

The Power of Concentration - Part One

By Remez Sasson

When I was a child, I was shown a fascinating experience, how a magnifying glass could burn a piece of paper when the rays of the sun were focused through it. The fire could start only when the rays were concentrated to a small point. When the magnifying glass was moved too far away or too close, the rays were not focused and nothing happened. This experience demonstrates the tremendous power of concentration.

Concentration can be described as focused attention, the ability to pay attention to one single thought or subject to the exclusion of everything else, and as one pointed mind.

When our mind is focused we do not dissipate our energy on unnecessary activities. Developing concentration is essential to anyone who aspires to take charge of his life. It is required in order to succeed in all walks of life. Without it our efforts are dissipated, but with it we can accomplish a great deal.

Concentration has many uses. Concentrating on your activities makes you perform them better, faster and successfully. Focusing on work makes work more efficient. A better concentration makes studying easier, understanding faster, and improves the memory. It helps us to focus on our goals and achieve them more easily.

The concentration power enhances our inner healing powers, and helps us to send healing energies into our and others bodies. It is required for developing psychic powers. It is a powerful tool for the efficient use of creative visualization and the power of imagination.

When this ability is developed, the mind obeys us readily, and does not engage in useless dissipating thoughts and worries, and we experience true peace of mind. Concentration, which is actually mind mastery, is also a very important tool in practicing meditation. Without it the mind just jumps restlessly from one subject to another. Last but not least, it brings us faster to the brink of Spiritual Enlightenment.

Now you understand why it is very important and worthwhile to develop and improve the ability to concentrate.

I have found out that I could always find the time to exercise each day, no matter how busy I was. If I could do that, you can too. Forget all your excuses that you do not have the time, or you are too busy. Do not say that the circumstances are not proper, and that you cannot find a place to be alone in order to exercise.

I have found out that while leading an ordinary life, with a job and a family, it is possible to find the strength and the time to develop this ability. It is possible to develop the power of concentration wherever you are. I believe that if you realize the importance the power of concentration, you will certainly find the time, energy and desire for it.

Thoughts claim our attention incessantly, and waste our time and energy on unimportant and useless matters. They actually rule our life. We have become so accustomed to this slavery, that we take it for granted, and have become unconscious of this habit, except on certain occasions.

While breathing we do not need to pay attention to each inhalation and exhalation. We become conscious of the process of breathing, only when we have some difficulty with breathing, such as when our nose is clogged due to a cold or when we are in an unventilated room.

It is the same with thinking. We become conscious of the onslaught of our thoughts, and of our inability to quell them, only when we need to concentrate, solve a problem, study or when we have worries or fears.

Look at the following familiar scene. You need to study something for your job or for an exam. You sit comfortably on the sofa with the book in your hands and start reading. After a while you feel hungry and go to the kitchen to eat something.

You return to read, and then hear you people talking outside. You listen to them for several moments and then bring your attention back to the book.

After a while you feel restless and switch on the radio to listen to some music. You continue to read for a little while, and then remember something that happened yesterday, and you start thinking about it.

When you look at your watch, you are amazed to find out that one complete hour has passed and you have hardly read anything.

This is what happens when concentration is not strong enough to ward off all disturbances. There are many situations in life, where a little concentration can make a great difference. Think, and find out where you could use more concentration. Imagine what you could have accomplished, if you possessed better concentration.

Concentration is worth cultivation. All spiritual traditions talk about it. It is useful in many ways in our ordinary daily life, for studying or working, for meditation, developing psychic powers and for magic.

A work that requires physical strength, such as carrying heavy loads for example, develops physical strength. Yet, it is not as going daily to the gym and training in a systematic manner. It is the same with concentration. Reading, studying and trying to pay attention to what we do, develop some concentration ability, but practicing concentration exercises diligently each day is something else, it is like training in a gym.

Resistance to developing concentration

In order to develop this ability we have to train our minds. Most people shun concentration and do not even want to try. They think that concentration is strenuous and tiring, and that it involves exertion and tension, which are difficult and unpleasant.

