

Meditation Simplifies



“I implore you by God’s mercy to offer your very selves: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed” (Romans 12:1-2).

For “this present world” let us read “ego”: the part that thinks it is the whole. It is the part that involuntarily blocks and distorts the mystery of life because of the way it responds to pain and rejection; it is the part that creates the perception of a world without love. [. . . .] Even if meditation were no more than a brief daily dip into the kingdom within us it would merit our complete attention. But it is more than a temporary escape from the prisons of fear and desire. Complex as these patterns are, making us fear the death and the true love that are necessary for growth and survival, meditation simplifies them all.

Day by day, meditation by meditation, this process of simplification proceeds. We become gradually more fearless until in the joy of being released from the images and memories of desire we taste total freedom from fear. And then—and even before then—we become of use to others, able to love without fear or desire . . . released to serve the Self which is the Christ within.

After meditation: “One Song” in *THE SOUL OF RUMI: A New Collection of Ecstatic Poems*, tr. Coleman Barks (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), p. 47.

What is praised is one, so the praise is one too,
many jugs being poured
into a huge basin. All religions, all this singing,
one song.

The differences are just illusion and vanity. Sunlight
looks slightly different
on this wall than it does on that wall and a lot different
on this other one, but
it is still one light. We have borrowed these clothes, these
time-and-space personalities,
from a light, and when we praise, we pour them back in.

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