

Meditation Group For the New Age

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PART I

Prayer Visualization

Meaning and Place of Prayer Today

The Transmuting Value of Prayer

The Process of Prayer

Higher Reality

Types of Prayer

PART II

Visualisation

Images

The Technique of Visualization

Visualization and Will

Types of Symbols

Symbolic Images

Imagination

The Rose Exercise

Recognize

PART III

The Principle of Unanimity

Tabulation

Meditation Outline

Part I

Prayer Visualization

The Meaning and Place of Prayer Today

The *word prayer* is used in many different senses. In a general way it includes numerous inner activities, such as meditation, contemplation, petition, and orison which, as Evelyn Underhill writes, “are bewildering in their variety”. “But for the sake of clarity we will use the word prayer in this study in the definite sense of that *inner action* which is characterized by *feeling*, and in which the feeling function is directed towards the higher realities or powers.

Even in this restricted sense there are several distinct types of prayer. There is simple petition, asking for material things; there is prayer for special help or guidance for oneself; prayer of the same kind but for others; prayer in which the feelings are projected into dedication or the offering of oneself to a higher Power; and prayer of an even higher type which leads to the communion of love.

To understand the place of prayer in the wide framework of modern conditions and in the methods of spiritual approach that are suited to the psychological make-up of present-day humanity, we need to examine the prevailing mentality and the trends of modern society. A paradoxical situation has created serious problems and difficulties. The mass of humanity has increasingly directed its interest towards physical enjoyment, possession of material objects, and social success; it has aimed at the acquisition of wealth and has used its energies to exploit the assets of the world. At the same time there has been a rapid increase of education and a widespread development of the mind. This marks real progress in the evolution of humanity, but it has also created specific problems, and the development of mental and critical ability often leads to intellectual pride and sterile sophistication.

Between these two trends, the materialistic and the intellectual critical, the intermediate level of emotion, of feeling, and imagination is often neglected, under-valued, and in many cases repressed. But the living forces of our nature cannot be annihilated and any such attempts cause regression and a return to the more primitive or infantile stages of development, with the constant danger that forces may explode in destructive ways.

This situation has been deplored by a number of thinkers and critics of modern society, such as Bergson, Buber, Keyserling, Sorokin, Maslow, and Jung. Jung made the following outspoken comments in an interview:

In our time it's the intellect that is making darkness, because we've let it take too big a place. Consciousness discriminates, judges, analyzes and emphasizes the contradictions. It's necessary work up to a certain point. But analysis kills and synthesis brings to life. We must find out how to get everything back into connection with everything. We must resist the voice of intellectualism.

(Published in *A Magazine of Jungian Thought*, Spring, 1960.)

On the other hand, recognition of the functions and “rights” of the non-rational aspects of human nature can have negative and harmful effects. If these “rights” are given too much emphasis all kinds of drives may be let loose and result in the uncontrolled expression of desire and imagination, both individually and collectively.

The inner world of emotion and desire with its corresponding drives is immense, and its many different expressions need to be carefully evaluated and handled with discrimination. There is a great difference, for example, between animal desire and spiritual aspiration, between selfish possessive attachment and selfless love, between the wild excitement of a crowd at a bull fight and the elevated feelings evoked by the music of Bach. Yet they all belong to the same “world,” they all have the same *basic* quality, just as one color has many shades—red, for instance, extending from the darkest, lurid color to the most delicate light rose.

The Transmuting Value of Prayer

This fact of a common basic quality indicates the possibility of transmuting the lower into the higher aspects. Indeed, one of the most important and urgent problems facing humanity at present is how to *transmute and redirect* into aspiration towards higher goals the powerful and turbid currents of human desire which are so bent upon acquiring material possessions and power.

One of the means by which this needed transmutation and redirection of the emotional energies can be brought about is through the right kind of prayer—*aspirational prayer*. If we

exclude the lowest type of petitional prayer—the demand for material advantages or power for selfish purposes—all other forms of prayer are of an aspirational character, they have an *upward* direction. This is true even of prayer for such things as strength, light, protection or guidance, because the attention is directed toward the spiritual Self or higher Powers; it is even more true of prayer for the good of others and in that highest form of prayer—that “God’s will may be done.”

Here we find one of the many paradoxes of the spiritual life. While the conscious desire when we pray is that something may be granted, may “descend” to ourselves or others, the *upward* projection of our demand and aspiration has the effect of “lifting” our center of consciousness in some measure onto the subtler levels of the inner world; it is an *elevating process*. This upward trend of aspiration has been expressed in all the world religions by many symbols; for example, the ascent of the mountain, the upward leaping flame and the arrow—as in the exhortation. “Let us be as arrows striving heavenward from a fiery bowstring.”