One of the reasons for this belief is because most people did not like to go to school, when they were children. They preferred play to study. Teachers and parents expected them to study, do their homework and bring good grades. As children, they felt coerced and forced to do something they did not like to do. In this way, in the children's minds, study became associated with doing something against their will.

Studying needs concentration, and as children are often reminded that they are not concentrating enough, they develop a loathing for concentration. It becomes associated with coercion, lack of freedom, doing something they do not like and which is against their will. When they grow up, it is no wonder that their powers of concentration are weak, and there is no desire to strain mentally.

We acknowledge the fact that good concentration is a great asset, yet most of us do nothing to enhance it, mostly because we do not know how. Reading and thinking about the benefits of concentration and about the reasons why it should be cultivated can help us change our attitude toward it.

Concentration can be fun if approached in the right way. It should be practiced with joy, fun, optimism, and understanding of its great possibilities. It has to be approached in a positive manner and then success dawns.

The benefits of developing concentration

Sometimes you can find strong powers of concentration in yourself. When you are decisive and sincerely want to excel in your studies, pass an important exam, or solve a problem, the power of concentration becomes available to you. This kind of concentration is raised because of some need, or desire. Developing it in a systematic way, brings it under your control, and grants you the ability to use it easily, with no exertion whenever you need it.

Real and good concentration is developed gradually, through daily work, and with special exercises. It has to be approached in a reasonable and practical way.

Consider what the power of concentration can give you:

- Control of thoughts.
- Peace of mind.
- Self-confidence.
- Inner strength.
- Will power.
- The ability to focus your mind.
- Better memory.
- The ability to decide and carry on your decisions.

- Better functioning in daily life, whether at home or at work.
- The ability to study and comprehend more quickly.
- Stop being carried away with every passing thought.
- Freedom from needless and annoying thoughts.
- Think when you want to, about what you want to think.
- Inner happiness.
- Help in developing psychic abilities.
- More powerful and efficient creative visualization and guided imagination.
- True meditation.
- Spiritual Enlightenment.
- And much more...

It seems too good to be true? Develop your concentration and find out for yourself!

So what about beginning to develop concentration power today?

In part two of this article you will find some suggestions and exercises for developing and strengthening the concentration.

The Power of Concentration - Part Two

By Remez Sasson

Sharpening the needle of concentration needs practice as everything else in life. Do you go to the gym? If you do, how many times during the week and for how long? Do you study a foreign language? If you do, then how much time do you devote to it?

Concentration is not different: training is needed. Even ten minutes a day will do you good.

I am now going to give you some simple exercises to perform. Start with ten minutes each day, if you can manage fifteen minutes that is better. You have to understand that the mind does not like any discipline. It loves its freedom more than anything else, and will try to stand in your way whenever and however it can. It will cause you to forget to do the exercises, make you feel lazy, and tempt you to postpone the exercises. It will find many tricks to stop and disturb you, but you can and must be stronger.

Always remember that the choice is yours: to be a slave to the mind and its whims, or to be its master. It may be hard to accept the idea that the mind is only some kind of a machine and that you are not the mind. It is an instrument, which has its value if used correctly, but at the present, man is ruled by this instrument. You are not the mind and its thoughts; they are just some kind of power that you are using. By mental exercises it is possible to train the mind and master it. It should be put in its proper place, as a servant to you not as your boss and master.

Most people believe that the mind is themselves or part of them, and they believe erroneously, that controlling the mind means holding themselves back and denying freedom. They feel that it is not natural, that it is some sort of repression. These beliefs are wrong. What you are doing is putting the mind in its proper place. It is a power that is ruling your life, not always to your own good. The time has come for you to reclaim your birthright as a master of the mind.

The proof that we are not the mind comes with training. Accept it in theory and in time, as your control over your thoughts grows, you will see it as a fact. Remember, you are not the mind, and this is the reason that it is possible to control it. We are controlling some kind of power, not ourselves. Choose to be free. Real freedom is freedom from the obsession of thoughts. Why be a slave to the mind? Why obey its every whim? Why let it rule your life and make you say and do things you do not want to? Be free and strong, it is possible and it is worthwhile.

