

Changing Habits at Will

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"Changing Habits at Will," "Changing Habits at Will."

To discuss this subject we should have some knowledge of just what habits are, and their power. If you know what a...the thing is, you have the knowledge of it, you can cope with the conditions that arise in connection with that particular thing. And so, in regard to habit, we should first know what habits are, and then wherein lies the power of habit. And I'm sure we all agree that it has power – habit has Great power.

Now habits, habits are, as you know, I'm sure, are automatic mental machines to eliminate the use of will in every action we perform. They are an economy of nature. If you don't believe that, you stop to think. Now, the next time that you start walking down [to] the church, or any place, [if] you have to think, and use your will to take the step, and every step you take, it's going to be quite a task, isn't it? So you see, habit, habits are automatic mental machines whereby you do not have to exercise free will every time you do a thing.

We can apply this to our everyday life, our everyday work. Habit saves us an awful lot. Think of making a bed and having to think of placing that sheet just right; using your will every little movement. But you do, and it's automatic. So habit is a very good thing in that respect. It saves us the exercise of free will, taking up all our time, and preventing us from doing many, many other things. So habit is just that. Now, habits can be good, or bad. If they're good, that's fine. But, if they're bad, they have just as much power when they're bad as they do when they're good, and it seems sometimes that if they have more power. That is, the bad habits have more power.

Now except for this habit, this law of habit, we would stay as little children. We'd remain as little children, thinking everything we did, every step we took, every action we perform; we'd have to think it out, and use our will to do it. But by habit, it becomes automatic, and it's a most wonderful thing. So when we walk, we just walk. When we do our daily duty, we just do it. When we drive the auto, we look around a little bit, and drive. Why? Because of habit. So habit is very essential. But one thing we must not forget is, that it can be used for good, or bad.

And habit, realize, is an automatic process. That, therein lies the danger. Now the power of habit is this, that because of its automatic nature, it causes us to do things we're accustomed to do. Now that, in that one thing is the power of habit, because it's automatic, and as. . .because it is automatic, we do the things we're accustomed to do. So when we have bad habits, we're accustomed to do them; it's automatic to do it. That. . .therein lies the power of habit. When we have good habits of meditation, Self-Realization, we do it. It's automatic, isn't it, after you know how. At first, I must admit, it is not automatic. You have to learn to do it.

And so the power of habit, realize, comes in this one phase of it being an automatic thing. Making us do what? The things we are accustomed to do, not perhaps the things we should do. Realize that.

Now we have an ordinary human being, they're doing those things, those things of which they are accustomed to do. Day-in, day-out, whether they're good or bad, because of the power of habit, and, if it is bad action, they keep doing it, because it's natural. That's the law. It's automatic, like walking. You don't have to think even. Master used to say, "Breakfast, lunch, and dinner; breakfast, lunch and dinner; do a little work; go home; sleep; breakfast, lunch, and dinner." There you have it.

Remember that next time you start out somewhere. Say, "Now, listen. Is this, is this what I want to do, or is it what I 'm accustomed to do?" And you'll find a lot of it is what you're accustomed to do. Then you have to – well, we'll come to that later. I mustn't get ahead of myself here, because it's a habit, it's a subject which doesn't offer too much field of explanation. Habit is habit, that's all – everybody knows it and does it. But we point out the good and the bad of habit.

Now, one thing I must also point out. The ordinary man performs his habit, does those things which he is accustomed to do. Now, a child of God does what? A child of God follows Jesus' words when he says, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven." "Seek first the kingdom of heaven." And so, his habit is to attain God contact – to form the habit of meditation. How can you seek God first unless you meditate? I don't think you can. Meditation means concentration on God. And so Jesus said, learn those things first.

And so, the child of God cultivates those habits, those meditative habits, which give him what? God contact. Then, he doesn't do the things, perhaps, he's accustomed to do. What does he do? The things he should do. Is that clear? To the worldly man, he does the things in an automatic way, following the worldly habit, because he's known nothing else since a little fellow. He's been brought up in the wheel

of society and social conditions where the habits are fixed - difficult to break through those. And so, he does that. He follows habits of a worldly nature.