The process of transmuting and sublimating the psychological energies cannot be dealt with here at length, but three ways in which this can be done may be pointed out:

1. Through substitution and purification of motives.
2. Through elevation of the level of action.
3. Through changing the methods employed

To illustrate these points, combative energies can be put to good use in fighting such things as social evils; physical aggression can be replaced by discussion on the mental level; material weapons can give place to the pen or the microphone. But the essential factor is primarily the changing and purification of motive.

To a certain extent psychological transformation and spiritual sublimation are taking place continually in an unconscious way, because they are natural processes in man’s inner evolution. But this process is greatly helped and hastened by *conscious inner action*. There are various ways of setting about this, but one of the comparatively easy and effective methods—because it brings about change of both motivation and level of activity—is *aspirational*

prayer. As has been said by a spiritual teacher, prayer is “a joyous process of making desire holy.”

The Process of Prayer

It is difficult to present the process of prayer in a way which will appeal to the different types of mind, but to make a wide generalization, there are two main groups today. One is composed of those who could be called in a broad sense religious, and who have a natural inclination toward prayer, even though, in the whirl of modern life, they may fail to practice it. The other group consists of those of a more mental type who have doubts and even refute religious and spiritual matters, and are inclined to consider prayer as outdated and of little or no value. To this latter group belong many of the young people.

The first question they raise is to “whom” one can pray, and there is unwillingness to admit the existence of a personal God as conceived in the traditional way. Before taking up this question it should be made clear that the first “objective” or “being” to whom aspirational prayer should be directed is the spiritual Self or Soul. This may be surprising and seem at first as if one is praying to oneself, but the fact is that normally the human personality, the conscious self, is far from being united and identified with the *spiritual Self*. Often the personal self ignores and even denies the existence of this spiritual Self; it takes no notice of it or refutes the intuitions and intimations which reach it from that higher Self, and tries to evade the responsibilities entailed. Our primary aim should be to reduce this sense of duality and strife, for until some degree of unity is achieved our inner action cannot be effective, nor can our outer lives be really harmless and constructive. Prayer to the spiritual Self for light, inspiration, and guidance should therefore complement, in the feeling aspect of our natures, the receptive meditation accomplished through the mind. Prayer of this type corresponds to that of many Christians praying to the “indwelling Christ.”

In the higher stages of prayer the personal consciousness and the spiritual Self unitedly address their approach to a higher Power, and such prayer is devoid of selfish petition and personal desire, being a true expression of the will-to-good.

Higher Reality

Coming back to the question of the reality of higher Existences, it is not possible to discuss here the many concepts that are held regarding them, but neither is it necessary; for the present purpose of learning to utilize prayer no set theology is needed, nor is the acceptance of any definite metaphysical ideology. It is enough to admit that there is a great Mystery, a universal Reality around us and above us, which is beyond our rational conceptions. Only an attitude of great conceit would deny this. While we cannot directly know the essential nature of this Reality, we can recognize even with our rational minds some of its manifestations, and more is revealed when we are able to make an intuitive approach.

The most recognizable manifestation is *intelligence*. The more advanced scientists today speak of a cosmic Mind directing all material manifestation and evolution. The observable patterns that govern with precision from solar system to atom are evidence that cannot be denied of a Cause of Intelligence. The beauty throughout all the kingdoms of nature, from the tiniest crystal to the grandeur of the starry heavens, is also evidence of a higher Mind or Reality which creates or causes to be. In humanity we find genius, selfless love and other qualities that are difficult to explain if they are not reflections in ourselves of attributes and aspects of a greater Being.

Then again, in the human kingdom a great difference can be seen between the primitive types and geniuses in the fields of science, culture, and so on. This indicates an evolutionary growth towards higher levels of intelligence and states of being, and induces us to admit that there may be higher Beings and Kingdoms beyond our present comprehension. That they are not within our vision is no reason to deny their existence; science is making us realize more and more how limited is our span of physical vision as well as our knowledge, and how many energies and states of matter that are invisible to us exist in the universe.

If such realities and energies exist, they cannot be wholly separated from us and there should be ways of establishing communication with them. There is considerable evidence that this is possible, and for many it has been confirmed by direct experience and proven facts. But even without taking that into consideration, the unlimited possibilities of our relationship with higher aspects of being and the urge to know more of our

existence, may well be powerful incentives toward exploration of the inner worlds and towards seeking the new experiences of spiritual adventure.