Preliminaries Before Performing Concentration Exercises

When starting to learn to concentrate you have to find a place where you can be alone and undisturbed. You can sit crossed legged on the floor if you can, or on a chair. Sit with spine erect. Take a few calm deep breaths and then relax your body. In your mind go through each muscle and part of the body and relax it.

I will now give you some exercises to practice. Start with the first exercise, and practice it daily, until you are able to do it easily and without thinking about anything else for at least five "clean" minutes. You have to be honest with yourself, and proceed to the next one only after you are convinced that the exercise is practiced with full concentration.

No timetable can be given, as this may be frustrating. If for example I tell you that an exercise has to be completed in a week, two things may happen. You may get disappointed if you cannot get the desired concentration within a week, or you may move on without practicing the exercise correctly. Practicing an exercise successfully is an individual matter. It may take days, weeks and sometimes even months.

Put your whole attention into the exercises. Do not think about anything else. Be careful not to fall asleep, daydream or think about other matters. The moment you find yourself thinking about something else, stop the exercise and start again. When you become proficient, lengthen the time, and if possible, include another session in the afternoon. Do not attempt too much at the start. You may think the exercises are too simple and easy and try to perform them all at once. Go slowly, do not overdo or tense your brain. Try to reach perfection.

If you find it too difficult, or thoughts distract you and make you think about other matters, don't despair. Everyone encounters difficulties along the way. The successful ones are those who go on and never give up. If you persist in spite of difficulties and disturbances, success will crown your efforts. Remember, even those with powerful concentration had to exercise.

It does not matter if your concentration is weak, it can be strengthened. You need not be some special person to be able to do that. But each will reach a different level of concentration. Some will have a stronger power, others not so strong. It all depends on how much time, energy and earnestness you put into the project. I repeat what I wrote earlier, even ten minutes a day will add to your power.

In time you will find out that you can concentrate anywhere, anytime, no matter what your circumstances are. Do you understand what does it mean? To be able to concentrate, think and function under the most trying circumstances, staying calm, relaxed and collected. The reward is worth the effort a thousand fold.

Now to the exercises. Some of them may be familiar to you. Some may seem too easy to perform. Some were taken from various sources and some created by me. When your concentration and knowledge about concentration increases you will be able to create new exercises by yourself.

For full benefit, it is advisable that you practice each exercise for one more week, after you are convinced that you are practicing it correctly and with full attention.

Concentration exercises

Exercise 1

Take a book and count the words in any one paragraph. Count them again to be sure that you have counted them correctly. Start with one paragraph and when it becomes easier, count the words in a whole page. Perform the counting mentally and only with your eyes, without pointing your finger at each word.

Exercise 2

Count backwards in your mind from one hundred to one.

Exercise 3

Count in your mind from one hundred to one, skipping each three numbers, that is 100, 97, 94, etc.

Exercise 4

Choose an inspiring word, or just a simple sound, and repeat it silently in your mind for five minutes. When your mind can concentrate more easily, try to reach ten minutes of uninterrupted concentration.

Exercise 5

Take a fruit, an apple for example, and look at it from all sides. Concentrate your attention on it and examine it from all sides. Devote the whole session to concentrating on it. Do not be carried away by irrelevant thoughts that arise. Stay with the apple. It could be any other fruit. Look at it and do not think about the shop where you bought it, about the way it is grown, its nutritive value etc, only about the object in front of you. Just look at it, see it, smell it and touch it.

Exercise 6

This is the same as exercise number 5, only that this time you visualize the fruit with your eyes closed. Start by performing again exercise number 5 for five minutes, and then do this one. Try to see, feel, taste, smell the fruit in your imagination. Try to see a clear and well defined image. If difficulties arise open your eyes, look at the fruit, close them again and continue the exercise.

Exercise 7

Take a small simple object such as a spoon, a fork, or a glass. Concentrate on one of these objects. Watch the object from all sides without any verbalization, that is, with no words in your mind. Just watch the object without thinking with words about it.

