

Chapter Nine, Apophatic and Cataphatic Meditations. Of the Book, God is No-thing. The Apophatic Assertion. Copyright Rodger Ricketts Psy.D.,2020. All rights reserved. Protected by international copyright conventions. No part of this chapter may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever, or stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, without express permission of the Author-publisher, except in case of brief quotations with due acknowledgement. Published through CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

## **Apophatic and Cataphatic Meditations**

Apophatic meditation is considered a more tranquil form of meditation in contrast to the Cataphatic or positive meditation. Cataphatic forms of prayer are the most common in the world's religious theology. They are active prayers to a definitive and personal God that which uses an intentional and sustained focus. The object of the prayer has content; it uses words, images, symbols, ideas and visualization, or is or sung. The context wants to be asked for things. with the creator.

There is a clear dualistic, subject/object definition in this 'relationship'. For example, in Christian theology, there is the Praising Prayer of one's transformation into a greater likeness of God, as well as a deeper loving relationship with him. Also, there is the Asking Prayer where the devotee is taught that God wants to be asked for things. It is assured that the son of God, Jesus, will always answer a request with a 'yes'. Assuming that God is interested in any of the details of our lives, all one's desires or needs are important to him and his help can be asked.

### **Apophatic Meditation**

Instead, in the spiritual Path of Transcendence of Apophatic meditation, the devotees empty their mind of words and cravings

and attempt to remain in pure silence. Apophatic meditation quiets the mind of disarray, preoccupation and distraction. It purifies the mind and brings serenity and tranquility. The internal chatter of the mind is calmed, it brings serenity into one's life as well as giving time for inward reflection. Importantly, the necessary preparation for contemplative meditation, perseverance in the consistent living with virtue and grace, is supported by a growing non-attachment of craving to sense based objects.

To show the universality of the application of the apophatic creed, this essay will explore characteristics and examples of different religions approaches to Apophatic meditation.

## **Two main forms of Apophatic meditation**

There are two main forms of Apophatic meditation: both forms are considered foundational and calming, helping the participant to 'lose their self'.

1. **Concentrative** — it is an approach intended to cultivate deeper, clearer, purer, more expansive states of awareness. The practitioner learns to make a distinction between the contents of consciousness (thoughts, feelings, images, etc.) or the conceptual veil or filter superimposed on reality, and instead, perceive reality directly, without any filters - No-thing. This type of practice seeks experiencing the Transcendent as the Ground of pure awareness.

Examples of this practice includes Zazen and Jhana. After the firm establishment of virtuous living, the devotee maintains a balanced sitting posture during meditation, they are quiet, relaxed yet alert. The more the devotee is relaxed, the purer their awareness becomes. The meditator sets aside the active intellect by letting go of conceptualizing and thinking. They do not deliberately think about

anything, stay alert and their consciousness is clear and awake. Zen Dogen Zenji said, “[when you meditate or sit zazen] do not think of either good or evil. Do not be concerned with right or wrong. Put aside the operation of your intellect, volition and consciousness. Stop considering things with your memory, imagination or reflection.” The person is aware, in the here and now with nothing added. It is the practice of being aware in life just as it is. Consciousness has no content. It means emptying the mind of words and ideas and cravings and simply resting non-dualistically in the presence of Now. It is like Shakyamuni Buddha’s meditation under the Bodhi tree 2500 years ago.

**2. Receptive** — it is a more volitional approach in which the ‘divine’ is imagined as a loving partner. Therefore, it is usually considered less insightful and complete in understanding as there is still the slight dualistic influence. This more directed meditation may use prayer or breath, intended to actively invoke the emotion or goal of the meditation.

Becoming aware of one’s breathing is an important focus in this exercise. The practitioner realizes that there is power in the breath and that with inhaling and exhaling they are drawing the divine into their body and releasing it at will. They don’t try to force the breathing and instead, allow the pattern that it takes to continue. The breath soon deepens in reaction to the body calming and resting. The devotee is not afraid to let the ‘self’ be emptied. An important part of this exercise is realizing that even if empty, one is not alone.

## **Examples of Apophatic Meditations**

In this section we will look at examples of the silent insightful method used in different Apophatic spiritual traditions.

