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VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

THE MAYANS
SAN ANTONIO,
TEXAS

Degree 10

Number 290

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YOU CAN TRIUMPH

A Series of Six Lessons Devoted to:

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| I. TRIUMPH OVER ANXIETY | IV. TRIUMPH OVER GUILT |
| II. TRIUMPH OVER FATIGUE | V. TRIUMPH OVER LONELINESS |
| III. TRIUMPH OVER SELF-PITY | VI. TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY |



LESSON IV.

Mayan Revelation Number 290

TRIUMPH OVER GUILT

Feelings of Guilt Will Come

Guilt Fosters Nervousness

Confession Brings Release

Start Over Again

Accept God's Forgiveness, Peace, and Power

Beloved Perfectioner:

We now come to the Fourth Lesson in the Series, YOU CAN TRIUMPH. The subject of Guilt is of interest to everyone who is seeking for self-mastery. Listen to the words of John:

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

"If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -- (I John 1: 8,9).

As we strive to achieve the triumphant life our Heavenly Father intends for us, we must confess our shortcomings and accept Divine Forgiveness. Then we are prepared to climb to new spiritual heights.

Those who are endeavoring to live upright lives are inclined to apply the word SIN to the misdeeds of others. This is due largely to our failure to understand that SIN is more than dishonesty, immorality, and other gross transgressions. Modern psychology has brought to light the innate drives within all human beings. This has encouraged a widespread tendency to excuse much behavior that is unworthy of children of God.

SIN includes any failure to measure up to our best. It is contentment with second-rate achievements. It is neglect of Truth and indifference to Beauty. It is wasting time in futile endeavor. It is seeking personal advantage at the expense of others.

When you are sensitive to the call to live as a son or daughter of God, you are filled with remorse whenever you fall short of the ideal implied in the title "Perfector". Consciousness of guilt, however, need not be morbid and unhealthy. It should lead to penitence and to the acceptance of God's forgiveness. Then you are prepared for the challenge to live more, and ever more, nobly.

This Lesson will help you not only to become increasingly aware of the high mark that is your aim as an advanced student of Mayanry, but will help you to see how you can use any sense of guilt as a steppingstone to a higher level of living.

Join me in the prayer:

PRAYER

Father, forgive us for so often deceiving ourselves and substituting our personal desires for Thy holy purposes. Make us sensitive to our failures and willing to ask for Thy forgiveness. Take away every trace of false pride or morbid remorse. Grant us tranquility of mind and peace of heart, now and always. Amen.

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FEELINGS OF GUILT WILL COME

Recall the occasions in your life when you have been tortured by the knowledge that you did what was wrong. Perhaps it was because you were unkind, or because you took something belonging to another. Perhaps it was because you hurt someone you loved, or because you failed to say the word that would have eased a friend's distress. Possibly it was because you felt an inner prompting to be kind to some stranger, or to be generous to one of your competitors, and you failed to respond to the voice within.

I have never known a person who could lie, or cheat, or commit adultery, without suffering from guilt. The mental agony that follows wrongdoing far

outweighs any momentary satisfaction that may have been received. A person can try to forget the evil thing he has done, but it will not be erased from his mind. He is in the situation of Lady Macbeth who, after committing murder, kept wringing her hands and crying, "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" but still found herself unable to think of anything except the taint of blood that "all the perfumes of Arabia" could not cover up.

The torture that comes from a sense of guilt is experienced by some who have never committed grievous sins. People can be haunted by remorse when they have made only trifling mistakes. Men and women who are deeply religious can be pushed into the dark caverns of despair by the knowledge that their acts, or their attitudes, are un-Christian. They can feel guilty when they believe that their innermost thoughts are too low to bear scrutiny.

The more sensitive we are to eternal values, the more distressed we become when we see that we have failed to behave honorably. Our sins are frequently those of omission, rather than those of commission. We can be troubled by our neglect to help someone whose life would have been brightened by the kindness we felt prompted to do, but never did. We can experience a gnawing discontent because we spend so much time and thought on the unpleasant and the trivial, neglecting opportunities to do that which is worthwhile, and seldom centering our attention upon subjects that have real value.

