

Transforming the Body, Heart, and Mind

Observing the Mind

Universal Worship, March 12, 2023

HINDUISM:

"Yogaś citta-vritti-nirodhaḥ"

Yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of mindstuff.

-Yoga Sutras of Patanjali 1.2 (trans. Woods)

BUDDHISM:

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a deep breath, inhale and exhale, rock your body right and left, and settle into a steady, immobile sitting position. Think of not-thinking. How do you think of not-thinking? [Through] non-thinking. This in itself is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not learning meditation. It is simply the dharma-gate of repose and bliss, the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is the manifestation of ultimate reality. Traps and snares can never reach it. Once its heart is grasped, you are like the dragon when he gains the water, like the tiger when he enters the mountain. For you must know that just there [in zazen] the right dharma is manifesting itself and that from the first dullness and distraction are struck aside.

-Dogen Zenji, "The Universal Promotion of the Principles of Zazen" (trans. Waddell / Abe)

ZOROASTRIANISM:

Give ear to the Highest. Look within with enlightened mind at the faith of your own selection, person by person, each one for their own self.

Awake, to proclaim this, our Truth, before the great and Final Consummation.

-Yasna 30:2 (trans. FA Bode)

TAOISM:

"The man has been mutilated," said Ch'ang Chi, "and yet people call him 'Master.' He must be very different from the ordinary men. If so, how does he train his mind?"

"Life and Death are indeed changes of great moment," answered Confucius, "but they cannot affect his mind. Heaven and earth may collapse, but his mind will remain. Being indeed without flaw, it will not share the fate of all things. It can control the transformation of things, while preserving its source intact."

"How so?" asked Ch'ang Chi. "From the point of view of differentiation of things," replied Confucius, "we distinguish between the liver and the gall, between the Ch'u State and the Yueh State. From the point of view of their sameness, all things are One. He who regards things in this light does not even trouble about what reaches him through the senses of hearing and sight, but lets his mind wander in the moral harmony of things. He beholds the unity in things, and does not notice the loss of particular objects. And thus the loss of his leg is to him as would be the loss of so much dirt."

"But he cultivates only himself," said Ch'ang Chi.
"He uses his knowledge to perfect his mind, and
develops his mind into the Absolute Mind."

INDIGENOUS:

My gauge each day, in all things, is simply this: Is what I'm choosing (to think, do or say) moving me closer to my Creator or farther away? For this question, I am immensely thankful. It saves me an awful lot of backtracking, worry lines, frustration, angst and apologizing. Today and every day, I give thanks for my ability to exercise the power of choice - even when I've chosen wrong.

-Richard Wagamese, Ojibway storyteller

JUDAISM:

The Baal Shem Tov teaches: Bemakom she'machshavot ha'adam, sham kol ha'adam.

"You are where your thoughts are."

Man's mind is his very essence. Wherever your thoughts are, that is where you are – all of you.

Guard your thoughts very carefully, because thought can literally create a living thing.

-Rebbe Nachman, Likutei Moharan (trans. sefaria.org)

CHRISTIANITY:

A free mind can achieve all things. But what is a free mind?

A free mind is one which is untroubled and unfettered by anything, which has not bound its best part to any particular manner of being or devotion

and which does not seek its own interest in anything.

-Meister Eckhart (trans. Oliver Davies)

Let us pray to God that we may be free of God.

-Meister Eckhart, Sermon on Matthew 5:3. (trans. Walshe)

ISLAM:

Verily Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces but He looks to your hearts.

-Hadith (Muslim)

TRUTH:

The mind which is constantly wandering, which is not under the control of the will, which cannot be made to respond in a moment, which is restless, this mind should be harmonized; it can be harmonized first with the will. When there is harmony between the will and the mind, then the body and mind, thus controlled and harmonized, become one harmonious mechanism working automatically. Merely bringing the mind and body into order allows one's every faculty to show itself in its fullness, to manifest. A person begins to observe life more keenly, to comprehend life more fully; and so perception becomes keener and the faculty of knowing develops.