Now the child of God does not do that. The child of God, he follows the words of Jesus. "Seek first the kingdom of heaven," or the words of the Master, "Make meditation a daily habit." "Seek first the kingdom of heaven." Therefore, he does that. He forms habits of meditation, attaining God contact, then he does not act automatically to do the things he's accustomed to do, but he acts to do the things he should do. So just realize that.

Now we come to the battle to know one other thing now. That what is the deepest ingrained habit we have? Did you ever stop to think? Some say, "I have no habit." I say, "Yes, you have, because you think you are that body." That's the deepest ingrained habit. The idea that we are this body – that's the deepest ingrained habit. Did you ever stop to think of it? Try to get out of it. Try to sit in meditation and expand your consciousness, then you'll know how deep it is; how deeply ingrained, rather, it is. So that's the deepest ingrained habit is the idea that we are this body. Patanjali said, "Clean out the mental cancer that you are the body." Why? Why? Why shouldn't I feel good and feel this body. Why? Because it keeps you in delusion, it keeps you in worldly consciousness.

And so, we must realize we are not this body. That's why we meditate. That's why we try; that's why we pray, "Father, get me out of this delusion that I am this limited body. I'm not this body. My consciousness is one with Thy Consciousness, and Thy Consciousness is Omniscient, because the Scriptures say so, and the Master has told me so, and all the Great saints say that." And so, this idea that we are the body is wrong, because we are not the body. It is the most deeply ingrained habit we have.

I was telling a man one time, I was enthused, and I was saying, "You're not this body at all, you just think you are." He was getting red in the face and so was I. And I said, "You are not this body, you're not this body at all, you're far Greater than that. When you meditate, and sleep, where are you? You're not this body."

And I went on, and on. Suddenly, he says to me – his face is puffed up – and he says, "Well," he says, "if I am not this body, who, who in the dickens am I?" And he meant it. "If I am not this body, who am I?" So then I had to quietly tell him – get him to try and meditate. He was an elderly fellow, and they don't take to meditation so well. But he did, and I knew him for a Great many years. He was a very good man, and we used to have some heated discussions. I was a little enthusiastic – so was he. If he wasn't the body, he wanted to know what he was. So I had to try and tell him in my way.

And so, that's the most deeply ingrained. The deepest ingrained habit is that we think we are this body. Patanjali said, get rid of that idea. And meditation, Self- Realization techniques, will help you to get rid of the idea that you are the body. And when you do that, instead of losing anything – you will lose something all right, but it doesn't amount to anything – you will lose it, but you will get the freedom you never knew existed, because it is this limited vehicle which keeps us tied to this realm of Cosmic Delusion, this realm of worldly consciousness.

Now we come to the battle of habit – the battle of habit. Remember, they're automatic. Now we have health and ill health. You know when you have good health, you've seen people, the habit is established, and they go right on and on in good health. The person who has bad health, the habit goes on and he gets worse, and worse, and worse without trying. Why? Because it's automatic; he's formed those habits. His karmic impulses have created in him those habits of ill health, or doing things which produce ill health, and it goes on automatically. So the worst of this thing habit, it works both ways. If it would work just on the good side, it'd be fine, but it works the other way.

And so, realize when you have good health, the natural outcome is through the law of habit, to keep on having better health. There are exceptions, and also when you have ill health it's mighty easy to get worse, as I'm sure you all realize.

Now the same with spirituality; you know some people, they have no trouble at all in being good, because the habit is established. And the good multiplies through the law of habit. Others try to be good, and everything works the other way, pulling them down through the law of habit. And so this habit works both ways.

Now these bad habits established in childhood must be considered. Bad habits encountered in childhood tend to become fixed. Bad habits of lack of discipline, lack of obedience, lack of consideration for others, lack of honesty – all those things – lack of uprightness. Those things are sometimes established in childhood, and they persist. They become fixed causing much trouble later on in life.

And then we also have the habit of society. Society runs on the wheels of habit. And you know how difficulty...difficult it is to break through those social habits, so to speak. The Master used to say, "When you walk on the side of the road with the rest of them, it's fine. But when you walk in the middle of the road, then you get the brickbats, and tomatoes, and all sorts of things." Why? Because you break the habit, you go against the habits of society. And so society, society runs on the wheels of established

habit. But we must realize this; we must break those habits. We have to change those bad habits. We have to replace them by good habits.

