

Accepting Silence

 wccm.org/weekly-teachings/accepting-silence

7 January 2023

For many of us the dominant emotions that rule us unconsciously are insecurity and fear. These prevent us according to John Main from having the courage to go into the Silence. These strong emotions are either due to outside stimuli, which lead us to feel powerless over our own life, or to internal states, primarily a lack of self-worth, when we are too aware of our own drawbacks and limitations. These external fears could be based on a real situation, in which we find ourselves, but the internal ones are based on illusion, only a perception. They are based on a lack of true self-knowledge, as we have forgotten the truth of our whole being. Constantly John Main is pointing us in the right direction: by going within we can experience *“the harmony of all our qualities and energies in that ultimate centre of our being, which is the centre and source of all being...Love.”*

These emotions are not the only factor that makes us hesitant to enter the inner silence meditation leads to. Going within and discovering a different way of being goes contrary to current opinion of what is important. Our society focuses on the material plane, even denying that there is anything beyond the rational, conscious level of awareness. Consciousness is considered to be an emergent property of the brain. Once the brain no longer functions, there is just oblivion waiting for us. What a limited and depressing view of human nature: we are merely organic, biological computers responding to stimuli from the environment, hard-wired to assert ourselves, act and achieve. No wonder that meaninglessness and a sense of alienation are so prevalent in our time. The antidote to this, silence and just being, is perceived to be a waste of time, in which we could instead more profitably achieve our clear materialistic objectives. The existence of spirit and soul are denied; they are considered to be only a response to an unrealistic wish for immortality. Never mind that this goes against philosophical and spiritual thought for thousands of years. Just to give a few recent examples: The psychiatrist C.G.Jung came across, already in the beginning of the 20th century, this utter disbelief: *“The assumption that the human psyche possesses layers that lie below consciousness is not likely to arouse serious opposition. But that there could just as well be layers lying above consciousness seems to be a surmise that borders on high treason against human nature.”* The American psychologist William James in *‘Varieties of Religious experience’* highlighted that: *“Our normal waking consciousness is but one special type of consciousness, while all about it, parted from it by the flimsiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.”* Despite these and many other voices throughout the millennia the majority of scientists hold strongly to their limited materialist, mechanistic view point.

John Main is also in this respect leading the way by encouraging us to be counter-cultural and go into the Silence and experience for ourselves that there is a lot more to us than we think. He explains in *‘Word into Silence’* *“that it is only in accepting silence that people*

come to know their own spirit, and only in abandonment to an infinite depth of silence can they be revealed to the source of their spirit, in which multiplicity and division disappear.”