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THE MASTERKEY SYSTEM

HOW TO APPLY THE LAW OF ATTRACTION IN YOUR LIFE

Author : Charles F. Haanel, Embassy Book Distributors, Mumbai: 2008, PP 281

BOOK REVIEW

Haanel's book, *The Master Key System* was published in 1912, when he was 46 years old. It is written in the form of a course in New Thought, mental development, financial success, and personal health. The book was heavily promoted in the pages of Elizabeth Towne's New Thought magazine *The Nautilus*. By 1933 it had allegedly sold over 200,000 copies worldwide. Haanel practised the financial principles he preached, and was a self made success who owned several major companies. According to Stevens, writing in 1909, "He was president of the Continental Commercial Company, president of the Sacramento Valley Improvement Company, and president of the Mexico Gold & Silver Mining Company." He was an American author, philosopher and a businessman. He is best known for his contributions to the New Thought Movement through his book *The Master Key System*. In 1919, Napoleon Hill wrote Haanel a letter thanking him for *The Master Key System*. In the letter Hill stated, "My present success and the success which has followed my work as President of the Napoleon Hill Institute is due largely to the principles laid down in *The Master-Key System*." Haanel was quoted in the best-selling self-help book *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne, published in 2007. He is also authored different set of popularly known books to name a few; *The New Psychology*, *Mental Chemistry*, *A Book About You*, *The Amazing Secretes of the Yogi* etc.,

The thesis *The Master Key System* advocated by Mr.Charles F. Haanel distinguishes itself from many other motivational and psycho-analytic literatures. It is out and out mind centric. Human mind is the creative force that constitutes the sole difference

between men. “It is the mind, therefore, which overcomes environment and other obstacles in the path of men”. Mind is not only the creator but the only creator. One has to learn that power comes from within and the internal source of power and strengths make one gain dominant attitude and work miracles; and he is weak only because he depends on the help from outside. Thus, the internal locus of control is essential to create condition which will produce desired results.

The master key has been developed diligently by the author, based on the above premise. According to the author, “it is an absolute scientific truth which will unfold the possibilities that lie dormant in an individual, and teach how they may be brought into powerful action to increase the person’s effective capacity, bringing added energy, discernment, vigor and mental elasticity.

Master key develops mental power which means, other instinctively recognize you as the person of mental power, and you attract men and things you need and develop harmony with environment. It activates positive energy and unfolds the ability to secure results by developing insights and sagacity and increased independence and at the same time destroys distrust, depression, fear, melancholia and every other weakness. Many of the ideas expressed in this book are strikingly similar to the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, the great Indian monk who propounded spiritual oneness of humanity.

The book under review is divided into twenty four chapters. Each chapter reinforces this basic philosophy of cultivating self in different dimensions. “Master key develops mental power which means that others instinctly recognize that you are a person of force, that they want to do what you want them to do; it means that you attract men and things to you”.

It develops a method of thinking and an attitude of mind which believes that the only way to secure power is to become conscious of power and one never becomes conscious of power until one learns that ‘all power is from within’ - the thought and feelings. The world within is governed by mind. It echoes Swami Vivekananda’s words: “There is no limit to the power of human mind. The more concentrated it is, more power is brought to bear on one point.” (Vivekananda; His call to the nation –A compilation, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta,1979,p.34)

Mental efficiency is contingent upon harmony in the world within, which means that the ability to control our thoughts. Harmony in the world within results in optimization and affluence, generate courage, hope,

enthusiasm, confidence, trust and faith by which they are given the fire, intelligence to see the vision and practical skill to make the vision real.

The world within is related to subconscious mind which presides over all subjective sensation like fear, love, emotions, respiration, imagination etc. The subconscious mind is connected to universal mind. The universal consciousness is one and is omnipresent, it must be present in each individual and each individual consciousness is the manifestations of that omnipotent and omniscient consciousness. They are one. The Hindu spiritual idea of *jivatma* and *paramatma* is reflected in the above statement. Swami Vivekananda therefore said: each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature external and internal (ibid p.47).

The objective mind which deals with outward objects and which has discriminating power and making rational choice with power of reasoning, is the guardian ruler of the sub-conscious mind. It may be called the 'watchman at the gate' which does not allow the false suggestions accepted by the unguarded sub-conscious mind. Conscious mind is reasoning will and sub-conscious mind is instinctive desire.

