

Make Habit Serve You

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One point before we begin our talk this morning about the Wednesday evening meditation here. Please do not forget it. It is not enough just to come here Sunday morning and perhaps do a little meditation during the week, but come on your Wednesday night meditation service, because our Master has said that meditation is the missing link between religion and realization, between Soul and Spirit, between man and God. So we must have that extra meditation, so those of you who are apt to neglect a little bit, please brace up now. Start again and come to your Wednesday night meditation. If you knew what benefits you are derived from it through the Master's Grace in establishing this wonderful church, in which the Spirit of God is, you would not neglect it.

The subject this morning "Make Habit Serve You." It's a timely subject because most of us let the habits run us. "Make Habit Serve You."

Now our Master, Paramhansa Yogananda, the Founder of this Self-Realization Fellowship has these words to say about habits. "Habits," he described as "automatic mental machines installed to exercise economy in the use of willpower during the performance of action." It's an economy of nature. Otherwise, every time you walked you'd have to just use your will to figure out where the next step would come. It'd be quite a job walking, wouldn't it? But through the law of habit we walk right along and think nothing of it. And so, that's what habit is for. It is to help us, not only in worldly things, as walking and such things, but in other matters too.

And then in your everyday work, when you make that bed, you ladies who are present, you don't have to think how you throw the sheet up. You just do it. But if you had to think, now I gotta tuck that one right in there, this corner in here, you'd never get nothing else done. And so, habit is, it's for a definite purpose. And in driving, perhaps some of you noticed, you may wake up with a start, but you've driven several miles, you don't remember a thing. But it's good, but it was a subconscious habit there that was taking care of you. Otherwise you would have landed in the ditch or up against a pole.

So these habits are good things, if they are employed in the right way. And remember this thing, that except for habit we'd be as little children all the time,

we'd start to do something; we'd have to think it all out. Thank God for habits, which takes care of the automatic things of life. And speaking of walking, perhaps you noticed those who have Multiple Sclerosis. They have to think every time they take a step. So be very charitable toward them. They have to think practically every time to make that muscle move just in the right way. And so, habits are very important, especially, when they're used in the right way.

Now, I have just a reference here I'd like to read at this time from The Master Said, in which he says that a student once confided in him that he feared that he could not continue with the Spiritual path because of his bad habits, and they were so strong that it wore him out, wore him out fighting them. "I'm too caught up in mistakes to make any progress," he said sadly. So, you see, the habit can work the other way. Then the Master said, "Well, will you be able, better able to fight tomorrow than today? Why add today's mistakes to yesterday's? You have to turn to God sometime, so isn't it better to do it now? Just give yourself to Him and say, 'Lord, take care of me, naughty or good I am Thy child. Thou must take care of me. And if you keep on and don't stop trying and form the habit, then,' as the Master said, 'You will reach your goal, you will change.'" (*Sic*) Habits can change us, but we have to keep on. We cannot give up. We hafta make the habit of not giving up. Then we change. And he ends it by saying, "A saint is a sinner who never gave up." So let us be that.

Now, the power of habit, the power of habit is supreme in all of us. In the ordinary human being, he acts in an automatic way. He starts out, and through the power of habit, he, as the Master used to say, has breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and goes to work, and comes home, and goes to sleep. He's an automaton through habit. So, realize, that ordinarily we are victims of habit. And if those habits are of worldly consciousness, so is our action of worldly consciousness. But a child of God, a child of God acts in an independent way from the Presence of God within him. He is not subject to the environment, latent impulse, and habit of ordinary living. No. He has made contact with God, and from that contact with God, he acts independently as a child of God should. And as he creates greater and greater habit of God-contact, he becomes more one and one, one with God, becomes more one with God.

¹ The Master Said, Self-Realization Fellowship, 1952, Page 9, "A student once confided to the Master that he feared he could not continue on the spiritual path because his bad habits were so strong it wore him out fighting them. 'I'm too caught up in mistakes to make any progress,' he said sadly. And the Master said, 'Will you be better able to fight tomorrow than today? You have to turn to God some time, so isn't it better to do it now? Just give yourself to Him and say, 'Lord, naughty or good I am Thy child. Thou must take care of me.' If you keep on and don't stop trying you will change. A saint is a sinner who never gave up.'"

So, realize that, that you can use habit in an automatic way. You start out in the morning, and you perhaps think, "Well, now I'm gonna do just what I wanna do." But are you? No. Unless you're careful, you're going to follow the habits which you have laid up and automatically live that day. But on the other hand, if you make, as Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven,"² if you make that paramount in your life and when you wake up, contact God. Then He will guide you through independent action from the Soul. Not to be a creature of ordinary worldly habits, but to be a creature of the habit of knowing God. This is a very important point, this power of habit. It is supreme. But no matter if it is supreme, if we turn it to our benefit, it's the greatest thing we can do.

