

# An entrance into the nearness of God

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21 June 2024



**From John Main OSB, *The Way of Trust, The hunger for depth and meaning: Learning to meditate with John Main*, ed. Peter Ng (Singapore: Medio Media, 2007), pp. 179-181.**

I was reading the other day of the Indian god Shiva, who was sitting with his wife looking down on the world and she said to him, Why don't you go and grant salvation to some of your devotees? Shiva said, Very well. So they went down to a town and they sat in the market place. The word got around that the great prophet was there. And then the holy men of the town came out. The first came up to Shiva and said, I meditate eight hours a day. In winter, I meditate for two hours in cold water. In summer, two hours in the heat. When will I get salvation? Shiva looked at him and said, Three more incarnations. The man goes back to his friends shaking his head, Three more! Three more! And so it goes. Finally a little man come and he says, I am afraid I don't do much, but I try to love everyone around me and I try to love creation. Can I get salvation? Shiva scratches his head and the little fellow gets a little nervous. Shiva looks at him and says, Well, a thousand incarnations, at which the little fellow jumps in delight and joy and starts shouting to everyone, I will get it! Only a thousand! And at that, he bursts into flames and so do Shiva and his wife, and they all become one flame and are gone. Shiva's wife says to him, How did that little old man get salvation immediately? You said a thousand! Shiva said, Yes, but his generosity overruled my ruling. So he was saved immediately.

Just after that, I picked up the Gospel of Luke: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and one a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and said: I thank you God that I am not like other men, greedy, dishonest, adulterous or for that matter like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I pay tithes on all I receive. But the other kept his distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest saying, Lord God have mercy on me a sinner. (Luke 18: 10-14) Meditation is a way we follow to entrust ourselves utterly to the mystery of our own existence. To be meditating is simply to be in the state of accepting what is, of entrusting our whole being to God. In meditation, we lay ourselves on the line, offering ourselves, abandoning everything that we are. We simply say our word. Meditation is an entrance into the nearness of God, who is found in our own hearts. God answers the yearning of our heart with the simple answer of love. This love is our hope, our unshakable confidence that whatever the difficulty, whatever the challenge, we can meet it out of the infinite resources given us. God does all this within us in silence, if only we allow the mystery to encompass us. The quality we require for this work is simple acceptance of everything that is: trust.

**After meditation, Franz Wright, Did This Ever Happen to You in GOD'S SILENCE: Poems by Franz Wright (New York: Knoph, 2008)**

A marble-colored cloud  
engulfed the sun and stalled,  
    a skinny squirrel limped toward me  
as I crossed the empty park  
    and froze, the last  
or next to last  
    fall leaf fell but before it touched  
the earth, with shocking clarity  
    I heard my mother's voice  
pronounce my name. And in an instant I passed  
    beyond sorrow and terror, and was carried up  
into the imageless  
    bright darkness  
I came from  
    and am. Nobody's  
stronger than forgiveness.

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