How to do it? Starve the bad habit. Replace those by habits of self-discipline, so that gradually the balance is on the side of good habit, away from the side of bad habit. And we can do this. And we should realize that unless we do this, the end result is nothing. There's nothing when we follow bad habits. In the end there's nothing, but worldly consciousness. There's nothing to look forward to. But, if we make up our minds, and instill habits of self-control, form good habits, meditative habits, in the end, what is there – freedom of the soul; freedom of the soul; realization of your Divinity. Realization of your Divinity, that you are a child of God. And so it is worthwhile. We must do this.

Another thing we should remember, that the world creates in you habit. But when the results of those bad habits come, the world will not be responsible for you. Did you ever stop to think of that? Society creates in...habits within us, the world creates habits, and when we carry them out and get into trouble, the world is not responsible. We are left to fight it out ourselves. And so we must never forget that. Sometimes it's easy to follow worldly habits. They come naturally. Everybody else is doing it. But when the result comes of those wrong actions, the world will not be responsible for your actions. You will be, and the world will not help you to overcome. That's the first thing.

Another thing we should remember is that not to feed these bad habits, but starve them out. Starve them out, replace them with habits that are good and lift us toward God. Feed, feed good habits by will. And what is the use of that will? To meditate, to create good habits whereby instead of being taken down into worldly consciousness, deeper, and deeper into this delusion of the Cosmic Dream, we're lifted into Reality, the Unity of God's Presence. And this comes by using our will to establish good meditative habits.

Now going on just a bit more – the law of gravity in habit; there's a law of gravity in habit, just the same as there is in matter. I guess habits are matter. They're a kind of fine matter, but they have, they have substance all right. You get engulfed in one, and you'll know it. So the law of gravity as pertaining to habits is this: that bad habits, or bad people, seek bad company. Isn't that so? Bad people seek bad company. Worldly people seek worldly company.

Now I've known, and you have known many worldly people; they're good people, they pay their bills, their fine people, but they don't have God contact, do they? They don't have that religious aspect – true

religious aspect. Now, if you mixed with those people, you'll gravitate to that level, because you will assume the habits which they have.

And finally, people of meditative habits, those who meditate, and come together, they draw one another, and lift each other up toward God. And so those who have meditative habits, if you mix with them, you become like them. That's why when you come here to Self-Realization, you meditate, as you're going to have a meditation before next Sunday service, you come there, mix with them, you become like them due to the law of gravity in habit. And so that's a wonderful thing. This law of gravity is an exact thing. You mix with bad you become like it through the law of habit. You mix with worldly people you become like them through the law of habit. You mix with Godly people and you become like them through the law of habit. These things cannot be escaped, because environment is stronger than will power. But establish the habit. Then it's much easier to cope with the situation.

Now we come to the part of the subject, why haven't you changed your habits at will? Why haven't you done it? Now stop and think. The Master was always expert in telling us what the matter was with us. So let us think just for a minute why haven't you changed your habits at will.

There are three main reasons. First is you haven't introspected. You haven't introspected; you haven't kept a mental diary so that you sit down, and you find out what you're doing wrong. How can you correct it, if you do not know what you're doing wrong? And so, the first important thing in understanding this law of habit and how to change your habits at will is to first introspect; keep a mental diary. And when you sit down and introspect, you will realize the things you have done that are wrong. Then you can change them, can't you? So the first thing in overcoming habits, or changing them at will, is to introspect. Introspection is the first thing.

The second thing is, as I have said, watch your company. You haven't changed your habits at will, because you haven't watched your company. You've stayed, perhaps, with worldly people. I don't think you've been with bad people, but you've been with those people who are not doing as Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven." They like things that are good, perhaps, but they don't make that the issue. They don't seek the kingdom of heaven first. And so, your company is another reason why you have not changed your habits at will. You have not seen that your company is more like Self-Realization company, who have the one ideal, is through the path, which the Master has given them to go back to God. And so you haven't watched your company. You've been neglectful of that.

