

Osho's and Islamic Meditation

Hossein Bagheri¹, Maedeh Bagheri² and Hassan Rasouli Khorshidi^{3*}

1- Department of Maaref, Neka Branch Islamic Azad University, Neka, Iran

2- Department of Psychology, Neka Branch, Islamic Azad University, Neka, Iran

3- Department of English, Neka Branch, Islamic Azad University, Neka, Iran

Corresponding author: Hassan Rasouli Khorshidi

ABSTRACT: Today, new religions labeled with 'newly-emerged religious movements' have appeared orienting toward idealism and supernatural issues attempt to introduce a transcendental and mysterious stream. Osho's insight as one of these movements using spiritual and psychology principles determined to be a newly-emerged idealism. The teachings of Osho can be referred to as the most influential spiritual teachings in the past decade. However, the grim consequences of this influence have targeted throughout the European and Asian countries and even Iran which is the land of religion, mysticism, and spirituality. Similar to other leaders of newfangled spiritualities and movements, Osho claims to introduce an insight which is specifically exclusive to the religion. This article tried to critically review Osho's viewpoint regarding meditation and presented an analysis on his point of view.

Keywords: Osho, meditation, spiritual teachings, mysticism, spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Human is a bi-dimensional creature: the physical body which lives in the telluric world and the soul which belongs to the heaven. Westerners think that freedom from calamity and peace of mind lie in the light of spirituality. The western community realized that the spiritual vacuum has caused severe mental and physical catastrophes. Therefore, it not only sought spirituality not opposed to modernity but it also selected one in accord with modernity.

Durant and Durant, (1961) state that the endeavor to attain equilibrium and comfort from physical and mental discomforts were considered by ample Indian local religions. In Buddhism, equilibrium is seen as a state of concentration with a not polluted soul or 'Nirvana' which means the state of being free from distress. Nirvana is the imperturbable stillness of mind from terrestrial desires and delusion. It is the highest and the final path for salvation from the cycle of rebirth, illness, and death and freedom from any kinds of suffering and affliction. Returning to the originality and gentility is taken as granted in human being. However, the worrying point is the emergence of religions and mystical sects in different illusive models rendering their audience no promotion in their spiritual status toward perfection. There is no doubt that because these religions and manners are not based on real principles, they are unable to heal moral, mental, and spiritual crises. Moreover, they deteriorate these crises and cause the body and soul to be exposed by sufferings and miseries.

A sound judgment about any phenomenon is only possible by perfect understanding of that phenomenon and insufficient knowledge will result in wrong interpretation. Understanding a phenomenon depends on the knowledge about its characteristics and peculiarities. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of any phenomenon is the best method to distinguish one from another. In the last two decades, the fast growth of spirituality-oriented sects has brought serious rivals for the religious mysticism which made it difficult for eager seekers of mysticism and spiritual reality to distinguish and select the right method.

In the newly-emerged mysticisms, numerous strategies have been suggested to achieve mental equilibrium. As a result, in this study, it was attempted to discuss a number of Osho's viewpoints regarding the peace-providing nature of meditation.

Equilibrium in spritual meditation

Meditation as the most important technique used by Osho and many other modern mystic leaders is an old one. Meditation, the same as other humanistic issues dates back to primitive human. Perhaps, for primitive human meditation started while waiting for his prey sitting still on a stone. However, there is no doubt that the origins of modern meditation are India and Far East. Although Osho's meditation is derived from the philosophy of Indian Yoga, meditation is not merely limited to Indian spirituality. Then, it can be claimed that meditation is an old and publically used technique. The religious beliefs in Shamanism¹, Taoee breath holding², Islamic recitation³, Christian Hzykasm⁴, any kind of piety, and seclusion can be regarded as meditation.

Mazaheri Seif, (2012) brings forward some questions. He states that the questions are: What is the justification behind the popularity of meditation? Why is it considered very important in newly-emerged mysticisms? Is really meditation able to bring comfort to the modern agitated human?

Kinds of meditation

Meditation can be performed in different ways. It may be performed in a quiet or a noisy place. Meditation can be practiced in silence or along with loud recitation of holy verses or mystical lyrics. It may be done in a comfortable sitting posture, in an uncomfortable position, during walking, or even while doing physical activities. It may last 15 to 20 minutes. It may be practiced whenever one is free. Meditation is performed by focusing on anything: a simple tangible outside object, a part of body such as navel, or an organic process namely, breathing, distinct mental imaginations, etc. (Hewitt, 1994).

Meaning of meditation

To Osho the first prior principle in life is meditation and other things have got minor priorities. He believes that meditation is the essence of all religious experiences. Meditation is a travel to one's depth to discover one's essence and to visit one's real ego. Mediation for achieving awareness is another kind of mediation that is met farther than mind. Consequently, to travel to one's deep inside you need to pass the mind. As a matter of fact, meditation is going beyond the mind and impeding mental imaginations to receive kenning. This kind of awareness and kenning is a relationship with the unknown world inside oneself where you can find God, equilibrium, and joy.

Meditation is only a courage to be silent, still, and alone. It is a new quality that you gradually feel within yourself. It is a kind of being alive, sort of new delicacy and beauty, a new talent that is originated from no one and which is developing within one's inside (Castaneda, 1991).

