

Eckhart Tolle and the Zen doctrine of No-mind



‘The beginning of freedom is the realisation that you are not ‘the thinker’. The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated. You then begin to realise that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence. You also realise that all the things that truly matter – beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace – arise from beyond the mind.’

‘Be where you are. Look around. Just look, don’t interpret. See the light, shapes colours textures. Be aware of the silent presence of each thing. Be aware of the space that allows everything to be.’ [E. Tolle *Practising the Power of Now*]

The No-Mind

Presence [Tolle] = Emptiness [Buddha] = Light [Christ] = Reflexive Self Consciousness [Eugene]

‘The infinite when we attend to it wholly is equivalent to nothing. If we get hold of infinity, we are doing that which the Japanese No-Mind specialists aim to do; we get hold of nothing instead of something. The reason why we do this is because if we get hold of nothing first and then get hold of something within the nothing, we can see that thing in isolation from accidental association with other things because the nothing is no-thing – is actually pure conscious power itself. Pure conscious power is no-thing, not a thing, not finite, but it is that in which all finites occur.’

[Eugene Halliday *The No-Mind - 11min in approx*]

‘. . . the seekers after it are to transcend discrimination in all its form and to see into the functioning of Prajna [wisdom] itself. When this is done, *mushin* (*wushin*) is realised, there is no-mind in all our doings, which is the so-called state of ‘no-mind-ness’; this is a life of effortlessness, letting the Unconsciousness live its life.’

[D.T Suzuki *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind*. p116. *his capitals*]

‘Now it is of the utmost importance for beginners in Zen to comprehend its aims clearly. What are we going to attain by doing Zazen? There are three categories:

- 1 Developing concentration of the mind.
- 2 Experiencing satori – awakening or enlightenment.
- 3 Making this experience personal.’

[Ko'un Yamada *On Zen Practise* p 75.]



‘Therefore stop the intellectual practise of investigating words and chasing after talk; study the backward step of turning the light and shining it back. Body and mind will drop away of themselves, and your original face will appear.’

[*Principles of Seated Meditation* Eihei Dogen (1200-1253) trans Beielefeldt]

‘You are cut off from being as long as your mind takes up all your attention. When this happens – and it happens continuously for most people – you are not in your body. The mind absorbs all your consciousness and transforms it into mind stuff. You cannot stop thinking.’

‘As you listen to the thought, you feel a conscious presence – your deeper self – behind, or underneath the thought as it were. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness of being, which is usually obscured by the mind. With practise the sense of peace will deepen. In fact there is no end to its depth.’

‘To become conscious of being you need to reclaim consciousness from the mind . . . It will free vast amounts of consciousness that had previously been trapped in useless and compulsive thinking.’

‘ . . . When we talk about watching the mind we are personalizing an event that is truly of cosmic significance. Through you, consciousness is awakening out of its dream of identification with form and withdrawing from form. This foreshadows, but is already a part of an event that is probably still in the distant future as far as chronological time is concerned. The event is called the End of the World.’

[E.Tolle *Power of Now*]

The Now. Or ‘If not now when?’

‘What, at this moment is lacking?’ Rinzai

And what is God's self-definition in the Bible? Did God say, ‘I have always been, and I always will be?’ Of course not. That would have given reality to past and future. God said: ‘I AM THAT I AM.’ No time here, just presence.

To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time: to live almost exclusively through memory and anticipation. . . Both are illusions.

The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it.

‘Find the narrow gate that leads to life’. It is called the Now.

‘The universe is solid percept . . . this is a very peculiar thing that physics is not unaware of – that there is no empty space. . . That ‘space’ is power. The universe is absolutely solid to the consciousness that perceives at its optimum rate. Now this means that the consciousness will not see the universe serially at all – it will see it one-ly.’ [Eugene Halliday *Here and Now* 58-64 min]

The Inner Body – [edited version for reading to class]

A very effective way of doing this [*stilling the mind*] is simply to take the focus of your attention away from thinking and direct it into the body, where Being can be felt in the first instance as the invisible energy field that gives life to what you perceive as the physical body.

You may find it helpful to close your eyes for this practise. Later on, [] this will no longer be necessary.

Direct your attention into the body. Feel it from within. Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet – in your abdomen, your chest?

Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell? Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy?

Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments. Do not start to think about it. Feel it.

The more attention you give it, the clearer and stronger this feeling will become. It will feel as if every cell is becoming alive, and if you have a strong visual sense, you may get an image of your body becoming luminous. Although such an image, no matter how beautiful or powerful, is already defined in form, so there is less scope for penetrating more deeply. []

Make sure the body is relaxed. Take a few deep breaths. Feel your breathing into the lower abdomen, as it were. Observe how it expands and contracts with each in and out breath.

Then become aware of the entire inner field of the body. Don't think about it – feel it. By doing this, you reclaim consciousness from the mind. If you find it helpful, use the light visualisation, just described.

When you can feel the inner body clearly a single field of energy, let go, if possible of any visual image and focus exclusively on the feeling. If you can also drop any mental image you may still have of the physical body. All that is left then is an all-encompassing sense of presence or 'being-ness', and the inner body is felt to be without a boundary.

Then take your attention even more deeply into that feeling. Become one with it. Merge with the energy field, so that there is no longer a perceived duality of the observer and the observed, of you and your body. The distinction between inner and outer also dissolves now, so there is no inner body anymore. By going deeper into the body, you have transcended the body.

Stay in this realm of pure being for as long as feels comfortable; then become aware again of the physical body, your breathing and physical senses, and open your eyes. Look at your surroundings for a few minutes in a meditative way – that is without labelling them mentally – and continue to feel the inner body as you do so.

Having access to that formless realm is truly liberating. It frees you from bondage to form and identification with form. We may call it the Unmanifested, the invisible source of all things, the being within all beings.

The Pain Body – discussion