You may possibly know the agony of a guilty conscience because you have done something despicable. But if you earnestly desire to live a perfect life, you will surely know anguish whenever you speak impatiently, act thoughtlessly, or fail to respond to another's need, for then you realize that you have fallen short of the standards you have set for yourself. Whatever causes you remorse, it is of utmost importance that you learn how to triumph over guilt, instead of letting it obsess your mind and lower your efficiency.



GUILT FOSTERS NERVOUSNESS

Don't fall into the habit of accusing yourself of doing that which is evil when you have only blundered, or made some trifling mistake. If you are endowed with a sensitive mind and heart, naturally you are sorry when you have failed to be generous, considerate, and kind; but do not continually berate yourself for small deviations from perfection. Never carry your self-chastisement to an extent that is unreasonable.

This may sound like a plea for you to do what is easiest, but that is not what is intended. No, here is a summons for you to make a supreme effort to resist the temptation to continually upbraid yourself for minor oversights and transgressions. This would foster nervousness and would make you less able to think rationally. Do your best; and then refuse to dwell upon slips you have made.

I think of a young man who said, "When I know I've done wrong I get so tense I cannot study. I'm afraid to meet people. I panic for fear someone will discover what kind of a person I really am."

This young man needed help, or he would be in danger of nervous collapse.

Later in this Lesson we will present the steps to relieve the panic that stems from guilt. But here I want to emphasize the fact that sometimes (and it happened to be true in this case) mental suffering comes from a tendency to punish ourselves by magnifying our shortcomings. This is a habit studiously to be avoided. Any practice that wears our nerves, making us tired, irritable, and depressed, must be overcome if we are to live triumphantly. So:

Don't exaggerate your mistakes.

Ask yourself: "Am I getting secret satisfaction in self-punishment?" If so, resolve to take an intelligent look at your errors, as well as to ask for forgiveness.



CONFESSION BRINGS RELEASE

There is a cleansing power that comes to a man when he confesses his wrongdoing and asks for forgiveness. Sometimes the need for this is desperate. Guilt can gain such a strangle hold upon the mind that it destroys a person's ability to think rationally, to eat normally, to sleep soundly, and to work efficiently.

A woman who came for counsel said, "I am tortured day and night by what I have done. Try as I will to forget it, constantly it haunts me. I've tried to work so hard that I will forget it. I've tried to push all thought of it from my mind by reading and recalling pleasant things. I've tried to seek forgetfulness in alcohol. But I can't drown out the voice that whispers, 'Go and hide. Don't let anyone know that you are two-faced.'"

This woman urgently needed release from the obsession that was destroying her life, and no wishful thinking, nor merry-go-round of activity could bring it to her. Pretending that she was righteous only served to heighten the conflicts that were tearing her apart.

One thing was needful - to confess her error and then to make a fresh start. That alone could purify her mind and bring comfort to her soul.

Confession relieves the conscience, getting rid of thoughts and doubts that are poisoning the mind. Guilt that is expressed loses much of its destructive power.

I would urge you, whenever possible, to go directly to any person whom you have harmed. Admit your error. Say you are sorry and ask for his forgiveness. If he is understanding and gracious, the mounting tension will quickly evaporate. Even if he is offended, you will feel better because you brought to light the whole ugly business.

Obviously, there are situations in which this direct approach cannot be made. To do so might injure your family, or involve a third party. Perhaps your offense was not against a single individual, but against a group. Perhaps your sin was one of omission, and discussing the matter with the person whom you

neglected would only deepen the wound.

In situations such as these, seek relief by sharing your burden of guilt with a trusted friend, a trained counselor, or your pastor, priest, or rabbi. For centuries, religious leaders have recognized the therapeutic value of confession. Psychiatrists devote far more time to listening than to giving advice. In the past decade, many schools have employed counselors to help students with their problems, and these men and women encourage young people who are troubled to tell of their anxiety or remorse.

