
THE SHIORI 栞

ALONG WITH AME-TSUCHI-BITO 天地人 ○ □ △

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#0_information_the final issue of “The Shiori”

On October 1st, 2022, I officially retired from active duties of Shin-Budo Kai (SBK) such as teaching classes and conducting seminars at any dojos.

I would like to take this opportunity to discontinue to issue “The Shiori” that was originally planned on issuing periodically, including my dojo activities and Q-and-A matters. After I made up my mind that I would no longer issue “The Shiori” right after this, I took enough time span so that I could include new articles that had not written yet.

Here I have not only added new articles but also rearranged a style of format using #number instead of the date of writing that I used as its original style of “The Shiori.”

The following are titles of articles that I guess are suited for the final issue of “The Shiori.”

#1_literature_”Siddhartha” by Hermann Hesse	(#1_literature_pp. 1-7)
#2_thoughts_kazutama and number-related story	(#2_thoughts_pp. 1-5)
#3_meditation_”Jewish Meditation” by Aryeh Kaplan	(#3_meditation_pp. 1-10)

When you read the above articles, you don’t need to follow the order of #number because I merely used #number for the page-numbering purpose rather than numbering the total number of pages of this issue [If so, it will become 23 pages in all].

Finally, I added a short postscript to the final page of “The Shiori.” I anticipate that you will be able to find the new kanji character as the ending mark of “The Shiori,” which is my last message to you, that is, both sentences and one kanji character. You don’t need to worry about my future activities. My writing activities will be continued in the form of one subject per an issue without using the specific letterhead I normally adopted.

[The End of #0_information]



* Note that I have changed the ending mark into the above one that is pronounced “ai” meaning “harmony,” which is the same kanji character as “ai” in Aikido.

無 #1_literature_”Siddhartha” by Hermann Hesse

I chose a topic from a novel for the first time. The title is “Siddhartha” by Hermann Hesse, a German novelist (1877-1962), who acquired Swiss citizenship later. Before I give you information on Hermann Hesse and his book titled “Siddhartha,” I would like to notice you that the following book codes are used in this article henceforth.

- Siddh-D “Siddhartha” Eine indische Dichtung
Die Erstausgabe erschien 1922 im S. Fischer Verlag, Berlin
Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main (1953)
Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag (Erste Auflage 1974; 66. Auflage 2015).
- Siddh-E “Siddhartha” – translated in English by Hilda Rosner
A New Directions Publishing Company, New York (first published in 1951)
A New Directions Paperbook NDP65 (1957).
- Siddh-J “Siddhartha” (シッダールタ) – translated in Japanese by Kenji Takahashi
Shinchōsha Publishing Company, Tokyo (first published in 1971).

HERMANN HESSE, A GERMAN NOVELIST (1877-1962)

The following portions are mainly based on information described by Kenji Takahashi (1902-1998), who commented on “Siddhartha” as a translator of Siddh-J. Takahashi visited Hermann Hesse seven times. He is known in Japan as a writer who translated most books written by Hermann Hesse.

Hermann Hesse was born in Calw, Southern Germany in 1877. His father, who was a priest, forced Hermann to enter a theological seminary despite his wish to become a poet in the future. Eventually, Hermann Hesse left a seminary in the middle of the school, and then he had experienced various jobs while he was developing his writing skill further.

In 1904, his maiden work of a novel titled “Peter Camenzind” was published, and Hermann Hesse at last became a novelist making his living. His early works were full of poetic and sweet themes and his life remained steady. Unfortunately, in 1914, the First World War broke out. Although Hermann Hesse wrote articles on objecting to the war, his opinion was not well received among a mass movement in a support of that war, which ended in 1918.

In 1919, the novel named “Demian” was published. Although that novel was actually written by Hermann Hesse, he submitted it to a publisher under a false name in 1917. Unfortunately, “Demian” had not been published for two years until Hermann Hesse acknowledged that “Demian” was his own work. Ironically speaking, “Demian” became a watershed moment of his career because he started to explore a human mind most deeply through this novel. This flow of changing a style of framework of his novel proceeded to “Siddhartha.”

In 1919, Hermann Hesse began to write “Siddhartha,” and its Part One was first published in a magazine in 1920 under the title of “Siddhartha — Eine indische Dichtung.” The German words “eine indische Dichtung” meant “an Indian poem.” Although the work of Part One was progressing well, the proceeding of its Part Two suddenly slowed down. As a result, “Siddhartha” consisting of Part One and Part Two was first published in 1922. In 1946, Hermann Hesse received a Nobel Prize for literature. He died in Montagnola in 1962.

HIS BOOK: "SIDDHARTHA"

Hermann Hesse visited India in 1911. India was a place where his grandfather and father had worked as a missionary, and his mother was born in India. Therefore, it was not strange for him to have a longing for the East. On returning from India at the end of the year 1911, Hermann Hesse moved near Bern in Switzerland. In 1922, "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse was published in Berlin. The title of "Siddhartha" derives from a male name in India, and Siddhartha is a hero of this novel.

When I decided to buy this book "Siddhartha" (a version of Siddh-D) for a long time ago, I supposed that this book would be a kind of a biography of Buddha or Gotama because of both a cover photograph and a name of Siddhartha. Buddha or Gotama was born in India about 2,500 years ago and Siddhartha was the name at the time of his boyhood.

My guess proved wrong because the fictionalized Gotama (the Buddha) encountered with the young Indian Siddhartha, who was a hero of this novel. In my opinion I guess that the young Siddhartha seems like the incarnation of Hermann Hesse himself.

It goes without saying that this portion, although I later introduce to you some passages through a long quotation, is the highlight of Part One. In my opinion Hermann Hesse wanted to write an encounter with Gotama through the young Siddhartha who had the same name as the Buddha in his boyhood.

The main reason why it took a long time to finish writing this short novel titled "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse was caused by his own lack of spiritual experience despite his tremendous knowledge of the Eastern philosophy. In other words, Hermann Hesse wanted to write about not ideological enlightenment but the true secret of enlightenment through his own spiritual exploration so that he could make Siddhartha attain such an enlightenment in this novel. Accordingly, Hermann Hesse began to control his passion and desire by living an ascetic life and practicing yoga during his preparation for writing Part Two.

Each name of chapters of "Siddhartha" below is quoted from Siddh-E.

Part One: Four Chapters

- The Brahmin's Son
- With the Samanas
- Gotama
- Awakening

Part Two: Eight Chapters

- Kamala
- Amongst People
- Samasara
- By the River
- The Ferryman
- The Son
- Om
- Govinda

A SUMMARY OF PART ONE

Siddhartha was born in a family of Bramin that was the highest class in caste system in the ancient India. He had studied and played with his friend named Govinda. This is the beginning of a plot.

Siddhartha decided to go away from his home and Govinda followed him. They joined the Samanas that was a kind of the old religion. After that, they encountered with Gotama (the Buddha). Although Govinda decided to join Gotama's group, Siddhartha made his decision to depart from that group after a dialogue with Gotama. In my opinion this portion is a highlight of Part One, I quote some dialogues between them below.

