

**The Only Meditation There Is:  
Watching**

Osho: The Great Zen Master Ta Hui, Chapter 28

**The Sutra:**

**Not "keeping the mind still," but mindlessness.**

Though you may not fully know whether the teachers of the various localities are wrong or right, if your own basis is solid and genuine, the poisons of wrong doctrines will not be able to harm you, "keeping the mind still" and "forgetting concerns" included. If you always "forget concerns" and "keep the mind still," without smashing the mind of birth and death, then the delusive influences of form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness will get their way, and you'll inevitably be dividing emptiness into two.

Let go and make yourself vast and expansive. When old habits suddenly arise, don't use mind to repress them. At just such a time, it's like a snowflake on a red-hot stove. For those with a discerning eye and a familiar hand, one leap and they leap clear.

Only then do they know lazy Jung's saying: right when using mind, there's no mental activity. Crooked talk defiled with names and forms, straight talk without complications. Without mind but functioning, always functioning but non-existent -- the mindlessness I speak of now is not separate from having mind. These aren't words to deceive people.

There has been a long misunderstanding about these two things: keeping the mind still and mindlessness. There have been many people who have thought that they are synonymous. They appear to be synonymous, but in reality they are as far apart as two things can be, and there is no way to bridge them.

So first let us try to find the exact meanings of these two words, because the whole of Ta Hui's sutra this evening is concerned with the understanding of the difference.

The difference is very delicate. A man who is keeping his mind still and a man who has no mind will look exactly alike from the outside, because the man who is keeping his mind still is also silent. Underneath his silence there is great turmoil, but he is not allowing it to surface. He is in great control.

The man with no mind, or mindlessness, has nothing to control. He is just pure silence with nothing repressed, with nothing disciplined -- just a pure empty sky.

Surfaces can be very deceptive. One has to be very alert about appearances, because they both look the same from the outside -- both are silent. The problem would not have arisen if the still mind was not easy to achieve. It is easy to achieve. Mindlessness is not so easy to achieve; it is not cheap, it is the greatest treasure in the world.

Mind can play the game of being silent; it can play the game of

being without any thoughts, any emotions, but they are just repressed, fully alive, ready to jump out any moment. The so-called religions and their saints have fallen into the fallacy of stilling the mind. If you go on sitting silently, trying to control your thoughts, not allowing your emotions, not allowing any movement within you, slowly slowly it will become your habit. This is the greatest deception in the world you can give to yourself, because everything is exactly the same, nothing has changed, but it appears as if you have gone through a transformation.

The state of no-mind or mindlessness is just the opposite of stilling the mind -- it is getting beyond the mind. It is creating such a distance between yourself and the mind that the mind becomes the farthest star, millions of light years away, and you are just a watcher. When the mind is stilled you are the controller. When the mind is not, you are the watcher. These are the distinguishing marks.

When you are controlling something you are in tension; you cannot be without tension, because that which is controlled is continuously trying to revolt against you, that which is enslaved wants freedom. Your mind sooner or later will explode with vengeance.

A story I have loved....

In a village there was a man of a very angry and aggressive type, so violent that he had killed his wife, for something trivial. The whole village was afraid of the man because he knew no argument except violence.

The day he killed his wife by throwing her into a well, a Jaina monk was passing by. A crowd had gathered, and the Jaina monk said, "This mind full of anger and violence will lead you to hell."

The situation was such that the man said, "I also want to be as silent as you are, but what can I do? I don't know anything. When anger grips me I'm almost unconscious, and now I have killed my own beloved wife."

The Jaina monk said, "The only way to still this mind, which is full of anger and violence and rage, is to renounce the world." Jainism is a religion of renunciation, and the ultimate renunciation is even of clothes. The Jaina monk lives naked, because he is not allowed to possess even clothes.

The man was of a very arrogant type, and this became a challenge to him. Before the crowd he threw his clothes also into the well with the wife. The whole village could not believe it; even the Jaina monk became a little afraid, "Is he mad or something?" The man fell down at his feet and said, "You may have taken many decades to reach the stage of renunciation.... I renounce the world, I renounce everything. I am your disciple -- initiate me."

His name was Shantinath, and shanti means "peace." It often happens...if you see an ugly woman, most probably her name will be Sunderbhai, which means "beautiful woman." In India

people have a strange way...to the blind man they give the name Nayan Sukh. Nayan Sukh means "one whose eyes give him great pleasure."

The Jaina monk said, "You have a beautiful name. I will not change it; I will keep it, but from this moment you have to remember that peace has to become your very vibration."

The man disciplined himself, stilled his mind, fasted long, tortured himself, and soon became more famous than his master. Angry people, arrogant people, egoistic people can do things which peaceful people will take a little time to do. He became very famous, and thousands of people used to come just to touch his feet.

