

Start with Meditation

Doctor Roles said:

We must stress that everyone has their own way of developing this connection with the inner Self and the Self of the universe. You can't dictate to somebody else how they ought to think about it – what way they ought to choose. (FCR: 'Voyage of Discovery')

The Christian image of God is drawn from the Gospels. Jesus Christ on earth and God in Heaven. But according to Father Bede Griffiths, (who once came and spoke to us at Colet House) when we come to the tradition of the East we find that they see things in a different way. He tells the story of a priest in India who approached a group of school children and asked them: 'Where is God?'. The Hindu children pointed to the heart and said that that was where God was. The Christian children pointed up to the sky. He goes on to say:

These are two different ways of understanding God and of course they are complementary; we are all learning today how to reconcile opposites. Things do not have to be one thing or the other. Nearly always they are both/and, as the Chinese with their ying/yang know. So when we think of God we do need images but we need the image of both of the Father in heaven and the Holy Spirit within us. (Bede Griffiths: 'The New Creation in Christ')

Meditation

During a seminar Bede Griffiths was asked: Can we say that meditation will always lead us to an experience of God's presence?

Father Bede: *I think that for most people the mantra is the way to open themselves to the inner life of the Spirit. Normally the mantra goes on continually and....you let the mantra go on as long as it can. The purpose of the mantra is to go beyond the ego. But, once you let the mantra go, it is so easy for your ego to come in and the spiritual ego is the greatest danger of all. When you think you are getting very near to God, you are in fact getting more and more egotistical. Our belief is that the mantra keeps you humble.....Quietly repeating your word keeps the ego in its place and should lead you to the transcendent.....As an expression of faith and love it becomes a very powerful means to direct your faith and love and open you to God. (Bede Griffiths:'The New Creation in Christ')*

And Doctor Roles in 'Voyage of Discovery':

Every time we do the meditation, to some extent we pass from the ordinary self into the universal Self. That is the whole point about it. It is not a special state or an illumination that happens once in a lifetime. We get a little of it every day. Sometimes we hardly notice it. We say to ourselves: 'This meditation is not doing much. Is it any good?' But really it is doing more than we think. Little by little it is adding something, dyeing the cloth deeper and deeper; for it leads in the end to an understanding of the purpose underlying the creation of the universe, and so to the realisation of the Creator's will. There would be no higher thing for man than this – to know the Creator's will.

Pause

A poor devotee points to the sky and says: 'God is up there'. An average devotee says: 'God dwells in the heart as the Inner Master'. The best devotee says: 'God alone is and everything I perceive is a form of God'.(Summer Programme 2003)

Extract from a letter written by Doctor Roles to Don Millson in New York in 1980. He said that the Shankaracharya had quoted the Gita to him:

Lord Krishna: He who knows that it is only the gunas that act, and remains calm, will find Me beyond them. And he who loves Me and only Me with unfaltering devotion, will, transcending the gunas, merge with My Being. For I am the refuge of the Spirit, the Eternal and unchanging, the Source of right action and infinite joy.

Pause

The relationship between meditation and the principle of Advaita may be summed up as follows:

When everything is seen as One, we return to the Source and stay where we have always been.

(Sengt'san – 6th C Chinese Zen Master)

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