



# The World Community for Christian Meditation

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## Monday of Lent Week 4



Life is a story with many stories and people who love life like

stories. It's a bad sign when no story stirs, amuses or saddens you. John Main taught meditation simply because he wanted to share with others what he had found: the gift of meditation to vitalize us and lead us continuously to a fuller experience of life and its meaning.

He was a great storyteller. I can remember him telling this one to a meditation group one evening:

The Indian God Shiva was sitting with his wife, looking down on the world when his wife said to him, "Why don't you go and grant salvation to some of your devotees?" Shiva said, "Very well" and so they went down to a town and sat in the market place. The word got around that a great prophet was there and then the holy people of the town came out.

The first of them came up to Shiva and said, "I meditate three times every day, in winter I meditate for two hours in cold water, in summer I meditate for two hours in the heat. When will I get salvation?" Shiva looked at him and said, "Three more incarnations". You can just imagine the story as this man goes back to his friends, shaking his head and saying, "Three more, three more". So it goes on with others. Another person comes and he is told that he has ten more incarnations. Finally a little man comes and he says, "I am afraid I do not do much but I do try to love everyone around me and I try to love creation. Can I get salvation?" Shiva scratches his head and the little fellow gets a bit nervous and asks again, "Can I get salvation?" Shiva looks at him and says, "A thousand incarnations", at which the poor fellow jumps around for joy and starts shouting to everyone "I will get it, I will get salvation! A thousand, only a thousand more!"

At that, he bursts into flames and so does Shiva and his wife and they all become one flame and they are gone. Then his wife says to him, "How did that little old man get salvation immediately when you had said a thousand incarnations?" He said, "Yes, that was my ruling; but his generosity overruled my ruling and so he was saved immediately."

The point? If you don't get it and feel better about your own limited efforts, read it again.

Remember yesterday's story of the two brothers.

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