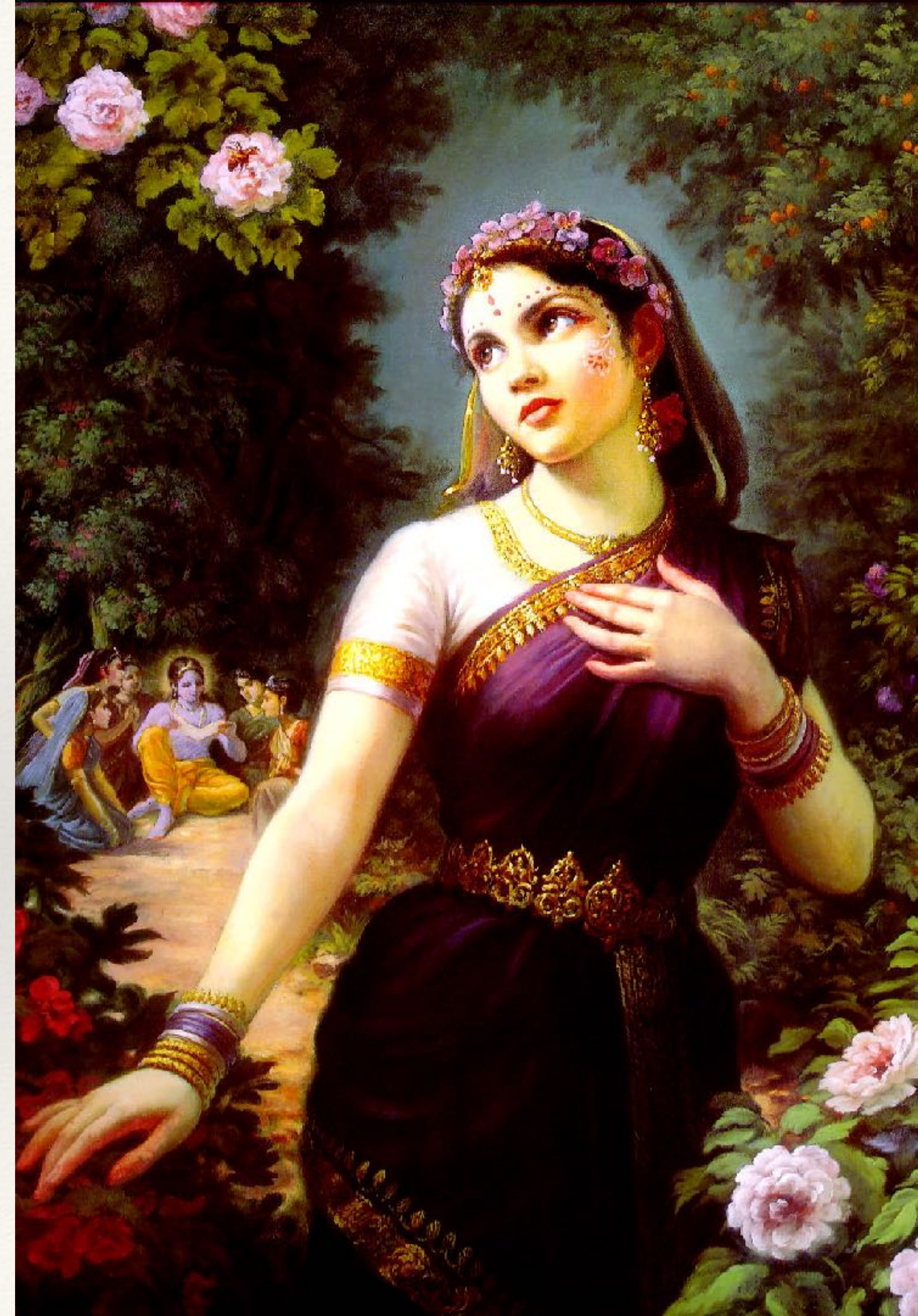


Practical Spirituality: The Yoga of Awakening
Lecture Ten

Concentration



Concentration

"Without wise concentration of thought, the experience of the truth is impossible."