Exercise 8

After becoming proficient in the above exercises, you can come to this exercise. Draw a small geometrical figure, about three inches in size, such as a triangle, a rectangular or a circle, paint it with any color you wish, and concentrate on it. You should see only the figure, nothing else. Only the figure exists for you now, with no unrelated thoughts or any distractions. Try not to think with words during the exercise. Watch the figure in front of you and that's it. Try not to strain your eyes.

Exercise 9

The same as number 8, only this time visualize the figure with the eyes closed. As before, if you forget how the figure looks like, open your eyes for a few seconds and watch the figure and then close your eyes and continue with the exercise.

Exercise 10

The same as above in number 9 but the eyes open.

Exercise 11

Try for at least five minutes, to stay without thoughts. This exercise is to be attempted only after all the previous ones have been performed successfully. The previous exercises, if practiced correctly, will endow you with the ability to impose silence on your thoughts. In time it will become easier and easier.

The secret of success is constant practice. The more time you devote to the exercises the faster your success arrives. Go on gradually; ten minutes at the start and in time as you gain the ability to concentrate, give it more time. When you see that you are successful, you will begin to love the exercises, and in time they will become a habit. You will be able to concentrate your attention easily and effortlessly upon anything you want to concentrate on.

Are you jogging, exercising at the gym or studying a foreign language? How difficult it was in the start? How many times you wanted to quit? Yet, after a while you started to like what you were doing. It became a habit, needing no effort to perform. So it is with developing the power of concentration.

After some of time you will start to feel differently. It will be easier to concentrate. Your mind will be calm and relaxed and you will radiate peace into your surroundings. Things, circumstances and events that used to agitate and anger you, will not influence your inner calmness. You will experiment happiness, content and satisfaction, self-confidence and inner strength. You will be able to cope more easily and efficiently with the outer world.

You will feel a new form of consciousness growing in you, bringing you peace of mind. It may come every now and then for a brief moment, but in time it will grow and fill you completely. You will be able to make the mind work for you when you need its services, in a most efficient way. You will be able to silence it when its services are not needed.

I assure you, from personal experience, that the attitude to life and the reactions to events change after starting to practice concentration. It is some kind of automatic and gradual process. You come to know many things about the mind and how it functions, and you learn to deal with it efficiently.

Will Power and Self-Discipline

By Remez Sasson

Sometimes you wish to go for a walk, knowing how good it is for your health and how wonderful you feel afterwards, yet, you feel too lazy and prefer to watch TV instead. You may be aware of the fact that you need to change your eating habits or stop smoking, yet, you do not have the inner power and persistence to change these habits.

Does this sound familiar? How many times have you told yourself, "I wish I had will power"? How many times have you started some new activity and quitted after a while? We all have had experiences like these.

Everyone possesses some habits or addictions he wishes he could overcome, such as smoking, excessive eating, laziness, procrastination or lack of assertiveness. Developed will power and self-discipline bestow the inner strength to overcome any negative habit. They make a great difference in your life. They can make you a winner in whatever you do.

What are Will Power and Self Discipline?

Will power is the ability to control inner unnecessary and harmful impulses. It is the ability to overcome laziness and procrastination. It is the ability to arrive to a decision and follow it with perseverance until its successful accomplishment. It is the inner power that allows you to refuse to indulge in unnecessary, useless habits and grants you the strength to overcome inner resistances. It is one of the corner stones of success, spiritual and material.

The human being is full of inner unconscious, or partly conscious, impulses. People sometimes say or do things they later regret saying or doing. On many occasions people do not think before they talk or act.

Self-discipline is the companion of will power. They usually come together. Self discipline gives the stamina to persevere in whatever one does. It bestows the ability to withstand hardships and difficulties, whether physical, emotional or mental. It grants the ability to reject immediate satisfaction for something better.

By developing these powers it is possible to gradually become more and more aware of the inner subconscious impulses, and gain the ability to ignore them when they are not for our own good, without any effort. By developing will power and self-discipline we become powerful.

Will power and self-discipline help us to choose our behavior and reactions instead of being their slaves. Don't think that life will become dull and dry in this way. On the contrary, you will feel more powerful, in charge of yourself and your surrounding, and consequently much more happy and satisfied.

