

CHAPTER 4

HOW DO WE ADOPT A DISCIPLINE

I have found that many students have learned how to meditate, but few have learned how to be self-disciplined. Those who do know how have discovered the way of discipline mostly by themselves. There is much more to the mystical journey than meditation, even though meditation is a major key. We also have duties and responsibilities in this world.

We simply cannot sit indefinitely in a state of meditation, nor live in a state of inertia. Meditation is a process. It is a technique and a way by which we can learn to experience the Transcendental Nature. We experience That which sustains the mental, physical and emotional worlds. However, meditation by itself is not enough. Out of meditation (which is passive) is born contemplative activity. The mystic is a person who practices this contemplative activity. Most mystics are prime movers of humanity. They are very busy people. We realize this when we read their biographies. They are not living in a state of inertia. Their minds are functioning. They move easily, as the Life Force Itself expresses. It is flowing through their consciousness. Contemplation is consistent attention to this activity. The essence of the mystical life, then, is the expression and demonstration of this Truth. The mystic is open on all levels of his being; he allows himself the opportunity to remember that there is only one Life, one Power, one Intelligence, one Spirit, and that this Reality is flowing through him, as he is. The mystic watches, and, having surrendered himself to God, lives in a constant state of devotion.

Let us remember, then, to supplement our meditation with contemplative activity in our daily lives. Then we come out of our meditation, we should immediately adopt a principle to contemplate throughout the day. We may begin with the statement, "Today I am going to realize consciously that there is only one Presence in my life." That is our decision. Then we become involved in the duties, responsibilities and obligations

which we encounter in our relationships: the physical, mental and emotional patterns which enter our minds, and which cause us to forget the Truth. Before we know it, we forget that we have made a decision to realize the one Presence. If this happens, don't feel guilty; just make the decision again to remember this Truth for the rest of the day; remember that the Presence of everyone you meet *is* the Presence of God. This Presence is where you are, in your environment, everywhere. Say to yourself, "I am going to allow myself to experience one Presence."

The mental level is merely one aspect of our being, with its own powers, perceptions and activity; the emotional and feeling nature adds a larger dimension to our mental activities. When something happens to our life, we usually go through a process, and this process is initially recognized on a mental level. Then there is an emotional response, followed by a physical response. If our response is negative, then the activity in our mind carries with it an emotional response which further results in certain chemical reactions in the body. How do we get to the Truth? We immediately realize that there is only one Presence and that that Presence is God; that there is only one Activity and that Activity is God.

When we change our attitude, our emotional nature also changes; for instance, when mentally we move from fear to faith, our emotions reflect this change and then even the body responds and begins to calm down. We go through a process of balancing. What we become aware of are the processes which are taking place within us on at least three different levels. The coordination of these levels brings us into unity, or Oneness, and a healing then occurs. Please be aware of these processes on these different levels. How do you coordinate these three levels with Oneness? To move into mystical realization is to move from where you are (without going through any process) to the Truth. This is how we do it: we learn to move gently through the mind, the emotions and

the body, without attachment to the activities or functions of any of them. We pass through these activities to the Truth.

Our disciplines aid us in this passage. But how do we arrive at the full realization of the meaning of a principle—such as, “There is only one Presence”—without getting caught in our mental processes? How do we come upon this realization without attachment to the three levels of mind, body and emotions? We must begin with what we know; we go to that center within ourselves through which the reality of one Presence is manifest. Where is this center? Can we focus our attention on it? Is it in our mind or in our body somewhere? Yes, it is. We start with what we know for certain and that is the physical body itself. We find that there is a center of consciousness within the physical body known as the heart center. This *is* the center of consciousness. This is the center through which we find the midway point between the absolute and manifest realms.

In the practice of these disciplines (such as one Presence), we learn to think, to feel, and to know in the heart. We learn to live from this center within us. It is this center which acts also as a balancing force for all the activity of our consciousness. (If and when you are ever working with people who are unstable mentally, emotionally or physically, have them relate to themselves through their heart center and identify with this center within themselves.)

Our experiences that are really true never take place just in the mind alone. What we call experience is an activity which we recognize with our conscious mind, but simultaneously our thinking and our feeling and physical natures are also responding to this experience. Now, please allow yourself to move from the mental level to the heart center. Try living with the idea of one Presence in your heart center. If you can do this, then you will experience a conscious recognition that you are a manifestation of the Presence of God. You must open the door to your feeling nature to allow yourself to have this experience. When you have this experience, you become aware of the flow of consciousness. If, during this process, there is an interchange of your being with

the being of another person, then both of you change. This flow and exchange of consciousness is always occurring, but when we become conscious of it, we live in a state of joyful revelation.

