

Chapter 9: The Third Form of Contemplation

[[author assumes we have developed our “recollection” and attention to some degree by this
This means Presence, and the focus of our attention.
And that we have had some experience of Contemplation]]

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1st (the normal self has ...) merging itself in a larger consciousness, it has learned to know the World of Becoming from within

2nd (self) you reached out towards the ultimate ... (beauty, meaning, joy are) expressions of a greater whole (via unselfish loving attention)

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Two experiences of the enfolding presence of Reality, under those two forms which the theologians

1. First Form "immanence" of the Divine
2. Second Form "transcendence" of the Divine

Now the Third Form (a larger gap from the other two)

3. a change in the relation between spirit and the Infinite Life

Requires a change in the manner of your apprehension of Reality

REVIEW (active contemplation)

now, having achieved an awareness—obscure and indescribable indeed, yet actual—of the enfolding presence of Reality, under those two forms which the theologians call the "immanence" and the "transcendence" of the Divine, a change is to take place in the relation between your (finite) human Spirit and the Infinite Life

(through perseverance) possible for you to feel the subtle contact of deeper realities

[IT SEEMS TO BE] the direct result of your own hard work. A difficult self-discipline, the slowly achieved control of your vagrant thoughts and desires, the steady daily practice of recollection, a diligent pushing out of your consciousness from the superficial to the fundamental, an unselfish loving attention; all this has been rewarded by the gradual broadening and deepening of your perceptions, by an initiation into the movements of a larger life, You have been a knocker, a seeker, an asker: have beat upon the Cloud of Unknowing "with a sharp dart of longing love." A perpetual effort of the will has characterized your inner development. Your contemplation, in fact, as the specialists would say, has been "active," not "infused."

Note: "infused" - means awakening to our Divine relationship by grace, a **supernatural gift**, that originates completely outside of our will or ability, by which a person becomes freely absorbed in God producing a real awareness, desire, and love for Him.

Defined: *Infused contemplation* is a supernatural gift by which a person's mind and will become totally centered on God, under this influence the intellect receives special insights into things of the spirit and the affections are extraordinarily animated with Divine love.

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achieved an awareness ... —of the enfolding presence of Reality, under those two forms which the theologians call the "immanence" and the "transcendence" of the Divine, a change is to take place in the relation between your finite human spirit and the Infinite Life in which at last it knows itself to dwell.

feel the subtle contact of deeper realities ... [by] the stretching-out of the loving and surrendered will into the dimness and silence, the continued trustful

the chief features of your inner life

[seems that there] is no more that you can do of yourself, there is much that may and must be done to you

Your state, then, should now be wisely passive

that you may be transformed
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You are therefore to let yourself go; to cease all conscious, anxious striving and pushing.

"Night of the Spirit,"

you are to dwell there meekly; asking nothing, seeking nothing, but with your doors flung wide open towards God. And as you do thus, there will come to you an ever clearer certitude that this darkness enveils the goal for which you have been seeking from the first; the final Reality you cannot by your efforts reach it. This realization ... the most painful and most essential phase in the training of the human soul. It brings you into that state of passive suffering [[yearning ... purification]] which is to complete the decentralization of your character, test the purity of your love, and perfect your education in humility.

that a further, more drastic self-exploration, a deeper, more searching purification than that which was forced upon you by your first experience of the recollective state is needed.

offering ourselves to it

your soul gradually becomes conscious of a constriction,

that absolute surrender which is the only way to peace.

for union with Reality can only be a union of love, a glad and humble self-mergence in the universal life.

wholly into God."

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for everything will now seem to be taken from you, nothing given in exchange.

a mighty transformation will result.

you will be reborn into another "world," another stage of realization

"God's *action* takes the place of man's *activity*"

only think of it as God. has been preparing him; and it is out of this willing quietude and ever-deepening obscurity that the new experiences come.

"O night that didst lead thus,
O night more lovely than the dawn of light,
O night that broughtest us
Lover to lover's sight—
Lover with loved in marriage of delight,"

the soul is represented as being close to God; and that there abide a conviction thereof so certain and strong, that it cannot possibly help believing so."

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This sense, this conviction, which may be translated by the imagination into many different forms, is the substance of the greatest experiences and highest joys of the mystical saints.

passes into that simple state of consciousness which is called Ecstasy.

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this sense of the Living Fact,

may assuredly be realized by you.

the ruling character of the third phase of contemplation;

a mysterious contact, a clear certitude of intercourse and of possession with a sudden shattering violence, in a "storm of love."