How many times have you felt too weak, lazy or shy to do something? You can gain inner strength and the ability to decide whether to act or react, or refuse to act or react in

any situation. Believe me, it is not difficult to develop will power and self-discipline. If you are serious and are willing to experiment, you will certainly succeed.

At the end of this article you will find some exercises and techniques to develop these abilities. You can perform these exercises anywhere, and at any time. Go slowly and gradually and your powers will increase. The desire and ambition to practice these exercise will develop and strengthen your self-discipline

There is a misconception in the public mind regarding will power. It is erroneously thought to be something strenuous and difficult, and that one has to exert and tense the body and mind when expressing it. It is a completely wrong concept. This is one of the reasons why people avoid using it, though they are conscious of its benefits. They acknowledge the fact that the employment of will power in their life and affairs will greatly help them, and that they need to strengthen it, yet they do nothing about it.

Will power gets stronger by holding back and not allowing the expression of unimportant, unnecessary and unhealthy thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions. If this saved energy is not allowed expression, it is stored inside you like a battery, and it becomes available at the time of need. By practicing the exercises you develop your powers the same way as someone who engages in bodybuilding builds his muscles. When you exercise your will power you strengthen your self-discipline and gain inner strength. The more you exercise, the stronger you become.

Developing Will Power and Self Discipline

One way to develop and improve this ability is to practice doing disagreeable things in your daily life. Your mind and feelings may oppose this action, nevertheless, do it. By doing something you do not like or are too lazy to do, you overcome your subconscious resistances, train your inner powers and gain strength. Muscles get stronger by resisting the power of the barbells. Inner strength is attained by overcoming inner resistance.

Here are some exercises:

- You are sitting in a bus or train and an old man or woman, or a pregnant lady walks in. Stand up and give up your seat even if you prefer to stay seated. Do this not just because it is polite, but because you are doing something that you are reluctant to do. In this way you are overcoming the resistance of your body, mind and feelings.

- There are dishes in the sink that need washing, and you postpone washing them for latter. Get up and wash them now. Do not let your laziness overcome you. When you know that in this way you are developing your will power, and if you are convinced of the importance of will power in your life, it will be easier for you to do whatever you have to do.

- You come home tired from work and sit in front of the T.V. because you feel too lazy and tired to go and wash yourself. Do not obey the desire to just sit, but go and have a shower

- You may know your body needs some physical exercise, but instead you keep on sitting doing nothing or watching a movie. Get up and walk, run or do some other physical exercise.

- Do you like your coffee with sugar? Then for a whole week decide to drink it without sugar. You like to drink three cups of coffee each day? For a week drink only two.

- Overcome your laziness and your habits. Convince yourself of the importance of what is to be done. Convince your mind that you become stronger when you do things, even when you are reluctant, too lazy or believe you are too tired to do.

- Sometimes, when you want to say something that is not important, decide not to say it.

- Don't read some unimportant gossip in the newspaper, even if you want to.

- You have a desire to eat something not too healthy. Refuse the desire.

- If you find yourself thinking unimportant, unnecessary, negative thoughts, try to develop lack of interest in them by persuading yourself of their futility.

Never say that you cannot follow the above exercises, because you certainly can. Be persistent no matter what. Think and rethink about the importance of performing the exercises and the inner power and strength they will give you. Believe me it helps. It helped me and it can help you.

Trying to attempt too many exercises immediately at the start may end in disappointment. It is better to start with small and not so important actions at first, and gradually increase the number and difficulty of the exercises. Practice will improve and increase your power, giving you a lot of satisfaction.

Remember, these exercises develop both will power and self-discipline, as they are strongly connected. Strengthening one strengthens the other.

Most of these exercises can be practiced anywhere, anytime. You do not have to devote special times for them. Believe me, they are very effective. Practicing them enables you to be strong and exercise will power and self-discipline in everything you do. This power becomes available whenever needed.

If you practice weight lifting, running or doing aerobics you strengthen your body. When you need to move something heavy, you have the strength for it. By studying French each day, you will be able to talk French when you travel to France. The same thing happens with will power and self-discipline. By strengthening them, they become available whenever they are needed.