Types of Prayer

As mentioned in previous Sets, there are various approaches to the great unknown. One of these is our present subject —*prayer*. But it should be made clear that there are also distinct kinds of prayer which are very different from each other. The common conception of prayer as petition or supplication for personal help addressed to a higher being, who is generally conceived in an anthropomorphic way, is only the most elementary kind of prayer and it is quite understandable that it may seem a form of selfishness, dependence, and credulity which does not appeal to the modern mind.

There are, however, higher forms of prayer in which communion is sought with Beings or energies expressing the highest values we can conceive, such as those of intelligence, beauty, love, goodness, etc., with the purpose of attuning ourselves to their quality and opening ourselves to their influence. This communion may also be sought in order to channel these beneficent energies for the good of others—in religious terms *intercessory prayer*. And finally there is that type of prayer which asks for nothing, but aims at increasing communion and atonement with the higher realities or the supreme One.

As previously said, it is the use of the energy of the emotional nature, the use of the feelings, which characterizes prayer and distinguishes it from the other kinds of “inner action,” and different kinds of feeling give “wings” to prayer. For example, the common feeling of inability to cope with situations and solve personal problems frequently drives us to ask for strength, light, and guidance; the compassion that arises from realization of the ocean of suffering which engulfs humanity—whether it be physical, emotional or mental—impels the inner work of intercessory prayer as well as outer service; and the comradeship and love which grows from a sense of our essential identity also urges us to pray, both for those with whom we feel a special inner affinity and for all our fellow human beings with whom we share a common origin, nature, and goal.

When we succeed in stepping out of the boundaries of self-centeredness and the clamor of our selfish desires and fears, we begin to realize and appreciate all that we inherit both from the kingdoms of nature and the achievements of humanity. This appreciation of the beauty and wonder of the world around us, as well as the magnificence we glimpse of the universe, bring about a feeling of *worship* of the highest order. We might call it “joyous admiration” of the unknown Life or Reality which has created and impels the universe and all its component parts—including ourselves and every smallest unit—towards some mysterious and magnificent goal. This feeling is inherent in us and when released into free expression it leads to our cooperation with the Supreme Reality and with all living things.

This consciousness of a greater relationship is reached not only by religious or mystically inclined people. Many artists, scientists philanthropists, and men and women of no particular religious belief have felt and expressed it in various ways. A significant illustration of this comes from the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who had one the keenest minds and whose work was a landmark in the development of modern thought:

Two things fill me with ever new and increasing admiration and veneration the longer and more often I reflect upon them: *the starry sky above and the moral laws within me*. There is no need for me to look for them or to suppose that they exist...I see them *before me* and I immediately relate them with the awareness of my existence.

The first (space) begins from the place I occupy in the outer world as it widens my connection with it in a boundless greatness of worlds and worlds, and systems of systems, and also with the unlimited spans of time, their periodic movements, their beginning and their duration.

The second begins from my invisible self, from my personality, and represents myself in a world which is truly infinite, but in which only the intellect can penetrate and in which...I know myself to be in a universal and necessary connection.

The first picture of a countless number of worlds annihilates my importance as an *animal creature* which must give back to the planet (a mere point in the universe) the matter of which it was

formed after having been endowed for a short time (one does not know how) by vital energy. The second picture, instead, increases infinitely my value as an *intellect* in whom the moral law manifests a life independent from the animal nature and also from the entire visible world, as can be inferred by the fact that this existence of mind is determined by purposes not bound by the conditions and limitations of this life, but is extended to the infinite.

Critique of Practical Reason (Trans.)

Summing up, prayer constitutes the *heart approach* to higher Reality and to higher Beings. It is a vital and direct approach and one that should be understood and practiced particularly by those for whom the mental approach—that is, concentration and meditation—is the preferred method. We should remember that the most effective “inner action” is a combination and synthesis of all the various approaches, but before being able to do this the ways and methods of each approach should be known and experimented with more or less separately. This applies to prayer as much as to concentration and meditation. In prayer other psychological factors, such as thought and will, may come in and associate with feeling; we should certainly not try to exclude them, as long as the emphasis remains on the *heart* activity and on the utilization and dedication of feeling to the spiritual aim.

Thus prayer is useful in two ways: as a specific activity of an important aspect of our nature, and also as a necessary preparation for the inclusive and synthetic inner action which, as we shall see, results from the unified spiritual approach of our whole being.

