The World Community for Christian Meditation

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

Weekly Readings 20/1/2013

From Laurence Freeman, OSB: Dearest Friends, January 1997

WCCM International Newsletter.

To allow [the] pattern of daily meditation to take hold amid all the other patterns of our lives, not just imaginatively but actually, is a challenge to the best of us; to the best in us. It is a mundane introduction to the cosmic law of sacrifice.

There is an Indian story which tells how Vishnu came every day to offer worship to Shiva by offering a thousand lotuses at her feet. One day, after a few thousand years of such worship, he discovered as he lay the lotuses down that were only 999 that day. (Such things happen occasionally). Without delay he plucked out one of his eyes, beautiful, shaped like a lotus and completed the offering with it by placing it among the 999.

Worship is another way of understanding the self-renunciation which is the dynamic at the heart of meditation and of all love. It offers us a different way of looking at sacrifice. Not as a loss of something precious, something dragged from us as we kick and scream. . .but as a precious opportunity to enter even greater bliss and fulfillment. To accept and to give in such moments is a gift of praise, which collects our whole being and unifies and simplifies us in the sudden alchemy of love.

This is the multi-dimensional work of meditation and it is why we must be so simple in our saying the mantra if all these dimensions are to be harmonized and develop together. It is not only a sacrifice of time. . . . The sacrifice includes our thoughts and imagination, the hundred-and-one conversations at all levels of our mind. As it was for Vishnu, it is an offering of our whole way of seeing and knowing, a temporary, partial blindness which is an act of faith in another and greater way of seeing and knowing.

The mantra introduces . . . into [the] experience of prayer a spontaneous act of praise which involves our whole being. Not just telling God . . .how omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent "he" is. But accepting the invitation inherent in our very existence to become as God is: by grace, by adoption, by love. In this cooperation of grace and nature our being is made whole. Christ the healer is most at work uniting depth and surface, inner and outer, in

the pure gift of praise, which is ours and his as we listen to the mantra.

As Fr John taught, our meditation becomes most purely prayer not just in the work of saying the mantra in the face of distraction, but in the ease of listening to it.

After meditation: ?Pax,? D.H. Lawrence, SELECTED POEMS, rev. (London: Penguin Poetry Library, 1986), p. 241

All that matters is to be at one with the living God
To be a creature in the house of the God of Life.

Like a cat asleep on a chair
at peace, in peace
and at one with the master of the house, with the
mistress
at home, at home in the house of the living,
sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.

Sleeping on the hearth of the living world,
yawning at home before the fire of life
feeling the presence of the living God
like a great reassurance
a deep calm in the heart
a presence
as of a master sitting at the board
in his own and greater being,

in the house of life.

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Source URL: http://www.wccm.org/content/weekly-readings-2012013