The exercises should be practiced because of your decision to perform them, and because you realize that by doing them you will develop your will power and self-discipline.

One important thing to remember is not to interfere with your health or deny your body and its necessities. Deny what is not necessary or harmful and you will get stronger.

If you stop doing something in order to strengthen yourself and you find that it is easy, you can resume doing it, if it is not harmful. For example, you love orange juice, and in order to strengthen your will power you switch to apple juice and then find out that it does not matter to you. If it is so, you can switch back to orange juice if you like. You have proven to yourself that you are stronger than your subconscious impulses. Always use your reason and common sense so that you do no damage to yourself.

Advantages of Possessing Strong Will Power and Self Discipline

You need will power and self-discipline order to rule your thoughts and to be the boss of your mind. The stronger your will power and self discipline are, the more control you have over your thoughts, and consequently your powers of concentration get stronger.

When you are the master of your mind you enjoy inner peace and happiness. Outer events do not sway you, and circumstances have no power over your peace of mind. It may sound like a dream for you, but once you start on the way, you will prove to yourself that all the above is true.

They are essential for self growth, spiritual growth and meditation. They are the powers that change your habits, and are the key to any kind of success.

Will power and self discipline give you more control over your daily life, help you in the development of all the inner powers and are essential for a spiritual search. They keep you on the right track until you get what you are after.

If you practice the exercises presented here earnestly and persistently, you will go really far.

Serenity of Mind

Freedom from Thoughts - Peace of Mind

By Remez Sasson

We enjoy inner peace and feel happy and satisfied, when life flows smoothly and we have a good job, good relationships, good health and a good financial situation. We are at peace when there is nothing to worry about, no tension and no need to hurry.

Daily life it isn't always like this. There is always something that causes worry, tension or fear, and which does not let us feel peaceful and calm. Nevertheless, we can enjoy peace, regardless of the state of our outer circumstances. Peace of mind is an inner state, and is independent of outer conditions. Why wait for never, for circumstances to be "right"? Why let outside circumstances decide for us the state of our mind?

Inner peace is within reach of everyone. It is not dependent on outer conditions, richness or poorness, health or sickness, physical freedom or lack of it. Everyone possesses the potential to enjoy peace of mind.

Peace of mind seems to be in this world, but out of this world. It is experienced here and now, yet independent of outer circumstances. Inner calmness and serenity can be experienced even under the most trying circumstances. Of course some training is needed first.

Thoughts and Peace of Mind

Thoughts arise in us and we think them. We may choose to ignore them and experience real inner freedom, or we may choose to water them with the power of our attention and make them grow.

When you have to think, choose only positive, happy and uplifting thoughts. Think about and imagine only what you really and truly desire and that will come to pass. Always remember that life is shaped according to your thoughts.

When the mind is silent there is happiness inside and happiness outside. It is a great asset and advantage to be able to silence the mind when its services are not needed.

The attainment of serenity of mind, which is actually freedom from the compulsion of incessant thinking, is open for everyone, provided the proper training is undertaken. Just reading this article you will not bring you peace of mind. When you understand the value of inner peace, and you have a true desire to succeed, nothing can stand in your way. Though this is an inner power, the way to its attainment is not different from other tangible goals. Work and persistence are necessary.

Most people are enslaved by their thoughts. It does not occur to them that they can become free from their grasp. From the moment they wake up in the morning to the

moment they fall asleep at night, this chatter of the mind continues incessantly, giving no moment of rest. The habit of constantly thinking is very deeply ingrained in the human race. Nevertheless, this habit can be undone. The mind is a great and useful instrument, but it should not be allowed to rule our lives. We should be able to silence it when we want to.

To change or stop a habit, we have to act consciously and attentively in a different manner. Whatever new skill we develop, we have to work at it, until it turns into second nature and becomes easy to perform. The same is with mind control.

True control the mind is not just the ability to concentrate on one thought and disregard other thoughts. It is the ability to cleanse the mind completely and make it silent. Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great Indian sage, has said: "Mind is only a bundle of thoughts, stop thinking and show me the mind". When one is really free from thoughts he becomes free from the mind as both are one and the same thing. One comes to see and understand the illusiveness of the mind.

