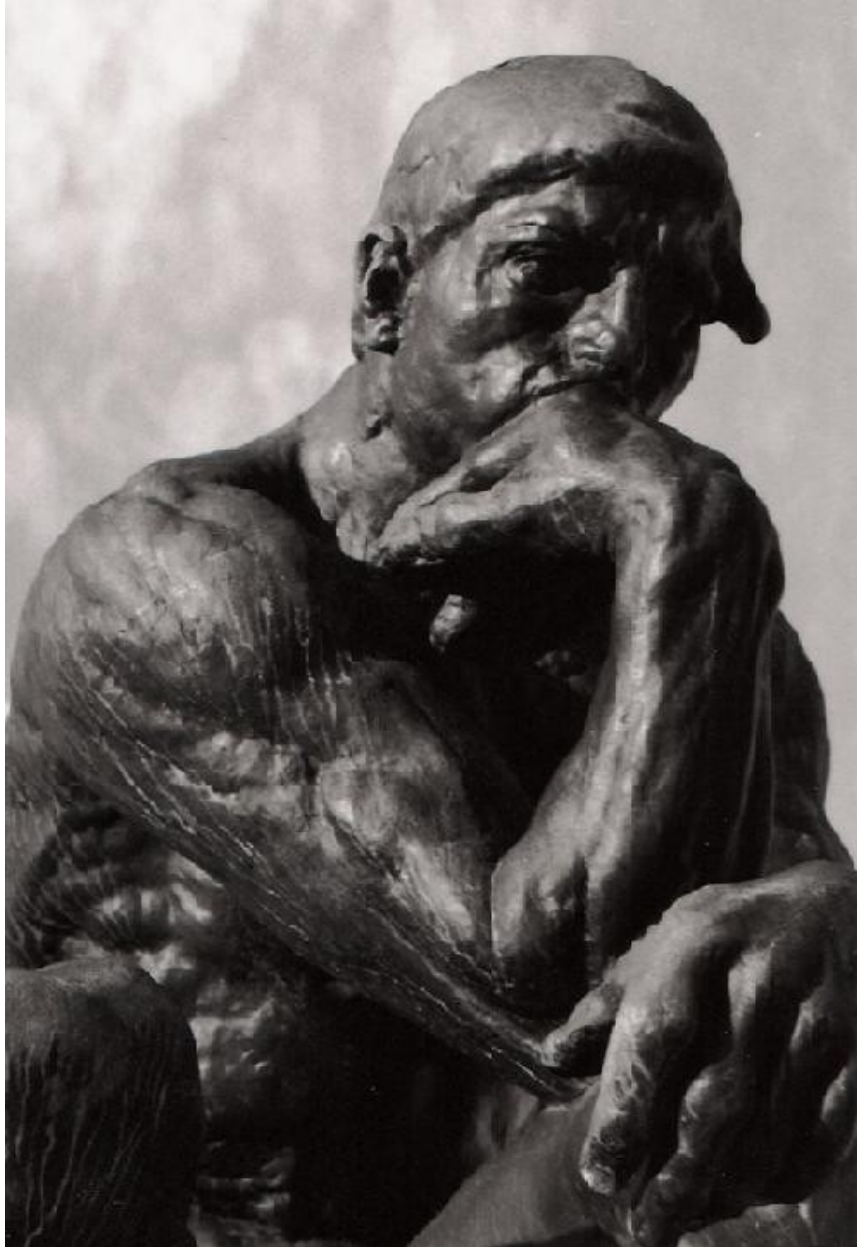


INSIGHT

The Wheel of Life



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The Buddha was sitting quietly under a tree when a young monk approached him. Bowing respectfully to his teacher, he said, “I am confused. I have heard people here speak of mindfulness, and I have tried to be mindful of my body, mindful of every action, and mindful of the world, but I see nothing to it. What is it that I am missing in this?”

“It is excellent you have asked this question, because what you are describing has never been taught by Me. It is not what I teach, so I am saddened to hear you learned this from people who claim to practice my method of Jhana meditation.”

“I didn't learn it from you, but people representing you and your teachings teach this, and say this is what you teach.”

“This is terrible! Already people are distorting what I have said, and are teaching false doctrines based on their own minds. They have no experience upon which to base their beliefs, but are hungry to be teachers, when they don't know anything. This is how my teachings will continue to decay, so it is good you come here and ask this question, so we

can slow the speed of decay. Let me ask you, when you practice mindfulness, where is the one who is mindful?

