

game of 'Kick Me'. (The labelling of certain oppressed minorities as 'Kick Me' players is one way of keeping them oppressed and mystified about their oppression). Such anger is a genuine emotion—it should not be confused with the criticism of the Parent nor with the ineffective rebelliousness of the Child. Although the Adult is considered by some transactional analysts to be purely rational and computer-like—an opinion perhaps more attractive to those who think of human beings as machines—some believe it to incorporate an instinct towards self-improvement. Jeannette Hermes, one of the contributors to 'Going Crazy: the Radical Therapy of R.D. Laing and Others', says:—'I see the Adult as combining with the Child to integrate one's life experience and move ahead'. My own view is that the Adult maintains a natural anger which is 'in business to accomplish something', the type of anger you sense when you sign a petition to ban blood sports or to stop a motorway going through your back garden.

Perhaps the real problem lies in the word anger, a Teutonic word which originally meant trouble or passion and is probably related to the German 'angst', meaning anxiety. Most people consider anger an undesirable emotion rather than a desirable striving towards change. The word aggression originally meant walking forwards. Now that both words have become debased perhaps we need to invent a new term, one that suggests a healthy anger.

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Dinah Day

## The Open Path of Meditation

*(A talk given at Valley Meditation Centre, Lynton, Devon)*

Man has the tendency to accumulate knowledge, and nowadays this can be done to an unprecedented extent. We are concerned with knowledge, but not with *being known*, either by others or by ourselves, and the advice to 'Know Thyself' is often approached in terms of analysis rather than an open-ended awareness. The root of the verb 'to know' in Sanskrit is the same as that of 'to see', and seeing is a non-accumulative process which in meditation can move with what is being experienced, instead of getting caught up in interpretation. Usually when something is seen it sets off a train of associative thought, or an emotional reaction, which takes the mind off at a

tangent until it is far removed from the here-and-now. We lose connection with awareness of the body, which can then no longer speak to us, and we fall asleep in a strange way. Christ said 'Sleep not!' and the Buddha is referred to as the Awakened One, but man spends much of his time in a disassociated state, not really here, not *with* what is happening.

Perhaps the main thing which turns us to the search for a path is mental or physical suffering, and the need for relief. An extension of this in yogic tradition is a wish for perfection, control, or bliss. Self-mastery is also seen in power aspects of Sufism (as distinct from its other path

of service and devotion), and the wish for manipulation is so strong in the West that even technology is used to condition the mind into what is imagined to be meditation. When something 'works' it is immediately exploited for results, orientating towards a goal rather than the personal treading of a path: seeking for the end rather than working *through* what lies on the journey.

The human being has become expert in altering things to suit himself, selecting what he wants; and the other side of that coin is the attempt to avoid or more aggressively reject what is not wanted. So, because what is not wanted is regarded as a threat, an underlying fear is developed, with mind and body building up tension. No matter how many times we still the mind and body through efforts of will, the central hanging-on of ego regenerates defences and represses the natural flow of energy.

If ego defences evolve during spiritual practices, they can be extremely subtle and we become difficult to reach or help. 'Spiritualised ego' is invulnerable in its one-ness, its centredness. Forms of meditation based on the desire for spiritual rather than material achievement could be called spiritual materialism. A person can acquire a taste for being high, using meditation instead of drugs to 'turn on'. Or he may learn how to detach and 'turn off' thoughts and feelings, eliminating these as hindrances to the matter in hand, whereas they *are* the matter in hand— the baby is *in* the bathwater! Transcending obstacles by accelerated methods could turn out to be slow, if it by-passes the real problem. In the race between the tortoise and the hare, for all his speed and efficiency the hare fell asleep while the humble tortoise, accepting his own limitations, plodded on to the end. This is the persistent approach

to path, rather than a precipitation towards goal, and is such a simple attitude that it has been largely obscured. Seekers want more interest than they imagine the bare facts can provide, and after years of conditioning find it difficult to simply stay with the direct experience of what is happening.

Buddhism is unique in that its first Truths can be immediately verified: the facts of Suffering and Clinging. Since the Buddha's day, the study of Buddhism has gathered complications because what he said (or didn't say) has been transmitted through many minds and scriptures, and has blended in with established traditions in different countries. Some Buddhist schools vary so much that they might as well be different religions. But there now seems to be a movement to counteract this, to return to basics, and a fresh approach to Buddhist meditation could emphasise individual experience rather than indoctrination by previous belief systems.

