



World Community for Christian Meditation
(Singapore)

Monthly Online Meditation

with Peter Ng

SESSION 6

NOVEMBER 2, 2020

INTRODUCTION – Peter Ng

Tonight I'd like to share with you the teaching in meditation about enlightenment. The word 'enlightenment' is often used in the spiritual literature of Buddhism and Hinduism. It is less often spoken about in Christianity. But essentially the word 'enlightenment' means to awake to wisdom. And there's a story that when the disciples of the Buddha went to the Buddha and asked him, 'Who are you? Are you the all-powerful? Are you the all-knowing? Are you the Almighty?' The reply of the Buddha to his disciples was, 'I am the awakened one – I am awake.' In our Christian tradition, the word 'enlightenment' is also very important. But our understanding of enlightenment is that we become enlightened, we come to wisdom, through the light of Christ. So we should always remember the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John, chapter 8:12 where Jesus says:

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (Jn 8:12)

So when we sit down to meditate, we seek to enter the light of Christ and we are thereby enlightened by his Spirit, by his presence within us. So let us now listen to Fr John Main as he speaks about this theme of enlightenment.

Enlightenment

JOHN MAIN OSB

Transcript of excerpt from *The Heart of Creation, John Main, Collected Talks Vol V, 'At One with the Light'*.

One of the words that is used to describe the purpose of meditation is the word 'enlightenment'. St John in his gospel describes the purpose of the coming of Christ as being 'to banish the darkness'. And he speaks of the power of Christ's light being so great that the darkness cannot overcome it, cannot quench it.

Just listen to these words of St Paul writing to the Corinthians: He is speaking about people

who find it difficult to understand the gospel.

Their unbelieving minds are so blinded by the god of this passing age that the Gospel of the glory of Christ who is the very image of God cannot dawn upon them and bring them light. It is not ourselves that we proclaim; we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for the sake of Jesus. For the same God who said, 'Out of darkness let light shine,' has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation – the revelation of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:4-6)

The New Testament proposes to us that this light of Christ is a very powerful light. It's a light that burns away the darkness, that dispels the shadows. And the peculiar power of the light of Christ is that it reveals reality as it is. As you know, light is a form of energy that makes vision possible – the brighter the light, the clearer the vision, the deeper the harmony. And what each of us has to learn is that Christ is *our* light, and it is the task of Christian meditation to uncover the brilliance of the light of Christ in our own hearts.

All of us are aware that there is much darkness in our world. We hear every day of terrible injustices, of violence, of hatred, of feuds, of greed, and so on. And we see this both at the personal level and indeed the international level. And all of us too are aware of the darkness within ourselves. We recognise that we too have a dark side, that we do have a capacity to live at a level that we know is not really worthy of our human destiny, of our destiny as persons. And when we begin to meditate, we begin to understand that we cannot enter into the experience of meditation with just a part of our being. Everything that we are, the totality of our being must be involved in this entry into wholeness, our own personal wholeness and harmony. Every part of our being must be open to the light. Every part of us must come into the light.

We do not meditate just to develop our religious side or our religious capacity. Meditation is the way into a total harmonious integration into the whole reality. The truly spiritual man or woman is in harmony with every capacity they have, and that is why the truly spiritual man or woman does everything that they do with the greatest possible perfection, the greatest possible love, and so the greatest possible joy. And the reason is this: meditation is the process whereby we come into the light, the process whereby we begin to see everything, the whole of reality. We begin to see it all by the power of the light.

What Jesus tells us is that the power of the light is love, and the test of our progress in meditation is how far we are moving into this condition of seeing everyone and everything by the light of God, seeing by the light of his love. Not judging, not rejecting, but seeing everyone and the whole of creation by this light which we must discover in our own hearts.

REFLECTION -Peter Ng

This morning as I was preparing for this talk, I decided to google the word 'enlightenment' to see what it says, and I was led to this website where it spoke about the twelve qualities of an enlightened person. So I'd like to share this with you.