I don't know exactly.

“The Buddha points to his head and asks, “Is the one who is mindful in and around your head?”

“Of course. Who else could be mindful? This is what mindfulness is, isn't it?”

“Look at your mind. It is constantly moving here and there and you think you are mindful. You look at your body and say you are mindful of it. You look at My body and are mindful. You look at the sky and you say you are mindful. Are these experiences in and around your head? Are these experiences just your mind, so we call them mindfulness?”

“Yes, of course. They are my mind, they are in and around my head, so we naturally call them mindfulness.”

“What are my basic teachings, as you understand

them.”

“You speak of suffering and the path to end suffering.”

“And what is the cause of suffering?”

“Attachment?”

“And what attachment is there that leads to suffering?”

“Well, every kind of attachment leads to suffering.”

“What one attachment leads to all other attachments?”

“It must be the attachment to ME. If I were not attached to ME, then there would be no other attachments.”

“Yes, and now that you are practicing mindfulness, is there the sense of ME?”

“Yes, I am the one who is practicing mindfulness,

so there is always a sense of ME.”

“Exactly, so what is this technique? How is it different than using your mind for anything else?”

“I include watching my body and I include ME watching everything in this awareness.”

“And when you include your body and ME watching, it is still your mind including these things?”

“Yes.”

“And there is a heightened sense of ME?”

“Oh! Well, yes. I suppose I have a heightened sense of ME, But this is mindfulness, isn't it?”

“Yes. This is mindfulness and it is just the mind and a fuller sense of ME. It is just thoughts and images in your head. You have said it is attachment to ME, which leads to suffering, and here you see mindfulness enhances that ME attachment. Do you believe that thoughts and images in your head,

which enhance the ME feeling, are capable of liberating you from suffering?

“No, I now see what you mean. Mindfulness enhances the Me attachment and suffering. It is not an escape from suffering.”

“Would a fully enlightened being, one who has completely gone beyond suffering teach such a method to attain liberation?”

“My great teacher, I think it would be impossible for such a teacher to teach such foolish things, but if this is not what you are teaching, what it is that I should be learning?”

“Yes my son, what should you be learning? It seems many followers are teaching falsely, so we need to clarify what is true, so my followers again understand. Do you understand “the circle in the dirt”?

“I think so. You are saying that everything we can know or do is inside a circle. Every sense has a limit as well as the mind, and those limits create the

circle.”

“Have you experienced the circle as a reality for yourself? Have you experienced your circle in the dirt?”

“No, I haven't.”

“Look at the ground here blankly, not allowing yourself to focus on any one thing.”

“OK.”

“Do you see your attention suddenly move to one object, without you willing it?”

“Yes, I relaxed my vision so as not to focus on anything, and waited silently. Suddenly my attention was automatically directed to a small stone.”

“OK. Do the same thing again, and find out if attention occurs inside your head, or out at the object. Watch very carefully.”

“Amazing! The attention seems to occur at the object.”

“Yes, the first flash of attention feels like it occurs at the object. Now let's do it again, and watch what the attention does. When the first attention occurs, relax and wait for the second attention to occur.”

“OK....this is a little difficult, sometimes things are moving quickly. I need to repeat this. This is a very strange experiment, very subtle. There are very quick movements of this attention, but the first attention is always at the object. Then many things can happen. Sometimes they are quick and sometimes they are slower, but the attention always comes back to ME, inside my body, sometimes at my head and sometimes at my heart. The attention sometimes is instantly at an object, and in the next instant is back at ME. Sometimes the attention waits a second and then comes back to me. Also there are other sequences, like attention quickly goes to many places and then jumps back to ME. I have never seen this before. What is this?”

“Let's investigate. If you sit here and quietly do

your mindfulness meditation with eyes open and blankly observe what your attention does, what is happening?”

“OK. Let me try this....this is odd. My attention just jumps from one ME feeling to the next ME inside my body, sometimes at my head, and sometimes at my heart.”

“How meaningful is this style of meditation. How meaningful is this experience?”

“When you say it like this, I feel foolish. This is a worthless experience allowing attention to just go to ME ME ME, head-ME heart-ME. This is silliness, a worthless experience.”

“If you sat like this for one hundred years, do you think you would find liberation?”

“NO! In seconds I am bored with this repetitious nonsense of ME and want to stop it. I want to do something else.”

