

Sweet Darkness

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[The new holiness] allows us a glimpse into the process of reform unfolding within the collapse of the old structures. It builds confidence to deal with the massing powers of darkness because we see not only their capacity for havoc but their intrinsic superficiality and falseness: the brazen denial of truth, the eye-for-eye, tooth-for-tooth politics that undermines justice, the deceitfulness of the gospel of prosperity that blasphemes against the Holy One.

What allows us to commit to the way of truth and renew the gift of self? How do we start any good work and prevent the ego from hijacking it? By discovering the true nature of love. We cannot find this without going into the desert of solitude, renouncing possessiveness and triumphing over the demon of loneliness. Over time this is the work of contemplation, leading us through failure into humility. Meditation restores the wisdom we have lost of the link between asceticism – training in the discipline of selfless attention – and love. This is the lost chord in the music of humanity we have continuously to recover. Quite simply and directly, learning to meditate teaches that to find we need to lose.

To know the truth that sets us free from illusion we need to see ourselves in others and others in ourselves. Jesus insists there is nothing to fear in this. Rumi saw it too when he wrote “In the ruin of heartbreak you find the diamond of divine passion that can resurrect

the dead.”

After meditation: “Sweet Darkness” by David Whyte in POETRY OF PRESENCE, ed. by Cole-Dai and Wilson (West Hartford, CT: Grayson Books, 2017), p. 152.

When your eyes are tired

the world is tired also.

When your vision has gone

no part of the world can find you.

Time to go into the dark

where the night has eyes

to recognize its own.

There you can be sure

you are not beyond love.

The dark will be your womb

tonight.

The night will give you a horizon

further than you can see.

You must learn one thing.

the world was made to be free in.

Give up all the other worlds

except the one to which you belong.

Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet

confinement of your aloneness

to learn

anything or anyone

that does not bring you alive

is too small for you.

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