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VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

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MANAGING THE MIND

Mayan Revelation Number 249

A Peculiar Treasure

Wonder versus Curiosity

Servant or Master?

Mental Health

Exploration versus Wandering Exercise

Unused Minds

Beloved Perfectionist:

The next two lessons we have prepared for you go hand in hand. The title of this one is "Managing The Mind" and the following one will be entitled "Managing The Tongue".

The reason these two are so closely related is that it is our mind that directs what our tongue says. There is a vast difference between the brain and the mind. There are many people who confuse these two. They don't quite understand the difference. We have endeavored to explain that to you in this lesson and we feel you should derive much benefit from it and the one to follow, that you should be a better Member for having made a study of these two subjects.

It is our purpose always, of course, to increase your store of knowledge and bring greater stature to your character and your way of life. Also, these lessons very often act as a reminder of certain Truths we already know but are inclined to forget as the weeks, months and years go by. We "backslide", so to speak, and these studies act as a refresher course, which is important for you who have come a long way in your studies. You have evolved to the higher degrees and are much further advanced than some of your fellow Companions along the Path.

In taking up this lesson, "Managing The Mind", think deeply on it. Your Teacher believes that the mind is very much like the soil on a farm, which will soon be exhausted and produce nothing unless it is continuously fertilized and enriched. And, as the soil on the farm gains its strength from being fertilized and enriched, the mind is often enriched by experience and certainly by meditation. It remains active through exercise and use, and one of the great blessings of an active mind when it is in good healthy condition, is that it not only keeps itself busy, but often is able to furnish employment for many others.

Along these same lines, I would like to say that it has never seemed to me to be good for the minds of those who "retire" too early in life, because the

failure of the mind in old age is not so much from natural decay from the years as it is from disuse, very much as a muscle becomes flabby when it is not used, or machinery completely deteriorates when it is not used. That is why I say that many minds are put on the shelf in retirement that should be at their best and should be used. But, as the result of not needing to use them after retirement, they slowly become less active and less productive, which to me has always been a sad situation. With some, of course, retirement is a blessing, but with others it seems to me to be a great waste.

There is an old saying, "Few minds wear out; most of them rust out," and I believe that completely. This is the reason it has also been said, "When you want a job done, go to the busy man". This is because the busy man is using his mind constantly and the more things he has to do, the more things he can do; the more he is able to remember to do, the better his memory serves him.

We talk much of keeping the body healthy, but not so much is said of the importance of keeping the mind in a healthful condition. Mental anguish has driven thousands of people to suicide - not so the anguish of the body. As a matter of fact, the health of the mind is so much more important to our happiness than the health of the body, for very often the health of the mind controls the physical health. Many illnesses of the body are caused by wrong thinking. Both the health of the mind and the health of the body deserve much more attention than either of them receive - and you, as a Member, know that all through your studies on the Mayan Pathway, we have laid great stress on this.

Your mind can often make you wretched or happy, it can make you rich or poor, healthy or ill, all depending on how you use it. Not enough can be said of the importance of learning to manage your mind.

I believe one of the greatest things that The Mayan Order has to give to its students - and I base this statement I am going to make on many years of experience - is that our teachings, our literature, and our letters to our Members have taught many to use and manage their minds, where otherwise many activities of the mind that now manifest themselves would have remained dormant. I also base this on comparison of the Member who first started on The Mayan Path with his methods of thinking today.

Never forget the Truths we have expressed in this lesson and those that will be expressed in the lesson to come, "Managing The Tongue". What a great gift is the blessing of a good, sound, healthy mind. Keep this thought as you make the petition that follows.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for the wonderful gift of mentality by means of which I am not left to grope my way in the dark. Help me to keep my light burning and walk by it as through it Thou doest illuminate my way. Amen.



A PECULIAR TREASURE

The mind is a peculiar treasure. Among the marvelous items of our equipment for living, it is the most marvelous because it is a direct connecting link between matter and spirit. It may be called the inner lamp of our lives, enabling us to move among things both inner and outer with precision and purpose. Or it may be called the intelligence department of our lives, interpreting for us the signs and portents we dare not fail to understand.

