

# The stream and the sapphire

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19 May 2023



4.30.2023. An excerpt from John Main OSB, "From Isolation to Love," *THE WAY OF UNKNOWING* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), pp. 44-46.

**An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB in *COMMON GROUND* (New York: Continuum, 1999), p. 103.**

Meditation allows no self-deception. We see ourselves as we are. It is impossible to avoid seeing the ways in which we are phony or hypocritical; our illusions, self-deceptions, fearful insecurities, and compulsions stand out clearly; and the way we judge and dismiss others so arrogantly will strike a dagger in our conscience when we see it. By facing this dark side of ourselves, we enlighten it. We see it with a light that shines from somewhere deeper in ourselves. And this light of our spirit burns away our self-hatred with the ultimately unavoidable and revolutionary truth that we are good and lovable.

The more conscious of the true self we are, the more we see our attitude to others change in the way we live out our relationship with them. Fear diminishes, generous love grows. Reactive anger yields to the wisdom of forgiveness; judgementalism is absorbed by patience. In place of the control and manipulation which, in the ego's eyes, makes the world go round, an amazing freedom is glimpsed as a real possibility in human affairs: the freedom that arises when people let each other be who they are.

After meditation: The Servant-Girl at Emmaus (A Painting by Velazquez) by Denise Levertov in *THE STREAM & THE SAPPHIRE*: (New York: New Directions, 1997), pp. 43-4.

She listens, listens, holding  
her breath. Surely that voice  
is his—the one  
who looked at her, once, across the crowd,  
as no one ever had looked?  
Had seen her? Had spoken as if to her?

Surely those hands were his,  
taking the platter of bread from hers just now?  
Hands he'd laid on the dying and made them well?

Surely that face—?

The man they'd crucified for sedition and blasphemy.  
The man whose body disappeared from its tomb.  
The man it was rumored now some women had seen this  
morning, alive?

Those who had brought this stranger home to their table  
don't recognize yet with whom they sit.  
But she in the kitchen, absently touching  
the wine jug she's to take in,  
a young Black servant intently listening,  
swings round and sees  
the light around him  
and is sure.

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