## **Contemplative prayer**

The Cloud of Unknowing author's contemplation is apophatic, i.e., the way of no images. This is a prayer of silence or quiet. He urged no strain, instead prayer is like rest, refreshing and not work. He wrote, "*With an empty mind and open heart, let yourself be naked before grace.*" Also, there is intent and a goal, '*It is not who you are or what you've been that God sees with his merciful eyes, but what you want to be.*' Throughout his book, the author urges others to judge no one else. "*Never think you are holier or better than anyone else.*"

## ***The Doors of Silence* from a Theosophy perspective**

Similarly, from a Theosophy perspective, there is a power of silent prayer. It is in silence that one finds the key to the peace 'that passeth understanding.' It may not come immediately nor in accord with selfish wishes and desires, but when the motive is unselfish, it will come. It carries the devotees above and beyond difficulties and the trials of life. By going into the depths of one's being, there wisdom rests and a new quality of intuition is discovered. Finally, with 'feeling' this sublime life, the devotee knows! Once felt, deeply, profoundly, they continually move along the true path.

There is a special power latent in the silences of life. Ideas are gradually purified under such a process, as spiritual ones find their place. Things once deemed necessary are no longer so; and by moving out into an open field of purified thought and aspiration, the devotee moves towards well-being.

From a Theosophy perspective, in the true condition of mind and heart there arises a sweet peace. Behind all form is the spirit of compassion. It is permanent and ever abiding.

Any thoughts or things worried about during this progress become an obstacle to union with No-thing. If thoughts take root in the mind, the mind starts to wander everywhere. The devotee is advised to ignore them. Instead, focus on the silence between the thoughts. For if the mind is cluttered with daily concerns there is no room for silence. If thoughts continue to distract the mind, choose a word like the word Love, or the word Kindness to keep it focused. Every time you find that your mind is wandering, bring your word back into focus and eventually let it go.

## **Important advice for practitioners**

Further advice is to be careful not to stay in the imagination or fantasy. Sometimes, using this prayer, there are feelings of bliss, or by miracles, and all sorts of wondrous things. Ignore them. Pay no attention. Miracles, thoughts, cravings, and fantasies of the brain all belong to ego. They are not divine. They only distract from silence and can only lead to pride and a judgmental attitude. They separate and are dualistic. Look past them and seek silence with its sublime love in No-thing.

## **Mindfulness Zen Meditation**

Next is a summary of Zen Mindfulness as taught by Zen Master G. Arnaud Painvin MD and Catherine Painvin MD.

Zen meditation is the daily practice of:

- Physical concentration by keeping our body still in a specific posture (sitting cross-leg or on a chair) or by walking mindfully.
- Mental concentration by focusing our attention on our breathing while letting go of our ongoing thoughts.

- Zen breathing, the exhale is used as your focusing point to anchor your mind. This is the first step toward the mind control that one will eventually achieve.

Beginning Meditation involves 4 mental stages that are repeated over and over:

1. Focusing our mind on our posture and our breathing (exhale)
2. Being mindful of our incoming thoughts (thoughts will always appear).
3. Letting our thoughts go.....
4. Returning on our breathing ... and so on....over and over.

There is nothing more in Zen meditation: no mantra, no music, no visualization, no candle concentration, no guided meditation. The more one meditates the quicker they will progress as long as they are not judgmental about the practice and results.

## **How does Zen meditation work?**

Meditation acts on three levels: mind control, mindfulness and skill and discovery of our inner self also called “True self”, different from the ego centered “I, me, myself, mine”.

- 1- Control our ego-centered mind and make it quiet and clear. Our deceptive ego-centered mind continues to produce thoughts such as desire, dissatisfaction, anger, fear, anxiety, frustration, resentment, illusion and uncertainty. With meditation we learn to tame our mind and eventually these negative thoughts and emotions are controlled. Our mind becomes then a mirror reflecting things as they are without judgement or decision.
- 2- Becoming mindful of your thoughts, senses, present moment, surroundings, and activities moment to moment without judgement nor action.

3- Discovering the ability of your inner awareness to achieve peace and emptiness within and naturally to help others.

