

The title of this lesson may strike you as a paradox, for usually in our quest for Truth we prefer to start with positives, and this certainly implies that you have succumbed to negatives and that your forces have become scattered. It calls to mind the old story of the man who mounted his horse and rode off in all directions. However, we cannot deny that for us all at times things do go badly. Faced by pressures and tensions we become discouraged, we feel insecure, depressed, emotionally upset; as we say, we go to pieces. At such times we tend to feel sorry for ourselves, and we pray and hope that our burdens will be lifted from us; we may even daydream of escaping to a place such as far-off Tahiti where we can dwell at last in peace and rest. We are then sure to be told to pull ourselves together. How can this be done? The only possible way is for us to take hold of ourselves; no one else can do it for us.

A number of years ago, Cy Young, a famous baseball pitcher of his day, was asked how those "old timers" he had played with compared with more recent players. "Some of them are great, but they are sissies alongside of the way we were. We didn't pitch one game then vacation for four or five days; sometimes we would pitch for three days straight and if we got into trouble during a game, they didn't rush out to the mound and hold an executive conference over it or put another pitcher in; we just had to keep pitching and pitch our way out of it." Well, isn't this the way with us all in life? There are really no relief pitchers to carry on for us; we have to stay in and keep right on pitching until we are out of trouble. There will assuredly be setbacks and times of discouragement; in every attempt we make in life there must be the possibility of failure as well as of success.

To become too elated with success, or to become too discouraged with defeat, is indicative of inner problems. In every failure we should be buoyed up by the realization that nothing is ever a total loss; that there is always some gain, some acquired experience, some blessing. Likewise, in every success we should be sobered and humbled by the realization that without the action of forces greater than ourselves we could not have succeeded. The first thing in pulling ourselves together in time of trouble is the determination to stay right in there and pitch, to keep on, and to keep on keeping on. Man is a composite of faculties and emotions that must pull together if he is to know success and fulfillment.

In pulling ourselves together, a second thought might be to hold the realization that the real trouble is not in other people and conditions, but the real trouble is within the self, in one's thoughts, in one's perspective, one's state of consciousness. Shakespeare puts it, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in the stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." There is nothing the matter with the place we are in. It may not suit us, but we will never succeed in changing it. Whatever its nature, if we are out of harmony with it, it is because of our inner state of mind. We must know that our peace and stability, our good come from within ourselves, and that we must continually check up on ourselves in regard to this.

On the other hand, if when we find something good coming to us our state of mind turns dramatically toward happiness and ecstasy, then the key to potential discouragement is revealed, for then when some reverse occurs, some trouble, some prolonged difficulty, we will turn just as dramatically toward discouragement and depression. In other words, if things can make you happy, then the lack of them will make you unhappy. If you depend on outer things for encouragement, then changing outer conditions can likewise bring to you the reverse. Catch this idea, then cultivate an inner sense of stability that is a consciousness all its own, untouched by outer things. This inner consciousness will be your stabilizer, keeping you from becoming overly elated or deeply despairing.

There was a young girl who tragically lost her sight. In the depths of depression for a while, one day there came to her the inspiration to "think light."

Although she could no longer see light, she, she started to think light, and developed a tremendous mental vision. She found her mind working more clearly than ever before which helped to build a rewarding new life for herself. Think light yourself. Look for the good. See the bright intervals in the darkness of today. When you think dark, things seem hopeless; when you think light, things always display their potential for good, in any circumstances. The important key in pulling ourselves together is the realization that whatever has happened must be regarded as an inside job, and within ourselves we can always turn on the light, so to speak. We can always think light and perceive the bright intervals between the dark episodes.

The final suggestion for help in pulling ourselves together is evidenced in the parable of the Prodigal Son. "I will arise and go unto my father." Man is a spiritual being, a child of God. He is so created that he cannot possibly experience harmony of mind, body, or affairs so long as he is conscious of separation from God; so long as there is a disruption of the divine circuit within him. If we are not in line with the power of God, with the Infinite Intelligence, with the Creative Process, we fall away, weak, and we go to pieces, as they say, and feel frustrated and discouraged. But, when we really get in harmony with that inner presence, it is truly amazing what we become, how powerful, how capable.

Truly, this is speaking of an "inner peace that passeth all understanding." This was the great contribution of Jesus. "My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto thee." In the Semitic languages, the word used for "peace" is "shalom" meaning surrender. No other greeting could be more appropriate than a wholehearted and mutual surrender of mind and heart, for there can be no genuine peace between people unless there is non-resistance and love and understanding. We may at first think of a surrender as coming at the end of a struggle; however, the oriental concept of surrender is "that which comes first," or "that which should come first." It connotes a spiritual state which promotes true brotherhood.

Jesus's idea of peace was a surrender to God, a suggestion to enter into the inner chamber and close the door and simply let. This does not mean at all a passive acceptance of things. It is more what we might term the law of acceptance, which states that you will never experience anything in the world of your body or of your affairs that you have not previously accepted in one form or another in your mind and heart. It is a surrender of preconceived notions, fears, prejudices, worries, and a letting of the light of God fill your mind and heart. There are times in which we simply have to surrender and attune ourselves to the rhythm of the universe. Get in tune. Get back into the consciousness of your innate divinity, of your oneness with God.

In the Bhagavad-Gita of Hinduism we read, "The man of unstable mind hath no knowledge of self nor hath he the insight of meditation. To him who hath no inner vision there is no peace, and without peace, whence comes joy?" Here, inner peace refers to an inner awareness of one's own divinity, to a deep, inner sense that God is the eternal and ever available essence of life. A person who has no knowledge of his true self, who does not know that his roots run out into the infinite, has no stability, no sense of security or of well-being; thus he readily comes apart at the seams.

So we say, "Pull yourself together," first of all by keeping on keeping on, and second by knowing that the problem comes within you. Always retain a bright outlook; think light and manifest a light consciousness in all your ways. Finally, Peace! Shalom! Surrender to the sense of oneness, to your inner sense of wholeness, and thus achieve the sort of power, the "peace that passeth all understanding," that will enable you to do and to be all that innately is potentially yours. Yours will be a tremendous reward.