

真 (ZHEN)

回教以清真為主

清者對濁而言也 真者對假而言也

凡天下有形之物 皆濁也 天下污濁之物 皆假也

人能去濁留清 去假存真 而修真之道得矣

夫所謂修真者 果何在也

The principal tenets of Islam are purity and ZHEN (Genuineness).

Purity is the opposite of foulness; ZHEN is the opposite of illusion.

Every physical form in the world is foulness. All foulness is an illusion¹.

If mankind can dispense with its foulness and maintain its purity, the way of genuine practice is attained.

Thus, what is the practice of ZHEN; what is it really about?

Note¹: By illusion is meant things that are ever-changing in form and lack essential meaning.

人生天地間 莫不存有我見

究竟我之為我 有真我 有假我

People in this world all have a perception of their own selves.

In truth, the self of our "self" can be a self of ZHEN and a self of illusion.

假我者 即此血肉之軀

因我當初一念之差 不能自主 遂墮於四大假合 紅塵醉夢之中

是以寄跡於此 留形於此

此乃幻化之身 最久不過百年 終歸朽壞

得之不榮 失之不辱者也

身既如此 何況天地間富貴榮華 夫妻子女 乃一切身外之物

尤屬風雲偶合 春夢一場 得之不足喜 失之不足悲者耶

噫 世之逐逐營營 具有有無生滅等相

因緣而起見 隨境而生心者 皆認賊為子 不知假我之為假合也

The self of illusion is this fleshly physical body.

Because of not being fully enlightened before this life, I could not control myself and was cast into a body of "four components" in this dusty and deceptive dream-land of life.

Thus, I live here and leave my traces here.

My body, which is illusory at best, lasts no longer than one hundred years and eventually ends with decay.

Having it brings no glory and losing it brings no shame.

If our own body can be viewed in this way, how illusory are all those things that are outside of the body, such as riches, honor, fame, glory, husband, wife, son and daughter.

Those images are chimeras as cloud and wind meeting in the sky, or as a sweet dream in spring-time. Having them is not required to make us happy, and losing them need not make us sad.

Alas, people's worldly cravings all have the transitory symptoms of existing, vanishing, living and dying.

People who perceive incidents through the lens of their own personal preferences and allow any circumstances to perturb their minds are as those who accept a thief as their offspring.

They fail to realize that the "self" of illusion is a deceptive component.

Note¹: The "Four components" of the body are earth, water, fire and wind. The hardest part of a body is the earth component. The wet part is the water; the warm part is fire and the motion of our body is wind.

真我者 即我本來面目 千萬年而不變 自混沌以來 賢不加多 愚不加少者也

人能閉門自修 用功煅煉

久而久之 後天氣質之性 煅化殆盡 先天靈陽之氣 日益充盈

陽氣充盈 真人乃現 可有可無 可大可小 可以超生死 可以出輪迴

天地有壞期 而我獨無壞期 人物有生死 而我獨無生死

蓋以此本陽神 至虛至無故也

然虛之極 即實之極 無之極 即有之極

故我能生天地萬物 天地萬物不能生我 是之謂真我 是之謂真樂

The self of ZHEN, which is the essence of our minds and unchangeable throughout all years, has existed since the primeval state of the Universe.

If we can close the gates of our desire¹ in order to practice our behavior sincerely with focused mind and temper, our learned characteristics can gradually evaporate and our innate positive principal spirit² can manifest itself in full strength.

When such positive principal spirit is in full strength, our 'self' of ZHEN, which has opportunity to manifest itself, then can be present with ourselves or disappear. It can grow small or large within ourselves. It can surpass life or death and even escape from the cycle of reincarnation.

Everything in this world has its own timetable of decay, but we don't. Everything in this world has its life or death but we don't.

This is due to the positive principal spirit which is the supreme void and nothingness³.

The ultimate void is also the ultimate solidity; the ultimate moment of nothingness is also the ultimate moment of everything⁴.

Thus, I can generate everything in this world but the world cannot generate me⁵.

This is the self of ZHEN; and it is the genuine joy.

Note¹: Gates of Desire are the desires of eyes, ears, mouth, nose and body.

Note²: Mankind has two principal spirits which are positive and negative. The positive principal spirit naturally buoys upward and the negative spirits sinks ever downward.

