

Meditation and the poverty of it is not self-rejection

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From John Main OSB, “Second Conference in CHRISTIAN MEDITATION: The Gethsemani Talks (Montreal: Christian Meditation Media, 1982), pp. 36=37.

Meditation and the poverty of it is not self-rejection. We are not running away from ourselves; we do not hate ourselves. But to arrive at our true selfhood—and it is to that invitation we respond when we meditate—we must pass into the radical experience of personal poverty with an unflinching self-surrender.

And what we surrender, what we die to is, in the thought of Zen, not the self of the mind but rather that image of the self which we have mistakenly come to identify with who we really are. Now this is not a proposition that we need, in the language of the Cloud, “to expound with imaginative cleverness.” But it does tell us what we are renouncing in prayer is essentially, unreality.

And
the pain of the renunciation will be in proportion to the extent that we have committed ourselves to unreality, the extent to which we have taken our illusions to be real.

After Meditation, Franz Wright, “Ohio Sunflowerfield” in GOD’S SILENCE (New York: Knoph, 2008), p. 132.

Ohio Sunflowerfield

Hiddenly, one minute
each one believes
death to be
an unforeseen
catastrophe
only occurring
elsewhere, to
everyone else,
and the next
minute a personal
doom to which you
alone are condemned—

What’s wrong with the truth, so profoundly consoling and perfect?