

Satsang by Swami Amar Jyoti

The Secret of *Concentration*

Once you become perfectly quiet and settled within, your concentration is complete. Then you can achieve anything.

IT TAKES TIME to quiet the mind. We sometimes feel as if noise and quiet are two different things, but if the mind is peaceful and settled inside, outer noises will not disturb you. So noise is a state of mind. We can be in any situation and still remain quiet inside. Once you achieve this inner silence, even if you are very busy, working the whole day, you can maintain that relaxed state. This is what is achieved through meditation, yoga, and other practices. Once you become perfectly quiet and settled within, your concentration is complete. Then you can achieve anything. Many have applied this in work and various accomplishments, but the main purpose for concentration is to attain inner wisdom.



As you attain concentration, the whole creation begins to reveal its mysteries. Mother Nature goes on teaching you through each person and situation until you become perfect.

Today we often think that to be busy and hectic means we are really living. Actually this is a sign of dissipation and distraction. Therefore we do not achieve much, even if we want to. The secret of success is concentration, but concentration cannot be achieved if the mind is disturbed, restless or agitated. That inner silence is golden. It gives you whatever success you want, including worldly success if that is your desire. Once you have achieved concentration, any question, secret or innermost mystery will be revealed to you. You will be able to understand how to solve any problem, whether outer or inner.

Often we become confused and cannot see how to resolve a given situation. This is all due to the mind's restlessness. If you were concentrated you would see the answer right away, and follow that. If you apply concentration spiritually that is the best way, because then your inner consciousness will awaken. That does not mean material success should suffer. We can extend this point and say that God is maintaining this entire creation with perfect concentration. Imagine if God would be disturbed: all the galaxies would fall apart. They are all standing because of His perfect concentration. We call this *samyam* in Sanskrit, which means concentration that is pinpointed and perfected.

Whatever you experience at home, at work, in the world or in a monastery, if you have concentration you will never feel problems or confusion. Not only so but this will also help you physically. Illnesses will slowly evaporate. It is our distracted, emotional, imbalanced mind that creates diseases. So concentration helps physically, psychologically and spiritually. Yoga, meditation, prayer, reading, studies, Satsang and other practices also help us to be wholesome, to be what we are inside, our real wealth. To open this up, concentration is necessary. Some practice concentration

as an art, which is okay, but I always say that before practicing concentration, first bring your mind and heart to a peaceful state so your practice is not disturbed. If your mind and heart have achieved relative quiet and relaxation, then your concentration will abide.

There are many ways to develop concentration. Some repeat the holy name of God, or a mantra. Some concentrate on a candle flame. Some choose an image such as a lotus, or an idea such as peace, love or freedom. Some use religious symbols or sounds. Some worship an aspect or image of God as their focus. It depends upon your temperament. Once you choose a focus of concentration, stand by it. If you go

on changing it, your concentration will never develop. You have to have one focus. The example has been given that if you want to dig a well, if you dig shallow holes in fifty places you will not get water. You have to dig deeply in one spot. It has to be one center of concentration, staying on one path, whatever the ups and downs. That is the way to success.

It does take years to achieve, but is worth it. We take years even to graduate from school or college. Once you attain deep concentration, your consciousness begins to open. You attain peace, joy, freedom, love and wisdom way beyond most human beings. In the scriptures it is written that meditation brings you to silence, but if you are truly meditating, then inside you are very awake.

Your stillness within is dynamic, vibrant. Actually this inner balance of the mind is the meaning of yoga: to have concentration and still be very active. For this we have to train the mind.

There are many paths and religions, and they all teach us how to awaken in order to experience joy and happiness. First we need to understand what disturbs the body and mind, to analyze and self-reflect in order to see our distractions, and then try to avoid them. In each and every thing, therefore, life becomes conscious rather than just instinctive. If you are instinctive you are unconscious and led away, a victim of circumstance. Life as a yoga means it is in your hands: you are the destiny maker. Instinctive life is fine



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for animals and birds. Their survival instinct draws them to eat when they are hungry, drink when they are thirsty, and sleep when they are tired. As human beings we have a conscious faculty waiting to be awakened. When that is done you are *aware*. You are supreme—not as God is Supreme, but in the sense that you can direct the details of your life. Life becomes your destiny and you are happy with it. This all comes when you are a conscious being.

To be conscious first requires pinpointed concentration. Let us say that you are looking at a paper on a wall at a distance and are unable to read it. But when you pinpoint your gaze, like looking through a keyhole, you can read it. This is the way the aperture of your consciousness focuses. When you concentrate completely on any aspect or situation in life, the truth is simply revealed. That is called revelation, which is also wisdom. This faculty is

within us, but since it is closed up, we are unconscious. Therefore we begin to think. When we begin to think, we are trying to know; but to know is to reveal, not to think. When you concentrate and focus, your faculty of reflection opens up. That is *knowing* rather than understanding, which comes from thinking.

