GOETHEANUM COMMUNICATIONS

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**Listening without knowing what there is to ‘hear’**

**Book by Bastiaan Baan on meditation in the western world**

**Practising meditation means learning more about oneself and perceiving the world in increasingly nuanced ways without a personal perceptual filter. In addition, meditation can also give access to inspiration on how to deal with tasks in the world.**

It‘s a bit like a run-up: by taking one step back one gathers momentum to sprint ahead. With meditation, too, one withdraws in order to acquire capacities. But meditation does not lead to quick results after a short introduction. It is rather like learning to play an instrument: step by step one works towards gaining skills at various levels that make it gradually possible to play a tune and after some time even play in an orchestra.

Using numerous practical examples, Bastiaan Baan explores aspects of meditation as an art in which everyone determines for themselves, “what they do and how they do it.” With perceptual exercises one sensitizes oneself to qualities that lie outside oneself, and by observing the resonance within one gets to know oneself. Natural phenomena such a clouds, in which complex effects come to expression, are a possible starting point. One listens without knowing what there is to ‘hear‘, and devotes oneself selflessly to possible impressions, because meditation does not ‘deliver’ foreseeable results in the sense of ‘When I do A, B will follow‘. Other starting points for meditation include images or words one connects with through feeling and experience.

If one observes oneself without bias during meditation, one learns to gauge to what extent one‘s experiences may still be influenced by ‘selfishness’. The contents one absorbs also inform the inner experience. This is why one has to be cautious. Using examples of experiences described by others, Bastiaan Baan warns against unqualified influence by teachers who disregard the principle of self-determination. Another stage in meditation is the consciously grasped return to the world of every day duties.

When we become familiar with ourselves through meditation, we begin to work on and with our ‘I’. For Bastiaan Baan, a Christian Community priest, the Gospels are full of inspiration for expanding our understanding of the ‘I’.

(2170 characters/SJ; English by Margot M. Saar)

**Book (in German)** Bastiaan Baan: Meditation in der westlichen Welt, Verlag am Goetheanum, 2022, 208 pages, 19 Euros / 23 CHF **Web (in German)** goetheanum-verlag.ch/produkt/meditation-in-der-westlichen-welt

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