*“Here it is--right now. Start thinking about it and you miss it.”*

— Huang Po

## **Buddhist Jhana Meditation**

*“The real glory of meditation lies not in any method but in its continual living experience of presence, in its bliss, clarity, peace, and most important of all, complete absence of grasping. The diminishing of grasping in yourself is a sign that you are becoming freer of yourself. And the more you experience this freedom, the clearer the sign that the ego and the hopes and fears that keep it alive are dissolving, and the closer you will come to the infinitely generous “wisdom of egolessness.” When you live in the wisdom home, you’ll no longer find a barrier between “I” and “you,” “this” and “that,” “inside” and “outside;” you’ll have come, finally, to your true home, the state of non-duality.’<sup>4</sup> Sogyal Rinpoche*

## **The origins of Jhana – Siddhartha’s experience**

Buddhist scholar Grzegorz Polak has proposed a silent model of Jhana meditation to explain the meditation of Shakyamuni Buddha under the Bodhi tree 2500 years ago to attain Awakening.

The Awakening story begins in the Sutta when Siddhartha Gautama was nine. He became bored at the local annual ploughing festival and he wandered off to a quiet spot and sat in the shade under a rose-apple tree. Relaxing, the young Siddhartha sat cross-legged and while naturally reposed, he focused his awareness on the exhalations and inhalations of his breath. This created a deep mental one-pointedness known as Samadhi, and he thus spontaneously experienced the very pleasant rapture, joy and pleasure of the first Jhana (meditative attainment).

The story continues that later in his life, at the age of twenty-nine, Siddhartha left his home and family to begin his quest for Nibbàna or Nirvāna. This is called his great renunciation. After six years of practicing vigorous self-mortification, the ascetic Siddhartha found himself still without realization of the solution of his quest. With his body badly weakened and with no possibility of success, he decided to give up asceticism, ate some simple food given to him and bathed in the local river. With his body and mind rejuvenated, and with firm determination and complete intuition of the original mind, Siddhartha vowed to remain beneath a large old fig tree, later called Bodhi tree, until attaining enlightenment.

According to the sutta, beginning his meditation, Siddhartha remembered his spontaneous childhood first Jhana experience at the Ploughing Festival. “*Might that be the way to enlightenment?*” he wondered. It seemed almost unbelievable that the simple breath awareness of his childhood could be the key to awakening. However, something from deep within Siddhartha said, “*That is the way to enlightenment.*” He began and persisting with his meditation absorption, Siddhartha distinguished between sense-based hedonic pleasure and the eudaemonic pleasure created by a one-pointedness of mind. Deep in his mind, the intrinsic wholeness of the Original Mind, wanted to actualize itself and become fully conscious. Gautama continued refining his experience by persisting to let go, to end cravings until he reached liberation and at the age of thirty-five, on a full moon night in May (vesàkha/vesak), he attained Supreme Awakening and became the Buddha, the Great Healer, who discovered the cure for the suffering of sentient beings.

The Buddha taught about his Awakening, ‘*When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints. I directly knew as it is:*



*'This is suffering'; ... 'This is the origin of suffering'; ... 'This is the cessation of suffering'; ... 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering'; ... 'These are the taints'; ... 'This is the origin of the taints'; ... 'This is the cessation of the taints'; ... 'This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.'*

*"When I knew and saw thus, my mind was liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it was liberated there came the knowledge: 'It is liberated.' ... "This was the third true knowledge attained by me in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished, and light arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute. But such pleasant feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.'*

## **The State of Jhāna**

Like other Apophatic traditions, the foundation of Jhāna meditation is the stable establishment of virtue, sense-restraint, freedom from dogma, freedom from social identity, mindfulness, and clear comprehension in a devotee's life. Therefore, once virtue is firmly established, to attain the different levels of Jhāna, one does nothing more than sit serenely in a quiet environment as the Buddha did under the Bodhi tree. By doing so, the devotee naturally brings the inherent Jhana qualities to a higher level.

In other words, according to Professor Polak, there is no distinct 'method' of 'practicing' the jhāna. One should simply sit quietly and enter in a deep and relaxed state. By doing this, all hindrances will become removed in a gradual way and the devotee becomes aware of and let's go of everything that takes them away from a direct awareness of 'life' or Being.

In the early stages of meditation, the practitioner becomes aware of their constantly arising thoughts, intentions, desires and memories

and they actively strive to let go of those activities by remaining focused on their breath. Maintaining awareness of one's activity of breathing in and breathing out is a lower stage of mindfulness, because all positive intentions and focused awareness on the process of breathing, takes one away from the direct awareness of the breath. To progress, the devotee becomes aware of their intentional efforts connected with the breath. Gradually, gross preconceptions are dispelled, opening the possibility of removing the more subtle ones. While the gross hindrances become obvious in meditation, ordinarily people are not aware of them as such during normal life.