To Osho meditation is an absolute perception and awareness. This feature is the reason for unbelievable happenings in life. Osho believes that meditation changes you into light and purifies you from venoms created by your mind. The consequences of this perception are equilibrium, silence, balance, and cheerfulness. To Osho, meditation is an instrument to merge and meet God through surrendering yourself. He believed that when human is free from oneself, even the fear of death disappears. He also held that unconsciousness is the initial of meditation and in the next level meditation ends perfect equilibrium.

Faali, (2003) states that according to Osho, meditation is a method for the achievement of inside purification, deliverance from mind, and salvation from sensuality. It is the first step after obliterating thoughts, mind silence, and equilibrium. Meditation starts with controlling thought and then feelings which is more important than the first and has got more depth. Completing these two phases, there is no controller because there is nothing left to control. This silence is the ultimate equilibration or Nirvana. Faali notes that the real equilibrium resists in meditation where you can find the authentic and genuine peace.

Faali, (2003) postulates that to Osho, meditation is specifically a level beyond love. To Osho, in the first phase, love is at the level of sexuality which manifests as sex. The second phase is loving all. Pray and unity with the universe or silence are the third and fourth phases respectively. But Osho distinctively did not explain about the relationship between these four phases and did not specifically make clear how sex changes into love, loving all, pray, and ultimately to meditation.

The aim of practicing meditation

One of the aims of meditation is attaining spiritual and mystical goal for which meditation is introduced. Meditation is the scientific and spiritual training of religions and provides sublime goals. Therefore, one aim of meditation is achieving mystical awareness. Another purpose of performing meditation is providing health. Practicing Eastern style of meditation which creates physical and mental relaxation and bestows profound peace is believed to be more beneficial than sleep in some respects regarding refreshing forces.

As a result, there are two distinguished benefits for meditation: 1) achieving awareness, 2) creating mental peace and refreshment. These two reasons have been widely used by the newly-emerged religions, as if the

benefits of meditation are only created in them. As a matter of fact, the benefits of meditation had been existing before the appearance of newly-emerged mysticisms as different kinds of meditation has been practiced in all monotheistic and non-monotheistic religions (Mazaheri Seif, 2012).

Functions of meditation

According to Osho, meditation has got different specific extraordinary functions. Meditation is like an elixir that changes any problem into all-carat gold. This elixir also exists in love. There is an irrefragible relationship between love and meditation. In his different lectures, Osho mentioned some of the functions of meditation as follows:

1. Meditation helps to achieve one's goal. In fact, meditation is a method of achievement.
2. Meditation helps to release mind from vain thoughts.
3. Meditation helps to be inattentive or indifferent to one's own surroundings.
4. Silence.
5. Equilibrium. Meditation helps one to be filled with peace and refreshment. Even martial arts which are the techniques of meditation bring peace.
6. Joy, youth, and purification.

Osho briefly explains the functions of meditation as a means of creating equilibrium, silence, and everlasting happiness. The point is that these mysterious and vague claims have never been met by anybody yet. Nobody else has mentioned so many spiritual and non-spiritual advantages for meditation except Osho. Most of these claims seem to be only mottos and far away from reality. It seems that Osho exaggerated about the effects of his meditation model on human relaxation and salvation.

Osho's meditation actually does not go profound enough to reach the unknown and absolute essence. His meditation makes no relationship with the ultimate goal or divine meditation. In his meditation, Osho is limited to observe superficial thoughts and desires and never reaches to a level to discern the totality of creation. To apprehend the absolute universe you need to go beyond these superficial levels.

Meditation in islam and mysticism

Meditation has got a different approach and goal in Islam and pure Quranic mysticism. In Islamic mysticism, meditation is performed as a daily program by the devotee. Semnani, (1996) states that meditation is to supervise one's own deeds. The devotee must be aware of his benefits and losses and always check his behavioral imports. The real follower needs to evacuate his inside for God. He must be aware what deeds are emitted from him.

The theosophist should reject the satanic entered items and accept the spiritual ones. The real mediation is a steady lifetime movement toward the almighty God. Meditation has got three levels: the first level is to consider God as the highest and greatest and forget all other distractions. The second level of meditation is that it always sees justice as its rival and witness. It likes to avoid complaint and never fusses. Outburst and pride are not in accord with meditation. The last level is achieving the monotheistic perfection. Therefore, meditation is devoting the heart to God and feeling Him anywhere. Are these deep concepts really attainable in Osho's meditation?

From another angle, meditation is the presence of heart. In prayer, the heart should be present. The presence of heart in prayer means, the theosophist empties his heart from other distracters and only focuses on the pray and God. Meditation is a means to make the heart be present in human.

CONCLUSION

Based on the studies and a comparison between meditation claimed by Osho's based on Buddhism and the presence of heart in Islamic mysticism, it is concluded that 1) the presence of heart is systematic. This means that the heart should be ready to be purified for approaching God. On the other hand, in Osho's meditation there is no explicit goal. If there is a profound meditation, the question is that to what extent is that motivation deep and what important impact happens? It seems that such questions have been remained without answers. In fact, Osho's meditation claims that the theosophist may attain equilibrium, but this equilibrium is not the ultimate purpose of human creation. Furthermore, real equilibrium is achieved only through trusting God. 2) The presence of heart in Islamic mysticism has got different explicit levels. However, in Osho's meditation school none of these levels are mentioned. In Islamic mysticism, meditation is a means to approach God than to achieve non-spiritual peace. 3) Meditation in Islamic Mysticism is not a polluted one because only a pure medication carries human to the unsullied positions.

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