“Siddhartha said: ‘O Illustrious One, in one thing above all have I admired your teachings. Everything is completely clear and proved. You show the world as a complete, unbroken chain, an eternal chain, linked together by cause and effect. Never has it been presented so clearly, never has it been so irrefutably demonstrated. Surely every Brahmin's heart must beat more quickly, when through your teachings he looks at the world, completely coherent, without a loophole, clear as crystal, not dependent on chance, not dependent on the gods. Whether it is good or evil, whether life in itself is pain or pleasure, whether it is uncertain—that it may perhaps be this is not important—but the unity of the world, the coherence of all events, the embracing of the big and the small from the same stream, from the same law of cause, of becoming and dying: this shines clearly from your exalted teachings, O Perfect One. But according to your teachings, this unity and logical consequence of all things is broken in one place. Through a small gap there streams into the world of unity something strange, something new, something that was not there before and that cannot be demonstrated and proved: that is your doctrine of rising above the world, of salvation. With this small gap, through this small break, however, the eternal and single world law breaks down again. Forgive me if I raise this objection.’

“Gotama had listened quietly, motionless. And now the Perfect One spoke in his kind, polite and clear voice. ‘You have listened well to the teachings. O Brahmin's son, and it is a credit to you that you have thought so deeply about them. You have found a flaw. Think well about it again. Let me warn you, you who are thirsty for knowledge, against the thicket of opinions and the conflict of words. Opinions mean nothing; they may be beautiful or ugly, clever or foolish, anyone can embrace or reject them. The teaching which you have heard, however, is not my opinion, and its goal is not to explain the world to those who are thirsty for knowledge. Its goal is quite different; its goal is salvation from suffering. That is what Gotama teaches, nothing else.’

“ ‘Do not be angry with me, O Illustrious One,’ said the young man. ‘I have not spoken to you thus to quarrel with you about words. You are right when you say that opinions mean little, but may I say one thing more. I did not doubt you for one moment. Not for one moment did I doubt that you were the Buddha, that you have reached the highest goal which so many thousands of Brahmins and Brahmins' sons are striving to reach. You have done so by your own seeking, in your own way, through thought, through meditation, through knowledge, through enlightenment. You have learned nothing through teachings, and so I think, O Illustrious One, that nobody finds salvation through teachings. To nobody, O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment. The teachings of the enlightened Buddha embrace much, they teach much—how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. But there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain. It does not contain the secret of what the Illustrious One himself experienced—

he alone among hundreds of thousands. That is what I thought and realized when I heard your teachings. That is why I am going on my way—not to seek another and better doctrine, for I know there is none, but to leave all doctrines and all teachers and to reach my goal alone—or die. But I will often remember this day, O Illustrious One, and this hour when my eyes beheld a holy man.’

“The Buddha’s eyes were lowered, his unfathomable face expressed complete equanimity.

‘I hope you are not mistaken in your reasoning,’ said the Illustrious One slowly. ‘May you reach your goal! ...’ “ (Siddh_E, pp. 26-28).

After Siddhartha talked with Gotama face to face, he walked away from Gotama’s group and began his lone journey in quest of his own solution. There, Part One of this novel had ended.

Below are Japanese equivalents of the above dialogues for those who are interested in reading passages in Japanese language.

“シッダータは言った。「おお世尊よ。あなたの教えの一点を私は何よりも賛嘆いたしました。あなたの教えの中ではいっさいが完全に明らかであり、証明されております。いまだかつていかなる所でも切断されたことのない完全な鎖として、因果によってつくられた永遠の鎖として、あなたは世界を示しております。これほど明らかにみられたことはいまだかつてありません。これほど否定の余地なく現わされたことは決してありません。あなたの教えによって世界を、完全な連関として、すきのない、水晶のように透明な、偶然によって左右されず、神々によって左右されない連関として見るとき、およそバラモンの胸はほんとにひとときわ高く鼓動するに違いありません。世界が善いか悪いか、世界の中の人生が苦しみであるか喜びであるかは、そのままにしておきましょう。それは本質的ではないかもしれませんが――

“しかし、世界の統一、いっさいの生起の連関、大小いっさいのものが同じ流れと因果生滅の同じ法則によって総括されていること、それがあなたの崇高な教えから明るく輝いています、お覚者よ。さてしかし、あなたのその教えによると、万物の統一と首尾一貫が一か所で中断されております。小さいすきまからこの統一の世界に、何か無縁なもの、何か新しいもの、何か前になかったものが流れこんでいます。そしてそれは明示されず、証明されえないのです。それは世界の克服の教え、解脱の教えです。この小さいすきま、この小さい裂け目によって、永遠な統一的な世界の法則全体がまた破壊され、否定されました。このような異論をとなえることを、お許しくくださいますよう」

“ゴータマは静かに微動もせず耳を傾けていた。さて覚者はやさしいねんごろな澄んだ声で言った。「おん身は教えを聞いた。おおバラモンの子よ。教えについてそのように深く思いを巡らしたのは、殊勝だ。おん身は教えの中に一つのすきまを、一つの誤りを見いだした。それについてさらに思いをめぐらしてほしい。だが、知識をむさぼるものよ、意見の密林に対し、ことばのための争いに対し、みずからを戒めよ。意見は大切ではない。意見は美しいことも、

醜いことも、賢いことも、愚かなこともあろう。だれでも意見を信奉することも、しりぞけることもできる。おん身が私から聞いたことは私の意見ではない。その目標は、知識をむさぼるもののために世界を説明することではない。その目標は別のものである。その目標は苦悩からの解脱である。それこそゴータマの教えるところであり、他の何ものでもない」

“「おお覚者よ、私に立腹なさないでください」と青年は言った。「あなたとの争いを、ことばのための争いを求めるために、私はこうしてあなたに話しかけたのではありません。ほんとはあなたのおっしゃるとおりです。意見は重要ではありません。だが、なお一つだけ言わせてください。私は一瞬たりともあなたを疑ったことはありません。あなたが仏陀であることを、あなたが目標に到達したことを、幾千のバラモンとバラモンの子がそれを目ざして途上にある最高の目標に到達したことを、私は一瞬たりとも疑いませんでした。あなたは死からの解脱を見いだしました。それはあなた自身の追求から、あなた自身の道において、思想によって、沈潜によって、認識によって、悟りによって得られました。教えによって得られたのではありません！それで、私もそう考えるのです。おお覚者よ——何びとにも解脱は教えによっては得られないと！悟りを開かれたときあなたの心に起こったことを、あなたはことばや教えによって何びとにも伝えたり言ったりすることはできないでしょう！悟りを開いたブツダの教えは多くのことを含んでおり、多くの人に、正しく生き、悪を避けることを教えます。しかし、かくも明らかで尊い教えも一つのことを含んでおりません。つまり、覚者自身が、幾十万人の中で彼ひとりが体験したことの秘密を含んでいないのです。私が教えを聞いたとき、考え認識したのはそのことです。そのためにこそ私は遍歴を続けるのです。——

“別のよりよい教えを求めるためではありません。そんなものは存在しないことを、私は知っておりますから。そうではなく、いっさいの教えと師を去って、ひとりで自分の目標に到達するためです。でなければ死ぬためです。だが、たびたび私はきょうのこの日を、私の目が聖者を見たこの時を思い出すでしょう」

“仏陀の目はじっと地面を見ていた。その探り知れぬ顔はじっと完全な平静さに輝いていた。

「おん身の考えが誤りでないように！」と世尊はゆっくり言った。「おん身が目標に到達するように！……」”(Siddh_J, pp. 38-41).