As Polak asserts, once we intentionally attempt to be mindful, we interfere with the uniqueness of these moments and create something different. In the Dvedhāvitakka Sutta (MN 19), the 'positive' and concentrative cultivation of active thinking is rejected as obstructive to the goal of Awakening. The very act of 'trying to be mindful' adds something artificial. If we are 'positively' mindful, this means that we are working with our retrospection, with a mental image created artificially by our memory, and not with the neutral, ever present 'here and now'.

## **Natural Jhāna and the stages to samādhi: An Apophatic experience**

On the path to enlightenment, the devotee progresses through the naturally increasingly formless or cognitively de-constructed levels of states of mind. Throughout the Jhanic experience, feelings such as friendliness, sympathetic joy, non-partiality, compassion, and empathy naturally develop. Also, to the devotee it becomes clearer that 'ego' boundaries are cognitively constructed, self-imposed, and impermanent. At each level of evolving understanding, there is a new degree of 'freedom of mind;' freedom from being embedded in the lower, more condensed levels of cognition. Eventually, the formless level described as the complete 'transcending of apperceptions or

conceptions of form,' 'unbound' and 'the plane of no-thing-ness' is experienced. Having experienced these various levels and having realized the role of cognition-dependent construction, the devotee sees 'the way things really are' in their original state or emptiness.

A well-known formula (AN 4.41/ii.44) describes the fourfold development of right samādhi: first, pleasant abiding here and now, second, knowledge and vision, third, mindfulness and full awareness, and fourth, to the release from mental defilements of sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and ignorance. Polak asserts that these are not the description of four separate types of meditation but instead they are four complementary aspects of the same meditative practice: the jhānas.

The meditator in the state of jhāna naturally and progressively experiences radiating metta, karuna, mudita and upekkhā (or loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity) that represent the 'divine' or highest levels of mundane consciousness. These are descriptions of states of the experiences of jhāna, not 'instructions' on how to practice jhāna.

The final stage occurs, when the practitioner 'realizes' that he/she is not simply breathing in and breathing out, but rather they are 'perceiving' their breaths. This is the falling away of interpretations. The direct awareness in the now of the devotee's activities, whatever they are, leads to the stopping of thoughts, to the arising of joy and to attainment of a higher state of consciousness.

In the final stages of jhāna, the devotee no longer forms saññās or perceptions or cognitions that can be defined as grasping at the distinguishing features or characteristics of the experience. When they no longer form interpretations, it also means that they no longer grasp at nimittas or mental signs, images, or visions that arise in meditation. Since interpretations operate by grasping nimittas, when there are no nimittas, the concentration is undirected, unfocused. Therefore, jhāna becomes a state devoid of cognitive interpretations.

The senses function in an uninterrupted way. Being mindful is the only thing left and the cognition or identification of self no longer applies. This brings awareness of being 'empty' of self or anything that pertains to self.

Philosopher Keiji Nishitani explicates further:

*"To speak of a mind that sees things, a self within that views what is on the outside, does not refer to experience in its pure form but only in a later explanation of experience. In direct experience there is no self, No-thing, nothing separate or individual at all. [...] We cannot think in terms of things existing on the outside and a mind existing on the inside. This is a later standpoint; the prior standpoint is that of pure experience where subject and object is one and undifferentiated. The ultimate integrity of experience is in its indivisibility into "experience" and "content."*<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, 'Mindfulness', 'understanding', and 'knowledge' is not seen as discriminative 'conscious activities' or 'distinct psychological phenomena'. That is why, no special method of 'insight' is needed. The final stage of jhana mindfulness of breathing is reached by becoming aware of and letting go of everything that takes the devotee away from it. Buddhist scholar Susan Hamilton wrote: *'This is what pure experience is: neither the world nor "I" in it other than experience.'*<sup>11</sup>

So eventually the devotee understands that he/she cannot be mindfully an observer in a discriminative way of one's own activities. If they are judgmental about what they are doing, this means that the devotee is living in the reflection of the past. The pinnacle of mindfulness of breathing is when there is only the breathing body experienced. This very state brings with it the liberating insight

So, we encounter the original apophatic dilemma: is it possible to explain or describe experience, especially transcendent experience? How will we be able to know it? From the Apophatic perspective, it is perfectly plausible to know life experience which is 'reality', the All,

etc., if we do not try to define, differentiate, label, and substantiate it. This is what the Buddha did. Through deeply releasing all cognitive thoughts, interpretations and constructions, he comprehended that all is impermanent, and co-originating and he remained blissfully in Emptiness which also had the corresponding opening of his heart to all the emotions related to knowing that all is interconnected, an inter-being.