To begin with, we must not confuse the mind with the brain. They are not identical. The brain is mortal - the mind is immortal. The brain is the instrument - the mind is the operator. The brain reacts - the mind directs. The brain receives stimuli - the mind interprets them. The brain perceives the part of the earth around it - the mind inhabits the world and looks out on the universe.

That last sentence is a great statement, but a study of our thought lives reveals that it is so. The brain can stimulate the eye to see a very limited distance at one given moment. The mind can think all the way backward through things past, or forward into things to come. It can travel instantly to the farthest star, into or through any substance, and into things unknown as well as known.

The mind is the interpreter of perception and experience. It tells us that resistance is substance, that ether waves are colors, and that atmospheric vibrations are sounds; and it goes into all the varieties of each. A little vibration is reported by a nerve to a brain center. The brain announces the color, but the mind interprets its nature and meaning for us. Yes, the difference between them is very great.

Those who do not take care of the mind and use it well must not appreciate its worth and the wonder of possessing it. How amazing it is that such a thing as the mind can be, and that each of us is given one of these priceless instruments as his own. Science has developed some things with which to supplement it and aid us in using it, but to have developed such an instrument itself would be the farthest thing from any human skill.

The mind has three great functions, at each of which we shall glance here and there. They are, first, to help us to live intelligently; second, to understand the meanings of the known; and, third, to search for the secrets of the unknown. That is an imposing program. Many people have done very well at some part of it, and its possibilities are freely open to any of us, for we are already implemented.

We should give thanks every day for our minds, and we should prove that gratitude by taking good care of them and making good use of them. They contain the necessary insight into maximum activity, production, and use, in all the phases of human living.

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SERVANT OR MASTER?

It has been said that a good servant often makes a bad master; and the

better the servant, the worse master he makes. This is true in many ways, and one of them is in the instance of the mind. As a servant, water maintains life; but as a master, it destroys it. As a servant, fire keeps us warm; but as master, it destroys our property and our lives. You can go on down all the list and the same principle holds. We must master things or they will master us, and often not for good.

One of the first and most important things we have to decide is - which the mind is going to be, a master or a servant. This cannot be done too soon, too wisely, or too well. The earlier in life and the more definitely it is done, the more profitable a servant the mind will be. We have to master the mind as we have to master ourselves by our wills; and, paradoxical as it may seem, we have to master even our wills by the power of will. To will the right things under the guidance of a controlled mind - that is the secret.

Of course, we have to recognize the authority of the mind. For instance, a lamp shows us our way about, or a flashlight shows us the way to go in the darkness; but we have to manage the lamp or the flashlight to keep them in order and working properly. The mind takes the lead as we move or operate, but it can be so mismanaged that it will be weak or out of order and not serve us well. Many of the teachers in Greece and Rome who taught the young their letters and their conduct were slaves themselves.

In the use of the mind, we have to strike a balance between freedom and restraint. For instance, there are certain principles a good thinker must set up to control his thinking and which he will not allow his thinking to violate. To declare the mind absolutely free to think anything it pleases leads to anarchy and shipwreck. For instance, a man may well decree that his thinking must not violate his loyalty to home, family, and country; nor to the established principles of truth as he understands them and comes to understand them; nor to such attitudes as justice and mercy; and so on. The mind needs such restraints.

The mind needs to move along paths of inquiry at times, but its user needs to see to it that this inquiry is worthwhile and that its accepted results are positive and constructive. A good rule to follow is that when our conclusions begin to be destructive, they are error instead of truth. Our minds are created in the image of the Divine Mind, and the Divine Mind is constructive. All the things in the universe, including ourselves, are energized thoughts. We need to energize our thoughts and make sure they are influences for good.