1. The enlightened person is happy and joyful. He has a cheerful disposition most of the time. So, happiness.
2. The enlightened person is peaceful and serene because he's free of fear and other unwholesome emotions. So, serenity.
3. The enlightened person is loving, kind, and compassionate.
4. The enlightened person is not self-centred.
5. The enlightened person is emotionally stable, because he's no longer trapped by his ego which needs validation for the ego's existence.
6. The enlightened person is patient and understanding, because he appreciates the challenges of achieving enlightenment. So he doesn't look down on people for their missteps.
7. The enlightened person is humble since he knows his place in the universe. He doesn't need validation from others. He doesn't think of himself as the centre of the universe. He realises that God is the centre of the universe.
8. The enlightened person is also insightful and open-minded. He's able to see the world with great clarity, without attachment to preconceived ideas about people, places, and things.
9. The enlightened person has great Inner strength, connecting with the sources of spiritual nourishment.
10. The enlightened person develops leadership qualities because having awakened to understanding the nature of suffering he realises his duty to help other people find freedom from suffering.
11. The enlightened person is mindful of his or her health – physical, mental, and emotional. He knows that his mind, body, and spirit must be in harmony in order to maintain his spiritual condition.
12. Finally, the enlightened person never forgets how he achieved enlightenment – he needs a spiritual practice, a regular spiritual practice such as meditation.

Now when we read about these qualities of the enlightened person we are reminded about the fruits of meditation. The fruits of meditation are the fruits of the Spirit, the harvest of the Spirit. In St Paul's Letter to the Galatians, he describes the nine fruits of the Spirit as:

*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness,
faithfulness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23)*

So I think that if we are able to practise meditation regularly – it is a the lifelong journey – but if we can persevere in it, then gradually we come into the light. We begin to see things more clearly. We begin to see reality more clearly, and that changes us. So it's a very gradual process of transformation. The difference between someone who meditates regularly and someone who does not have a spiritual practice is that you return to your ordinary life and live in an extraordinary way. You begin to manifest the fruits of the Spirit or the twelve qualities of the enlightened person that I just described to you. So I think it's very helpful for us as we practise our meditation to understand the process of transformation that is ongoing in us, that we are becoming enlightened. We are being enlightened by the light of Christ.

So now let's prepare for our meditation with the words and the teaching of John Main.

Meditation

JOHN MAIN

The way of meditation is simplicity itself.

All we have to do is to make time available every morning and every evening of our life. 20 minutes is the minimum time, 30 minutes is the optimum.

And for that time, we must be open to the light, to God, to love. Not thinking our own thoughts, not planning our own plans, but entering into an ever more profound silence, an ever more profound reverence, our being becoming rooted in God.

And so when we meditate together in a few moments, every one of us must make an effort to sit still, to sit really still. Don't move. And that's a certain abandonment of our body. And then closing your eyes gently, begin to recite your word, your mantra. The word I recommend you to recite is the four-syllable Aramaic word ma-ra-na-tha.

Recite it peacefully and calmly, and allow the word to sink deep into your being and to build up a resonance within you, every part of your own being in resonance with God. And as we enter into that resonance, we ourselves enter into the light of his love.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, open my heart to the silent presence of the spirit of your Son. Lead me into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call. Maranatha, maranatha, come Lord Jesus.



<https://www.wccmsingapore.org/timer/in-the-beginning>

A reading from the First Letter of Peter

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ((1 Peter 2:9–10)



PRAYER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

May this community be a true spiritual home for the seeker, a friend for the lonely, a guide for the confused.

May those who pray here be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to serve all who come, and to receive them as Christ himself.

In the silence of this room may all the suffering, violence and confusion of the world encounter the Power that will console, renew and uplift the human spirit.

May this silence be a power to open the hearts of men and women to the vision of God, and so to each other, in love and peace, justice and human dignity.

May the beauty of the Divine life fill this room and the hearts of all who pray here with joyful hope.

May all who come here, weighed down by the problems of humanity, leave giving thanks for the wonder of human life. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen
