



A Sufi Message Center for Universal Oneness

Concentration, Contemplation, Meditation
Selected Teachings by Hazrat Inayat Khan
Edited and Presented by Murshida Nuria Stephanie Sabato

*Spiritual development by the help of contemplation and meditation,
the science of breath being the foundation of each.*

Meditation is reached through two preliminary stages. The first stage is concentration and the next is contemplation. After these two stages comes the third, which is meditation. What comes after that is realization.

Nothing in this world can be thoroughly accomplished without concentration, whether in one's business or profession, or in spiritual work. It is by the power of concentration alone that we can express ourselves fully.

Concentration is the beginning of meditation. Meditation is the end of concentration. Once concentration is fully acquired, it is easy for a person to meditate. Concentration has three aspects: reflecting, constructing, improvising.

1. The first kind of concentration is to reflect any object that one has placed before oneself.
2. The other kind is constructive concentration, visualizing, in other words making the mind produce something under the direction of the will.

All that one sees or think we sees in our own thought. We can produce out of our thought an angel or a devil. We can produce God out of our thought. Our thoughts have a great power; and when we come to the realization that everything comes from one source and that everything is developing towards one goal, we begin to see that the source and the goal are God. Then the world of variety is no longer variety to us but unified; it is one. It is UNITY!

3. The third aspect of creative concentration is improvising. For example, if a poet is asked to write a poem on a rosebud the poet begins to improvise. The poet brings into it a dewdrop and may produce the picture of dawn. They take a gentle stream of water and build a beautiful background to it.

Very often we think concentration means closing the eyes and sitting still. And when we do this, find our mind may wander.

When we become disturbed, this shows that our concentration is not good. If our concentration is not good, that shows that our will power has failed. The best way to protect oneself from disturbance is to develop the power of concentration, so that the will power develops naturally, and one is able to withstand all the disturbances which arise when one has to live in the midst of the crowd.

The best remedy for a wandering mind is natural concentration. That means not forcing our mind. We first let the mind work naturally, thinking of things it is inclined to think about. One should think about anything one loves, then one can learn to concentrate.

1– OBSERVATION

- a) An object is displayed in front of the audience, which is invited to observe the characteristics of that object, such as size, shape, color and ornamentation.
- b) One then makes clear the purpose of that object. For instance, if it is a candle, the purpose could be of various natures, such as to give light to a room, to create a prayerful atmosphere, or to inspire a romantic experience.
- c) One now explains what effect is produced upon oneself by the thought of that object. In the case of a candle, one might feel religiously inclined, or one might enjoy the quiet peace of candlelight, or the flame might represent a source of energy.

2 – VISUALIZATION

The presenter asks the audience to retrace in memory all details observed in the first step, thereby mentally reconstructing the object in every detail of size, shape, color, and ornamentation, while keeping in mind the purpose of that object and the specified effect to which it is wished to attune.

3 – CREATIVE CONCENTRATION

The audience is invited to alter the mental image of the object, changing the shape, color and details and multiplying the object in various numbers, as well as adding a complexity of scenery, all as suggested by the presenter during this guided concentration.

4 – PROJECTIVE CONCENTRATION

All that has been creatively elaborated in the third step is now mentally transported to some distant point, such as for instance one's own home, or the home of a person whom one treasures.

5 – DE-CONCENTRATION

One then gradually erases from the mental image, part by part, the details of form, shape and color of which the object is constituted.

- Dedication of Merit