After twenty years he was in the capital. A man from his village had come for some purpose, and he thought, "It will be good to go and see what transformation has happened to Shantinath. So many stories are heard -- that he has become a totally new man, that his old self is gone and a new, fresh being has arisen in him, that he really has become peace, silence, tranquility."

So the man went with great respect. But when he saw Muni Shantinath, seeing his face, his eyes, he could not think that there had been any change. There was none of the grace which necessarily radiates from a mind which has become silent. Those eyes were still as egoistic -- in fact they had become more pointedly egoistic. The man's presence was even more ugly than it used to be.

Still, the man went close. Shantinath recognized the man, who had been his neighbor -- but now it was beneath his dignity to recognize him. The man also saw that Shantinath had recognized him, but he was pretending that he did not. He thought, "That shows much." He went close by Shantinath and asked, "Can I ask you a question? What is your name?"

Naturally, great anger arose in Shantinath because he knew that this man knew perfectly well what his name was. But still he kept himself in control, and he said, "My name is Muni Shantinath."

The man said, "It is a beautiful name -- but my memory is very short, can you repeat it again? I have forgotten...what name did you say?"

This was too much. Muni Shantinath used to carry a staff. He took the staff in his hand...he forgot everything -- twenty years of controlling the mind -- and he said, "Ask again and I will show you who I am. Have you forgotten? -- I killed my wife, I am the same man."

Only then did he recognize what had happened....

In a single moment of unconsciousness he realized that twenty years have gone down the drain; he has not changed at all. But millions of people feel great silence in him.... Yes, he has become very controlled, he keeps himself repressed, and it has paid off. So much respect and he has no qualification for that

respect -- so much honor, even kings come to touch his feet.

Your so-called saints are nothing but controlled animals. The mind is nothing but a long heritage of all your animal past. You can control it, but the controlled mind is not the awakened mind.

The process of controlling and repressing and disciplining is taught by all the religions, and because of their fallacious teaching humanity has not moved a single inch -- it remains barbarous. Any moment people start killing each other. It does not take a single moment to lose themselves; they forget completely that they are human beings, and something much more, something better is expected of them. There have been very few people who have been able to avoid this deception of controlling mind and believing that they have attained mindlessness.

To attain mindlessness a totally different process is involved: I call it the ultimate alchemy. It consists only of a single element -- that of watchfulness.

Gautam Buddha is passing through a town when a fly comes and sits on his forehead. He is talking to his companion, Ananda, and he just goes on talking and moves his hand to throw off the fly. Then suddenly he recognizes that his movement of the hand has been unconscious, mechanical. Because he was talking consciously to Ananda, the hand moved the fly mechanically. He stops and although now there is no fly, he moves his hand again consciously.

Ananda says, "What are you doing? The fly has gone away...."

Gautam Buddha says, "The fly has gone away...but I have committed a sin, because I did it in unconsciousness."

The English word "sin" is used only by Gautam Buddha in its right meaning. The word "sin" originates in the roots which mean forgetfulness, unawareness, unwatchfulness, doing things mechanically -- and our whole life is almost mechanical. We go on doing things from morning to evening, from evening to morning, like robots.

A man who wants to enter into the world of mindlessness has to learn only one thing -- a single step and the journey is over. That single step is to do everything watchfully. You move your hand watchfully; you open your eyes watchfully; you walk, you take your steps alert, aware; you eat, you drink, but never allow mechanicalness to take possession over you. This is the only alchemical secret of transformation.

A man who can do everything fully consciously becomes a luminous phenomenon. He is all light, and his whole life is full of fragrance and flowers. The mechanical man lives in dark holes, dirty holes. He does not know the world of light; he is like a blind man. The man of watchfulness is really the man who has eyes.

Ta Hui slowly, slowly is penetrating into the deeper secrets of inner transformation. He says, Though you may not fully

know whether the teachers of the various localities are wrong or right, if your own basis is solid and genuine, the poisons of wrong doctrines will not be able to harm you....

He says it is useless to think who is right and who is wrong. There are thousands of doctrines, hundreds of philosophies, and if you go on searching for truth in those words, you will be lost in a jungle where you cannot find the path. All that you know is to attain to a solid basis within yourself.

..."Keeping the mind still," and "forgetting concerns" included. If you always "forget concerns" and "keep the mind still," without smashing the mind of birth and death, then the delusive influences of form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness will get their way, and you will inevitably be dividing emptiness into two.

Let go and make yourself vast and expansive....

It is not a question of controlling yourself separate from existence; it is a question of letting-go and becoming vast -- as vast as existence itself. And in watchfulness you become infinite: that is the only thing within you which has no limits.

Just have a look at your watching, witnessing. It is unlimited. No beginning, no end...it is formless.