If we take things as they come in meditation, it is going to mean looking not *for* what we think is the Essence, or the Beyond, or No-Mind, but *at* what is actually arising. This needs no previous diagnosis, or long years of doing something else in preparation, but most people need an anchor or meditation object in some form. This should be neither abstract nor fixed, because the flow of things is not abstract or fixed, so the rise and fall of the breathing is attended to as an aid. This is in flux, easily observable, physically 'earthed', and is also what is actually happening. The sitting practice is alternated with a meditation in movement, attending to slow walking. The ongoing nature of walking, and the receiving and losing of the breath, are characteristic of life itself, which gives and takes away and changes

all the time. Even if we try to hang on, such a turning world will twist or break us unless we can learn how to let be. Therefore this meditation is a practice of non-interference, in which self-will is not strengthened. The only will in the work is the willingness to face what comes. The flux of duality is not just a superficial situation, but basic. Ego clings to unity (EKA in Sanskrit means ONE), and in trying to defend itself against OTHER it clashes with the nature of creation. Yogins speak of union with Reality, and Christians or Sufis of unity with God, but if this is conceived as gaining one-ness with a transcendent Being there will be no encounter with the real in appearances, Nirvana *in* Samsara.

In sitting meditation, therefore, there need be no attempt to change or count the breathing—we simply experience it, and anything else that arises in sensation, thought, or feeling, without interfering. There's no 'ought' about what happens, no good or bad meditation. One looks at negative states as well as positive, without expecting a purification process to feel pure! This meditation is based on the Vipassana (or Insight) practice of Theravada Buddhism, but as traditionally taught this emphasised clarity and the penetration of insight to eliminate so-called defilements. Truly open meditation does not have this attitude, and if there is confusion or heaviness instead of clarity and light, it is regarded as material for meditation. In Taoism it is said that he who wants order without disorder does not understand the way things hang together.

Application is used, rather than effort—what the Buddha called diligence, a seeing-and-accepting which is characteristic of the enlightened being, so that the path is not something totally divorced from the nature of its end.

Qualities such as compassion and serenity may arise on the path, but are not methods in themselves, so if they are superimposed by teachers upon states actually arising, as happens in forms of *Samatha* meditation, a subtle kind of repression occurs, and guilt that one is not as one *ought* to be. On the other hand, the exposure and confrontation of negative aspects needs a patient approach, otherwise we shall reject what we see in ourselves and others. The Buddha taught the primal form of Buddhism when he gave what has been called his Flower Sermon. When asked what was the essence of his teaching, he silently looked at a flower in his hand, simply giving it his full attention—a pure transmission of the teaching of awareness.

This is said to be the origin of Zen, but most *Zazen* (or 'just sitting' meditation) has a strong aim of enlightenment, often through the use of koans (problems unanswerable by the intellect) such as 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' The meditator wrestles and suffers with the question until precipitated into Satori, an enlightenment experience, not to be confused with enlightenment! The concentration practised is ambitious, intense, and exclusive, so the sudden transcendence is not easily integrated into life. In the *Zazen* called *Shikantaza*, there is no striving for Satori through a koan, but the breathing is watched with a concentrated attention which has been compared with that of a swordsman poised at risk of his life, developed through practices of counting and controlling the breathing until it is harmonious. However, if 'just sitting' is to mean what it implies, the breathing can be attended to whether harmonious or not, as all disturbance *is as it is*. Choicelessness can be practised from the start, and can continue, with what is called Beginner's Mind. If our purpose is

to get rid of things, we shall not know them. Christ said to Satan: 'Get thee behind me!', but the Buddha in similar temptation said: 'Mara, I know thee'. In other words, he faced Mara and 'met' him, loving him not in a sentimental way but in acceptance and acknowledgement, the basis of love.

The greatest koan of all is really here already without our choice, because

existence itself saturates everything with a profound question mark. There is no need to fix upon a man-made question when a silent mystery is coming through every moment. It's extraordinary, it's so intensely mysterious that we usually turn away from it and hide ourselves in doing or dreaming. But it's calling us all the time through the Suchness of life, which can neither be grasped nor escaped.

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Tender green leaves of summer,  
soft green tendrils of me,  
reaching out and searching gently,  
exploring my space, my reality.

Soft young feelings and precious yearnings,  
secretly expanding, probing with care.  
I am unfolding and feeling my world,  
finding my own potential – me.

**Rosemary Rayner**

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