We can't keep this knowledge just in our heads, because if we do, then it becomes merely an intellectual game and a source of agitation. But when we learn to move the discipline to the heart center, then we become stabilized and integrated. This is the way we must learn to live as we go through the routine of our daily lives, consciously knowing the Truth, no matter what is occurring, until we come to be at home at the center of our being, with both feet on the ground.

We must move through the three levels of mental, emotional and physical activity without attachment in order to arrive at the center. We are talking about Reality which manifests Itself directly in our lives. And by living, in, through and out of our own center of consciousness, we are able to function in this world and to do almost anything with much greater freedom and creativity than we have ever enjoyed before. We are no longer concerned with old patterns of belief. What were they anyway but the dead past? They were not real. When we discover our capacity to relate to life through our own centre, we find that, in comparison, our mere intellectual ability is restrictive and inhibiting. Now we are able to see that the intellect is only a tool. And we realize that we have many other tools as well, each one being used when appropriate, yet no one of which can be given precedence over all the others. We must have a balance on all levels within the functioning of our being.

We cannot reach this balance through delving into the mass of conditioned data which exists in our subconscious mind. *What* is new? The patterns in the subconscious are of the dead past. We cannot work from yesterday's knowledge or insights. The source of our lives is Spirit, underlying, sustaining, fulfilling, living Itself through our minds and hearts. We must come to this Source! The activities of the mind can be distractions because they can create mental and emotional agitation and turmoil. When directed by the

Spirit, these mental activities are useful to us. It is Spirit that reveals Itself through all of the tools and all of the aspects of our being. The Spirit will initiate and activate whatever processes are necessary for our growth and understanding._____

This is the joy of practicing the discipline of living in the one Presence. For It always reveals Itself to us so that we can experience It and know what the experience of It is. This is how our consciousness is expanded. Then, after we have lived with this principle for at least two weeks, we can move on to the next principle.

We decide to adopt the principle that there is only one Power. And we move that principle likewise from the intellect to our heart center. We remember our commitment to this discipline as often as possible. Whatever we are doing, we try to be aware that it is the one Power that is expressing Itself, that is our recognition and experience of that Truth. For example, let us suppose that you have a problem in a certain relationship in your life and you adopt this principle of one Power and accept the truth of that Power as the only one operating in both your feeling nature and in the feeling nature of the other person. By working directly with this discipline in this relationship, you will discover any “blind spots” that you may have. Sometimes we don’t want to recognize that what “I am feeling” and what the other person is feeling and what both are experiencing is of the same power. At times what the other person does as if it were something negative, as if it could hurt us, as if it could be a hindrance to our spiritual growth or unfoldment. We can live a week or perhaps even many years having made an intellectual decision to experience one Power and yet never allow ourselves to experience It in our feeling nature. Instead, we delude ourselves into thinking that we are really practicing this principle. Why? It is because we really don’t want to let go of the old way of looking at things. For instance, there might be something in our past concerning a certain person or situation which we refuse to release. In other words, we keep our old patterns of seeing rather than letting go and actually

realizing and experiencing the one Power as It manifests in our lives. To learn not to get caught in the processes, to be simple, to be innocent, is the key. In that innocence, all things exist. In that innocence, all things are made new, and life expresses Itself where we are. We don't recognize what is innocent. That is why we have to have disciplines. Let our lives be innocent, not according to the dead past, but according to the ever-present Truth.

It is not possible for a person to remain in ignorance, pain or suffering, if he uses these principles and faithfully practices them. The Truth is light, and darkness or ignorance will not survive in the light. If we have access to these principles and disciplines and we are still not enlightened, then we are playing games. It generally takes about two or three months for us to begin to see positive results. These are very powerful principles. When we embody them daily, then we live by them and yet we are still active in the world. Throughout all activities, we refer to our principles; we do so during all the good and bad and neutral experiences and situations in our lives. Then, it is not possible for us to sit in judgment on ourselves or anyone else, nor do we judge or analyze the past, present or future. There is only One. Everything else that seems to be otherwise is merely an illusion of duality.

We learn to go directly to the center of our consciousness in all instances, and we stay there as much as possible, letting the mental and emotional processes take care of themselves.

Each principle should be adopted, one at a time, for at least two weeks. Then start over again.