

Finding Balance in the Body

Universal Worship, October 8, 2023

HINDUISM:

Contemplate Brahman as adoration and all desires will fall down before you in adoration. Contemplate Brahman as the Supreme Lord and you will be endowed with supremacy. Contemplate Brahman as the destructive agent and your enemies who hate you and also those who do not hate you will perish. This one who is in you and that one who is in yonder sun, both are one.

The one who knows this, as described above, after dying to (i.e. withdrawing from) this world, attains the self which consists of food, attains the self which consists of the vital breath, attains the self which consists of the mind, attains the self which consists of the intellect, attains the self which consists of bliss. Then they go up and down these worlds, eating the food they desire, assuming the forms they like. They sit, singing the chant of the non-duality of Brahman:

"Ah! Ah! Ah! I am food, I am food, I am food! I am the eater of food, I am the eater of food, I am the eater of food! I am the uniter, I am the uniter, I am the uniter! I am the first-born of the true, prior to the gods and the navel of Immortality. The one who gives me away, they alone preserve me. The one who eats food - I, as food, eat them. I, as the Supreme Lord, overpower the whole world. I am radiant as the sun."

Whosoever knows this, attains Liberation.

-Taittiriya Upanishad, sec.10 ch.3:4-6 (trans. T.N.Sethumadhavan, adapted)

BUDDHISM:

Having recognized the futility of my selfishness

And the great benefit of loving others,
may I bring all beings to joy.

May I send all my virtues and happiness to others
through the strength of my practice,

and may I receive the suffering, obstacles, and defilements
of all motherly beings in all realms

-Joan Halifax

ZOROASTRIANISM:

With uplifted hands and deep humility, I beseech, O Mazda, first and foremost, this, the abiding joy of Spenta Mainyu, Thy Holy Spirit. Grant that I perform all actions in harmony with Asha, Thy Divine Law, and acquire the wisdom of Vohu Mana, the Good Mind, so that I may illumine the very Soul of creation.

-Gathas 28:1 (trans. Bode)

TAOISM:

Carrying vitality and consciousness,
embracing them as one,
can you keep them from parting?
Concentrating energy,
making it supple,
can you be like an infant?
Purifying hidden perception,
can you make it flawless?
Loving the people, governing the nation,
can you be uncontrived?
As the gate of heaven opens and closes,
can you be impassive?
As understanding reaches everywhere,
can you be innocent?
Producing and developing,
producing without possessing,
doing without presuming,
growing without domineering:
this is called mysterious power.

-Taoteching 10 (trans. Cleary)

INDIGENOUS:

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear;
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages
That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.

Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care
And kindness in all things.
Breathe in, knowing we are made of
All this, and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we
Were born, and die soon within a
True circle of motion,
Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.
-Joy Harjo, *Eagle Poem*

JUDAISM:

God decreed that this combination of body and soul must ultimately be a permanent one. Even though the two separate at death, this is only a temporary state, existing only until the resurrection. After the resurrection, body and soul must coexist forever. The soul must therefore be able to work, strengthen itself, gradually weaken the occluding power of the physical, and thus bring enlightenment to the body. The body then becomes able to elevate itself together with the soul, so that they can both experience the Highest Light. This is the exact opposite of our present condition, where the soul is dimmed and depressed because of the body.

-Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, *The Way of God* (trans. Kaplan)

CHRISTIANITY:

The Church is visible because she is a body. Hence they err in a matter of divine truth, who imagine the Church to be invisible, intangible, a something merely "pneumatological" as they say, by which many Christian communities, though they differ from each other in their profession of faith, are united by an invisible bond. But a body calls also for a multiplicity of members, which are linked together in such a way as to help one another. And as in

the body when one member suffers, all the other members share its pain, and the healthy members come to the assistance of the ailing, so in the Church the individual members do not live for themselves alone, but also help their fellows, and all work in mutual collaboration for the common comfort and for the more perfect building up of the whole Body.

-Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*

ISLAM:

When a man loves a woman, he seeks union with her, that is to say the most complete union possible in love, and there is in the elemental sphere no greater union than that between the sexes. It is [precisely] because such desire pervades all his parts that man is commanded to perform the major ablution. Thus the purification is total, just as his annihilation in her was total at the moment of consummation. God is jealous of his servant that he should find pleasure in any but Him, so He purifies him by the ablution, so that he might once again behold Him in the one in whom he was annihilated, since it is none other than He Whom he sees in her.

-Ibn Arabi (trans. Austin)

TRUTH:

The difference between our soul and our body, which sometimes we consider as great as between earth and heaven, is not so great. Soul and body are one light, and therefore the external part of us is expressive of our inner being, and our inner being also is dependent in many ways upon our external being. 'Inner and outer part of our being' is a term used for our convenience; in reality there is one being, there is one light.