A SUMMARY OF PART TWO

Siddhartha wandered around alone. One day he asked a ferryman to let him cross a river. Although Siddhartha could land on the other side riding on a bamboo raft, he could not give a ferryman any payment. I quote a short conversation between them below.

“A ferryman laughed at Siddhartha and said: ‘I could see that,’ said the ferryman, ‘and I did not expect any payment or got from you. You will give it to me some other time.’ / ‘Do you think so?’ asked Siddhartha merrily. / ‘Certainly. I have learned that from the river too; everything comes back. You, too, Samana, will come back....’ ” (Siddh-E, p. 40).

In my opinion this encounter with a ferryman provides a reader of this novel with a hint of a plot that is to be developed later.

Now Siddhartha entered another region for the first time. One day when he passed through a small town, he witnessed a woman whom native residents called a beautiful courtesan Kamala. Siddhartha visited her house and became acquainted with her. Although Kamala liked Siddhartha, she told him that he needed to have enough money to see her further. Once she knew that he could read and write, she introduced to him a businessman named Kawaswami so that Siddhartha could work under him to earn money.

Once he learned how to deal with a customer, Siddhartha had getting richer and richer. Then his life of lust and riches had continued insatiably. One night Siddhartha received a warning in his dream. After that, he decided to depart from this town abandoning everything and severing his connections with the decay of his moral.

The next plot had begun. Siddhartha was standing on the bank of river where he had entered a town before. When he was watching a stream of a river, he heard a voice from the water.

“ ‘Love this river, stay it, learn from it.’ Yes, he wanted to learn from it, he wanted to listen to it. It seemed to him that whoever understood this river and its secrets, would understand much more, many secrets, all secrets. / But today he only saw one of the river’s secrets, one that grappled his soul. He saw that the water continually flowed and flowed and yet it was always there; it was always the same and yet every moment it was new. Who could understand, conceive this? He did not understand it; he was only aware of a dim suspicion, a faint memory, divine voices” (Siddh-E, p. 83).

Siddhartha reached the ferry and he found the same ferryman who had once taken him. About twenty years have passed since then. Siddhartha asked him to let him serve an apprentice as a ferryman. After talking with each other for a while, a ferryman named Vasudeva permitted Siddhartha to stay with him in his hut because his wife had already passed away. Thus a new life of Siddhartha began as an apprentice of a ferryman.

Vasudeva was a great listener and Siddhartha a good talker. One day Siddhartha asked Vasudeva about learning secret from the river.

“ ‘Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time?’ / A bright smile spread over Vasudeva’s face. / ‘Is this what you mean? That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, nor the shadow of the future?’

“‘That is it,’ said Siddhartha, ‘and when I learned that, I reviewed my life and it was also a river, and Siddhartha the boy, Siddhartha the mature man and Siddhartha the old man, were only separated by shadows, not through reality. Siddhartha’s previous lives were also not in the past, and his death and his return to Brahma are not in the future. Nothing was, nothing will be, everything has reality and presence’ “ (Siddh-E, p. 87).

“And once again when the river swelled during the rainy season and roared loudly, Siddhartha said: ‘Is it not true, my friend, that the river has very many voices? Has it not the voice of a king, of a warrior, of a bull, of a night bird, of a pregnant woman and a sighing man, and a thousand other voices?’ / ‘It is so,’ nodded Vasudeva, ‘the voices of all living creatures are in its voice.’ / ‘And do you know,’ continued Siddhartha, ‘what word it pronounces when one is successful in hearing all its ten thousand voices at the same time?’ / Vasudeva laughed joyously; he bent towards Siddhartha and whispered the holy Om in his ear. And this was just what Siddhartha had heard” (Siddh-E, p. 88).

In the final chapter, Hermann Hesse created a plot of a reunion between the old Siddhartha and Govinda. That was reasonable as the final plot because Hermann Hesse began his novel from a story of the young Siddhartha and Govinda. Although there are good religious conversations between the old Siddhartha and Govinda, I avoid quoting that part based on a manner of reading a novel, that is, a man should not talk to other persons on the final primary plot of a novel like “whodunit” in a mystery.

In conclusion, I would like to finish my article by quoting the last paragraph written by Hermann Hesse that is really touching like an ending song of a movie. I hope you feel a lingering sound of the flow of the river in your mind. After you read the final passage I quote with three languages separately, I would like you to guess how valuable this reunion with Siddhartha was to the old Govinda, who had become a devout Buddhist monk under Gotama.

“Tief verneigte sich Govinda, Tränen liefen, von welchen er nichts wusste, über sein altes Gesicht, wie ein Feuer brannte das Gefühl der innigsten Liebe, der demütigen Verehrung in seinem Herzen. Tief verneigte er sich, bis zur Erde, vor dem regungslos Sitzenden, dessen Lächeln ihn an alles erinnerte, was er in seinem Leben jemals geliebt hatte, was jemals in seinem Leben ihm wert und heilig gewesen war” (Siddh-D, p. 121).

“Govinda bowed low. Incontrollable tears trickled down his old face. He was overwhelmed by a feeling of great love, of the most humble veneration. He bowed low, right down to the ground, in front of the man sitting there motionless, whose smile reminded him of everything that he had ever loved in his life, of everything that had ever been of value and holy in his life“ (Siddh-E, p. 122).

“深くゴーヴィンダは頭をさげた。なんとも知れない涙が老いた顔に流れた。無上に深い愛と、無上につつましい尊敬の感情が心の中で火のように燃えた。身動きもせずすわっている人の前に、彼は深く地面まで頭をさげた。その人の微笑が彼に、彼が生涯の間にいつか愛したことのあるいっさいのものを、彼にとっていつか生涯の間に貴重で神聖であったいっさいのものを思い出させた。” (Siddh-J, p.159).

[The End of #1_literature]



無 #2_thoughts_kazutama and number-related story

In the previous issue of “The Shiori,” I wrote on “kotodama” for analyzing the meaning of eight sounds of “to-ho-ka-mi-e-mi-ta-me” (refer to #210815_Japanese thoughts_what is kotodama? of “The Shiori”). At that time I used a list of meaning of 48 sounds of Japanese phonetic symbols, which Ms. Nobuko Yoshino introduced to readers in her first book of “Katakamuna Kotodama no Chohosoku,” published by Tokumashoten in Japan, 2015.