When the clouds hide the sun, it is still there, beyond the clouds. Our Essence, our inner Self, is always here. We only need to remove the sheets and covers that envelope it in order to experience peace and calmness. These sheets and covers are our thoughts, ideas, habits and beliefs. I do not mean to tell you that you have to stop using your mind. You need it in order carry on your life. I mean that it has to be under the control of the Self. It should be your servant to serve you right, and not your master.

Advice for Attaining Inner Serenity and Peace of Mind

You don't have to feel uncomfortable with words such as Self, Inner Self, Inner Essence, Universal Consciousness, etc. They may now seem to you meaningless words, but they are not. They symbolize something very real, not hazy concepts. Concentration and meditation make these words meaningful. Advancing on the spiritual path is not something hazy, imaginative and unpractical as some may imagine. By personal experience you will come to really know what I mean.

Everyone can learn a new language, but not everyone can reach the same level of expertise. Everyone can engage in bodybuilding, painting or writing, but each will reach a different level. It depends on the inner aptitude, the earnestness, and the time devoted to these activities. Yet, everyone will make some progress. So it is with training yourself to become free from the compulsion of incessant thinking and attain peace of mind.

Try to calm your mind when you feel agitated. Mentally, take a step back and watch your mind, as if looking at someone else's mind. This has the tendency to calm and relax it. Develop concentration power and meditate. All these actions calm the mind and make it serene.

Following the suggestions in these pages and using the techniques mentioned in this web site, will start you on a marvelous journey. Practice, read articles and books on the subject and persevere in your training. One day you may meet someone who may teach you personally, as the saying goes: "When the student is ready, the teacher appears".

Try to watch your thoughts during the day, as if they are not yours, without being sucked into them. Become conscious of the fact that you are watching your thoughts. Then this awareness of watching will increase.

You will have to remind yourself incessantly to practice watching your thoughts, as your mind will probably make you forget. Do not give up and you will succeed. If you practice as often as you can, you will be on the way to success. It may take some time, but the effort is more than worthwhile.

You can also increase your peace of mind by developing the power of concentration, by meditation, by physical exercise and by correct breathing.

Remember!

You are not your mind!

You are not your thoughts!

You are not your ideas!

You are not your beliefs!

They may be yours, but they are not you.

They are instruments that you use. Do not let them control you.

What remains after they are rejected, is you, the real "I".

You are the quiet impersonal feeling of being that remains after you dis-identify yourself from everything else. It is hard to explain this in words, but through appropriate training you will come to realize what true peace of mind is.

When thoughts cease, you still exist. There is no vacuum. When the emptiness of no thoughts is reached, you begin to feel your existence, your being. This emptiness is filled with something great, wonderful, powerful and sweet. You start living in Peace. You sail on the water of the calm mind.

This is Pure Existence.

When you realize this state you are free from thoughts.

Then you are really free.

In this state nothing can influence you. You stop acting instinctively on the prompt of each passing thought. You become a completely conscious being, alive, strong, beyond everything.

You stay in this world. Your life continues, but you are beyond.

True peace of mind is the gate to Enlightenment.

Think of serenity of mind as a feasible possibility. Calm your mind with concentration, meditation and affirmations, and start enjoying peace of mind.

Consciousness, Awareness and Being

By Remez Sasson

Watch your consciousness, the feeling and sensation of being aware and alive, and observe what you feel. I do not mean that you look at the contents of your mind. I mean becoming fully aware and conscious of the sensation of being alive and existing. Some ability of concentration is needed to perform this simple exercise, because the mind with its thoughts will probably try to stand in your way.

This consciousness is not the awareness of the body or of the emotions or thoughts, but it is an awareness of what is beyond, when all these are dropped. By strengthening this awareness you do not cease to be and lose your consciousness. You become more conscious, but in a different way.

What I have just said may sound strange or meaningless, but this is because you may have never thought about your consciousness or tried to be aware of it.