This absolute stillness of the mind is exactly no-mind or mindlessness. It is not control, it is not discipline; it is not that you are putting all your pressure on your mind and keeping it silent. No, it is simply not there. The house is empty. There is nobody to control and there is nobody to be controlled. All concerns for control have disappeared into a simple watchfulness. This watchfulness is expansive. Once you have tasted it a little, it goes on expanding to the very limits of the universe.

When old habits suddenly arise, don't use your mind to repress them. At just such a time, it's like a snowflake on a red-hot stove.

He is reminding you that even when you are moving on the path of watchfulness, sometimes old habits may revive. But don't be concerned; they are like snowflakes on a red-hot stove, they will disappear of their own accord. You simply watch. Don't get concerned, don't get disturbed, don't be worried.

Sometimes there will be anger, sometimes there will be a desire, sometimes there will be an ambition, but they cannot disturb your watchfulness. They will come and they will go without leaving a trace on your mirror-like purity. But you have only to remember one thing: not to start fighting with them, smashing them, destroying them, throwing them away. It comes very naturally to the mind that if something wrong is happening, jump on it and destroy it. This is the only thing you have to be aware of, because this is what never allows a man to get beyond the mind. Old habits will come -- and old habits are very old, many, many lives old. Your awareness is very fresh and very new; your mechanicalness is ancient, so it is

very natural that it will come back.

Somebody insults you -- you don't have to be angry, but suddenly you find anger arising. It is not an effort, it is just an old habit, an old reaction. Don't fight with it, don't try to smile and hide it. Just watch it, and it will come and it will go...Like a snowflake on a red-hot stove.

For those with a discerning eye and a familiar hand, one leap and they leap clear. Only then do they know lazy Jung's saying: right when using mind, there's no mental activity. If a man has learned the art of watchfulness he can use his mind too, and still he has no mental activity.

I am talking to you, and I am using my mind because there is no other way.

Mind is the only way to convey any message in words; that is the only mechanism available. But my mind is absolutely silent, there is no mental activity: I'm not thinking what I'm going to say, and I'm not thinking what I have said. I'm simply responding to Ta Hui spontaneously without bringing myself into it.

It is as if you go into the mountains and you shout and the mountains echo: the mountains are not doing any mental activity, they are simply echoing. When I am talking on Ta Hui, I am just a mountain echoing.

Right when using mind, there's no mental activity. Crooked talk defiled with names and forms, straight talk without complications. Without mind but functioning.... This is a strange experience, when you can use mind without any mental activity.... Without mind but functioning, always functioning but non-existent.

I was from my very childhood in love with silence.

As long as I could manage I would just sit silently. Naturally my family used to think that I was going to be good for nothing -- and they were right. I certainly proved good for nothing, but I don't repent it.

It came to such a point that sometimes I would be sitting and my mother would come to me and say something like, "There seems to be nobody in the whole house. I need somebody to go to the market to fetch some vegetables." I was sitting in front of her, and I would say, "If I see somebody I will tell...."

It was accepted that my presence meant nothing; whether I was there or not, it did not matter. Once or twice they tried and then they found that "it is better to leave him out, and not take any notice of him" -- because in the morning they would send me to fetch vegetables, and in the evening I would come to ask, "I have forgotten for what you had sent me, and now the market is closed...." In villages the vegetable markets close by the evening, and the villagers go back to their villages.

My mother said, "It is not your fault, it is our fault. The whole day we have been waiting, but in the first place we should not

have asked you. Where have you been?"

I said, "As I went out of the house, just close by there was a very beautiful bodhi tree" -- the kind of tree under which Gautam Buddha became awakened. The tree got the name bodhi tree -- or in English, bo tree -- because of Gautam Buddha. One does not know what it used to be called before Gautam Buddha; it must have had some name, but after Buddha it became associated with his name.

There was a beautiful bodhi tree, and it was so tempting for me.

There used to be always such silence, such coolness underneath it, nobody to disturb me, that I could not pass it without sitting under it for some time. And those moments of peace, I think sometimes may have stretched the whole day.

After just a few disappointments they thought, "It is better not to bother him." And I was immensely happy that they had accepted the fact that I am almost non-existent. It gave me tremendous freedom. Nobody expected anything from me. When nobody expects anything from you, you fall into a silence.... The world has accepted you; now there is no expectation from you.

When sometimes I was late coming home, they used to search for me in two places. One was the bodhi tree -- and because they started searching for me under the bodhi tree, I started climbing the tree and sitting in the top of it. They would come and they would look around and say, "He does not seem to be here."

And I myself would nod; I said, "Yes, that's true. I'm not here."

But I was soon discovered, because somebody saw me climbing and told them, "He has been deceiving you. He is always here, most of the time sitting in the tree" -- so I had to go a little further.