I asked Ralph Bryan to include the word “kazutama” or “kazu kotodama” (spirit-numbers) in his book: “The Aikido of Shin-Budo Kai” (refer to on page viii). At that time I could not explain to you the meaning of each number from “1” to “10” in that book. Now I simply explain to you “kazutama” from “1” to “10” using a new list of meaning of 1-99 numbers that Ms. Nobuko Yoshino created for her second book of “Katakamuna Kazutama no Choeichi,” published by Tokumashoten in Japan, 2017.

First, I would like you to confirm your level of knowledge of whether or not you can count numbers in Japanese as the same as the following list of numbers I made for your checklist.

	<u>English</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Japanese 1</u>	<u>Japanese 2</u>	<u>Japanese 3</u>
1	one	一 yi	ichi	hitotsu	ひ ヒ hi
2	two	二 er	ni	futatsu	ふ フ fu
3	three	三 san	san	mittsu	み ミ mi
4	four	四 si	shi (yon)	yottsu	よ ヨ yo
5	five	五 wu	go	itsutsu	い イ i
6	six	六 liu	roku	muttsu	む ム mu
7	seven	七 qi	shichi (nana)	nanatsu	な ナ na
8	eight	八 ba	hachi	yattsu	や ヤ ya
9	nine	九 jiu	ku (kyu)	kokonotsu	こ コ ko
10	ten	十 shi	ju	tou	と ト to

I guess that most of you can count numbers with Japanese 1, which is the standard Japanese vocal sound of a number. That is why I name it Japanese 1. Japanese 2 is the old Japanese vocal sound of a number. The feature of Japanese 2 is that each number ends with the suffix of “tsu” except “tou” (10). And Japanese 3 is the ancient Japanese vocal sound of a number, the feature of which consists of univocal sound of all numbers respectively.

Although you wonder why Japanese people must use such numbers with having a good command of Japanese 1, 2, or 3, I don't have any proper answer at all because I am not a linguist. All I can do is show you how I adapt my manner of counting each number to suit the occasion of "sūsokukan," in which a person should focus on numbers counting from "1" to "10" in accordance with the rule of one number per a breath in zazen. As one of the important actions when practicing zazen is to control a breath, I use a style of Japanese 1 because the condition of my normal breathing interval still remains in the beginning of zazen. As I used to count with a style of Japanese 1 since my childhood, my subconscious mind remembers its style of counting so that my effort mainly goes to make my breath longer without worrying about counting. After my breath is getting longer and I feel comfortable in zazen, I switch my each counting into a style of Japanese 2. As I already wrote it, each number ends with the suffix of "tsu" except "tou" (10). Conveniently, I use that vocal sound of "tsu" in my mind when physically inhaling each number, and I add "tsu" to 10 (tou) like "toutsu" although this is not the correct vocal sound from the viewpoint of Japanese language. After I get into the deepest breathing condition in zazen, I switch my counting into a style of Japanese 3, that is, one sound per a number. That is the way of my breathing count of "sūsokukan" in zazen.

Next, the word "kazu" literally means "numbers" and "tama" "spirits." The word "kazutama" is related to "kotodama" because each number possesses its own vocal sound respectively. Both of them are one and indivisible. For example, "1" (one) and "hi" of its vocal sound of Japanese 3 correspond to two sides of the same coin. "Kazu" or "number" also possesses spirits like "kotodama." In other words, there is sound of a word implying its specific meaning behind it.

Below is part of a list of meaning of 1-99 numbers that was created by Ms. Nobuko Yoshino in her second book. From there, I made a simple list of meaning of 1-10 numbers.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1 一	ひ ヒ hi	to exit from the origin / to return to the origin
2 二	ふ フ fu	to increase, a vibration
3 三	み ミ mi	substance, light, a body
4 四	よ ヨ yo	new, convex, plus (yang)
5 五	い イ i	transmission, concave, minus (yin)
6 六	む ム mu	expanse
7 七	な ナ na	the core, importance
8 八	や ヤ ya	to be saturated, saturation
9 九	こ コ ko	to roll in / out
10 十	と ト to	to integrate, to unify

The following explanation on “kazutama” from “1” to “10” numbers is based on information that was described in the second book by Ms. Nobuko Yoshino.

The vocal sound of “**hi**” is equivalent to “1.” That suggests that one unidimensional string connects to all things. For example, assuming a person can draw a circle with this string, a thing existing inside a trace of this circle exits from the origin. In the same way a thing existing outside a trace of this circle returns to the origin.

The vocal sound of “**fu**” equivalent to “2” implies “to increase” and “a vibration.” For example, when a person vibrates one rope like a heavy-rope-swinging exercise in a gymnasium, that straight rope resonates caused by phenomenon of resonance and starts to make waveform. The harder that person swings it, the more waveform appears.

The vocal sound of “**mi**” equivalent to “3” implies “substance,” “body,” and “light.” It is allegedly said that all substances and bodies are formed from light.

The vocal sound of “**yo**” equivalent of “4” implies “new,” “convex,” and “plus (yang).”

The vocal sound of “**i**” equivalent to “5” implies “transmission,” “convene,” and “minus (yin).”

The vocal sound of “**mu**” equivalent to “6” implies “expanse.”

The vocal sound of “**na**” equivalent to “7” implies “the core” and “importance.”

The vocal sound of “**ya**” equivalent to “8” implies “to be saturated” and “saturation.”

The vocal sound of “**ko**” equivalent to “9” implies “to roll in / out.”

The vocal sound of “**to**” equivalent to “10” implies “to integrate” and “to unify.”

Finally, what I wanted to explain to you in this article is that numbers (kazu) possess spirit (tama). I mentioned the following phrase in “The Aikido of Shin-Budo Kai.” “Hitofutami / Yoitsumunanaya / Kokonotari.” Here I add a cardinal number to its original phrase so that you can recognize each number easily.

<u>HITO</u> <u>FUTA</u> <u>MI</u>	ひと ふた み
1 2 3	1 2 3
<u>YO</u> <u>ITSU</u> <u>MU</u> <u>NANA</u> <u>YA</u>	よ いつ む なな や
4 5 6 7 8	4 5 6 7 8
<u>KOKONO</u> <u>TARI</u>	ここの たり
9 10	9 10

[“Tari” or “tariru” means “enough” or “sufficient” that substitutes for “10” (ten).]

A STORY OF NUMBERS FROM MANGA BY C. C. TSAI

Although I cannot show you frames of “manga” or “comic strip” below, I try to introduce to you a story of numbers, which was created and illustrated by Taiwanese cartoonist C. C. Tsai about 20 years ago. Although I enjoyed reading in Japanese version, you may have already read its English version because manga books by Tsai were very popular in many countries.

C. C. Tsai begins his story of numbers with a gathering scene of several characters of numbers chatting with each other.

No. 3: “The figure of ‘3’ is a good number, isn’t it?”

No. 8: “The figure of ‘8’ isn’t bad, too.”

No. 9: “I am ‘9,’ the highest number [among you]!”

