

WHAT IS A GOOD MEDITATION?

By Gerry Pierse

What does a *pure heart* mean?

1. Jesus tells us in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the *pure of heart*, for they shall *see God*” (Mt. 5:8).
2. Does it mean somebody who has never experienced temptation, someone who lives in an antiseptic, isolated, trouble-free world? I do not think so.
3. The Spanish writer Unamuno put it this way:
*Those who believe they believe in God
But without passion in their heart,
Without anguish of mind,
Without uncertainty,
Without doubt,
Even at times without despair,
Believe only in the idea of God,
Not in God himself.*

Purity of heart and the seeing of God are rooted in daily reality.

1. They are not found in ecstasy, but in struggle.
2. The pure of heart are seldom aware that they are pure of heart.
3. They are just trying to be faithful, and the words “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner” are much more likely to be on their lips than the words “Thank you, God, that I am not as the rest of people”.
4. *Sanity* has been defined as having the same sickness as everyone else.
5. *Insanity*, living outside of reality, is thinking that we are unique.
6. To have a pure heart, then, is to be struggling to be faithful in a jungle of impurity.

Purity of heart – like meditation – is a direction rather than an achievement.

1. To ask who is pure in heart is, in a sense, to ask a wrong question.
2. To ask what is a good meditation is to ask the same kind of wrong question.
3. To meditate is to be *going in a direction*, to be casting off all the baggage that will delay one or distract one on the journey.
4. Meditation is not to be luxuriating in a successful achievement and stroking the ego, but to be struggling along a rocky road on which there are all sorts of obstacles and distractions.
5. Meditation is *faithfulness in going in the same direction*, not the achievement of the end.
6. If God gives moments of special joy or awareness of himself, they are to be accepted gracefully, but when these moments are sought for themselves, they become an obstacle to meditation.

A parable for understanding meditation

1. There was a man who died and was told that he would have to walk a million miles before he could enter heaven.
2. He said that this was impossible and so he lay down where he was.
3. After a million years, he realised that if he had walked even one mile a year he would now be in heaven.
4. So he began to walk. As he began to walk, he found himself carried along by a joy that made the miles seem shorter and made him discount any difficulty experienced on the way.
5. What we need is to set out on the road of meditation each day with *courage and fidelity* – and not to be self-consciously asking ourselves whether or not our meditation is a good one.