“Yes, me too. Ha Ha. Imagine the infinite stars in

the sky, then relax with unfocused eyes and mind, and tell me what the attention does.”

“This is crazy! My attention just goes from my image to ME in my head, back and forth quickly and constantly. It's out of control! But this feels better than ME ME ME, but this is not worth much.”

“Yes, there are many such fool's games being played by people who think they are meditating. Some just love the Me Me Me drumbeat. Some like the Me-dream Me dream Me-dream drumbeat. Now you have seen those drumbeats clearly, so we move on. So let's stare at the ground again blankly and wait for attention to move, and see attention go outside to an object and return to ME, repeatedly. When attention returns to the ME, do you see that you have the feeling of you having knowledge of the object?”

“Yes, when the attention snaps back to ME, then I feel I know the object, and sometimes the attention goes very quickly back and forth and builds more knowledge about the object.”

Yes, exactly. This movement of the attention is automatic and without your volition. You have not done anything except soften the focus of your eyes and mind, and the activity of attention, making contact with an object and quickly jumping back to the Me, was able to be seen.”

“I have never seen anything like this before. Is this mediation? Is this mindfulness? Liberation?”

“No no. this is just simply a little insight. This is just the first few minutes of basic insight that anyone should have. How many minutes have we been talking together? How long did it take you to have this insight? It is not so difficult.”

The people who have taught me claim to have your teachings, but now I see that they have not even had a few minutes of your teachings and insight. This is incredible. They are deceiving many people with their nonsense. I am very fortunate to have had these few minutes. Although this seems like great insight, far beyond anything I have heard or seen, you say it is just a small insight. There must be so

much more, so help me gain more insight.

“Yes, we need to move onward. With relaxed eyes and mind, let your attention go towards the horizon and let it contact something there.”

“OK. I have done that.”

“And you feel the attention make contact and come back to the ME inside your body?”

“Yes, it does it very rapidly now, back and forth very quickly, in a flash it there, and then it is here.”

“Now if your attention slowly rises into the sky, just allowing the attention to make its own contact, not pushing it. You go completely across the sky slowly to the other horizon, what happens. What do you experience?”

“This is interesting. When I do this my attention is marking out an arch above me, like the top of a circle. Then the attention keeps moving back to ME, but this ME feeling is definitely in my heart. So my heart is the center of an arch created by my attention

moving to the sky and back to my heart. I have never seen this before, and when I get near the other horizon, I see or know that the same curve is below me also. This is just a circle with my heart at the center. How strange. When I see this, I think to myself this circle is everywhere, my heart is the center of some kind of globe of attention created around me, so I quickly direct my attention, and it is true. My attention has created a globe around my heart. This is uncanny. Who has ever heard of this thing? Do you teach everybody to see this?”

“Yes. Every one who follows me knows this circle in the dirt. Everyone who knows me knows the spinning wheel of attention, the spinning wheel of life. This is just a few minutes into insight, so how could someone who says they know me, know my teachings, not know this?”

I think it is impossible for anyone who listens to you for just a few minutes, would not know these amazing insights.”

Yes, my son. This is true. This Dharma Chakra, this dharma wheel, the circle in the dirt, is known by all

who know me, but this is again just a little insight. It is just the realization of the extent of Maya, the extent of mind consciousness. We have to have more insight. We have seen the circle in the dirt and we know it is caused by attention making contact and coming back to the ME in the heart, continually. So a wise person, upon seeing this might say, "I have seen this, and this is what I am. This appears to be all I am. When I have insight, this is as far as my life goes. It is just a circle in the dirt. Why am I so absorbed in this game of attention? It only brings me suffering. I should quit this bad habit if I want to live without suffering. Attention is just creating an infinite spinning wheel of suffering. Are these not the thoughts of a wise man?"

“Yes, my Lord. I wish I had the wisdom to speak those words. I am happy you have said them for me. I may not be wise, but I want to free myself from this spinning wheel of suffering, which you have shown me. How do I do that?”

“Think carefully. How are you participating in attention?”

“I am not sure? It seems like I follow it. When attention contacts an object, I am out there. I feel it out there. When it comes to my heart, I am here in my body, at the heart. So my participation is following attention.”

“When you follow a spinning wheel around and around with your eyes, you soon get very dizzy and lose sight of everything around you. If you step back and allow the wheel to spin without you, what happens?”

“My body suddenly becomes blissful...more and more blissful. What is this?”

“This is day one.”

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