

Quadrant II - Transcript and Related Materials

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Notes

Meaning of Mysticism:

Belief that union with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute, or the spiritual apprehension of knowledge inaccessible to the intellect, may be attained through contemplation and self-surrender. Mysticism is an attempt to penetrate into the ultimate reality. In common understanding mysticism has a variety of connotation. Some think that it is associated with magic or occultism some others think that it is something psychological. It

might also mean a religious attitude that does not care much about the outward appearance of religion. For the purpose of study we define mysticism as a definite recognizable form of experience, movement of intuitive perception which reveals a new facets of reality but leaves deep impact on the person. Mysticism is a religious experience in the purest and concentrated form. Mystics are those who are initiated into mysteries of eternity and timelessness.

Kinds of Mysticism

1. Mysticism of love and union and mysticism of knowledge

These types of Mysticism are always combined. The difference lies on the emphasis that there are two urges in men that is the Earth to escape from the lonely self and merge individuality into something larger. This urge leads to mysticism of love and union. Here the mystics wishes to escape from the lonely self and merge or participate in a closer union with God. The second urge is to understand the secret mysteries of the world. The mysticism of knowledge and understanding results from this urge the mystics wants to understand the secret of universe in its fullness.

2. Nature mysticism

To the nature mystics nature around is a mirror in which reflected the face of God, nature is not an illusion for the mystics but is the only reality. In this kind of mysticism the immanence of God is emphasized. The strongest exponent of this mysticism was Plato. For Plato each object for a particular thing is related to the general concept whose essence is an idea of the divine mind. The divine mind is the good, the true and the beautiful. We sense the reality through our sense impressions which are produced by contact with nature.

3. Soul Mysticism:

In soul Mysticism god is equated with soul. The soul is regarded as sacred hidden and the mystic searches for the soul.

The body is believed to be a physical cause of the soul or soul mystics believes in the reality that the soul is ultimate truth not the body .

Vedic teaching point out to the kind of an experience where the ego is dissolved and soul within is brought out.

4. God mysticism:

In God mysticism the mystics completely identify himself with God. God and man become one. Matter becomes an illusion hence is a great obstacle to spiritual realization. In eastern mysticism the individual persons personality and the world are ceased. In western form of God mysticism soul becomes God without losing its identity.

Seven Characteristics of Mystical Experiences

William James and F.C. Happold state that mystical experiences have certain characteristics:

1. Ineffability : (inability to capture the experience in ordinary language)

Mystic states are ineffable, it defines expression in an understandable way to anyone who has not had a similar experience. In this sense it resembles a state of feeling rather than a state of intellect. It is impossible to make a clear feeling to somebody who haven't had a similar experience.

Noetic Quality: (the notion that mystical experiences reveal an otherwise hidden or inaccessible knowledge).

all the mystical states are close to the states of feeling and knowledge they are a great insight into truths which have not been touched by the intellect. Their insight vary a great sense of authority and they cannot be expressed in the language of intellect.

. Transiency: (the simple fact that mystical experiences last for a relatively brief period of time), Mystical states cannot be sustained for long. Except in rare instances, half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day.

4. Passivity: Passivity (the sense that mystical experiences happen to someone; that they are somehow beyond the range of human volition and control)The mystic feels as if his own wheel is suspended and he is held by some other power.

5. Unity of Opposites :(a sense of Oneness, Wholeness or Completeness)

In many mystical states there is a feeling of presence of consciousness of oneness of everything. All duality and multiplicity are seen as ceased and erased

6. Timelessness: (a sense that mystical experiences transcend time). Mystical experiences seem to occur beyond in some sense: outside of time. In mystical experiences it cannot be explained in terms of past, present and future. A mystic feels that he is in a dimension where there is no time and everything is always 'now'.

7. A feeling that one has somehow encountered "the true self": (a sense that mystical experiences reveal the nature of our true, cosmic self: one that is beyond life and death, beyond difference and duality, and beyond ego and selfishness).