There used to be a Mohammedan cemetery....

Now people ordinarily don't go to graveyards. Of course, everybody has to go once, but except that, people don't like going to graveyards. So that was the most silent place...because dead people don't talk, they don't create nuisance, they don't ask you unnecessary questions, they don't even ask you who you are or for introductions.

I used to sit in the Mohammedan graveyard. It was a big place, with many graves, with trees, very shadowy trees. When my father came to know that I was sitting there he said, "This is too much!" He came one day to find me and he said, "You can start sitting in the bodhi tree, or under the bodhi tree, and nobody will disturb you. This is too much, this is dangerous -- and in fact, when somebody goes to the graveyard he should take a bath and change his clothes. You have been sitting here the whole day and sometimes at night, and when you come home we don't know from where you are coming."

This is usual, that when you come back from the graveyard.... Ordinarily nobody goes there unless they are sent, and they have to go; so, reluctantly they go. From the graveyard people normally go directly to the river to take a bath, to change their clothes, and only then do they enter the house. So my father said, "I don't know how long you have been doing this."

I said, "Since you disturbed me on the bodhi tree. I had to find some place...." And I told him, "Even you will enjoy it once in a while. When you get tired and too tense, just come here -- no dead man disturbs anybody."

He said, "Don't talk to me about dead men -- and particularly in a Mohammedan grave...." Mohammedans are poor; their graves are mud graves. In the rain, sometimes a dead body will appear. The mud has washed away and you can see the dead body -- somebody's head is showing, somebody's leg is showing. He said, "Don't ever tell me to go there. Just the idea that one day I will be in such a position, with my head showing out of a grave, makes me feel so frightened...you are a strange boy!"

I said, "What is wrong with it? The poor fellow is dead, he cannot do anything. It is raining, he cannot manage to have an umbrella, what can he do? If one of his legs is showing, what can he do? He cannot pull it in -- if he pulls it in then too there will be trouble, so he keeps silent and lets things be as they are."

A love of silence and a love of being absent has helped me so tremendously that I can understand when he says, Always functioning but non-existent -- the mindlessness I speak of now is not separate from having mind. These are not words to deceive people.

Ta Hui is saying, "I am not using these words to deceive anyone; I am not trying to show my knowledge; I am not trying to pretend that I am more knowledgeable than you are. I am saying these words just to share my experience that no-mind and mind can exist together. There should be no repressive methods used, only pure watchfulness...and slowly, slowly mind loses all content. It becomes no-mind."

So mindlessness and mind are not separate. Mindlessness is mind without any content, without any thought. It is just like a mirror not reflecting anything.

The silence of being a mirror not reflecting anything is the greatest bliss that existence allows man to have. And from there things go on expanding -- mysteries upon mysteries...no questions, no answers, but tremendous experiences...nourishing, fulfilling, giving contentment to the hungry soul which has been wandering for lives upon lives.

It is time to stop this wandering.

To stop this wandering there is a simple method, and that is to start watching your mind, your body, your actions. Whatever you are doing or not doing, one thing you have to be alert of -- that you are watching. Don't lose the watcher -- then it doesn't



matter whether you are a Christian or a Hindu or a Jain or a Buddhist.

The watcher is no one. It is just pure consciousness.

And this pure consciousness can only bring a new humanity, a new world, where people will not discriminate against each other for stupid reasons. Nations, races, religions, doctrines, ideologies -- those are just for children to play with, not for mature people. For mature people there is only one thing in existence, and that is watchfulness.

...A monk is going to spread Gautam Buddha's message. He himself is not enlightened yet; that's why Gautam Buddha calls him and tells him, "Remember, I have to say this because you are not enlightened yet...you are articulate, you speak well, you can spread the message. You may not be able to sow the seeds but you may be able to attract a few people to come to me -- but use this opportunity also for your own growth."

The monk asked, "What can I do, how can I use this opportunity?"

And Buddha said, "There is only one thing that can be done in every opportunity, in every situation, and that is watchfulness. You will sometimes find people irritated by you, angry because you have hurt their ideologies, their doctrines, their prejudices. Remain silent and watchful. You may have days when you cannot get food because the people are against you, they will not even give you water. Watch...watch your hunger, watch your thirst...but don't get irritated, don't get annoyed. What you will be teaching people is of less importance than your own watchfulness.

If you come back to me watchful, I will be immensely joyful. How many people you approached does not matter; how many people you spoke to does not matter. What ultimately matters is whether you have come home, whether you yourself have found the solid basis of witnessing. Then all else is insignificant."

This is the only meditation there is; all other meditations are variations of the same phenomenon.

So this sutra of Ta Hui is one of the most fundamental ones.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Osho.