## **Learning to Be Still: A Reflection on Apophatic Meditation in the Baha'i Faith**

Let us look at an example of apophatic theology from the Baha'i Faith. The founder Baha'u'llah explains that one hour of reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship. We are told explicitly in his writings to “pray and meditate”, to “reflect”, to “ponder awhile”, and to “contemplate” upon the Creative Word.

Baha'u'llah tells us that, *‘In my quest to learn how to ‘sit still’, whilst I have realized that stillness and particularly silence are essential, as: “...the sign of the intellect is contemplation and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at one time – he cannot both speak and meditate.’ Make ye every effort that out of this ideal mind there may gleam forth such pearls of wisdom and utterance as will promote the well-being and harmony of all the kindreds of the earth.’*

Thus, meditation, despite being one of the most personal, private, and intimate communions between the practitioner and the All, is also, inextricably, a part of what allows for the growth and development of the social fabric of humankind itself. And so, as the practitioner closes their eyes and allow themselves to be still, it is no longer about the seconds, minutes or hours, instead, it is the desire to truly connect with “that mystic feeling which unites man with

‘God’ and to strive to become “empty and pure from every mention and thought...[to] forget all besides God”. So that through this faculty of meditation, “the light breaks forth and reality is revealed”.

Abdu'l-Baha was the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh and he served as head of the Bahá'í Faith from 1892 until 1921. He described meditation and where it can lead; *‘meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state, man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood, he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves.’*

Baha'u'llah encouraged his followers to accept and develop the self-discipline of a spiritual life. For Baha'is, this is a daily practice of spirituality that leads to self-exploration and a consistent reflection on the devotees' own actions. Many modern people instinctively shy away from developing this kind of spiritual life. Even though they can still hear the promptings of their intuition, many people have rejected for various reasons spiritual constraints on their behavior. Because specifically the Baha'i Faith has no clergy, and because Baha'is believe in the independent investigation of truth and in individual responsibility for their own behavior, the development of a consistent, regular foundation of virtue, compassion and wisdom of the spiritual practice of self-reflection and moral inventory becomes very important.

## **Emmett Fox: the Christian Practice of Meditation or Prayer**

Finally, we will look at the Christian teacher Emmett Fox's apophatic teachings that the spiritual life is the search for higher states of consciousness and nothing else. The higher level of understanding is the goal. For Fox, the secret of effective prayer is to cultivate

simplicity, spontaneity and to be quiet. Spiritual development is not to be hurried but is a matter of growth and requires steady, honest, and genuine striving for spiritual purification. Spiritual growth is from inner to outer. Fox says that if one prays and meditates from outside pressure just because a devotee thinks it is a duty or they will feel guilty if not done, the prayers will be dead. one will make no spiritual progress and will get no joy. But when meditating the devotee feels connected with the ALL, and feels blissful, then the devotee is working from within outward. Their spiritual growth will be fruitful, and they will grow very rapidly in spiritual understanding.

For Fox, prayer is to wean the heart from relying upon outer things, either for pleasurable gratification or for spiritual salvation, and to inculcate a new attitude of mind altogether. Fox used the example as set forth in the Christian Beatitudes. To be poor in spirit means to have emptied yourself of all desire to exercise personal self-will, and, from the apophatic perspective what is just as important; to have renounced all preconceived opinions about 'God'.

For Fox, the scripture 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see 'God', sums up in a few words that God has no corporeal form, and therefore, there is no question of "seeing" Him in the ordinary physical sense. If one could see God in this way, He would be limited, and therefore, not God. To "see" in the sense referred to in the scripture, signifies spiritual perception, and spiritual perception means that capacity to apprehend the true nature of Being.

To see is to apprehend Truth as it really is, and this is freedom and perfect bliss. It is not enough for a devotee to accept the Truth with only the rational, logical mind. At that stage it is still a mere opinion. It is not until it is known by the heart/mind, and thus assimilated into the whole mentality, can it make any difference in one's character or life.