Concentration is for everyone, not just holy people or ascetics or yogis. The more you practice concentration, the more your life will become bountiful. Abundance just comes to you. I am not trying to teach you how to get more health, wealth or talents, but those also can be achieved by deep concentration, though if misused it will recoil back on you. Concentration is like a sword: sharp on both edges. If you misuse it, it will strike you back. However, if used properly, it will make you prosper in everything. Anything you aspire to you can achieve. That is the secret of concentration. In ancient times, to avoid the misuse of concentration,

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Strength comes from not being vulnerable to remarks from others. This comes from concentration. So do not think that spiritual principles are otherworldly. They apply to our life here and now.

sages or wise ones advised aspirants to first clean the mind and heart of all dross. This would take many years and much patience during which the master was purifying them, but in those days they had a lot of time and patience. Nowadays we have watches and are habituated to calculating time. Patience is much less. If you have to wait for an hour, you get very anxious. I still feel that patience is very necessary before concentration or inner wealth begins to open up. Our minds and hearts have to be thoroughly cleaned so that impurities do not trouble us later on.

It is something like a teenager or child who suddenly inherits great wealth. Without help they would go on using and misusing it until that very wealth becomes harmful to them. Therefore I always suggest that before you practice concentration or meditation in any form, to avoid the misuse of your inner wealth or power, see that your mind and heart are purified first. Otherwise, as we say, “power corrupts.” Actually, power does not corrupt; it is when we misuse it that it corrupts. Power itself is strength or energy. When you purify your mind of falsehoods, greed, jealousy, untruth, selfishness, or any negative thoughts or actions, then practicing concentration becomes easy. Impurities do not distract you. Whether you apply these principles in a scientific, religious, or material way, they will give tremendous results. You become a full human being. If you have patience it is easy to follow a practice or meditation that applies to your life and mind both. It is a steady, long-range kind of practice, and for that you need peace.

Everything that God has created is beneficial, provided we are capable of using it properly. Take for example a hydroelectric system where water produces electricity. If the engineers did not know how to harness the water, there would be flooding. Likewise, some poisons can also be beneficial, depending upon how

they are used. In Indian Ayurveda, herbs and organic compounds that otherwise may be toxic can be used judiciously to give life-giving effects. Another example of this is anger. Normally we say that anger is bad, destructive, negative, and hurts both the angry person and the one who receives the anger. But according to the sages, anger rightly used can also be beneficial, though we are not normally able to do this. When we get angry we

become identified with it; we become an angry person, and lose our balance and concentration.

If you knew how to use anger in a situation where it is needed, without being angry *inside*, that is the yogic way. Instead of being angry, which would do damage, you can use a little more seriousness, like a show of eyes. In this way you are using anger beneficially, responding in a loving manner, and you do not harbor any anger inside. You develop the insight that even your enemy is good to you, teaching you a lesson that you could not or did not learn any other way. A person may say something to you that you feel is insulting, disrespectful or bad. Normally your reaction would be that this person is bad and should not have done this. That maybe true on the surface, but there are deeper layers of seeing. Ask yourself, “Is there any lesson here for me to learn?” This does not mean that people do not do wrongs, but the question is: why did it come to you? When you go deeper with patience and concentration, you might find that there was a lesson to learn from this experience. Any situation can therefore teach us. As you attain concentration, the whole creation begins to reveal its mysteries. Mother Nature goes on teaching you through each person and situation until you become perfect. That is Her benevolence.

She reveals all the time in order to make us perfect. We generally resist or react because it is something different than what “I” want. How we respond is the main thing: how we communicate and open to Mother Nature and God. If we are closed, resisting, reacting, avoiding or hiding, we will not open to what is given. Each situation will present differently. Whether it is respect or an insult, whether someone talks to us sweetly or rudely, there is always a lesson in it. The karma for anger belongs to that person and he or she will suffer for it. But why you received it is up to you.



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You could refuse to receive it if you had the strength. When something disturbs you that means you are accepting it. You feel bad because your very touchy ego is identified with it. But what if you reject it? “That is not me; that person is doing wrong.” Then you are strong and not disturbed.

Strength comes from not being vulnerable to remarks from others. This comes from concentration. So do not think that spiritual principles are otherworldly. They apply to our life here and now. We can remain peaceful by not allowing anger to reach us. The other

person may become more disturbed but that is their problem. They will receive their own reaction. Fire may be burning there but if you do not touch it, it will not touch you. Becoming peaceful is very important in developing concentration, and concentration is necessary for revelation. Wherever you may be, you can smile away the situation. You can learn lessons without reacting and blaming anything outside of you.