Then they begin to bully the figure of “1.”

No. 3: “The figure of ‘1’ looks miserable, doesn’t it?”

No. 9: “Yah! the figure of ‘1’ is shorty.”

No. 8: “Poor thing!”

No. 1 appears on the scene and other numbers disappear from there.

No. 1: “What on earth am I [1] the shortest?
I don’t have anything superior to others.
I would rather die than stay together with them.”

At that point, No. 0, the elder, came along and found No. 1 muttering alone.

No. 0: “Hey, shorty! Why are you looking so depressed?”

No. 1: “Everybody made fun of me [1] by saying that I was the smallest.
I really got sick of myself.”

Suddenly, No. 0 laughed loudly, and then scolded No. 1 saying like this.

No. 0: “If you [1] are filled with despair when you heard like that, I [0] must commit suicide jumping from the high spot. You look good, No. 1.
Your number itself is not so bad. Do you know why?
The figure of ‘1’ is a mere name and that doesn’t mean the size of large and small.
For example, when you [1] stand on the right side of 9 [91], you are smaller than ‘9.’
However, when you stand on the left side of ‘9’ [19], you are larger than ‘9.’
Therefore, you don’t need to become obsequious to others.
Also you should not be puffed up with self-importance.”

No. 1: “What does it mean, the elder?”

Then No. 0, the elder, began to tell No.1 using ancient Chinese philosophy.

No. 0: "Lao-tzu said in 'Tao Te Ching' like this.
The Way (Tao) gave birth to one. One gave birth to two.
Two gave birth to three. And from three all things were born."

No. 1: "Were all things born from one [1]?
If so,, one [1] is the beginning of everything."

No. 0: "That's right."

No. 1: "But Lao-tze also said that all things were born from 'yū' (existence).
And 'yū' was born from 'mu' (nothingness)."

No. 0: "The word 'mu' implies the figure of '0.' That suggests me [0].
To be sure, I [0] am in a position of higher-level sphere than others.
The figure of '0' corresponds to 'mu' (nothingness), 'en' (a circle), and 'kū' (emptiness).
When you attained 'satori' (enlightenment),
all of you can also attain the state of mind like me [0].
That is not so difficult as you think.
First, break off a deep attachment to your ego.
Then try to become one with the universe, without comparison with others."

No. 1: "Originally, there was no distinction between the self and the other.
Therefore, I should not see the present matters, the past, and the future
from the viewpoint of sticking to my current ego."

No. 0: "Oh! You've got understood well."

I guess you enjoyed the above plot of manga through my translation even though you could not see their frames of illustration. No. 0 and No. 1 get along well. That is why a computer programmers have mainly counted on two of them since the times of the punch card for IBM computer. For example, 000001, 000010, 000100, 001000, 010000, 100000, and so on.

[The End of #2_thoughts]



1
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
0

#3_meditation_ "Jewish Meditation" by Aryeh Kaplan

Although I can imagine your mixed reaction to the above topic, the purpose of this article is to introduce to you the fact that Jewish meditation exists from the viewpoint of a history of meditation in addition to an introduction of its meditation, including the basic forms of Jewish meditation. Allegedly, even American Jews don't know this fact. Neither do you, I guess.

Aryeh Kaplan was an Orthodox rabbi and wrote many books. Although he wrote a manuscript of the section of introduction of this "Jewish Meditation — A Practical Guide" on December 17, 1982, this book was eventually published from Schocken Books, New York in 1985 after Aryeh Kaplan passed away in 1983. So this book seems like his last book. Henceforth I use the book code of JM_AK instead of "Jewish Meditation" by Aryeh Kaplan in this article.

Aryeh Kaplan begins the first paragraph of his 5-page introduction as follows:

"People are often surprised to hear the term 'Jewish meditation.' Otherwise, knowledgeable Jews, including many rabbis and scholars, are not aware that such a thing exists. When shown texts that describe Jewish meditation, they respond that it belongs to esoteric or occult corners of Judaism and has little to do with mainstream Judaism.

"It is therefore not surprising that many current books on meditation give scant attention to Judaism. Although most writers seem to be aware that mystical elements exist in Judaism, their discussion is usually restricted to the Kabbalah or the Chasidic masters. Most books on meditation emphasize Eastern practices, and in some instances Christian meditation, but Jewish meditation is for all practical purposes ignored" (JM_AK, vii).

Then Aryeh Kaplan wrote his various experiences of teaching Jewish meditation as a rabbi. The following is the last paragraph of the section of his introduction.

"This book presents the most basic forms of Jewish meditation, especially as discussed in mainstream sources. It assumes no special background on the part of the reader either in Judaism or in meditation. It is my hope that this book will at least begin to provide its readers with insight into the spiritual dimensions of the Jewish heritage" (JM_AK, xi).

As Aryeh Kaplan stated 18 chapters, I quote the contents of this book for your reference.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. What Is Meditation? | 10. Conversing with God |
| 2. Why Meditate? | 11. The Way of Prayer |
| 3. Techniques | 12. Relating to God |
| 4. States of Consciousness | 13. Unification |
| 5. Jewish Meditation | 14. The Ladder |
| 6. Mantra Meditation | 15. In All Your Way |
| 7. Contemplation | 16. The Commandments |
| 8. Visualization | 17. Between Man and Woman |
| 9. Nothingness | 18. Remolding the Self |

When I skimmed contents of this book for a long time ago, it seemed to me to be worth reading parts of them. At the time of my actual reading, it turned out that the chapters from 9 to 18 mentioned above were beyond the scope of my knowledge. Frankly speaking, I have not only studied Hebrew but also have not read specific Jewish books appearing in this book.

A SUMMARY OF “WHAT IS MEDITATION?”

Aryeh Kaplan begins with the general meaning of meditation for beginners.

“In its most general sense, meditation consists of thinking in a controlled manner. It is deciding exactly how one wishes to direct the mind for a period of time, and then doing it.

“In theory this may sound very easy, but in practice it is not. The human mind is not a domesticated animal, but rather seems to have a mind of its own beyond the will of the thinker. Anyone who has ever tried to concentrate on a subject, only to have his mind drift to other thoughts, is aware of this. Sometimes it seems that the more one tries to control one’s thoughts, the more they refuse to be controlled” (JM_AK, p. 3).

Next, Aryeh Kaplan offers its readers two exercises of meditation. The first exercise is “stop thinking,” and the second one is “imaging” or “engraving.” After he persuaded its readers that the mind had a “mind of its own,” he explained why this would happen.

“There are thus two parts to the mind, one that is under the control of the conscious will and one that is not. That part of the mind under the control of the will is called the consciousness, while that which is not is called the unconscious or subconscious. Since the subconscious is not under the control of the will, one cannot control what it passes into the conscious mind.

“One of the goal of meditation, then, is to gain control of the subconscious part of the mind. If one were to succeed, one would also gain a high degree of self-mastery. This, too, is a goal of meditation.