Now, about bad habits; I don't wanna say too much about those, those things. We all know about them. In the beginning, perhaps they, they give people who indulge in them a little temp, temporary happiness, but in the end, in the end, as the Master says, "it gives satiety, disgust, and unhappiness." And so, let us watch those habits which lead us into temptation. Somebody dropped this on the altar, which I'll read. It says, "Most of us don't need to be led into temptation. Most of us don't need to be led into temptation; we can find our own way." That's a very, very pointed remark. I'm glad that was laid here, fits right in. Bad habit, bad habit. So, if we yield to those bad habits, we must realize this: that we, what do we lose? We lose the opportunity to compare the better Spiritual joys of right living by succumbing to bad habits. Remember that one point. You're deprived from the ability to compare, or rather the chance to compare the better joys of living in God by following bad habits.

Now, about good habits; good habits, even although they appear less interesting in the beginning, and they do – you know how hard it was for you to cultivate those habits of meditation. There seemed to be nothing there but a blank, dark, black wall. And as you kept on, I know those of you who have kept on feel good now, because in the end it gives you everything, especially it gives you God-contact. Having Him, you have all things. So, bad habits, promising, perhaps little in the beginning...excuse me, good habits promising little in the beginning, in the end, give you, as our Master has said, "harmony, happiness, and well-being." Why? Cause they give you God. God is everything. In Him you find all-fulfillment, all Bliss, and Joy. And if you can once catch Him, so to speak, then no matter what the world does, or does to you, makes no difference,

² Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

because when God is with you, you have everything. Now, bad habits will keep you from knowing that. Good habits will sooner bring you to God-contact which gives you everything.

One more reference from some of the Master's writings – from The Master Said. The young man who contemplated entering the Spiritual path told the Master, "There are still so many things in the world that I enjoy, and yet I know I'll find only happiness in God, but still I think it'd be difficult for me to give up those pleasures." And so, the Master said this to him. "A little child thinks it's fun to play with mud pies, but when he begins to grow up, it doesn't satisfy him anymore. When you grow up spiritually, you will not miss the false pleasures of the world."³ Those are wonderful words from that Master's little book, The Master Said.

When you can compare the difference between making mud pies, so to speak, by following bad habits to the superior joys of God-contact, which come from cultivating good habits, then you'll see the difference, then you will never be satisfied with the mud pies, so to speak.

Now going on; just one or two more points then I'll be through – the law of gravity in habit. You can remember this point, because we're all familiar with the law of gravity – at least when we trip and fall we know gravity works. And so, the law of gravity means that every finite body has an attraction to pull. And so, this applies to people, this law of gravity. And if you'll remember this in your daily living, that there is the pull of certain types of people pulling you toward them, there's a pull of other types, and also, there's a pull of God. So, let us understand this pull of gravity, the law of gravity in habit. It is this: that if you mix with bad people, so to speak – I hope none of you do – but we'll say, if you mix with people who are taken up with worldly consciousness, you become like them, because they pull you into it. They pull your consciousness into that consciousness in which they are living. If you mix with even worldly people who are good people, still that's not enough because they are, sometimes, they are not truly religious. They pay their bills, they're good citizens, but that's not enough, because, because the First Commandment says "Thou shalt love God

³ Op. Cit. The Master Said, Page 69, "A young man who contemplated entering the spiritual path told the Master, "There are still so many things in the world that I enjoy, and yet I know that I'll find happiness only in God. I think it will be difficult for me to give up pleasures." And the Master said, "The little child thinks it's fun to play with mud pies, but when he begins to grow up it doesn't satisfy him any more. When you grow up spiritually you won't miss the false pleasures of the world."

with all thy strength and soul and might and heart.⁴ We must realize that worldly people, although good, are not the best for us. But on the other hand, if you take into account the law of gravity and habit, and mix with those people, saintly people, who are following God, like those in Self-Realization, who have seen the difference between orthodoxy and the Universality of Religion and are following that Universality behind their outward form of religion, if you mix with those people, you'll be drawn more and more to them and to God.

And so, this law of gravity and habit is very important. It is easy to remember that everything attracts other things. People attract other people. Mix with the right people who know God, or, or are making the effort to know God, and you will be drawn with them toward God.

Now, the last point, above all we must form the habit for God. This is the most important point. Form the habit for God. Isn't God worth, isn't He who gives you, your parents, your friends, everything you have, isn't He worth 1/24th of the day? We must form the habit for God, even He who is Life itself, you live and move and have your beings and enjoy things. Isn't the Giver worth a little of your time? At least one hour? But when you know Him a little better, when you feel His Presence a little better, you will not be satisfied with one hour. You'll want Him with you all the time. So, we must create within us the habit for God, because we will never be satisfied until we attain Him. We will never be satisfied. You may have a million dollars, and all the houses in the world, and all the wearing apparel, and everything, but until you feel yourself one with God, you will not be satisfied. And so, it is paramount that we create the habit for God.

Also, and the greatest point, is that if you create within yourselves the habit for God, what happens? Then you attain God-contact. Not in imagination, but in reality. You know God as the Holy Vibration, the Word with its Light, with its Sound, but greatest of all, with that Peace and Bliss in your heart which you feel. If you create the habit for God, you attain God-contact. And having God-contact, you can express Divinity, which is the goal of life. Making God first in your life, creating the habit for God, then you will express what you truly are a child of God.

⁴ Luke 20:27, "And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."