This consciousness is our inner being, and there is nothing mysterious or mystical about it. We experience it constantly, but never investigate or try to be consciously and intently aware of it. This is because the mind and the attention flow outside, and rarely inside.

You may ask: " Why do we need to be aware of this consciousness? We have lived our life, and we never thought about it before. Why now?"

We are this consciousness, and therefore we need to know about ourselves. If we own a car, don't we want to know, at least superficially, how to handle it better? If we own a television set, a mobile phone, or some other electrical appliance, don't we want to know how to use it efficiently, and understand, at least a little, how it works?

Most people do not utilize all the possibilities and functions of the appliances they have at home, because they do not know of these possibilities. Do you know and make use of everything your VCR or computer can do?

It is the same with consciousness. The more we know and understand it experimentally, the more we become conscious and aware of its power. We can then utilize its inherent potential and power. Calmness, peace of mind, freedom from worry, inner strength and happiness are some of the by-products of becoming conscious and aware of our consciousness, which is what we really are.

When watching a beautiful, breathtaking landscape, there are several moments or seconds, when we are so immersed and overwhelmed by the landscape that we cease to be aware of the body, feelings and thoughts. It is as if nothing else exists, but yet, we remain conscious. For a little while we become merged in some sort of silence.

A little while latter, our mind starts verbalizing about the landscape, and we again become aware of our feelings and thoughts. We return to our ordinary consciousness and awareness of our body and its sensations.

We did not lose consciousness during this experience. It was a happy and joyous one. Experiences like this are not rare. The above description may give you a hint of what it is to be without awareness of the body, feelings and thoughts, while being aware of our inner Being.

Most people are accustomed to regard themselves as one complete unit. The body, feelings, thoughts are looked on as one inseparable unit. They consider their beliefs, attitudes, name, gender, family and social and economic status as constituting themselves, as their essence.

All of these components are changeable and impermanent. Even the cells of the body change in time. Yet, the Higher Consciousness never changes. It is immutable. It holds everything else together like a string that holds a necklace of pearls. It is constant, but all the "things" attached to it or revolving around it always change.

When we reject every component as not our "I", the residue that remains is something, which cannot be described, only lived. It is an impersonal "I". It is Life, Light and Being. It cannot be the object of thought, because it is above and beyond thoughts and the mind. The moment we think about it, it becomes only an object of thought and stops being the real thing.

We can live, experience and be this "I", this "consciousness of I", but we cannot think about it, as it is not an outside object. This "I" is the real you. It is this consciousness we are speaking about.

Discussing this consciousness is just mental acrobatics, because this consciousness is beyond thoughts. It is fully experienced only when thoughts cease, whether unintentionally as in the above case of watching a landscape, or intentionally when special exercises are performed to enhance it.

By being completely aware and immersed in consciousness, thoughts cease to disturb; they may still come, but they are regarded as exterior. In order to experience this state, one has to really and deeply desire it and devote time to being aware of it. This may be at first during meditation and then, when more proficient, throughout the whole day until it becomes natural.

Strong powers of concentration are a great help. Reading spiritual literature, or coming in contact with people who are living in constant spiritual awareness are great aids. Your practice should be done in a relaxed and calm way, without thinking of the target or worrying too much about it.

You do not need to search for this Consciousness. It is here, and you are living in it all the time. You only forgot it. You are letting thoughts rule your life. The sky is always up there. If we do not see it, this is because of the clouds that cover it. The clouds of thoughts cover your Consciousness, but by removing them you become aware of it.

This Consciousness I am talking about, is not the everyday, ordinary awareness of our body, ego and personality. It is not the awareness of the world around us. It is a "Higher Consciousness" that stands beyond the ordinary one, and is responsible for it.

The ordinary consciousness is changeable and intermittent. At times we are aware of the outer world and at other times unaware or only partially aware. There are times of sleep and times of wakefulness. On the other hand this "Inner Consciousness" is always present. Everything takes part in it. It never ceases to be and is always present. It is the background of whatever happens in life. By being aware of it, we become more than human beings.

Developing the power of concentration, practicing meditation and trying to be aware of our Awareness, Consciousness, and Being, is the way to the golden key that opens the door of Enlightenment.