And the last and Greatest thing is what? Will. Will. Even though you stay in the best of company, even though you introspect, and you don't use your will. Where you gonna get? Nowhere. Will is the third, and, perhaps, most important thing – and that will, must be steady. Not to come to Self-Realization meetings in the first, and get enthused, and then peter out. The will must be steady. That's why Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven." When you wake up in the morning, seek God first. When you start your daily work, take Him with you. But to do that requires will. Now it's much easier, if your company is good. It's much easier, if you have introspected, and know what you should avoid, and what you've done wrong. But in spite of those things, you've got to use will. Will is the Greatest thing. Will is the Greatest thing. And realize this, that your will, if you couple it to God's Will, is His Will, then you have sufficient power to overcome all things. Will is the third and most important thing in changing your habits at will.

Know what you want to do; avoid the company that keeps you from doing what you want to do; and finally do it, by the use of will. And realize, you think, "Well, I haven't got the strength." Of course you haven't, as long as you think so. But, if you realize you're not this body, but you're one with the Great Omniscience of God, His Great Consciousness, His Great Light, which is spread all over, and all the Power in the Universe comes from God, the Power which has created all the stars, and the suns, and luminaries, that's God's Power that's in you, if you will join, join with it, make it your own. And so, will is a very important thing in changing your habits.

That is, to use steady will. And that means, the will that does not peter out, the will that does not get discouraged. Why should you get discouraged when you know you're God's child? The will that does not peter out, the will that sticks until the thing is consummated. That's what. . .the kind of will that we must have, if we are going to change our habits as we'd like to have them changed.

And so that brings us to the final point, why you haven't changed your habits at will is, finally, this is the Greatest, because you haven't made the habit for God. Isn't that so? You can't get around it anyway. When you want one thing, and want it to the exclusion of everything else, you'll get it, if you use a little will. We haven't done that. We haven't made the habit for God. We've made plenty of other habits: to eat, and feed the family, and get the new automobile, and buy the house. But we have not made the habit for God, which is the most important thing, because we cannot move, and breathe, and have our being – we cannot have those near and dear to us – we cannot have anything, except it be for God. And don't you think we should realize that and not forget the Giver? We enjoy His gifts, we enjoy one another. We feel the Great Love of God in each other's hearts to a certain extent. Don't you think we should think of the Giver a little bit?

Don't you think the Giver of everything is worth 1/24th part of the day? One hour? Don't you think so? If we could just realize that, and give 1/24th of the day to God, form the habit for God, then you'd see things change. And, if you do that, if you realize that, if you form the habit for God, 1/24th part of the day even – if you do that, what's the result? Habits of Self-Realization – habits for God. What will be the result? God contact.

Now, it won't come by you sitting down and doing nothing. It won't come by my just hoping it. You've got to make the habit for God paramount in your life. Make that the reality, because He is the Reality. And you can't move, or I can't move, the heart will not beat; we can't move a muscle even, except God is in us. And those that we have who are so near and dear to us, we can't have them except God is in them, and in us. We don't realize it. Don't you think we need to give a little time for Him? That's why the Master said, "Isn't God worth 1/24th part of the day?" I think He is.

Realize God is the Sole Doer. He's the Sole Doer. Everything that happens – from the creation of universe upon universe, to the making of you and me, and every little single cell in this whole business is the product of God's Action. He is the Sole Doer. That's the thing we must realize. We must get away from personality worship. We must get away from that. That's of worldly consciousness – that's of the Cosmic Dream.

Now the Master brought that home to me very clearly one time. He was leaving Boston, long time ago. He'd been there three years, and I was bemoaning the fact that he was going to leave, because I thought the whole earth would fall apart. Why? Because there had been a little personality worship, don't you see? So he said to me – this woke me up, because I didn't need to be that way – he said, "Remember Doctor, never mind what happens to me." Imagine the Master saying that. It showed his humbleness – showed his Greatness before God. He said, "Never mind what happens to me. That Light which you see at the Christ Center is far Greater than I am. That's God Himself."

And so, then I realized that personality worship is not good, because God is the Sole Doer. And as one Great Indian saint has said, "When you realize that God is the Sole Doer, then you have salvation." And another thing he said, "If God's Power flows through you. . .if God allows His Power," that's the way it was put – "to flow through you. . .then you can help another soul. Otherwise not."

Now don't you think that means God is the Sole Doer? If He is the Sole Doer, our first and Greatest habit should be for Him, because everything we have we owe to Him. If we realize that, make that our sole habit, then we have God contact. Having God contact, we have sufficient power to overcome all our evil habits – all our bad habits – and the Greatest thing is, we will have freedom of our soul.