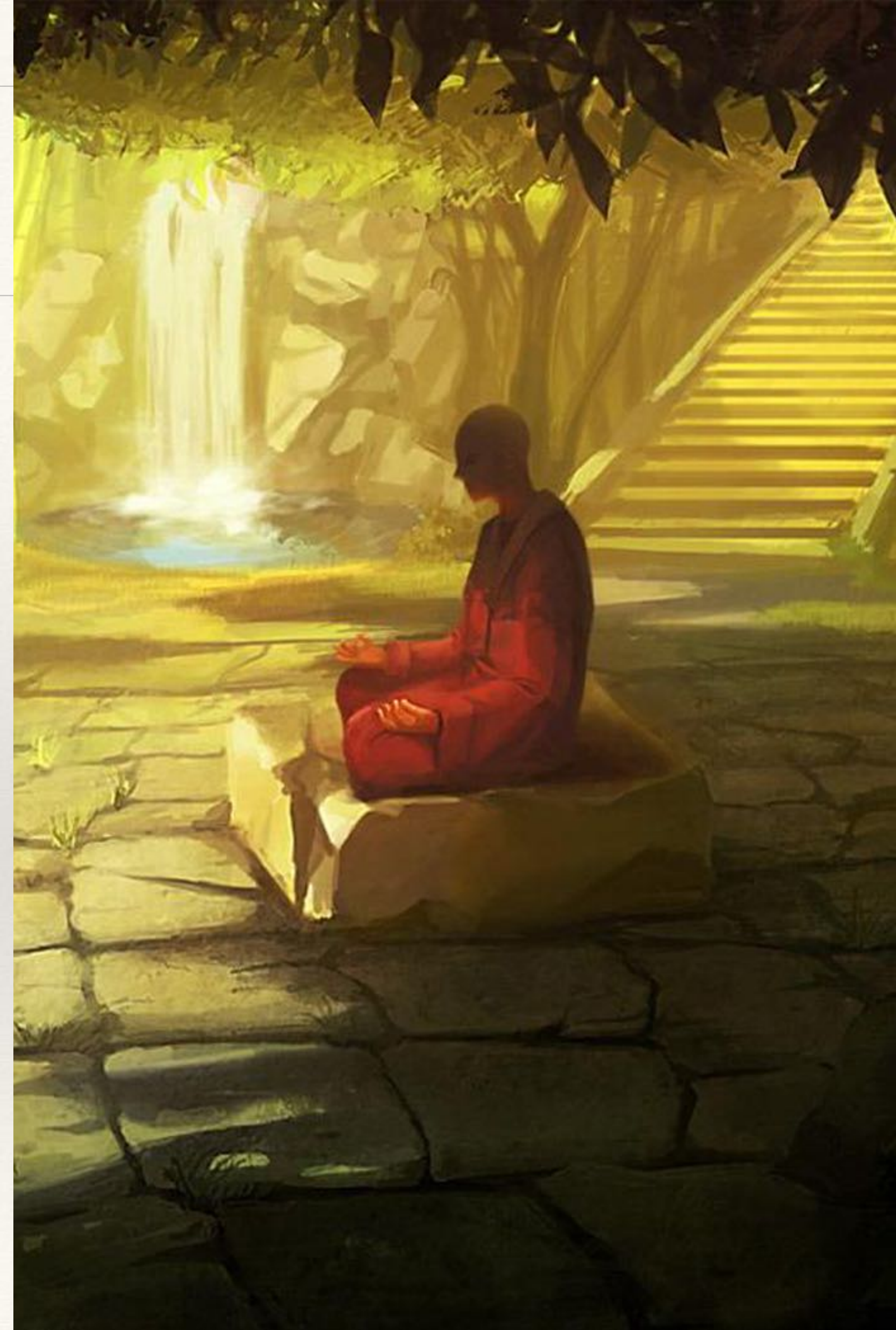
—*Samael Aun Weor, Spiritual Power of Sound*

"...concentration is the first and foremost thing a sadhaka or aspirant should acquire in the spiritual path."

—*Swami Sivananda*

Steps of Yoga

1. **Yama:** self-restraint
2. **Niyama:** precepts
3. **Asana:** posture; relaxation
4. **Pranayama:** harnessing of life force
5. **Pratyahara:** withdrawal from senses
6. **Dharana:** concentration
7. **Dhyana:** meditation
8. **Samadhi:** super-conscious state, blissfulness, ecstasy





Dharana

(Sanskrit धारणा) Literally, “concentration, holding, firmness, maintaining, bearing, good memory, certainty, righteousness, steadfastness”

Yoga Sutras

3:1 Dharana (concentration) is fixing the
consciousness in one place.

— *Patanjali*



Bhagavad-Gita

4:19 As a lamp placed in a windless spot does not flicker—to such is compared the Yogi of controlled mind...”

— *Krishna*

Stages of Concentration

1. **Kshipta:** wandering
2. **Mudha:** forgetful
3. **Vikshipta:** gathering
4. **Ekagrata:** one-pointed
5. **Nirudha:** well-restrained



Yoga Sutras

3:11 Consciousness is transformed toward Samadhi as all-pointedness dwindles, and Ekagrata (one-pointedness) arises.

3:12 Consciousness is transformed towards Ekagrata (one-pointedness) as subsiding and rising are rendered similar.

— *Patanjali*

Examples of Concentration Practice

Fix attention on a single object and hold it there for some time.

1. Any external object.
2. A part of the body.
3. An image one can gaze upon.
4. An image one can visualize.
5. A passage from scripture.
6. A sound: a watch, a river, the rain.
7. A mantra or prayer.
8. A candle flame.
9. The moon, a star, or the expanse of the open sky.

Tips to Develop Concentration

1. Firmly perfect your ethics.
2. Reduce your worldly activities.
3. Maintain silence of tongue and mind as much as possible.
4. Relax continually.
5. Transmute.
6. Control your senses.
7. In all activities, concentrate on what you are doing.
8. Several times a day, sit in concentration practice.
9. Do not fight with the mind. When the mind wanders, simply bring it back to the object.
10. Observe the length of time you can remain concentrated before you become distracted.

Exercise: Develop concentration.

Concentration Practice: At least once a day, relax, become still, practice some pranayama. Withdraw from all the senses, to focus within. Then, for the duration of your practice, focus your attention entirely on one thing. When you become distracted, simply return to the object of concentration.

Helpful resources:

Books:

The Great Rebellion

Karma is Negotiable

Treatise of Revolutionary Psychology

Courses:

Beginning Here and Now

Bhavachakra, the Wheel of Becoming

Self-knowledge