In either case, the advent of this experience is incalculable, and completely outside your own control.

if you let yourself go, eradicate the last traces of self-interest even of the most spiritual kind
you have established conditions under which the forces of the spiritual world can work on you

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Thus dying to your own will, waiting for what is given, infused, you will presently find that a change in your apprehension has indeed taken place: and that those who said self-loss was the only way to realisation taught no pious fiction but the truth.

But now, this Ocean of Being is no longer felt by you as an emptiness, a solitude without bourn. Suddenly you know it to be instinct with a movement and life too great for you to apprehend.

a fresh life is infused into you, such as your old separate existence never knew. Moreover, to that diffused and impersonal sense of the Infinite, in which you have dipped yourself,

is now added the consciousness of a Living Fact which includes, transcends, completes all that you mean by the categories of personality and of life.

an Absolute Will, Thought, and Love; instantly recognised by the contemplating spirit as the highest reality it yet has known, and evoking in it a passionate and a humble joy.

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This unmistakable experience has been achieved by the mystics of every religion;
which they can only call Absolute Love.
now another Power which seeks the separated spirit and demands it;

this Power is felt as an impersonal force, the unifying cosmic energy, the indrawing love which gathers all things into One;

Presence which counsels and entreats the soul.

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the mystics insist again that this is God; that here under these diverse manners the soul has immediate intercourse with Him. But we must remember that when they make this declaration, they are speaking from a plane of consciousness far above the ideas and images of popular religion;

this Fact is "immanent"; dwelling in, transfusing, and discoverable through every aspect of the universe,

this all-pervasive, all-changing, and yet changeless One, Whose melody is heard in all movement, and within Whose Being "the worlds are being told like beads," calls the human spirit to an immediate intercourse,

a *unity*, a fruition, a divine give-and-take,

evokes in the fully conscious soul a passionate and a humble love.

by the knot of love she unites herself with God, and is with Him as the Alone with the Alone."

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to express and impart this transcendent secret, to describe that intense yet elusive state in which alone union with the living heart of Reality is possible.

which reveals Itself in all things that we truly love, and beyond all these things both seeks us and compels us, "giving more than we can take and asking more than we can pay."

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But you do know now that it exists, with an intensity which makes all other existences unreal;

"Some contemplate the Formless, and others meditate on Form: but the wise man knows that Brahma is beyond both."

more constant and steady—will your intercourse with it become.

will be answered by a movement, a stirring, within you yet not conditioned by you. The wonder and variety of this intercourse is never-ending.

It includes in its sweep every phase of human love and self-devotion, all beauty and all power, all suffering and effort, all gentleness and rapture: here found in synthesis.

you there find stored for you, and at last made real, all the highest values, all the dearest and noblest experiences of the world of growth and change.

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You see now what it is that you have been doing in the course of your mystical development.

heart stretched to a wider sympathy with life, you have been surrendering progressively to larger and larger existences, more and more complete realities:

through the magic of disinterested love. First, the manifested, flowing, evolving life of multiplicity:

Then, the actual unchanging ground of life, the eternal and unconditioned Whole, transcending all succession: a world inaccessible alike to senses and intelligence, but felt—vaguely, darkly, yet intensely—by the quiet and surrendered consciousness.

by a greater Reality, the final inclusive Fact, the Unmeasured Love, which "is through all things everlastingly": and yielding yourself to it,

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you pass beyond the cosmic experience to the personal encounter, the simple yet utterly inexpressible union of the soul with its God.

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And this threefold union with Reality, as your attention is focussed now on one aspect, now on another, of its rich simplicity, will be actualised

your own dwelling within the Eternal transfuses and illuminates it,

When the greater love overwhelms the lesser, and your small self-consciousness is lost in the consciousness of the Whole, it will be felt as an intense stillness, a quiet fruition of Reality.

it seems rather a perpetually renewed encounter than a final achievement.

realises the simple fact of its intercourse with the Divine.

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Each new stage achieved in the mystical development of the spirit has meant, not the leaving behind of the previous stages, but an adding on to them: an ever greater extension of experience, and enrichment of personality. So that the total result of this change, this steady growth of your transcendental self,

the addition to it of another life—a huge widening and deepening of the field over which your attention can play.

Reality to realize the Whole which dwells in and inspires every part.
outpouring of the Divine Mind