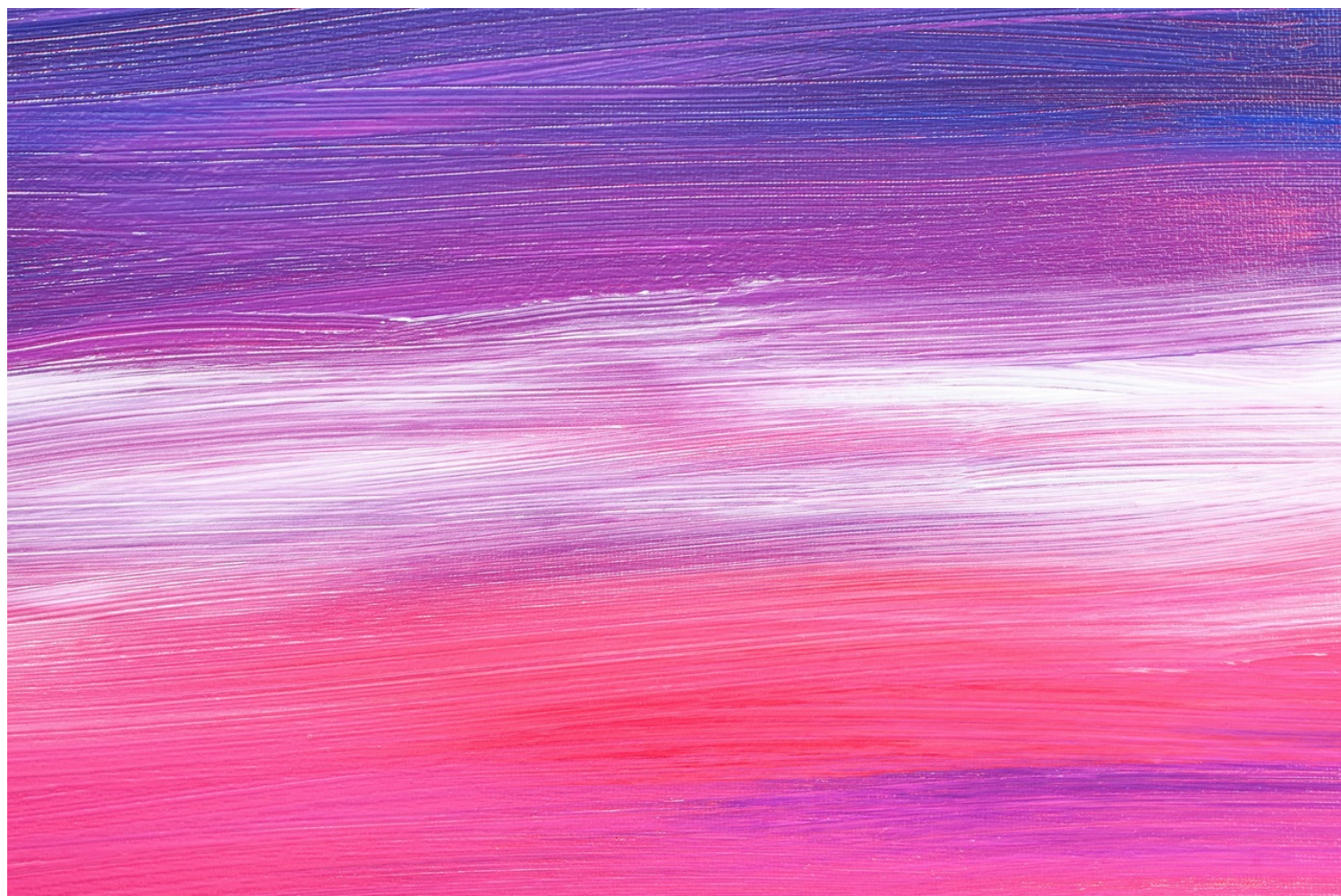


Self-knowledge as first step towards the Divine

wccm.org/weekly-teachings/self-knowledge-as-first-step-towards-the-divine/



The importance of having a spiritual guide when venturing into the silence cannot be overestimated. In the Christian tradition Jesus is our anchor as well as our door into the spiritual realm. In the wider cosmic consciousness his energy and consciousness is still there for us to link with. That is the true meaning of '*will be there always*'. The second coming is seen by many mystics not as a future historical event but as a personal interior one that can happen at any time. Meister Eckhart, as did St Augustine before him, saw this as '*the birth of Christ in the soul*'.

To see Jesus in this spiritual way is for many in our time difficult because of much negative religious conditioning, but as Laurence Freeman says in '*Jesus, the Teacher Within*' : "*To ignore Jesus because of the imperfections of the churches is a foolishness of tragic dimensions...Christianity on the other hand must be transformed.*" Not only Christianity needs to be transformed but so do we.

Meister Eckhart's experience taught him that the breakthrough from awareness of ordinary reality to higher reality comes before the transformation of our ego- consciousness. Many meditators in our tradition have had the same experience, often even at the start of the journey. "*At first his presence may only be glimpsed, something we have simply to hope for.*" ('*Jesus, the Teacher Within*') Yet this glimpse is

enough to wake us up, as the early Christians would say, and everything we think and do is seen in a different light. This is the gift of love, the grace of the Spirit, the Christ within, reaching out to us. Once we have had a glimpse of the love dwelling at our centre and know that we are accepted as we are, we have the courage to face our own limitations; we can accept our shadow side and integrate it in the totality of our being, which enables us to accept the shadow side of others with compassion.

With that insight we become aware of how deformed our perception of reality has been due to manifold forms of conditioning and this slowly transforms us. We are no longer ruled and imprisoned by the past but can stay in the present moment, where the Divine Reality is. Then the process of 'purifying our heart' begins, which is often called the stage of purgation on the spiritual path. Gradually over time love makes us more and more aware of the limitations of our ego-centricity and allows us to step into freedom by transcending the ego, becoming more other-centred, more Christ centred. Whereas before we '*saw through a glass darkly*', as our perception is clarified, we see and 'know' Christ as he truly is and we see ourselves as we truly are.

All we have to do is pay attention to our word, listen deeply to our word and be open to the insights given. In the silence we begin "*to turn towards another, to leave self behind; and that is to love*" ('*Jesus, the Teacher Within*').

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