“This explains why so many disciplines use breathing exercises as a meditative device. Breathing usually occur automatically and is therefore normally under the control of the unconscious mind. Unless you are consciously controlling your breathing, it will mirror your unconscious mood. This is one reason why breathing is one of the indicators in a lie detector test.

“Yet, if you wish, you can control your breath, and do so quite easily. Breathing therefore forms a link between the conscious mind and the subconscious. By learning how to concentrate on and control your breath you can go on to learn how to control the unconscious mind” (JM_AK, p.5).

After his explanation, Aryeh Kaplan showed its readers both examples of the “thought process” and the “visions that appear in the mind’s eye.” Then he concluded this chapter as follows.

“One of the powerful benefits of meditation is control over the unconscious mind. One learns to use the conscious mind to control mental processes that are usually under the control of the unconscious. Gradually, more and more of the subconscious becomes accessible to the conscious mind, and one gains control the entire thought process” (JM_AK, p. 6).

“There are many theories about the subconscious, However, if meditation is controlled thinking, it implies that the individual has the entire thought process under control, including input from the subconscious. The experienced meditator learns how to think what he wants to think, when he wants to think it. He can always be in control of the situation, resisting psychological pressures that work on the subconscious” (JM_AK, p. 7).

A SUMMARY OF “WHY MEDITATE?”

Aryeh Kaplan begins this chapter with many benefits in doing meditation. He showed its readers several examples like “thought process” and “problem-solving.”

“Suppose, for example, that you are trying to experience the beauty of a rose. At the same time, thoughts about your business may be pushing their way into your mind. Your attention does not stay focused on the rose and you cannot see the rose totally, in all its beauty” (JM_AK, p.9).

After explaining another factor preventing its readers from experiencing the rose entirely, Aryeh Kaplan wrote another important goal of meditation.

“Another important goal of meditation is thus enhanced awareness and perception. The greater the portion of the mind focused on an experience, the more the experience will be enhanced. When every cell in your brain is tuned in to experiencing the rose [the above example], the experience is indescribably different from what you would see in your usual state of consciousness” (JM_AK, p. 10).

Furthermore, Aryeh Kaplan explained to its reader the difference between “a blind person and the average sighted person.” Then he wrote another purpose of meditation.

“Another purpose of meditation is to attune the mind to certain truths (or Truths with a capital T). When a person tries to explore questions such as the meaning of existence, the true goal of life, or the ultimate nature of reality, the answers remain elusive, tickling the edge of the mind. Possible answers hover on the borderline of consciousness, but are discerned through the static of the mind.

“One of the most elusive truths is knowledge of the self. Generally we see ourselves only through a thick veil of ego. For this reason, it is impossible to see ourselves as others see us. Through meditation, however, we can remove the veil of ego, and see ourselves with a degree of objectivity. In this manner, we can look at ourselves objectively as a third person. We are then able to see our own shortcomings and overcome them.

“The self-awareness engendered by meditation can also strengthen the ego when needed. Thus, a person with a weak self-image and feelings of inadequacy can learn to be more self-assured” (JM_AK, p. 13).

In conclusion of this chapter, Aryeh Kaplan wrote about obtaining “an awareness of the spiritual” as well as “an experience of God” through uses of meditation.

“On its highest level, meditation can provide a person with an experience of God. This is certainly the highest possible spiritual experience. Our perception of God is often clouded by ego and anthropomorphism, so that we tend to see God as a mirror image of ourselves. By freeing the mind of these encumbrances, meditation can help us to open our minds totally to the experience of God. In many religious traditions, including Judaism, this is the highest goal of meditation” (JM_AK, p. 14).

A SUMMARY OF “STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS”

Aryeh Kaplan begins this chapter with the difficulty of describing higher states of consciousness.

“Most discussion of meditation speak of higher states of consciousness that can be attained through the practice. For the initiate these states of consciousness may be familiar, but for the outsider they are extremely difficult even to imagine. Much has been written about higher states of consciousness, but the discussion usually concludes with a statement that these states are indescribable and ineffable.

“There is an important reason that such experiences are indescribable. In the case of objective, external phenomena, a group of people can agree on words to describe them. This is how language in general is constructed. Thus, two people can look at a rose and agree that it is red. Since they are both seeing the same rose, they both have a common experience of which they can speak.

“However, when people try to discuss personal experiences in higher states of consciousness, the experiences are entirely internal. I have no way of knowing what is in your mind, so even if you try to describe it. I have no way of being sure of what you mean. Furthermore, since the experiences are internal and individual, it is difficult for people to find a common ground to develop a descriptive vocabulary. Vocabulary is based on shared experiences, and by definition, internal experiences is difficult if not impossible to share” (JM-AK, pp. 25-26).

Then Aryeh Kaplan showed its readers an example of how difficult for people to share a subjective experiences.

“For example, let us assume that while in a meditative state, I saw in my mind a color that has no counterpart in the external world. Suppose it was totally different from any other color and begin to describe what the color looked like? There would be no words in human vocabulary to describe it. The same is true of many meditative experiences. This fact makes it extremely difficult to develop an epistemology of meditative state. One ends up trying to describe experiences for which no language exists” (JM_AK, p. 26).

After his explanation, Aryeh Kaplan showed many examples until the end of this chapter. You must notice that some forms of meditation is dangerous to your mental health. He wrote the advice in the last passages of this chapter.

“In a sense, it is like climbing a mountain. Even for an experienced climber, there is always an element of danger. If a person had limited experience, he would not even think of climbing a difficult mountain without a guide, to do so would be to court disaster. The same is true of one who tries the more esoteric forms of meditation without proper training and discipline.

“The forms of meditation presented in this book are not dangerous mountains. Rather, they are gentle hills, which are safe to climb, but from which one can see wide vistas” (JM_AK, p. 39).

A SUMMARY OF “MANTRA MEDITATION”

Aryeh Kaplan begins the first paragraph with explaining the meaning of “mantra meditation.”

“The best-known forms of meditation today is mantra meditation. The word ‘mantra’ is an Eastern term denoting a word or phrase that is repeated over and over as a meditative exercise. In many types of Eastern meditation, mantra meditation is the central exercise, and it forms virtually the entire basis of Transcendental Meditation. Since there is no adequate generic Western term of this type of meditation, I shall use the Eastern term ‘mantra’ (JM_AK, p. 54).

The word “mantra” is familiar with me because I often use a word or phrase as one of forms of my meditation. The Japanese word “shingon” or the “sacred word” corresponds to “mantra.” Aryeh Kaplan further wrote mantra meditation right after the above paragraph.

“One immediate effect of mantra meditation is to relax the body. In this form of meditation, it seems that the more the body relaxes, the more active the mind becomes. It is as if energy is released by the body, which can be used by the mind.

“In any case, meditation, especially using a mantra, is an excellent relaxation method. For this reason, a number of psychologists have developed religiously neutral forms of mantra meditation to elicit the ‘relaxation response’ (JM_AK, p. 54).

Then Aryeh Kaplan insisted that mantra meditation could work through habituation.