Prayers can be classified as follows:

1. *Spontaneous prayers*, according to the inspiration of the moment.
2. *Formulated prayers* of one’s own, according to individual purpose and need.
3. *Existing prayers*, those used in the different religions and spiritual movements or written for special purposes.

We should experiment with the different types and choose whichever we find the most effective according to the occasion. For

example, spontaneous prayers may be found more suitable for individual use, but formulated group prayers may prove better for meetings or unanimous subjective work.

For this last purpose we suggest the use of an *Invocative Prayer* which is universal in character and is used today by a very large number of people throughout the world. It is quoted here and comments on its significance and on how it can be most effectively used will be given in Set V on Invocation and Evocation.

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the center where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the center which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

VISUALIZATION

Images

Visualization can be defined as the conscious and deliberate use of images. In reality, that is in *psychological* reality, we *live in a world of images*. The so-called objective world is not at all as we see it; the philosophers have told us this for a long time, but now modern science is proving it. Matter, as it appears to our senses, simply does not exist. Qualities such as color exist only in our mental pictures; objective reality, as far we can know, is an ocean of vibrations and energies of various kinds of which we know nothing directly; our five senses convey a very limited picture of the world around us. The span of vibrations caught by the eye, for instance, is only a small band in the whole vibrational range.

If our senses were different the so-called objective world would not appear the same; animals, we believe, see things somewhat differently. Dogs seem to have a very poor sense of color, and the world is probably rather greyish to their sight, but in compensation their sense of smell is acute and they have a sensitivity to scent that we do not have at all. Some animals are sensitive to ultra-violet vibrations which they probably perceive as a color of which we know nothing; some also have a range of hearing well above ours, and whistles are made, for instance, which only dogs can hear.

Besides the streams of pictures which impinge upon us from the outer world, we are engulfed in a sea of inner pictures—those created or evoked by our imaginative function. Very few live in the mental world of thought, ideas, and concepts; even those who know how to think spend the greatest part of their time in the world of inner images and emotion, where feelings and desires continually evoke images and these, in their turn, constantly evoke emotions and desire. This often produces a vicious circle; for instance, when a preoccupation or a fear dominates, it evokes corresponding images which in their turn reinforce the fear, so that it may become a real phobia, or at least a persistent anxiety with all the consequent bad effects.

Images have two ways of impelling us to corresponding activity, they evoke desires, and have also a more direct effect. It has been found through psychology that every image has a tendency to

produce the activity to which it corresponds. It may seem that this is not always so, because each image is counteracted by so many others which take its place; but when all other images are discarded, or if there is a deliberate concentration on one image, then its activity becomes evident.

In the past the philosophers realized the power of images; now the advertisers are utilizing it on a large scale. This means that besides the two streams of images—those coming from the outside through the senses and those bubbling up from the unconscious—there is now another powerful stream being thrust upon us by overt or “hidden” persuaders, such as the politicians, the industrialists, and all those seeking to influence us and impose their ideas.

Television is responsible for another stream of images to which a great many people, including children, are opening themselves passively. All this shows how vital it is for us to realize this situation and take steps to counteract it, so that we are not just the passive tools of all these streams of images.

The first task is to control the streams impacting upon us and to learn to offset, direct or evoke images *at will*. It is better to begin with the more insidious, those coming from within, which are the outcome of our imaginative activity. Certain techniques help to develop this control and the most direct and effective is *deliberate visualization*, for this means evoking and holding steady in the field of consciousness the *chosen* and desired images and excluding all others.

This may seem simple, but when we try it we soon find how difficult it is, and realize to what extent we are driven by images and are their victims. Even when we are quiet, when we have relaxed and reached a point where the flow of images subsides and leaves us in comparative peace, it is difficult, when a chosen image is evoked, to keep it steady before the inner eye. It just will not obey us, its tendency is to fade away, to become distorted or to proliferate in a series of associated images.

The Technique of Visualization

Just as with the training and development of any other ability, the first stage in the technique of visualization is purely technical or mechanical. One begins by practicing the simplest and easiest kind

of exercises which have no other value than the training of the ability itself, before going on to others which have a meaning and usefulness in themselves.

The first of these exercises utilizes the help of observation and concentration. We can take a photograph or picture—in the same way as mentioned when studying concentration (see *Set 1, p. 15*) and then make of it a mental image. As a second exercise we can evoke the image of something that is well known to us but not just previously observed. A further exercise is to *create* an image something we have never seen in reality, an imaginary picture. In all these exercises the picture should be held clearly, precisely and steadily for as long as possible, being re-evoked or built up again each time it gets distorted or fades.

Another point in the technique of visualization is the need to evoke the images repeatedly, to renew them frequently. Visualizing something once or twice is not enough to make the image so dynamic and charged with life that it has the force to drive through to objective realization. Every image, speaking metaphorically, is immersed in a struggle for survival with the countless other images already existing in the unconscious and flowing in from outside. So, if we want an image to be effective, we have to charge it with considerable energy by frequently holding it for a time before the mind's eye and *feeding* it with our attention. Enjoyment of the work is a great help in this and we should make the images as attractive as possible.

Images have two chief aspects—form and color. Some people have a greater facility for visualizing forms, others for colors, and there is a marked difference according to individuals and psychological types. Forms are more connected with the mind, while color is more directly linked with emotion and feeling, and each of us should work at the aspect found to be most difficult, so that we develop the ability to visualize equally well both the form and color of any given image.

Visualization is also preparation for the very effective “as if” technique, in which we conduct ourselves in the way we know to be right even if we lack the corresponding emotional attitude. A common instance of this is when we do something we are afraid of in a calm, courageous way, even while actually feeling fear. The

“*as*” of the “as if” requires a previous vivid visualization of the activity as we wish to carry it out. This technique can be of great value to those taking examinations, public speakers, actors, singers and so on.

Visualization and Will

It is obvious that these exercises require the use of the *will*. It is the will that enables us to focus our attention on the image, repeat the exercise and hold the visualization steady. The relationship between will and imagination is interesting. Coué remarked that whenever will and imagination came into conflict, imagination had the best of it, and in a sense this is true. The will cannot produce an outer result or activity except through the medium of images, that is, without use of the imagination. Every physical movement, it has been found, is preceded by a conscious—or more often unconscious visualization of it. The use of the will therefore involves evoking and directing images and acting through them. Another function of the will, and one which should precede the evocation and holding of images, is the choice. Choice is a specific function of the will.

This brings us to the right choice of images. At first, during what might be called the “drilling” period, we should use images of a positive character, but of no deep or symbolic significance, simply training ourselves to visualize them without any mental activity on their meaning. We can, for instance, visualize something which suggests a quality we want to evoke or develop, like strength, serenity, courage. Then comes the utilization of meaningful symbols. In using these, visualization is combined with reflective meditation on the meaning of the symbol. At first we can alternate our focus between visualization and reflection, then we will find we can do both at the same time,

Types of Symbols

There are various kinds of symbols and we have a wide choice according to our preference and purpose. The principal classes or groups of symbols are: natural (heaven, earth, water, fire, mountains, etc.), human, mythological, imaginative, abstract (numbers, geometrical forms, colors, etc.), and technical. There are also symbols of an individual or personal character which

either emerge spontaneously, such as those appearing in dreams, or can be evoked through free drawing and other techniques.

After having practiced with simple static images which do not change, we can proceed to the more difficult stage of visualizing a *process* — an object or scene which changes and develops. One of the simplest examples of this is to visualize a closed bud and “see” it slowly unfolding. An exercise in this is given on p. 18.

Another development in the imagemaking function is the evoking of what psychologists call “images” of other senses, such as auditory, olfactory or tactile. The word “image” may seem unjustified here, but such impressions of sounds, scents, etc. are in fact images evoked subjectively, that is, without any corresponding object to cause them.

Many other images, symbols or streams of images can be used; one technique of special value is to picture ourselves expressing a certain quality or qualities which we need to develop. First this may be a static image of ourselves portraying a desired quality, and then we can extend it to visualizing ourselves going through specific situations as we should like to be able to. But it should be clearly understood that this exercise is not an end in itself, if we stopped at that the result might be contrary to our aim and we might make the idealized picture an escape or substitution for personal effort. Therefore there must be no passive expectancy of the image being realized; it must be considered as a pattern, a blueprint, which will *help* to bring the ideal image into reality in outer life. It could in fact be compared with the vision and the inner blueprint that a sculptor must have of the figure he is going to produce.

The ideal model of oneself can be visualized in various ways. One can see the perfect model representing the ultimate goal, or one can take each step to this successively, visualizing one quality or one situation at a time, and in this way gradually arrive at the perfected whole. The latter is an easier and more effective method of working which offsets any tendency to forget reality in a purely idealistic substitution.

We should not, however, apply this method to others except with the greatest calculation. Much harm is done in this way, especially by parents projecting more or less consciously on to their children

the image of what they believe their children should be. (This is often an idealized image of what the parent has failed to become!) Such images seldom correspond to the true possibilities or the right lines of development of the child, who either justly rebels or is forced to accept an unsuitable role. This has harmful consequences and many psychological disturbances can be traced to such impositions.

Symbolic Images

The difference between symbolic and ordinary images is that the former have a special meaning; a symbolic image or symbol, besides its “face value,” represents an idea or truth which in itself is formless and therefore needs some “formulation” to give it expression, both for ourselves and for communication to others.

Many images can either be taken purely objectively or be used to convey a symbolic meaning as well; an instance of this is the image of a mountain. Somebody with a purely objective mind visualizing a mountain will see only its outer form and beauty, but someone who realizes its symbolic significance will see the mountain also as a way of access to higher levels and a place of wide vistas, and will realize the analogies with the inner life, the inner ascensions, the reaching up to higher levels of consciousness; this image then has an uplifting spiritual effect. Mountains are a clear example of the value of symbols. They have been used in many religions and throughout the ages people have associated them with inspiration and withdrawal to “higher places.”

Imagination

Imagination is used consciously or unconsciously in all fields. For instance in science—even in the physical sciences in which one would think it had little scope—it plays a definite part. Intuition and imagination have a particular connection; abstract intuition tends to clothe or express itself in images, which might be called the “vehicles” of the originating abstract intuition. Some of the great scientists have realized this and the French mathematician Poincaré wrote a book on the use of the imagination in science. Others have also spoken of the way in which some discovery has come to them in the form of a sudden image or pattern as in the famous case of the physicist Kekulé who “saw” the atoms dancing

about in mid-air in conformity with his theory of atomic grouping, while riding on top of a London bus.

A use of the imagination which is particularly suited to our work in this Meditation Group is the visualizing of different aspects of the New Age which we are seeking to help bring into being. We can visualize, for instance, various aspects of the new civilization, such as the new social structure, the new education and the new art.

In all our work with the imaginative function we should distinguish clearly between using imagination and images as substitutes for reality—which is passive imagining, an escape mechanism, and an unwholesome substitute for reality—and the active, positive use of imagination as an *effective means of creation*, in both the inner and the outer worlds. It all depends as with everything else, on *how* we use the imagination. Mention should also be made of the distinction between visualization and clairvoyance. The latter is *psychic reception*, whereas visualization is *positive* projection. Clairvoyance is the result of passive responsiveness but visualization is, or should be, always creation *at will*.

Finally, visualization should not be used independently on its own, but like the other types of “inner action” should be combined with the other methods and techniques we are considering. This will be gone into in the subsequent Sets on Invocation and Creative Meditation.

The Rose Exercise

Imagine—

A closed rosebud:

See vividly the stem and green sepals.

Visualize it clearly in a static way.

Imagine it opening very slowly—
revealing more and more of the petals.

As it opens wider, see the rose emerging in its beauty,
showing the full color and texture of the petals.

Imagine the perfume of the rose, with its special rich fragrance.

Direct the attention at the same time to both the beauty of the form and the scent.

Contemplate the rose with a sense of admiration and joy.

Recognize—

This is a *significant symbol* of inner growth, unfoldment, expansion, Self-realization, and radiation of one's inner being and quality.

Each of us is like a rose, with the same hidden potentialities as the bud—growth, actualization of latent potencies, harmonious development, and active radiation.

This exercise should be done very slowly, with pauses between each phrase. The results are sometimes quite out of proportion to the apparent simplicity of the exercise. It can bring about a new Self-realization, the awakening of inner qualities and, if needed, constitute a healing process.

The efficacy of the exercise depends upon the ability to make the rose a *living symbol* so that it works in us creatively.

Part II

The Principle Of Unanimity

Many confuse unanimity with uniformity, but these are two quite different things, as is clearly shown by the root of each word: Unanimity comes from *anima*—soul—and means having the same soul; uniformity comes from, and means having the same form.

This fundamental difference is not so clearly understood in practice. The true ideal of unanimity is difficult to maintain; it easily becomes distorted and uniformity tends to slip into its place. But this is a trap; the imposition of uniformity is all too easy if a leader assumes too much authority in a group, and although it may be called and even be thought to be true unison, it is not so and is in no way a new age type of working.

Unanimity means having identical *intention* — it means that one basic purpose unites a group or a section of people in a common endeavor, but it does not mean that everyone's endeavor has to be the same. Diversity of effort, of expression, and of form are perfectly compatible with unanimous purpose and, indeed, are the guarantee of a continual living unanimity springing from within.

Unity of purpose permits differences both in the *fields* of its manifestation and in the *ways and means* by which it is carried out. There can be a great variety of plans for the carrying out of some central purpose, and those plans may reach into all kinds of fields which necessitate corresponding differences of methods. But if the unanimity of purpose is strong and clear it need not in any way be affected by such differentiation, but will simply be *interpreted* to meet each new situation that appears.

Needless to say this is not easy to accomplish for often, however good our intentions, our vision varies and our ideas of the best methods to employ may quite well differ. But fluid outer cooperation, based on *inner contact* and relationship is possible and there are techniques that are helpful.

The first is a continual building of the inner relationships and the maintaining of a sense of oneness and common endeavor despite any outer divergence; this means cultivating love, understanding, and trust. Another technique is recognition of what is essential and

what is not, of where unity is necessary and where liberty is advantageous; this calls for clear thinking, discrimination, and wisdom. The issue of “freedom” has to be seen in right perspective and, without emphasis on freedom for its own sake, it has to be utilized to bring strength, growth, and full mobilization of the group potential. An *essential* unanimity which gives freedom and the needed variance of expression is the key to right relationship in a group and to its smooth working towards its goal.

Avoidance of emphasis on method and detail is another useful technique, for such emphasis often results in divergences; we all have our own ideas as to how things should be carried out, and each one’s opinion may be justified to some extent. So a wise precaution is to maintain emphasis on the common intention and leave the lesser issues of detail on the form side to work out gradually. Sometimes there may be a unanimous opinion as to the best methods, but often this is not possible and by focus where the differentiation lies the group itself becomes torn and weakened.

The story is told of someone who visited Bernard Shaw and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the well known Fabians, when they all lived together. She witnessed the fierce discussions they had after dinner and feared that their relationship must be severed, only to find the next morning with relief that the disputes were part of their normal *outer* living and in no way affected their essential relationship.

One of the best demonstrations of unanimity is friendship, the true friendship that ignores all minor differences and continues steadily through all the ups and downs of life. Such friendship springs from a deep inner bond and is consequently unaffected by outer and more transitory issues and occurrences as Shakespeare advises: “Do as adversaries do in law; strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.”

Another technique to be cultivated is appreciation of the value of others. Diversity in unity entails mutual respect and a willingness to give and take with no assuming of authority over each other. It also flowers where there is sound humility based upon recognition of the inevitable incompleteness and imperfection of all personal views and actions. The individual approach can rarely be all comprising, and extension into the group work today is needed to

meet the increasing demands of life in the New Age. Group contribution, governed by the *good of the whole* or the “greatest good of the greatest number,” creates a strong, rounded-out, and unanimous force, with the many sided facets of its members and the potential of each individual multiplied by the strength of the whole. A good illustration of this is the fact that the chord is the harmonious blending of different sounds, and also that white is the result of the blending of all the colors of the spectrum. It is clear that this is quite a different method to that of uniformity or “conforming” and dictatorship.

One example of the growing unanimity in our time is the establishment and operation of the United Nations. It should be realized that never before in history have so many nations of the world met together and discussed issues that affect us all. This is an important and necessary step on the way towards true international cooperation. The great number of groups working for peace and protection of the physical environment, the growing spirit of internationalism and spreading of world humanitarian movements all indicate the working out of the great underlying Principle of Unanimity.

“There are secret forces at work, blending together those who belong together,” wrote I Ching, and this secret Force of Unanimity brings a deep inner joy, for it is an expression of that central Oneness out of which all differentiation, all manifestation has evolved. When we experience it in unity of purpose and inner linking with others concerning some specific goal, we touch subjective sources of strength and joy that spring from our “essential oneness”; we are *rediscovering unity*, our basic, essential unity, and it is a *conscious* participation in the One Life.

In Earth My Friend Peter Townsend describes the recognition of this:

“The world is, one can feel it, moving towards a unity which will one day be perfect; the day must come when this oneness will possess all people. In the multitude of religions and beliefs there is one common expression; the desire of man to be one, not separate; to be part of, not divided from his Creator and the Creation. Man belongs not to himself but the whole scheme of life.”

