

'Focus and Discipline; Two of the 'Secrets of Success

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One of the causes of success is focus or total attentiveness. As a consequence of centering thoughts on a single point the mind remains attached to it. Then even the hardest hurdle cannot weaken the man's concentration.

Focus is for work what a lever is for lifting weights. The principle of a lever is that force concentrates at one point, which makes it easy to lift up heavy objects. Similarly by concentrating the mental powers on a single point one is able to solve complex problems. The working of our mind and body is like that of raindrops. When collected at one place they make a vast ocean. But if they fall here and there in scattered manner they disappear in the dust with out any visible effect.

We all must have heard about the great personality of Shaikh Bahai. He had mastery over many sciences like physics, mathematics and Islamics and has left a number of his precious books for the posterity. He says, "I have debated with many scientists and scholars. Though their knowledge was very wide in every field I used to win the debate. However when I came across a person who was a specialist in his field, he vanquished me easily. It was so because my knowledge was insufficient in that particular subject.

Mental abilities resemble the sunrays in the matter of solving problems. If sunrays are made to concentrate on a certain point with the help of a magnifying glass they burn down whatever is kept there. Though the scattered rays do not affect anything.

In the same way unless the rays of human thoughts focus on a point they cannot remove hurdles, as the different aspects are not illuminated. Veteran teachers always instruct their students to study everything deeply which only means that the thoughts must concentrate on a particular subject. All inventions and discoveries are the result of concentrated effort.

Aimless people

There are some of us who do not have any particular aim in life. They wander here and there like a drifting ship that dashes against submerged rocks. We can also compare it to an aeroplane without a compass. People without a program of action also smash against the rocks of difficulties or sink in an ocean of nothingness.

There also are some people who do have some program of activities but midway to their goal backtrack and begin to walk in another direction. Only those succeed who do not leave their path before reaching their goal and even if the journey is very long it does come to an end after continuous travel.

Some people fail despite being active and prepared because their mind is not constant. It wavers and jumps from one place to another. They step in different fields, starting a new venture before completing the previous one. They are jack-of-all-trades but master of none and they are not perfect in any particular field.

Nature has taught us a nice lesson. If we continue to uproot a sapling and put it in another place over and over again it would wither away and cannot grow up. But a plant that remains firmly rooted at the same spot grows into a huge tree. Then it flowers and also bears fruit. Want of concentration or hesitation is same as a plant that is uprooted every now and then. So it neither flowers nor gives fruits. Rather it withers away and dies. It is rightly said that concentrating the thoughts at one point is the hallmark of the wise. Taking up many assignments together brings personal loss and also harms the society. It can damage a nation's economy and culture and result in anarchy, which is difficult to control. Boron used to say: Man's interest and natural talent implies that he can concentrate his conscience and feelings on one point.

Newton was asked how he was able to discover so many things. His answer was that by constantly thinking about them. He was thinking on a subject so thoroughly and deeply that the subject became as clear as daylight before him.

A special feature of the modern civilization is specialization. We have experts in all walks of life. Specialization has become so necessary that the world cannot advance in its absence.

Discipline

Not only that discipline is a secret of the success of great men, our universe also stands on the same foundation. If the solar system is working regularly, if the stars are revolving around the sun systematically and if there is no flaw in this function for millenniums it is only due to the fact that the solar system is based on order.

Order is found in everything around us from the largest bodies of the universe to the minutest thing called 'atom'. Everything in this world is made up of tiny atoms. A wonderful discipline is in action and it is seen in each and every movement of the universe. There are tiny atoms in every system. Every atom has its own centre, which is called 'proton'. Many 'electrons' move round the center like stars and moons. In the words of a great Muslim scholar: "If you tear up the heart of every atom you will find its sun in its centre."

The universe is the best guide for all of us. We should learn about life and the causes and reasons of its stability and success from it. This universe tells that: "The secret of my survival is the regularity and orderliness which my Creator has ingrained in me."

If the educational system of any country becomes chaotic, if the trade and economy of any

nation is disturbed, if the balance of supply and demand is upset, if the law and order of any country turns corrupt, if the army gets out of control the end of that nation becomes certain. When the commander of the Faithful, Ali (a.s.) was fatally injured by the sword of Ibne Muljim, the first bequest uttered by him to his sons, after advising them to refrain from Allah's disobedience, was regarding this orderliness in every affair: "I advise you to refrain from disobeying Allah and to abide by law and order and regularity in life."

One of the ways of orderliness is to divide our daily time according to our needs. Doing every necessary work in its proper time is life. We should further this foundation of life. We must refrain from disorderliness and indiscipline because irregularity ends propriety and destroys our talent and competence.

The leader of the God-fearing people Ali (a.s.) says, "A Muslim must divide his time into three parts. One part should be reserved for Allah's worship, one for earning livelihood and the third for attending to the demands of the body which cannot be ignored."

If there was no orderliness or discipline in our past life can we benefit from such orderliness in the remaining years of our life? "Certainly, we can..." because the three stages of our life, viz, childhood, youth and old age are like three compartments of a ship which can be separated from one another by pressing a button. If a compartment is damaged it can be separated from the rest.

Only he is successful who can, using his wisdom, separate different compartments of his life and deal with them separately. It is pitiable that man, instead of gaining from the present opportunities, should remain sorrowful for his past, thus wasting the time available to him and become careless about bringing order in the forthcoming time.

A competent minister was carrying out his administrative duties with the help of his assistants. When asked as to how he was arranging his affairs he replied, "I never postpone today's work for tomorrow. In my view it is not correct to delay anything." We see signs in offices and workshops saying: Time is Gold. It surprises me because the value of time becomes more than .gold if everything is done in time