The mind is a headlight, illuminating the road. It is a probe, searching out hidden facts and secrets. It is a microscope, examining the infinitely small. It is a telescope, searching out things infinitely vast and far. It is many more things, all of them searchings for knowledge and understanding of life and its environment. It will do for us what we want done if we direct it, and that direction is not tyranny.

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EXPLORATION VERSUS WANDERING

We have tried to make it plain that the mind is at its best as a servant

and not as a master. We now proceed to try to make it clear that it is of true value and importance as an explorer and not as a wanderer. Like a railway train, an airplane, or an ocean liner, the mind has to have direction even in unknown territory. Like any other explorer, it must at least have a sense of scope, purpose, and direction. The wandering mind goes in circles. The exploring mind pushes ahead. This is definitely a phase of the management of the mind. Allowing it to wander is non-management of it.

The mind is like a balloon or a drifting feather. It naturally wanders with the strongest thrust or the line of least resistance. This happens when it has weak direction or none, and its wandering course leads to anything or nothing, practically never to anything of importance or value. Thinking must at least be impelled by some idea of what it is seeking, whether it expects to find it or not. It may come upon unexpected values even when searching for something else, but the wandering mind comes upon nothing, nor would it know it if it should.

Letting the mind drift aimlessly is not only profitless, but it is not good for the mind itself. It is weakening, and develops kindred bad mental habits. It does not carry impact and leads to flabbiness just like aimless muscular movements. Development on the part of either is the result of a well-planned program of use. Revery and all forms of mind wandering tends away from this. The mind should be kept doing something, and not merely drifting around it.

The world of things and the world of truth are alike, made for exploration and investigation. They furnish vast fields for the exercise of the mind. It can work in anything from its own experience to the heights of probability or possibility. There are truth and value everywhere it can reach. There is a mistaken idea that truth is to reverence and not to explore, but the opposite is the case, especially that part of it which involves human progress and welfare or spiritual development.

Our environment, our work - even ourselves - all have many possibilities for study and promotion. We need to know ourselves much better than most of us do, and many who think they know themselves well are more self-satisfied than the facts justify. But a part of knowing ourselves well is a large measure of self-knowledge on the part of the mind itself. Of late, there has been increased effort on the part of the mind to study and understand itself, and it is a good tendency.

Everything in the universe is related to every other thing. Roger Bacon figured this out centuries ago, and it was given increased emphasis and attention by Doctor Einstein shortly before his death. When we examine even the things with which we are familiar, we open many roads, all of which lead to some part of the great Unity. This is also true when the mind looks within itself or any part of the life to which it belongs.

The great and small benefactors of the race have all had a common cause - instead of letting their minds scatter hither and yon, they centered them on something within man or exteriorly related to him; and their results are the goals they attained.



WONDER VERSUS CURIOSITY

Some minds are passive and content merely to be vaguely conscious of what passes before them, not wondering or caring about its nature or meaning. They are worse than asleep. They are conscious, and that is about all. They might react to a sudden flash of light or a nerve pain, but anything constructive is out of their realm. There is not much that needs to be said about them, except to call attention to their existence. Of course they can waken, but they seldom do.

So, from this point on, we are referring to the active mind, the mind that is alert and awake. As a rule, its activating force is Wonder, and Wonder is a mental reaching forward, upward, and downward - at times even backward where there are things not yet sufficiently considered. It wants to know both about new things and more about old things. It finds its field anywhere and everywhere, for there is nothing that is not wonderful.

We must notice that there is a false and failing brand of Wonder that is also investigative, but it hardly ever investigates anything worth-while or makes anything of what it discovers, which is little. It deals mostly with the unimportant, with an unworthy moment, and with no intention of accomplishing anything except temporarily to satisfy its own insatiable appetite. We call it curiosity. It is a tickling of the appetite for sensation.

All the really important discoveries have been of things that lay at the end or along the trail of Wonder. Wonder pioneers and opens up new fields of possibility. It appropriates what it finds, adapts it, and dedicates it to mankind. The heart of every city, and the value of every improved way of living or doing things, was once pioneer territory. Wonder discovered it, while curiosity only gossiped about it.