## **Fox's instructions on wholesome managing of mental and emotion states**

Fox also discusses at length about mental states and thoughts. For him, like other apophatic teachers, thoughts influence everyone and are significant in managing a person's everyday life and in the development of their spiritual foundation. Every outward act is the sequel to a thought and intention and when we persist, it becomes habitual either for good or not. It is much easier to overcome unwholesomeness when one deals with it immediately, with mindfulness. Fox recommends that once there is awareness of it, turn to it without delay, repudiate it. Otherwise, the original problem becomes multiplied by wrong thoughts, thinking expansion, perseveration on a problem, negativity, or saturating ourselves with thoughts of misery.

In fact, states of consciousness, thoughts and beliefs, these are important on our spiritual Path. If the thought is wholesome, a deed cannot be unwholesome. If one's mental states are 'right', everything else must be right too, whereas, if these are 'wrong', nothing else can be right.

All one's experiences—are but the manifestation of their mental states. In other words, the 'world is not only the devotee's outer experience but inner world'. Everyone can think as they will; and thus, one makes or mars their lives by the way they think. According to Fox, Jesus constantly said that a person has no direct power over outer things, because these outer things are but consequences. The vital importance is "righteousness," or the thinking of harmonious and virtuous thoughts. In fact, some degree of serenity is essential to the attainment of any true concentration.

For success in prayer or meditation the devotee must first attain some degree of true peace of mind. 'Pray with no strain and you are



filled with peace'. The great enemy of prayer or meditation is a sense of tension.

This true, interior peace is known to the mystics as serenity. A devotee must have serenity before they can make any true spiritual progress. If they lack serenity, or peace, it is not possible to attain very much. The peacemakers spoken of in the Beatitude are those who bring about a true peace, or serenity, in themselves. They understand experientially the All or No-thing. This condition of mind is the objective at which all mystics aim in their instructions.

Crucially, the practitioner is merciful in their thought. To do this Fox recommended Resist not evil. When a person resists mentally any undesirable or unwanted circumstance, they create more power to the unwanted and become depleted. Just as the Buddha said, meet hate with love. Get rid of indignation, resentment, and revenge. Let it go, be positive. Instead, one reacts to fear through understanding and compassion. This also often changes the other person's reactions in a positive way.

Be merciful in mental judgments of each other, for, in truth, all are one. By freeing others from condemnation, it is also possible to absolve oneself from self-condemnation.

## Summary

*By itself, "liberating knowledge" is 'empty' and can only be spoken of properly in connection to its effects. If one no longer clings to the objects of the six senses, no longer reacts to them with attachment or aversion, then the devotee has achieved full insight into Emptiness or No-thing. There is no longer any doubt about his or her own existence, and they no longer seek anything more. Awakening is found in this life, and there is no confirmation in an afterlife. Sogyal Rinpoche.*

In this essay we reviewed several Apophatic methods to access the Oneness or No-thing. They all begin with the incorporation of virtue, compassion/kindness and wisdom to oneself and others into everyday life. By giving up the cravings and obsession

with sense gratifications, anger/resentments and egotistic selfishness based on a dualistic worldview, one's life is dominated by a degree of true peace of mind created by a virtuous mind and action: at this point, one is ready to move to the higher levels through meditation/prayer.

The supreme non- dualistic apprehension of existence is accomplished by consistently bending one's awareness to the natural and higher, purer states of mind. Release from the lower to higher states is accomplished by silencing the separation created by dualism and the subject/other split. In other words, his pure experience, unveiled for the Buddha the cognitively based complementary relationship of the dualistic subjective/objective world. Therefore, the prescription is to do nothing, relax, be alert and figuratively let the mind, or allegorically 'the lotus flower blossom', rise above the 'muddy paddy field' of worldly concerns. The final stage of meditation is reached by becoming aware of and letting go of everything that alienates us away from being present in the All. When that happens, we understand and empathically feel that everything is inter-being, interconnected and all living Beings are Family of the Universe or divine. The realm of pure experience is not an ontological category, but the ordinary world of phenomena experienced directly, with no intervening conceptualization. Finally, as philosopher, educator and writer, Martin Buber wrote, *"Now from my own unforgettable experience I know well that there is a state in which the bonds of the personal nature of life seem to have fallen away from us and we experience an undivided unity.... I can elicit from those experiences only that in them I reached an undifferentiable unity of myself without form or content. I may call this an original pre-biographical unity and suppose that it is hidden unchanged beneath all biographical change, all development and complication of the soul."*