Mother Nature always gives if we deserve. She gives what you need at the right time. That is our faith and it works. You just have to have patience and not

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be too demanding. If we get qualified, Mother Nature gives. But if we miss the opportunity, She may not give because at the right time we rejected it. You have to fit into the cosmic laws in such a way that you flow in tune with nature. Then you get everything you want. God never refuses anyone if we are in tune with Him. In an orchestra, the instruments may be different, but to play together they must be in tune with each other. Each musician cannot just play what they want; otherwise the director will tell them to leave. In the same way, we cannot simply tell God, “I did wrong, forgive me, have mercy upon me,” and then do what we want. We have to come in tune to be accepted back. We forget this part. We think that we have confessed or repented to God, “I am wrong,” but at that very moment, are we truly in tune to do right? God is merciful. If you keep open and do not resist, you will grow toward perfection and your consciousness will expand. You will be more positive, receiving from within.

As you grow deeper and deeper in consciousness, if you are fortunate enough to reach that state, you will see everything that seems to come from outside is actually within you. That is why we say that within and without are the same. This deserving capacity is already developed in you and you are receiving the fruit. In the beginning, theoretically or intellectually speaking, you will not see that things outside us correspond to the same inside us. This unity of within and without develops much later. It is a *very* high stage. Normally we feel that bounties such as relationships, affection or wealth are coming from outside, but this is only because we have developed that deserving capacity within us. You will not really enjoy, understand or appreciate *anything* unless it has developed within you.

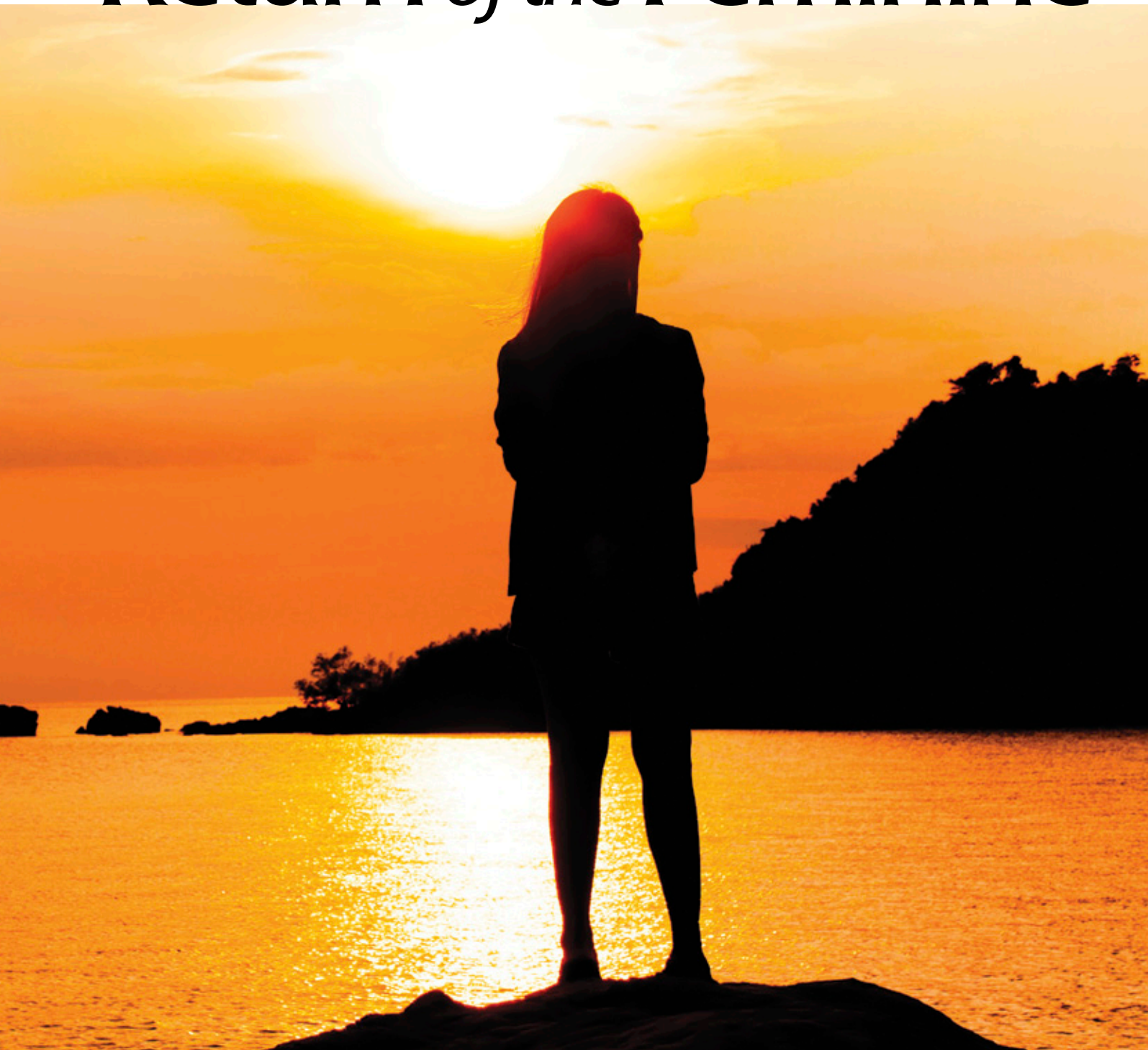
Once you develop this openness or unity within, you can make the best of everything. If it is loss, you