We must always remember, however, that all this applies not only to the greatest things we do, but also to the humblest. Some of the most important discoveries and improvements in living have been found in the most ordinary materials and processes. Gold and diamonds were both found in common dirt. Most of the great cures for disease were found while working with the most ordinary plants or minerals. The detached shirt collar was contrived by a housewife in Troy, New York, who had grown tired of ironing collars attached to shirts. The values of this principle are available to all.

The way of Wonder is the way of the wonderful, and the way of the wonderful is the way of Wonder. But what is not wonderful, from the fixed star to the grain of dust? We do not have to set up a laboratory - we have one, and it is as large as the widest area we can travel.

"I wonder" - that two word sentence that links the wonderful and each of us together, is the starting point on that trail of adventure at the other end of which lies the amazing discovery and experience that gives our lives their meaning and which constitutes at least a large part of our missions in the world.



MENTAL HEALTH

This section of the lesson is not about insanity or weak-mindedness. It is about something that can happen to any of us and does happen to many of us, something that rights itself but that can be prevented by right attitudes and use of the mind. It is the effect on our moods, viewpoints, and ways of thinking, that can be caused or encouraged by things going wrong and our failure to keep our mental processes adjusted to meet them well and effectively, sometimes even by failing to maintain good physical health.

The mind, like any organ, tool, or machine, must be kept in good working order and condition. Health of mind encourages health of body, and health of body encourages health of mind. That is the basis for the old Greek maxim - "a sound mind in a sound body". The mind has to use the body, especially the brain, in its work, and if either is not up to par it tends to hinder the other.

This means not only that a healthy condition of body and attitude of mind are necessary day by day, but that the mind requires basic care too, just as the body does. Where this is provided day by day, occasional difficulties are few and unlikely. The mind is at least as subject to the results of misuse and abuse as any function or power of the body. Have you not noticed the effect on its accuracy and dependability in times of worry, despondency, or high emotional conditions of any kind? Have you not noticed the effect on your work and relationships of wrong viewpoints, spiteful feeling, jumping to conclusions, and the like?

But now let us turn to the positive side for a little while. We have said that the condition of the body and the mind react on each other. Now let us note two reasons why a healthy body helps to keep the mental processes normal. One is that a healthy body, including a healthy brain, gives the mind a good instrument to work with. The other is that it helps by relieving the mind of the interference of pain, dullness, or ineffectiveness of any kind, and it can work unhindered and at its best.

There are two requirements for both health of body and of mind that are the same, each in its way. One of them is good and sufficient nourishment. Have you considered what you feed your mind in both quality and quantity just as you consider the food you provide for your body? You know, of course, of what that food consists - a good thought life, good reading, the use of good sources of information, and the like.

The other is adequate and effective exercise. The mind is to use, just as the body is; and its use must be as well planned and carried out. The best and strongest minds are invariably the ones that are kept doing good work. This will be given more adequate attention in the next section.

Healthy attitudes and viewpoints are necessary - such as calmness, poise, adaptability, high thinking, believing the best, and the like. We need to keep

our minds centered on what is worthwhile, to remember that mental hygiene requires that they be kept clean, and to bear in mind whatever real nobility one has is in his thought life.

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EXERCISE

We have already said that the mind requires effective exercise, just as the body does. We now proceed to lay further emphasis on this important fact. We all know how necessary use is to a muscle, and how it grows strong in use and flabby in non-use. That is exactly what happens to the mind in the same conditions. It is kept capable of lifting weights and being deft and accurate by being called upon to do these things regularly. It needs practice in thinking, knowing, reasoning, and problem solving, if it is to be kept ready for use.

We find this everywhere in life and nature. Non-use not only shortens the life of a machine, but makes it ineffective while it lasts, by rust, corrosion, and general decline.

In the case of the mind especially, its regular use has not only the value of the exercise itself but also that of the practice it gets in the process of use. Just as in preparation for an athletic game, or anything requiring strength, skill, and precision, the mind also gains in these same qualities and powers.

