

The Better Life Begins

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It often seems as if we rush through life at such high speed while in our heart there is the essential interior flame of being. Our rushing often brings it to the point of extinction. But when we sit down to meditate, in stillness and simplicity, the flame begins to burn brightly and steadily. As we abandon thinking in terms of success and self-importance, the light of the flame helps us to understand ourselves and others in terms of light, warmth and love.

The mantra leads us to this point of stillness where the flame of being can burn bright. It teaches us what we know, but frequently forget, that we cannot live a full life unless it is grounded on some underlying purpose. Life has an ultimate significance and value that is only really discovered in the still steadiness of being, which is our essential rootedness in God. It is terribly easy to let life become mere routine. Roles can easily take the place of being. We fall into playing the routine roles of student, mother, husband, manager, monk or whatever. [. . .] We must be open to the love that redeems us from illusion and shallowness. We must live out of that personal infinite holiness that we possess as a temple of the Holy Spirit. We must discover that the same Spirit that created the universe dwells in our hearts, and in silence is loving to all. This is the purpose of every life.

After Meditation, "Night" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Public Domain.

Into the darkness and the hush of night
Slowly the landscape sinks, and fades away,
And with it fade the phantoms of the day,
The ghosts of men and things, that haunt the
light.

The crowd, the clamor, the pursuit, the flight,
The unprofitable splendor and display,
The agitations, and the cares that prey
Upon our hearts, all vanish out of sight.

The better life begins; the world no more
Molests us; all its records we erase
From the dull common-place book of our lives,
That like a palimpsest is written o'er
With trivial incidents of time and place,
And lo! the ideal, hidden beneath, revives.

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