

Show an affirming flame

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Enlightenment dawns as the ego sets. Fear and desire yield to the . . . freedom to love those who believe differently from ourselves and even those who cause us suffering. The ultimate weapon of nonviolence replaces vengeance. The whole person is changed. We taste the universal in ourselves and surrender ourselves to God. The conflict of opposites becomes the experience of transcendence, which is not a momentary event, but unfolds in a new way and vision of life. It is all unobservable, but it can be recognized as soon as we allow ourselves to be known. We can see it in people of every faith.

We can serve this vision even before it is fully realized in our individual selves because we are more than individuals. Our great traditions teach us that there are communions of saints and that we belong to them. That our greatest resources are not material or technological but spiritual. The great teachers and lovers of humanity heal the wounds of sin and division.

After meditation: an excerpt from “September 1, 1939” by W.H. Auden in *ANOTHER TIME* (London: Faber and Faber, 2019, 90th Anniversary Edition).

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,

Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

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