The following excerpt from *The Phenomenon of Man* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Published by Harper and Bros.) is an interesting interpretation of the Principle of Unanimity from another angle:

“We have used the term mega-synthesis. When based on a better understanding of the collective, it seems to me that the word should be understood without attenuation or metaphors when applied to the sum of all human beings...

“The still unnamed Thing which the gradual combination of individuals, peoples and races will bring into existence, must needs be supra-physical, not infra-physical, if it is to be coherent with the rest. Deeper than the common act in which it expresses itself, more important than the common power of action from which it emerges by a sort of self-birth, lies reality itself, constituted by the living reunion of reflective particles...

“We are faced with a harmonious collectivity of consciousness equivalent to a sort of super-consciousness. The idea is that of the earth not only becoming covered by myriads of grains of thought, but becoming enclosed in a single vast grain of thought on the sidereal scale, the plurality of individual reflections grouping themselves together and reinforcing one another in the act of a single unanimous reflection.

“This is the general form in which, by analogy and in symmetry with the past, we are led scientifically to envisage the future of mankind.” (*pp. 250-251*)

TABULATION

What is Unanimity?

1. It is an expression of the essential unity underlying all creation.
2. Unanimity is not uniformity—it is unity in diversity and diversity in unity.
3. Organic unity—Functional unity (consider the analogy of the human body—).
4. Unanimity is not imposed—it is free adherence.
5. Differences are not suppressed. They are appreciated and integrated.
6. Its various aspects include:
 - a. Purpose—intention—will—motive
 - b. Thought
 - c. Aspiration
 - d. Action
7. Within oneself
 - a. Group unanimity
 - b. Inter-group unanimity
 - c. World unanimity

How to Achieve Unanimity

1. *Elimination of obstacles* such as:
 - a. Self-will
 - b. Pride and surety of rightness
 - c. Fanaticism
 - d. *Enforced* unanimity (which arouses rebellion)
 - e. Undue focus on detail and method (which causes cleavages).
 - f. Interference with the responsibilities of others.
2. *Cultivation of qualities* such as:
 - a. Love Universality
 - b. Joy in uniqueness
 - c. Spirit of integration
 - d. Will to harmony and synchronization
3. *Methods*

- e. Acknowledgement of unity in diversity
 - f. Realization of common purpose and freedom for creativity in moving toward that purpose
 - g. Unanimous intention
 - h. United group thinking
 - i. Unified group desire
 - j. Blending of diverse contributions in group activity
4. *Specific Techniques*
- k. *Conferences—Consultations*
 - 1) Finding one or more points of unanimity
 - 2) Expanding them into a growing area of agreement
 - 3) Valuing individual inspiration and areas of expertise
 - l. *Subjective work*
 - 1) Joint meditation, invocation, prayer, reception of inspiration and ideas
 - m. *Formulation of a common program and its concerted working out; for example:*
 - 1) (Objectively) constructing a building or running a factory
 - 2) (Subjectively) unanimous and simultaneous meditation on the Laws and Principles of the New Age

Keythought

In necessary things, unity;

In doubtful things, liberty;

In all things, love.

(The motto of an ancient monastic order)

Results of Unanimity

- 1. The joy of unanimity—communion
- 2. The power of unanimity—multiplied effectiveness

Recommended Reading

A large number of books and pamphlets on prayer have been published and are easily available. We limit our suggestions to one not connected with any specific religion or movement.

Prayer, by Prof. Friedrich Heiler (Oxford University Press) with the subtitle “A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion,” is a rare combination of scholarship and spiritual insight.

Meditation Outline

Alignment Through

1. Relaxation—physical, emotional, and mental.
2. Aspiration
3. Mental concentration
4. Linking with all those doing this meditation all over the world.

Dedication

“I dedicate myself to do all in my power to bring about a New Age based on understanding, cooperation, and sharing in which each and all will be able to unfold and express their creative powers and their higher spiritual possibilities.”

Meditation on the Principle of Unanimity

1. *Reflectively consider* the meaning, value, and implication of Unanimity.
2. *Visualize* a symbol of Unanimity.
3. Direct the mind upward and maintain a receptive attitude to any inner sound or impulse from a higher or subtler region.
4. As you return from this silence try to formulate into words any impressions you might have received during this receptive period. If possible, write it down.
5. Plan how to demonstrate Unanimity individually and how to contribute to its implementation in the work.
6. *Telepathically* radiate it through:
 - a. Repeating thoughtfully the word “Unanimity.”
 - b. Sending for the thoughtform of “Unanimity” along rays of light in all directions.

Affirmation

“May this group be helped to do its part.”