There is a strange and costly lethargy that seizes minds and makes them unproductive by keeping them unwilling to think. Of course they may muse and indulge in revery, but that is not what we mean by thinking. We mean setting one's self to the task of learning something, or thinking a problem through, or developing a plan for something worthwhile. This reluctance to think often prevents some very valuable use of the mind, and we need to overcome it. It is expensive both to us and to others.

"Put your mind to it", is a maxim that has guided our hands, feet, and various abilities in about everything they do expertly. Those who go listlessly about things do not realize how much they are missing, in satisfaction and success, that could as well be theirs if they began taking a real interest in what they do and pride in doing it as well as they can. Slipshod work is more often than not the result of someone's having gone about it without putting his mind to it.

Long ago, the German people did a logical thing when they named their schools Gymnasia. That is exactly what a school is, though the gymnastics are mental. The purpose is the development of strength and skill, just as it is in swinging Indian Clubs or doing exercises on the German Horse or Parallel Bars. In school textbooks, we always find lists of mental activities called exercises. But we are not all in school, and have to take our mental exercises in the regular processes of life. There is nothing discouraging in that, for that is where most learning is done and most mental ability attained.

We are not saying, or even implying here, that anyone should keep his mind at work all the time. It becomes fatigued, and continued use at such a time is

not good for it. It requires periods of rest, and the best rest for it is sleep. Yet it should no more rest all the time than it should work without pausing. Resting is a skill within itself. Learn how to make it count for the most.

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UNUSED MINDS

In closing this lesson, let us notice one phase of the matter under discussion that is both pitiful and promising - pitiful because it is a bad condition, and promising because it could be remedied. It is the fact that everywhere there are so many potentially fine minds that, like unsharpened tools, remain undeveloped and unused for the important parts they are capable of playing in the life of the world. The fact that a mind has never been given a chance need not at all mean that it is inferior and does not deserve one. Many fine minds are overlooked because they lie dormant and do not appear so.

No one should discount the quality of his mind, or those of his children, or those of his neighbors, unless efforts have been made to develop them and they have not responded, which seldom happens. No one knows what a mind is or can do until it has been given cultivation and an opportunity. A mind should not be discounted on account of its heredity, its environment, or anything else but proven inferiority after proper efforts at development.

Many of the finest minds the world has ever known have belonged to people who lived in obscurity and who ventured out into the world for training and testing against the expectations of families and neighbors, many of which are too quick with negative judgments for which there are no true reasons. The most ridiculous of all reasons for assuming that someone's mind is inferior, is poverty. It has been the very spur that has caused many to rescue themselves from oblivion and prove their abilities. A second standard mistake is to assume that it is ever too late to learn.

An uncultivated and unused mind is like a fallow field grown up with weeds and briars. Such a field, mental or agricultural, is pitiful for two reasons. One is what it is, and the other is what it might have been. The only real reason for its condition is lack of effort. Every field, like every mind, is good for something.

The first thing to do with a neglected mind is to let in the light. Inform it. Give it food on which to thrive, grow, and work. Such a mind is like a white, weak, twisted plant trying to live and grow under a board where no sunshine ever comes. Such a plant can be saved to strength and usefulness - if it is not left under the board too long. Minds can be fed anywhere. Some of the finest ones have developed where the schools were not of the best, and somewhere there were none.

The second thing to do with a mind that has no opportunities or has not responded to those it has, is to train its growing strength in every possible way

for maximum usefulness and its consequent satisfaction and sense of usefulness in the world. No one can live much of a life without self-respect, and this is one of the best means to self-respect ever known.

The third thing to do for such a mind is to give it opportunity to do what it can do and express whatever ability or genius it has, which may be considerable. Never let it think it has to be of a given age or condition, or that it must be in a given place under given circumstances. The path to improvement for any living person starts right where he is.

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AFFIRMATION

My mind is one of God's precious gifts to me.
I honor the gift and the Giver by trying to prepare it for usefulness, and using that preparation in any way I can.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.

