

Friday of Lent Week 4



The anguish of loss today can become the joy of deliverance tomorrow. We don't really understand the nature of the attachment that caused the pain when separation or loss came until the operation is over and the trauma subsides.

Either we breathe a sigh of relief as we realise we have been delivered ? from an addiction or a compulsive delusion, for example. Or we see that what we have lost has become a genuine death experience that drags us into a vortex of surrendering to something vaster than we can control.

If we lost something we are better off without, we pick up life again quickly with renewed enthusiasm. We had so many assets tied up in a bad investment but now they are liquid again and can be invested in life with much better returns than before.

There are pain and periodic twinges of regret. Like the Hebrews in the desert who regularly rebelled against their deliverance from Egypt and could only think of the ?fish we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic! Here we are wasting away, stripped of everything; there is nothing but manna for us to look at!? Oh no, not that supernatural manna again. No addiction ends instantly. No time of imprisonment ends at the moment the door is unlocked.

But the deeper losses of life are different. The difference is revealed when, as our attachments weaken, in their place a dark void opens all around us. The first is like going to the dentist. Forgotten when it's over. This is major surgery with a strong anaesthetic that puts us out. There is so much that is new and unwelcome that we have no choice but to accept and integrate.

Seeing the distinction between these two kinds of loss makes for living wisely. The perception needed is gained through the micro-losses we freely undergo by dealing with distractions during meditation.

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