

Anthony Damiani *on contemplating a symbol*

A.D. The idea is to look at (the symbol) and see it for what it is without superimposing any of your psychology on it. Anything I superimpose on it will be the ashes of memory ... I contemplate, I just try to keep my mind still. I try not to bring in any associations and thoughts. When the mind does get quiet then a meaning, so to speak, comes to the surface. And very often the meaning is not articulate in the beginning.... it's more or less the feeling or the presence of an idea and then I have to make it articulate for myself. So it's really learning to keep quiet and not throw, project out there.

S: So what you really try to do, is when you see it, is not to think.

A.D.: Yeah, that's what I call thinking,

S: Are you calling that also contemplation?

A.D.: Yeah. But thinking, real thinking is contemplation. What most people call thinking is not thinking, it's a regurgitation of everything that you've already experienced so it's in the realm of the known. How could you call it thinking? Thinking for me is always fresh, novel, new. Whereas if I pull out something from the past that's memory, that's not thinking.

S: O.K., you see the image, the pictorial image of the sword and what you're really trying to do is to stop thinking, but your focus is on, your attention is focussed on that visual symbol?

A.D.: Un-focused. [laughter] Now look, if it's focused, alright, it's like the whole psychological apparatus comes in ...

S: But it's attention.

A.D. : Yes, it is attention, but it's very peculiar. It's a sort of unfocused attention. It's a kind of diffused attention. Insofar that it's a diffused attention, if an intuition comes, I'll be there. Whereas if it's a focused attention, an intuition comes, I'm going to block it, I'm even going to deny it, I'm going to say, "I'm not interested in you." In other words what I'm saying is: a focused attention is a predetermination as to how you're going to see something. Whereas an unfocused attention there's no determination, there's no judgment. What's there is there.

If I already have focused my mind, put it in a set, predetermined condition, then anything I read is already pre-determined. I already know what I'm going to read, if I could use that term.

Whereas a mind that's open, receptive, unfocused doesn't cling to any of its memories, keeps them at a distance, that mind is capable of receiving an intuition. *[Ohio March 1984:]*

The attempt to perceive through this manner produces thought that forces us to exclude boundaries. Truly a trying to understand rather than a claim to have done so. Philosophy as wonder--and the insight into that wonder--will produce for us the inspiration for our daily and ordinary lives. . *[Anthony Damiani supp p. 622]*

If you DO cancel out expectation, anticipation, the past and the future, then you become a receptacle. There will spontaneously come to you thoughts which aren't yours, which are bright, happy intuitions, and they actually do tell you something new. *[Anthony Damiani Living Wisdom (p. 61)]*