Nurses and doctors are trained to help patients vocalize their troubles, to put into words not only their physical problems but their frustrations and regrets. Health involves the whole personality; and the confession that cleanses the mind frequently cauterizes the wound so spiritual healing can take place.

Bear this in mind when you are tormented by guilt. Seek someone whom you can trust - someone who is emotionally stable and who has Christian understanding. Unburden your guilt and its strangle hold upon you will be broken.

Be willing, also, to listen to those who turn to you for emotional support. As an advanced student of Mayanry, you have a high and holy responsibility to assist others who have not been privileged to receive the instruction you have had. Sometimes you can help them most not by teaching, but by patiently listening as they unburden their souls.

A person whose religious experience has been shallow is doubly in need of a human friend in whom he can confide. Pretense can drive him further and further into his loneliness. When he will sit down and give expression to his feelings of guilt, he will find freedom from the obsession that is destroying his happiness. By sympathetic listening, you can help a troubled person relieve his tortured mind. By expressing your own faith, you can encourage him to turn to the Lord.

Confession to God - when a person has found the way into His Presence - brings the surest and most effective release from guilt. If you daily converse with God through the avenue of prayer, you will feel His presence when you need Him.

Seek the silence and talk with God in secret. Think of Him as FATHER and remember His boundless love. Then acknowledge your failures and ask His forgiveness.

It may prove helpful to repeat one of the prayers used for many years by devout men and women: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me ... Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."

There is value in naming the specific shortcomings that are disturbing you. Try making your own litany. It might be something like this:

For choosing the low way, when I have seen the high,
O Lord, forgive me.

For deceiving myself, when faced with temptation,
O Lord, forgive me.

For failure to accept for myself the standards I
set for my neighbors, O Lord, forgive me.

And give me the vision and the strength to live
more nobly in the day that lies ahead. Amen.

Remember that the sincerity of your petition is far more important than any beauty of expression. Even the unspoken longing of your heart is understood by the Lord, for He is seeking you even before you turn to Him.

Do not hesitate to make your confession to God, even though you may find it difficult to voice your innermost feelings. Admit your errors. Ask for pardon and for the courage to resist further temptation.



START OVER AGAIN

You will avoid needless misery if, after making your confession, you have the wisdom to leave your errors in God's keeping. Why pick them up and continue to hold them before your mind's eye? When you have asked for forgiveness, accept it and make a new beginning.

Remember that many people have at some time in their lives made serious mistakes, and then with God's help have made a fresh start. They have succeeded in again becoming respected and self-respecting.

You need not remain a victim of your errors. Begin to achieve self-mastery by refusing to indulge in thoughts that encourage you to say and do the things out of keeping with your finest desires. You can subdue your lower self and realize your natural potential for goodness.

The first step in your spiritual progress is to clarify your image of the noble man or woman you can be. Then immediately seek to say and do the things that are appropriate for a person with the ideals you have set for yourself.

Do not be fainthearted because of the great difference between the person you feel you are and the person you would like to become. A bridge is not built in a day, nor is a personality perfected in one leap. You can transform your life by creating new patterns of thinking and behavior. Resolve that today you will give no place to ugly or destructive thoughts. Outline nobler activities to fill your time tomorrow.

In "The Imitation of Christ", which for centuries has served as a worthwhile guide for countless men and women who were seeking the way of Truth, Thomas à Kempis says, "We should soon be perfect if we would only conquer one fault every year."

This is an over-simplification of the problem, but it does dramatize the fact that we win the victory over personal faults by wiping them out one by one. Every time we make the effort to live up to our ideals, we develop spiritual strength and subdue our lower nature.

There is no doubt that frequently we are more like two people than like a well-integrated personality. One part of us says, "Yes". The other says, "No".

The father of three small children, after an argument with his wife, had illicit relations with another woman. The next day, when beside himself with remorse, he cried out, "I feel as if someone else had done it. That wasn't the real me. I'm not that kind of person."

