

Relaxing the Body

Universal Worship, July 9, 2023

HINDUISM:

The posture should be steady and comfortable.

In effortless relaxation, dwell mentally on the
Endless with utter attention.

From that there is no disturbance from the dualities.

-Yoga Sutras of Patanjali 2.46-48 (trans. BonGiovanni)

BUDDHISM:

[The Blessed One said:] And how is mindfulness
immersed in the body developed, how is it pursued,
so as to be of great fruit & great benefit?

There is the case where a monk — having gone to
the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an
empty building — sits down folding his legs
crosswise, holding his body erect and setting
mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he
breathes in; mindful he breathes out."Breathing in
long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or
breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out
long.' Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am
breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he
discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' He trains
himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire
body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive
to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe
in calming bodily fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I
will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.' And as

he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

-Kayagata-sati Sutta (trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu)

ZOROASTRIANISM:

All holy lives are Thine, O Mazda, in truth, all which have been, which are and which shall be. Thou dost apportion these their reward in keeping with Thy Love. Raise up the bodily life of humanity to the height of bliss through Vohu Mana [Good Mind], Xshathra [Power] and Asha [Truth].

-Gathas 33:10 (trans. FA Bode, adapted)

TAOISM:

When people are born they are supple,
and when they die they are stiff.
When trees are born they are tender,
and when they die they are brittle.
Stiffness is thus a companion of death,
flexibility a companion of life.
So when an army is strong, it does not prevail.
When a tree is strong, it is cut for use.
So the stiff and strong are below,
the supple and yielding on top.

-Taoteching 76 (trans. Cleary)

INDIGENOUS:

Sometimes Creator blinks. Sometimes
She is not looking at me. Those instances can feel
really, really long some days, but what's going on
is that Creator is showing Her trust in me. She's
letting me know that I have the tools to cope with
things, that I've learned enough in my walk with
Her to walk gracefully through those moments
when She blinks. And that's when I should blink,
too. Close my eyes and breathe, feel the unceasing
current underneath everything, surrender to it,
then open my eyes again to possibility and walk
That's how I learn to be graceful. Full of grace.
In the blink of an eye.

-Richard Wagamese, from *Embers: One Ojibway's
Meditations*

JUDAISM:

Your limbs are an orchard of pomegranates
And of all luscious fruits,
Of henna and of nard—
Nard and saffron,
Fragrant reed and cinnamon,
With all aromatic woods,
Myrrh and aloes—
All the choice perfumes.

-Song of Songs 4:13-14 (trans. JPS 1985)

CHRISTIANITY:

Thou hast made us for thyself, and we are restless until we find our rest in thee.

-St. Augustine, *City of God*

ISLAM:

Have We not opened up thy heart
and lifted from thee the burden
that had weighed so heavily on thy back
And [have We not] raised thee high in dignity
And, behold, with every hardship comes ease
verily, with every hardship comes ease
Hence, when thou art freed [from distress],
remain steadfast
and unto thy Sustainer turn with love

-Quran 94 (trans. Safi Kaskas)

TRUTH:

The highest relaxation is to relax the whole being: body in repose, mind at rest, heart at peace. It is that experience which may be called Nirvana, the ideal of thinkers and meditative souls. It is that which they want to reach, for in it there is everything. In that condition each person becomes for the time as a drop that is assimilated or submerged in its origin. And being submerged for one moment means that all that belongs to the origin is attracted by this drop, because the origin is the essence of all. The drop has taken from its origin everything it has in life. It is newly charged and has become illuminated again.