The sub-conscious mind is a part of the universal mind and when we come into tune with infinite, we set in operation the mightiest force in existence, the creative power of the universal mind (p.23). This is one law of attraction enunciated in the book. The spiritual content in the above statement is very much identical to the spiritual oneness between individual (*Atman*) and universal self (*Bhramman*) enunciated in *Unpunished*.

Thoughts of courage, power, confidence and hope all produce a corresponding state, but the one arch enemy which must be absolutely destroyed is fear. The author emphatically says that 'the enemy must be completely destroyed; must be completely eliminated; he must be expelled for ever; he is the cloud which hides the sun; which causes a perpetual gloom (p.31). It is the personal devil which makes the man fear the past, the present and the future; fear themselves, their friends and their enemies; fear everything and everybody. When fear is effectively and completely destroyed your light will shine, the clouds will disperse, and you will have source of power, energy and life (p.32-33).

According to Swami Vivekananda, the essence of *Upanishad* is fearlessness. "If there is one word that you find coming like a bomb from the *Upanishads*, busting like a bombshell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness"....., it is that one idea strength (Ibid, p.28)

World within controlled by 'I' and this 'I' is part or one with the infinite, which is the universal energy usually called God." we are coming to think of God as dwelling in man rather than as operating on men from without" (p.43)

The concept of external personal God is a creation of man. Swami Vivekananda took inference from *Upanishads* and stated categorically that "the only God to worship is the human soul, in the human body" (Ibid p.72)

Another concept the author considers as an attraction is visualization. Visualization is the process of making mental image and the image is a mold or model which will serve as a pattern from which your future will emerge. Make a mental image; make it clear, distinct, perfect; hold it firmly; the ways and means will develop; supply will follow the demand; you will be led to do the right things at right time in the right way. Earnest desire will bring about confident expectation, and this in turn must be reinforced by firm demand. (p.78) Create ideas only give no thoughts to external conditions, make the world within beautiful and opulent and world without will express and manifest the conditions you have within.

Creative power of thought is another attraction. Man is the sum total of his own thoughts; so the question is how are we going to entertain only the good thoughts and reject evil ones?

Every man is a reflection of the thought he has entertained. When a thought of anger, jealousy, fear or worry creeps in, just start your affirmation going. The way to fight darkness is with light, the way to fight cold is with heat, the way to overcome evil is with good. (p.104)

Thoughts will not have effect unless it is consciously and systematically directed. Thoughts must have intensity with feelings and emotions. Thought force gain strength only through concentration. Concentration on things you want and not on things you do not want (p.80). Thoughts must be transformed into practical value through action.

If you wish to eliminate fear, concentrate on courage,

If you wish to eliminate lack, concentrate on abundance,

If you wish to eliminate disease, concentrate on health.

The above idea was endorsed by Swami Vivekananda much earlier in astonishingly similar words; the remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but think of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them (Ibid,p.28).

Mental attitude is yet another attraction. The law of attraction will certainly and unerringly bring to you the conditions, environment, and experiences in life corresponding with your, habitual characteristics, predominant mental attitude. Your predominant mental attitude is what counts (p.89). Swami Vivekananda holds similar view. "it is our mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our minds. Learn to see things in the proper light (Ibid, p.37).

Ultimately human life becomes complete with the spiritual awakening, oneness with God almightily. The authors make a decisive statement on spirituality. "Spirituality is quite practical, very practical, and intensely practical. It teaches that spirit is the real thing, the whole thing and the matter is mere plastic stuff, which the spirit is able to create, mould, manipulate and fashion to its will. Spirituality is the most practical thing in the world - the only really and absolutely practical thing that there is" (p.266). One thing that is inconsistent in the book is that the author has equated mind with the individual self the soul or *Atman* in one or two contexts, whereas *Atman* is beyond comprehension of mind, it is an experience .Despite this small limitation, the book throws valuable insight about self development and provides the Master Key for the same.

Reviewed by: Sundarapandiyan Natarajan, Associate Professor, Vivekananda Institute of Management Studies, Coimbatore

Book Reference: *The Master Key System, How to apply the law of Attraction in Your Life* by Charles F. Haanel, Published in India by Embassy Book Distributors ISBN: 10: 81-88452-97-1 and ISBN : 978-81-88452-97-2 (2008)