“When one repeats a mantra over and over, the mind also becomes habituated to it. Eventually, one becomes able to say it without the words registering in the conscious mind. By this time, one has also formed the habit of erasing all thoughts from the mind while reciting the mantra. It is therefore a highly effective psychological means of removing all thought from the mind” (JM_AK, p. 55).

After that, Aryeh Kaplan showed its readers several examples from a viewpoint of historical mantra meditation. Below I quote one of examples of mantra meditation he mentioned there.

“In relatively modern times, a practical forms of mantra meditation was prescribed by the noted leader Chasidic leader Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1811)... Rabbi Nachman said that if a person does not know what to say, he should simply repeat the phrase *Ribbono shel Olam*, which is Hebrew for ‘Master of the Universe.’ From the description of the technique, it seems obvious that Rabbi Nachman was prescribing the use of phrase as a mantra to bring a person into a higher state of consciousness” (JM_AK, p. 57).

“Mantra meditation is one of the simplest types of meditation. It is therefore a good place to begin if you wish to embark on a program of meditation. Rabbi Nachman’s mantra, *Ribbono shel Olam*, is a good one with which to start. I also provides an excellent example of meditation in general,

“You cannot begin a program of meditation without a certain degree of commitment of meditation. In order for it to have an effect, you must do it on a daily basis, spending at least twenty or thirty minutes repeating mantra. If you do it every day, the effects become cumulative. However, when you miss or skip days, the cumulative effect is lost.

“Furthermore, it takes several weeks of discipline with a mantra to attain a full level of a higher state of consciousness. Some effects may be manifest immediately, but it takes a few weeks before you experience the full effects. If you have the commitments, the result can be striking” (JM_AK, p. 58).

Then Aryeh Kaplan explained where is suitable for your actual meditation, how you handle your sitting posture, and where you should put both hands.

“But the place is not important, as long as it is an environment where you will not be interrupted. You can even meditate under the covers in bed at night. If it is a place where you know you will not be disturbed, ...

“Many people associate meditation with the Eastern lotus position....For Westerners, this position is difficult to learn and is initially quite uncomfortable. In practice, it is found that sitting in a comfortable straight-backed chair is just as effective....

“During meditation, sit with the eyes lightly closed, totally relaxed. Your hands can rest comfortably on the table or on your lap. Your fingers should not be clasped or intertwined,... Rather, if your hands are together, one should rest lightly on the other” (JM_AK, p. 59).

Finally, Aryeh Kaplan explained to its readers how to enter mantra meditation after the above process. Below is the most important part of this mantra meditation.

“Let us assume that you are using Rabbi Nachman’s mantra, *Ribbono shel Olam*. Repeat the phrase over and over, slowly, in a very soft voice. The meditative norm is that it should be said in the softest voice that you can comfortably pronounce. You can either whisper it or vocalize it softly, whichever is more comfortable to you.

“There are no firm standards regarding this in Jewish meditation. Some people find it easier to whisper the mantra. It is also permissible to mouth it without voicing it at all. It is not recommended, however, that it merely be thought in the mind, at least for beginners. If the mantra is repeatedly mentally, without at least mouthing it, it can be interrupted by extraneous thoughts.

“Therefore, one should not place too much emphasis on how the mantra is said, as long as it is said, as long as it is said for the designated time. This usually consists of a period between twenty minutes and a half hour....

“At first, you may allow the mind to wander freely while reciting the mantra. As long as you have an inner awareness that the words *Ribbono shel Olam* denote ‘Master of the Universe,’ the words themselves will pull your thoughts in a meaningful direction. No matter where the thoughts lead, there is no cause for concern. A Chasidic teaching says that any thought that enters the mind during meditation does so for a purpose” (JM_AK, pp. 60-61).

In the final paragraph, Aryeh Kaplan stated below as a conclusion of mantra meditation.

“Of course, meditating on the phrase *Ribbono shel Olam*, ‘Master of the Universe,’ has great value in its own right, and some people may be content to make it a life time practice. Others, however, may want to use it as a way to learn meditative techniques and recognize higher states of consciousness, and then go on to what are considered more advance methods” (JM_AK, p. 63).

A SUMMARY OF “CONTEMPLATION”

Following mantra meditation, Aryeh Kaplan introduced to its readers “contemplation,” that is, contemplative meditation. I guess most of you recognize this kind of meditation.

“Contemplation consists in sitting and concentrating on object, word, or idea, letting it fill the entire mind. This is an excellent introductory meditation....The techniques are the same as those of mantra meditation, except that the experience is visual rather than verbal.

“Simple contemplation consists of gazing at an object for a fixed period of time. As in all forms of meditation, one should be as comfortable as possible. There is no need to avoid blinking the eyes, since this can lead to discomfort. Rather, one should sit and gaze at the object of contemplation in the most relaxed manner possible.

“The object of contemplation can be almost anything—a pretty stone, a leaf, a flower, or written material. Picture, images, and statues, however, are to be avoided, since contemplating them is dangerously close to idolatry” (JM_AK, p. 64).

Furthermore, Aryeh Kaplan explained to its readers the relationship between “contemplation” and “visualization.”

“Visual contemplation is valuable in many respects....Contemplation is a very good introduction to this [visualization] practice. Once a person has learned to look at an object correctly, he can also learn to control his vision. Contemplation engraves the image in the mind’s eye, and this image can then be conjured up even when the objects is not present.

“You can begin to using the object of contemplation as a focus for unstructured meditation. This would mean gazing at the object while letting the mind drift off in any direction it desires. The contemplation focuses the mind, but thought is left unbridled. You can think about how to restructure your life, about the meaning of life, or about any other subject important to you. Rather than being the goal of meditation, contemplation is an adjunct to a meaningful unstructured meditation.

“As one becomes more advanced, one gradually learns how to fill the mind with the visual image of the object of contemplation, banishing all other thought. This is very much like mantra meditation, except that instead of filling the mind with a word or phrase, it is filled with image. Extraneous thought are also shunted aside in a similar manner; whenever a thought enters the mind, it is gently pushed aside, leaving the entire attention fixed on the object of contemplation” (JM_AK, p. 65).

Aryeh Kaplan advised people who asked him which one of them should be done first.

“People sometimes ask, if one can only do one type of meditation, whether one should begin with mantra meditation or with contemplation. To a large degree, this is a matter of personal preference. Some people are more verbal, while others are more visually oriented. For one who is verbal, mantra meditation will work more effectively, while one who is more visually oriented may find it easier to fill the mind with visual contemplation....

“However, both mantra meditation and contemplation are meant to develop different areas of the mind and spirit. Therefore, both are important. There are also important meditations that

involve the senses of the body. For beginners, however, mantra meditation usually seems the simplest” (JM_AK, p. 66).

After his explanation, Aryeh Kaplan further advised its readers an idea of combining “mantra meditation” with “contemplation.”

