

The gift of discernment

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An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, “Meditation,” in JESUS THE TEACHER WITHIN (London: Continuum, 2000), p. 210

We meditate in this world. Our decision to meditate represents a commitment to participate responsibly even in a world going mad. It trains discernment and limits intolerance. It teaches faithfulness to the community of the true Self thus protecting human dignity. Each time we sit down to meditate we carry our own and the world's baggage into the work of attention. It is a way of loving the world we are part of and contributing to its well-being. Precisely because it is a way of letting go of ourselves, meditation helps us recognize and share the burden of humanity.

One of the fruits of meditation is the gift of discernment. Discernment about what the media is doing and saying to us, about when to switch off the screen. By creating the space of solitude through daily practice, meditation protects the dignity of individual privacy. As a result, it also develops the social values of personal liberty and responsible participation in society's decision making. The passivity and fatalism that media-saturation can create is challenged by meditation, if only because people of wisdom are less easily misled.

After meditation: “True North” by Annie Lightfoot in IRON STRING (Monmouth, OR: Airlie Press, 2013), p. 67.

Many things are true, and this is one:

You were there in the great tree at morning. You were who watched
the green time unfolding. You were and are there the whole length of the song.

TRUE NORTH

You are the first compass, you the needle and stone, water, and pail. You
are the tug of the miles, the force that turns, and you at last the surety
that follows your own silver point. You are the sail above the small craft,
its angle and drift, the night and the blackness of winds. You are the bent head,
the giving and ceasing, you the bright weaving and the kindness of hands.
You are every city and every street, you the nightwatchman and the young
shepherd as well, you the sharp fear, you the heart, arriving unharmed.