



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

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LETTING GO

We all begin the journey of meditation enchained, addicted to different things ? to sweets, to self-indulgence, to fantasy, to the past. And we all begin the path of meditation at different points.

The path of meditation leads us out of all slavery, all enchainment. It is a way of liberty. It is only necessary to begin exactly where we are and to follow the road that stretches out before us.

As we do so we experience a completely new experience in our life, an experience of communion with everyone else on the path and a growing sense of union with the whole of creation.

Yet we all do begin with certain egoism, and it is important to understand that meditation is not meant for the perfect but for human beings who know that they are called to be perfect

One of the problems we face as we begin to meditate, wherever we begin from, is the contrast between our present state of egoism and imperfection and that apparently unattainable state of perfection.

Our very awareness of imperfection, egoism, or sinfulness is an inevitable part of the spiritual and religious response to life. It is merely knowing that we are incomplete. We can be aware of that and humbly desire to be perfect and to leave egoism behind, but the desire for perfection can itself become a form of egoism.

The power of meditation in cutting out the root of egoism in us consists in taking our attention completely off ourselves. That is the essential dynamic of the mantra. While we are saying the mantra we cannot be thinking of ourselves.

Sometimes we can accept the teaching at first with great enthusiasm. Then later, when we begin to feel the discipline involved, we can begin to question it. And it seems puzzling to us.

Shouldn't we be doing something more complex? More sophisticated? Shouldn't we be doing something a little bit more advanced at this point, coming to grips with our imperfections more specifically?

If you say the mantra you have to face the consequence of saying the mantra and that will be the transformation of your life. As this conversion unfolds in our ordinary life, we begin to recognize it as the redemptive experience, the experience of liberation.

Although we may think of ourselves at the beginning as chained to many things, we are in fact only chained to ourselves. The liberty we long for is precisely the liberty from self-consciousness, self-centeredness self-obsession, from isolation.

So in saying the mantra don't be concerned with your imperfections or your hopes for perfection. Your only concern is to discover who you are. We don't know yet who we are but we come to know that we are a person created by love for love.

LIGHT WITHIN

Laurence Freeman OSB

We invite you to reflect on the excerpt from Light Within and how it may resonate in your journey of a spiritual awakening in the 12 steps of recovery, and in particular to step 11.

Meditation

It is to be hoped that every A.A. who has a religious connection which emphasizes meditation will return to the practice of that devotion as never before. 12&12 p.98, Step Eleven

Liberation

We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. 12&12 p.21, Step One

They spoke with great freedom from embarrassment, which I could never do, and they seemed very much at ease on all occasions and appeared very healthy. BB p.178, Doctor Bob's Nightmare

Isolation

This feeling of being at one with God and man, this emerging from isolation through the open and honest sharing of our terrible burden of guilt, brings us to a resting place where we may prepare ourselves for the following Steps toward a full and meaningful sobriety. 12&12 p.62, Step Five

Self-centeredness

Our actor is self-centered -- ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays. BB p.61, How It Works

Perfection

No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. BB p.60, How It Works

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