At times, each one of us behaves in a way that is not in keeping with his best self. Some wicked impulse prompts us to do the thing we would not do. Folk lore depicts this downward tug as evil spirits that lure people into dangerous paths. The Bible speaks of men being tempted by the devil. In France, frequent mention is made of the "plis", or mental kinks, which cause one to do and say the things that are not in keeping with his character.

We may feel an urge to do that which is low or mean, but at the same time hear a voice saying, "Be honest. Be kind. Be honorable." We can respond to the pull to live on the upper levels. That is why we experience guilt when we know we have fallen short of the divine standards for human behavior.

Once we have made a mistake, it is useless to try to make excuses for ourselves. It is far better to:

1. Honestly evaluate our misdeeds.
2. Confess our faults.
3. Ask for forgiveness.
4. Begin at once to act in accordance with our noblest desires.

Remember that the first change must come in our attitudes. A keen desire to live a Christ like life can form the basis for steady improvement in conduct. Apply this to your own situation, but also to your efforts to assist those whom you meet day by day. In every contact with those who have transgressed, pattern your approach after the Master's.

Recall how Jesus spoke with respect to the woman who was a harlot, and how He called a despised tax gatherer to be one of His Disciples. He saw the good in each person and helped each to visualize the type of person whom he could become. This preceded His command to "Go and sin no more", or His call, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."



ACCEPT GOD'S FORGIVENESS, PEACE AND POWER

If you are to know the cleansing power of God's forgiveness, you must begin by forgiving those who have injured your feelings or your character. Christ gives us the promise: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matthew 6:14).

The flow of God's love into your life is blocked when you keep resentment in your heart. So hold up one by one whatever injustices have been done to you. You may want to write these on slips of paper and ask God to help you forgive each

one. Then tear up the slips and throw them in the wastebasket, or burn them, as a symbol that they are gone forever.

Having forgiven everyone who has hurt you, you are ready to ask God to forgive your own trespasses. You will have opened the channel by which His spirit can cleanse your conscious and subconscious mind. You will be liberated from the burden of guilt that has been weighing you down. You will find peace for your tortured mind and wings for your heavy spirit.

Then you will know the joy that prompted David to write: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old." (Psalm 32: 1,3.)

The Psalmist had walked with stooping back and dragging feet when he buried his sin in the deep places of his mind. But the day came when he earnestly asked for the Lord's forgiveness. Then he knew:

"Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." (Psalms 86:5 and 103:12).

The Psalmist knew the joy, peace, and power that comes to a man who finds his sin is "covered", which literally means "cancelled away", wiped off the record.

Approach God in absolute trust and open your heart to Him. Then the Love of your Heavenly Father can save you from your lower self. It can free you from the agonizing rehearsal of your errors. It can bring tranquillity to your mind.

With God's help you can triumph over guilt. You can be your best self when your life is purified of everything that keeps you in bondage to low desires. You can step out upon the path ahead with new vigor when you are assured that the past is past, and that the Lord has given you new tasks to do and a new self to cope with them.



To summarize:

- * When your conscience tells you that you are unworthy, it is time to do something more than hide from shame.
- * Don't torture yourself by the evil you have done, whether it is real, or imaginary.
- * Refuse to magnify your mistakes.
- * Sweep your mind clean by confessing your wrong-doing. This will bring a glorious sense of release.
- * Let your words and deeds prove that you are sincere in your desire to live nobly. Go forward in the new strength that

will be yours as you know the peace that comes with forgiveness.

Lift others by seeing them in the best possible light. Listen patiently when they want to share their remorse. Forgive them if they have wronged you. Challenge them to discard thoughts that bring torture. Encourage pleasant, worthwhile conversation. Assure them that with God's help they can triumph over guilt.

AFFIRMATION

I will endeavor to so live that there is no need for pretense.

When any feeling of guilt enters my mind, I will seek release by confessing my wrongdoing.

I will accept God's forgiveness and open my mind to the peace and the power He daily offers to all who walk in His way.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.