

UW Readings
Concentration
October 13, 2024

Hinduism

When the knife of the fixed mind whetted by breath control,
sharpened on the stone of renunciation has cut through the
weave of life,
the adept is forever released from his bonds.
Freed from all desire, he becomes immortal;
delivered from temptations, having cut through the toil of
existence,
he is no longer in samsara.
-*Kshurika Upanishad 1.24* (trans. Derek)

Buddhism

“But what, Noble Lady, is concentration, what are the causes of
concentration, what are the accessories to concentration, what
is the development of concentration?”
“Whatever is one-pointedness of mind, friend Visākha, that is
concentration, the four ways of attending to mindfulness are the
causes of concentration, the four right endeavors are the
accessories to concentration, whatever repetition of these things
there is, their development, being made much of, this is the
development of concentration herein.”
-*Majjhima Nikaya 44* (trans. Bhikkhu Ānandajoti)

Zoroastrianism

Give me bliss, make me far-seeing, and reveal to me your
incomparable gifts – Your power, and the blessings of the Pure
Mind. O Holy RightMindedness, teach us clearly as to how
truth guides our way of thinking.
-*Yasna 33.13* (trans. Nariman)

Taoism

The way of great learning consists in manifesting one's bright virtue, consists in loving the people, consists in stopping in perfect goodness.

When you know where to stop, you have stability.

When you have stability, you can be tranquil.

When you are tranquil, you can be at ease.

When you are at ease, you can deliberate.

When you can deliberate you can attain your aims.

Things have their roots and branches, affairs have their end and beginning. When you know what comes first and what comes last, then you are near the Way.

-*The Great Learning* (trans. A. Charles Muller)

Indigenous

Spirituality is meditation. It is from this focus of the spirit that all health comes. There is only one Great Spirit. It is the soul, the one who heals, the Great Spirit, the divine. It is Chamahua. I merge with Chamahua so he can help me to help the ill person.

-Grandfather Cachora, Yaqui/Lacandon Maya

Judaism

What is to be understood by concentration of the mind? The mind should be freed from all extraneous thoughts and the one who prays should realize that he is standing before the Divine Presence. He should therefore sit awhile before beginning his prayers, so as to concentrate his mind, and then pray in gentle tones, beseechingly, and not regard the service as a burden which he is carrying and which he will cast off and proceed on his way. He should, accordingly, also sit awhile, after concluding the prayers, and then leave. The ancient saints were wont to pause and meditate one hour before the service, one

hour after the service and take one hour in its recital.
-Maimonides, *The Mishneh Torah 4:16* (trans. Moses Hyamson)

Christianity

Imagine that this Lord Himself is at your side and see how lovingly and how humbly He is teaching you -- and, believe me, you should stay with so good a Friend for as long as you can before you leave Him. If you become accustomed to having Him at your side, and if He sees that you love Him to be there and are always trying to please Him, you will never be able, as we put it, to send Him away, nor will He ever fail you. He will help you in all your trials and you will have Him everywhere. Do you think it is a small thing to have such a Friend as that beside you? O sisters, those of you whose minds cannot reason for long or whose thoughts cannot dwell upon God but are constantly wandering must at all costs form this habit. I know quite well that you are capable of it -- for many years I endured this trial of being unable to concentrate on one subject, and a very sore trial it is. But I know the Lord does not leave us so devoid of help that if we approach Him humbly and ask Him to be with us He will not grant our request.

-St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection 26* (trans. Peers)

Muslim

O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance.

-*Quran 33:41*

He who remembers his Lord and he who does not are like the living and the dead.

-*Hadith* (Bukhari & Muslim)

Truth

The entire universe in all its activity has been created through the concentration of God. Every being in the world is occupied consciously or unconsciously in some act of concentration.

Good and evil are alike the result of concentration. The stronger the concentration, the greater the result; lack of concentration is the cause of failure in all things. For this world and the other, for material as well as spiritual progress, concentration is most essential.

The power of will is much greater than the power of action, but action is the final necessity for the fulfillment of the will.

Perfection is reached by the regular practice of concentration.

[from *A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty*]