Note³: The void, which has no form or physical image, thus can never decay. If it never decays, it is ultimate form of solidity. In Taoist doctrine, Nothingness is the source of everything because everything must begin with the state of nothing.

Note⁴: The concepts of void versus solidity or nothingness versus everything can be compared to a person who tries to make space for himself. If he builds a small house, it means a small solidary boundary is formed and relatively a small space-void is created for himself. If he builds an ultimate huge house, it means an ultimate solidary boundary is formed and relatively an ultimate space-void is created for himself. That is what we call relativity today.

Note⁵: The subject "I" refers to a person who has attained the state of nothingness so that he can generate everything.

彼世之任情放棄 不知保我靈陽 養我性天者 皆認恩為仇 而不知真我之有真樂也
惟達人知之 掃除一切窮通 得喪 是非 利害 吉凶 禍福 生死 榮辱諸相
養我真精 真氣 真神
悠悠乎與太虛同體 浩浩乎與造化同遊
而不知真我之為真我也 又遑問假我之為假我乎

Nowadays, people who give vent to their desires without any constraint, don't know how to take good care of their positive principal spirit and nurture their inherent nature. They regard kindness as an enemy, so that they never know the genuine joy that emanates from the self of ZHEN.

The sages are the rare exception. They disregard all perceptions of difficulty or ease, gain or loss, right or wrong, advantage or disadvantage, luck or unluck, danger or fortune, life or death, glory or insult. Instead, they nurture their inner essence, their genuine vapour¹ and their positive principal spirit.

The sages then become part of the Universe and feel its boundlessness; they become part of nature and enjoy its vastness. By then, they have no concern that the self of ZHEN is the reality of themselves. Why would they even waste an instant to question whether the self of illusion is a falsehood?

Note¹: In Taoism, innate air called "genuine vapor" inside our body nurtures our positive principal spirit.

若夫庸夫俗子 明明真我 認之為假 明明假我 認之為真

For those of us who are more ordinary mortals, the so-obvious self of ZHEN is acknowledged to be illusion; the so-obvious self of illusion is acknowledged to be real.

惟其認假為真 則凡聲色貨利富貴功名 如浮雲之過太空而不足介懷者
每每認為我有

殊不知我身非我有也 況身外物乎

惟其認真為假 則凡身心性命 精神氣血 如至寶之佩吾躬 而不可稍離者
每每自甘暴棄

殊不知此乃一元真宰 非外物所可比倫也

The glamorous life, greed, wealth and fame should be treated with as little attention as we give the clouds running across the sky. But, confusing illusion with ZHEN, we continually think that we are entitled to those illusory things.

Moreover, we even fail to realize that we can't possess our bodies forever, how can we possess material things outside of our bodies?

The essence of our mind and spirit should be treated as priceless treasures that we must honor and cannot let leave our body at any time. But, confusing ZHEN with illusion, we compromise these treasures and even give them up willingly.

Moreover, we fail to realize that those treasures are our intrinsic sources of life to which nothing else is comparable.

是以一真既離 百假俱聚 往來酬酢 各存虛偽之心 遠近親疏 咸懷詐騙之術
自欺欺人 自誤誤國

此人心之所以日壞 世道之所以日乖也

Thus, once ZHEN has left, hundreds of fake motivations mingle within our inward interactions, and everyone among us is filled with motives of hypocrisy. Even our close relatives would behave with deceit, not to mention those more distant.

A self-deceived person also deceives others; a self-destructive person also destroys his country. Thus, the heart of mankind degenerates all around us, and the morality of the world becomes lower every day.

吾願有志君子

真以處世 而無狡飾之心 真以幹事 而無懈怠之意

真以修道 而不為氣稟所拘 人欲所蔽

I adjure all ambitious and honorable people to: use ZHEN to conduct their livelihood and be mindless of cunning and pretense; use ZHEN to deal with daily business and be mindless of slacking off; use ZHEN to practice the TAO so as not to be restrained by learned behavior nor be obscured by desires.

夫於是則一真百真 而可還其天地生我 聖賢教我 父母養我之虛靈不昧之性真矣
豈不善乎

Once a particle of ZHEN is manifested in our behavior, every other sign of the ZHEN in our behavior can follow.

Thus, we can repay the kindness of the nurturing of Heaven and Earth, the teachings of the sages and the lessons from our parents to maintain our lively and unconceivable self of ZHEN.

How surpassingly magnificent that is!