“Some people find it valuable to combine mantra meditation with contemplation. If a person has learned to focus his mind through mantra meditation, then he can also use this method to enhance his contemplation. It is very easy to fill the mind with a visual image when one is in a higher state of consciousness from mantra meditation. In this sense, mantra meditation can be seen as an excellent introduction to contemplation” (JM_AK, pp. 66-67).

Then Aryeh Kaplan explained to its readers many examples of mantra meditation with contemplation until the end of this chapter.

A SUMMARY OF “VISUALIZATION”

Aryeh Kaplan begins this chapter with learning how to control images that one sees when the eyes are closed.

“...An important discipline in meditation is learning how to control these images. When one has learned how to control them, one can also learn how to hold an image in the mind’s eye. This technique is known as visualization.

“A simple way to begin this discipline is to close your eyes and try to picture a letter of the alphabet, for example, the letter A. If you know the Hebrew alphabet, you can try to visualize the letter *alef*. Since there are Jewish meditations that use the letter *alef*, I shall use it as an example, although any other letter or figure could also be used.

“To begin a visualization meditation, just close your eyes and relax, allowing the images in the mind’s eye to settle down. If you have been practicing mantra meditation, you may want to use it as a relaxing mechanism. In any case, after a few minutes, the image in the visual field will become easier to control.

“When the visual field is fairly calm, you can begin to try to visualize the *alef*. You may have an *alef* printed on a card and set the image of it in your mind. Then close your eyes and try to picture the *alef*. Try to see it with your eyes closed exactly as you saw it with your eyes open.

“At first, this may be extremely difficult. The image that you see in your mind’s eye are very difficult to control. If you have never done this before, it will be almost impossible the first time” (JM_AK. pp. 77-78).

Furthermore, Aryeh Kaplan explained to its readers one aid in “visualization.”

“One important aid in visualization is the name of the object to be visualized. If you are trying to visualize the *alef*, you may repeat the word *alef* to yourself periodically. You may even wish to repeat the word over and over, as if it were a mantra. This not only relaxes the visual field, but locks the mind on to the *alef*. Repeating the word *alef* as a mantra will bring the letter into the mind’s eye” (JM_AK, p. 78).

After that, Aryeh Kaplan added another aid to the above visualization exercise.

“Another good aid is to innate the visualization exercise with a contemplation meditation. If you wish to visualize the *alef*, first spend several days contemplating the letter written on a card approximately twenty minutes a day. This will serve to fix the image in the mind. It will then be much easier to fix the *alef* in the visual field with the eyes closed.

“If you still encounter difficulty, the meditation session can be split between contemplation and visualization. Spend the first fifteen minutes of a half-hour session contemplating the *alef*, looking at it with your eyes open. Then, during the next fifteen minutes, you can try to visualize it with the eyes closed” (JM_AK, p. 78).

Then Aryeh Kaplan encouraged its readers with patience and perseverance so that it could be done.

“Even after depicting the letter in the mind’s eye, the average person will be able to hold the image only for several seconds. Then, like all such images, it will dissolve into other images. With time and practice, one eventually develops the ability to hold the image clearly and firmly in the mind’s eye for extended periods. When this is accomplished, one has come a long way to gaining control over the mental processes” (JM_AK, p. 78).

As a conclusion of this chapter, Aryeh Kaplan wrote the advanced techniques using the Kabbalah text that was beyond the scope of my knowledge.

MY COMMENTARY

Suppose you make a decision like this: “I don’t need to do meditation. Sipping a glass of wine and taking a nap would be more comfortable rather than wasting my time doing meditation.” That sounds good to almost most of you. Once you make up your mind like that, it leaves no room for me to interrupt your decision. But you must at least realize that many forms of meditation exist in the world and many people are doing some forms of meditation either individually or with other participants at various gathering places.

Assuming you change your mind and want to do meditation, you must first understand both what mediation is and why you meditate. After Aryeh Kaplan wrote the section of his introduction to its readers why he had written the book titled “Jewish Meditation — A Practical Guide,” he answered the most-asked questions regarding meditation: “What Is Meditation?” and “Why Meditate?” clearly. His reasoning was compelling. I summarized within 2 pages in my article when summarizing the above two chapters. The total number of pages of those two chapters amounted to 11 pages in which he included several exercises for its readers.

Although the total number of pages of the chapter of “States of Consciousness” in his book amounted to 15 pages, I summarized within one page in my article. All I wanted you to know about this topic was make you understand the concept of “states of consciousness.”

Now I would like to focus on how to do meditation. I start with the chapter of “Mantra Meditation.” The total number of pages of the chapter of “Mantra Meditation” in his book amounted to 10 pages. Although I summarized within 2 pages in my article, I guess you can easily follow the procedure of how to do “mantra meditation” individually.

The word “mantra” derived from Buddhism and Hinduism, and in Japan, “mantra” was translated into Japanese word “shingon” meaning the “sacred word or phrase.” Therefore, the word “mantra meditation” is familiar with many Japanese people. All you must do is whisper some “mantra” or “shingon” you made a decision to use. Most of you have experience of chanting eight sounds of “to-ho-ka-mi-e-mi-ta-me” during “misogi chanting training” at your dojo. When you use those sacred words or phrases quietly (without shouting), that becomes mantra meditation. I guess you got an idea about mantra meditation.

Then another method of meditation was introduced to its readers by Aryeh Kaplan in the chapter of “Contemplation.” The total number of pages of “Contemplation” in his book amounted to 13 pages. I summarized within one and a half pages in my article. It seems to be similar to zazen meditation in which you should not make sound, but just sit down silently.

Furthermore, another method named “visualization” was introduced in his book. Its total number of pages amounted to 6 pages. I summarized within one and a half pages in my article. You can use this visualization technique with both mantra meditation and contemplation meditation. Visualization is often used in various forms of meditation. For example, when you count numbers from “1” to “10,” you try to visualize the figure of number or image coming up from number. I personally visualize each number in accordance with Japanese way of counting respectively. For example, the number “3” corresponds to the sound of “san” in Japanese, and it also matches with the sound of “san” meaning a mountain in Japanese. So I imagine a figure of “Fujisan” or “Mt. Fuji.” You should have your own image to each number.

In conclusion, the total number of pages of “Jewish Meditation” by Aryeh Kaplan amounted to 165 pages. The portions I didn’t summarize in my article are where God-related subjects and Jewish specific articles appeared. As I have not studied Hebrew, the Torah, and the Kabbalah, those subjects were beyond the scope of my knowledge. Please allow me that I left out those out of my article. If you are an American Jew, those portions may be familiar with you..

[The End of #3_meditation]



Postscript: As I mentioned in #0_information, this is the final issue of “The Shiori.” Thank you for reading “The Shiori” as well as many issues having had various titles in the past.

Most important thing is that you continue your daily routine, that is, sipping a glass of wine, taking a nap, and handling favorite matters. Now-Here-You is only a place where the true Self exists. Please enjoy that moment of your life.

The last word: “May your future be filled with joy of practicing Aikido and other forms of budo and success of personal matters to be dealt with.

[The End of “The Shiori”]

