

Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life

By Mary Margaret Funk

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Sister Mary Margaret Funk explains the theory and practice of dealing with mindless thoughts developed by the great fourth-century monk John Cassian. She interprets the techniques in a contemporary way suitable for lay persons who are serious about the spiritual life.

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Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life By Mary Margaret Funk Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Benedictine nun and former prioress Funk translates the vocabulary of fourth-century Christian mysticism into accessible prose for 20th-century spiritual seekers. Using primarily the writings of the early desert father John Cassian (b. A.D. 356), other Christian mystics and an occasional Eastern religious mystic, Funk, the executive director of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, explores Cassian's premise that serious knowledge of God involves three renunciations: of one's former way of life, of the thoughts belonging to that former way of life and of one's very idea of God. Most of her text deals with renouncing the thoughts belonging to one's former way of life. Her eight chapters focus on different "thoughts"--food, sex, anger, dejection, acedia (profound weariness of the soul), vainglory (taking credit for good actions) and pride. In each chapter, she shows how such thoughts can interfere with one's knowledge of God. As Funk states: "To renounce one's thoughts may seem out-of-date to a casual observer--harsh, foreboding, even unrelenting. A mind at peace, stilled, available for conscious thinking at will is of major value for those of us who confront chaos, confusion, noise, and numbness as we move into the third millennium."

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From Library Journal
The desert tradition of Christianity (250-450 C.E.) is remembered for its ascetic rigor, but its purpose is often forgotten. Renouncing a former way of life to dwell in the wilderness meant renouncing the thinking that formed old habits and hence moving beyond all preconceived ideas to experience fully the divine reality. Funk, a Benedictine nun, discusses this spiritual practice of watching and training thoughts, largely based on the eight classic thoughts outlined by John Cassian, a fourth-century monk. Interesting parallels exist between this early Christian spiritual practice and Buddhism and Hinduism, as Funk points out. This book might be of interest to students of Eastern asceticism as well as those wanting a good introduction to the literature of the Christian desert communities, but even more broadly, it is an excellent, clearly written companion for spiritual seekers drawn to the path of mental discipline.
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Review
"A valuable addition to any meditator's library. A detailed exposition of the major machinations of the human ego... Highly recommended." -- *Monos, 2001*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Holeman:

The book untitled Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains your ex idea with easy technique. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read this. The book was compiled by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of time of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book inside anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it.

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