The World Community for Christian Meditation

Published on *The World Community for Christian Meditation* (http://www.wccm.org)

Meditators' Blog 9/9/2012

GROUP MEDITATORS DISCUSS THE SUBJECT OF ?LETTING GO? *by Paul Harris*

Meditators in a group setting often discuss what the term ?letting go? means in the practice of meditation. In a recent discussion someone mentioned that firstly ?we must let go of words, thoughts and images?.

Yes but perhaps that is only the beginning of delving into this important topic.

It seems to me we must also let go of instant results. It?s been said we live in an ?instant results? society: everything from instant coffee, same day cleaning service, to wanting to immediately know whether we have won the lottery. Our society is accomplishment and win orientated. We seem to have a fixation on achieving goals, seeing results immediately and above all winning.

The 4th century BC Chinese spiritual philosopher, Chaung Tzu, (369-286 BC) saw the danger of ?results? in his poem called The Need to Win.

He says:

When an archer is shooting for nothing
he has all his skill
If he shoots for a brass buckle
he is already nervous
If he shoots for a prize of gold
he sees two targets
His skill has not changed
but the prize divides him
He cares more of winning
than of shooting
And the need to win drains him of power

That is why John Main keeps insisting on ?letting go? of expectations, of goals, objectives, results, and in fact ?winning? on the path of meditation. A priest looking for results once went

to john Main and said ?I?ve been meditating now for seven years. How long is it going to take me to come to any kind of silence??

Father John with a twinkle in his eye, said: ?20 years?.

And the smiling priest in telling this story said: ?and just think I have only 13 more years to go?. The point of this story is that we must have the faith of a child and give up our adult self concern about goals and getting somewhere. Meditation is rally the opposite. It?s about ?letting go? of our self concerns, looking for results, progress, and about letting go of getting ?anywhere?.

There is even more to ?letting go?. We have to let go of all the things we cling to, including our attachments. We must let go of our security, our attachment to health, material possessions, reputation, everything. We are on a spiritual journey and we must travel light. Perhaps this is what Jesus was referring to when he said to his disciples: ?take no gold, no silver, no copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, not two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff? (Matthew 10:9-10)

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Source URL: http://www.wccm.org/fb_cb/196810127004328/content/meditators-blog-992012