

Wednesday Night Study Series – “The Power of Now”

Prayer of Surrender: Spirit of Truth, CARRY ME where you will; BRING TO ME what You will; TAKE FROM ME what You will; AWAKEN IN ME what You will. The Christ MAN is around me. The Christ MIND is in me. The Christ POWER flows through me. And, the Christ MYSTERY exists as me. I believe it. I perceive it. And, now I receive it! I am surrendered. Amen. And, so it is!

Beauty Arises in the Stillness of Your Presence

Zen masters use the word *satori* to describe a flash of insight, a moment of no-mind and total presence. Although *satori* is not a lasting transformation, be grateful when it comes, for it gives you a taste of enlightenment. You may, indeed, have experienced it many times without knowing what it is and realizing its importance. For instance, presence is needed to become aware of the beauty, the majesty, the sacredness of nature.

Have you ever gazed up into the infinity of space on a clear night, awestruck by the absolute stillness and inconceivable vastness of it? Have you listened, truly listened, to the sound of a mountain stream in the forest? Or to the song of a blackbird at dusk on a quiet summer evening? To become aware of such things, the mind needs to be still. You have to put down, for a moment, your personal baggage of problems, of past and future, as well as all your knowledge; otherwise you will see but not see, hear but not hear. Your total presence is required.

Beyond the beauty of the external forms, there is more here: something that cannot be named - something ineffable, some deep, inner, holy essence. Whenever and wherever there is beauty, this inner essence shines through somehow. It only reveals itself to you when you are present. Could it be that this nameless essence and your presence are one and the same? Would it be there without your presence? Go deeply into it. Find out for yourself.

When you have experienced these moments of presence in your life, you likely didn't realize that you were briefly in a state of no-mind. This is because the gap between that state and the influx of thought was too narrow. Your *satori* may have only lasted for a few seconds before the mind came back in, but it was there; otherwise, you would not have experienced the beauty.

Mind can neither recognize nor create beauty. Only for a few seconds, while you were completely present, was that beauty or that sacredness there. Because of the narrowness of that gap and a lack of vigilance and alertness on your part, you were probably unable to see the fundamental difference between the perception, the thoughtless awareness of beauty, and the

naming and interpreting of it as thought: The time gap was so small that it seemed to be a single process.

The truth is, however, that the moment thought came in, all you had was a memory of it. The wider the time gap between perception and thought, the more depth there is to you as a human being, which is to say the more conscious you are.

Because we live in such a mind-dominated culture, most modern art, architecture, music, and literature are devoid of beauty, of inner essence, with very few exceptions. The reason is that the people who create those things cannot – even for a moment – free themselves from their mind. So they are never in touch with that place within where true creativity and beauty arise. The mind left to itself creates monstrosities and not only in art galleries. Look at our urban landscapes and industrial wastelands. No civilization has ever produced so much ugliness.

Many people are so imprisoned in their minds that the beauty of nature does not really exist for them. They might say, “What a pretty flower,” but that’s just a mechanical mental labeling. Because they are not still, not present, they don’t truly see the flower, don’t feel its essence, its holiness – just as they don’t know themselves, don’t feel their own essence, their own holiness.

Affirmation: I am not my thoughts. I am not the thinker of my thoughts. I am the observer witnessing the thinker thinking the thoughts. Tonight, I am not the voice in my head or any limitation of an inherited collective cultural conditioning, religious indoctrination or even my past experiences. This week, I will mind my mind, free my mind, be free of my mind and surrender to practice “no mind.”