will see a lesson to learn and grow. If it is a gain but perhaps it is not good for you, then let it go. If it is fine for you, then take it. Have courage to accept what you do not get, and be humble to accept what comes to you by your own efforts. If you do not get stubborn about what you want, you will never disturb your peace. There is a common saying: “It’s not that God doesn’t hear your prayers, only sometimes His answer is no.” Should God decide as man wants every time? If He is perfect, are not His decisions perfect? And if those clash with our decisions or wishes, who should change? If God would go on supplying what we ask for like a manufacturer that would be commercial. It would not be God. In commerce, you pay the price and you get the things you want. With God, you get what you deserve. And once gotten, it is not always yours. That is the way Divine law works. If you know how to retain it, it will remain with you, otherwise Mother Nature will take it away. This is not cruelty; it is perfect justice.

We could even be immortal if we knew how to retain our immortality. This is a very big claim but it is true. God is always benevolent if we use His bounties properly. We make our own destiny; God does not. We are all made in His image: in goodness, benevolence, justice, love, freedom and wisdom. Each individual, society or nation is given lessons and experiences from which to grow. If we fail to learn our lessons, they will go on repeating. That is nature’s law. Not only will lessons repeat, but they may recur more severely. Therefore I always feel that suffering in life is not suffering but a lesson to be learned. And that is also the benevolence of Mother Nature: She never gives up on us. Even if we fail to take an opportunity seriously, She keeps repeating the same lesson until we learn it. This is the way to perfection. 🌸

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The Return *of the* Feminine



and the World Soul

At this time we need to reclaim what has been denied, what has been abandoned in the pursuit of our materialistic dreams. We need to return to the core of our being, to where the sacred comes into existence. **BY LLEWELLYN VAUGHAN-LEE**

THE FEMININE holds the mystery of creation. This simple and primordial truth is often overlooked, but at this time of global crisis, which also carries the seeds of a global transformation, we need to reawaken to the spiritual power and potential of the feminine. Without the feminine nothing new

can be born, nothing new can come into existence—we will remain caught in the materialistic images of life that are polluting our planet and desecrating our souls.

We see around us a world being destroyed by greed and consumerism, and feel within us the hunger of our soul for a way of life that acknowledges the sacred within all of life. And deeper, there is the cry of the soul of the world, the primal cry that comes from the depths of creation when the divine light that belongs to life is being lost. At this time we need to reclaim what has been denied, what has been abandoned in the pursuit of our materialistic dreams. We need to return to the core of our being, to where the sacred comes into existence. And the mystical feminine holds the key to this work of redemption and transformation.

The patriarchal era has denied women access to their real power. The patriarchy systematically repressed the power of the Goddess and the mystical teachings of the feminine. And yet this wisdom is still present, just as is the deep knowing every woman has of the interconnectedness of all of life. And every woman carries in her spiritual centers the sacred light

of creation. Without this light she could not conceive and give birth, she could not participate in the greatest mystery of bringing a soul into life: giving the spiritual light of a soul a physical form out of the substance of her own body. Men do not have this sacred light within them in the same way; they have to purify and transform themselves to gain access to it. For a woman it is always present.

But women have to recognize their true spiritual nature and the transformative potential they carry within them, so that they can offer it back to life—for without its light the world will slowly die. The world needs the presence of women who are awake to their spiritual light, and who can work with the substance of life in order to heal and transform it.

The last era has created a separation between matter and spirit, and so matter has forgotten its sacred nature, its ability to transform. Life itself has become caught in the abusive thought-forms of the masculine that seek to dominate through power. Life needs to be freed of these constrictions, and matter itself needs to be reconnected to its spiritual potential. This is a work that belongs to women, to those who know the sacred nature of life and how to bring light into matter, just as they instinctively know how to bring a soul into this physical world. For a woman the physical and spiritual worlds can never be separate: she carries the light of the world within the cells of her body; her sexuality is a sacred offering to the Goddess. But she needs to consciously recognize this divine potential and deep