

Taizé, June 7, 2020

The Art of Conscious Contentment

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Chris will set the intention to create a space for Communion

Chant – *We Let it Be* by Agape Intl. Choir

SILENCE – 1 Minute - Bell

Rev. Diana

Good morning. If you are new with us today, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, and I want to welcome you home.

Our theme for the month of June is *Joyful Expression*. And this morning, we are going to lead you on a meditative journey centered in *The Art of Conscious Contentment*.

Contentment is a joyful experience, don't you think? My invitation for you today is to find a place where you can be comfortable and settle into stillness, letting go of everything else for the next hour. See how still you can be as you allow yourself to be carried away by the meditative tone of Taize...

Join me now in taking a few deep, cleansing breaths, and as you inhale, allow the word *here* to gently float through your mind...and as you exhale, the word *now*. Take your time...here...now...

Allowing myself to be fully present, in this holy moment, I know that this moment is the only moment that matters, the only moment there is.

In this holy moment, I am content. There is nothing I need to do, there is nowhere for me to go. There is only now.

And in this moment, Spiritual Awakening is happening...it is happening here...it is happening now...It is happening all over the globe...it is happening as a Universal Experience. All of Creation is waking up now...and I allow myself to be swept up in this miraculous Process of Awakening. I am deserving of the gift of Spiritual Fulfillment, of Spiritual Awakening, and I welcome it...I allow this most amazing gift to be bestowed upon me now...and I am grateful.

SILENCE – 3 Minutes - Bell

Chris – *The Land of Content* by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

I set out for the Land of Content,
By the gay crowded pleasure-highway,
With laughter, and jesting, I went

With the mirth-loving throng for a day;
Then I knew I had wandered astray,
For I met returned pilgrims, belated,
Who said, "We are weary and sated,
But we found not the Land of Content."

I turned to the steep path of fame,
I said, "It is over yon height—
This land with the beautiful name—
Ambition will lend me its light."
But I paused in my journey ere night,
For the way grew so lonely and troubled;
I said—my anxiety doubled—
"This is not the road to Content."

Then I joined the great rabble and throng
That frequents the moneyed world's mart;
But the greed, and the grasping and wrong,
Left me only one wish—to depart.
And sickened, and saddened at heart,
I hurried away from the gateway,
For my soul and my spirit said straightway.
"This is not the road to Content."

Then weary in body and brain,
An overgrown path I detected,
And I said "I will hide with my pain
In this byway, unused and neglected."
Lo! it led to the realm God selected
To crown with His best gifts of beauty,
And through the dark pathway of duty
I came to the Land of Content.

SILENCE – 3 Minutes - Bell

Musical Meditation – *Spirit Run My Life* by Andy Anderson

SILENCE – 1 Minute - Bell

Rev. Diana –

Living from a place of deep contentment is an art form. And like any art form, it takes practice. But our practice, rather than being one of effort, is a practice of surrender, of letting go.

As human beings, we are gifted with very powerful problem-solving machines... we call them our brains. Their job is to protect us, and so they are constantly on the lookout for anything that could pose a problem in our experience. This is why we find it so challenging to simply be content. Because our brains are constantly trying to uncover problems...even where no problem exists. Our practice, then, is to let go of our brains need to make problems...to consciously guide it to a state of contentment.

Contentment is not the same as happiness...it is a sense of satisfaction, sufficiency, fulfillment...not wanting anything more. When I am full beyond measure, all of the energy drains out of my personal will. I become gracious...gratefully accepting and receiving whatever is given in the miraculous gift of this moment.

Contentment is always available...it is often I who am not available. When I choose contentment, I am Spiritually Fulfilled.

In a state of contentment, I am completely present. And when I am completely present, I find that I am content.

We see the spiritual path as a journey...it takes time...and practice. This is what we have been told. I invite you now to consider an alternative perspective...that inner clarity and deep peace is not something that develops and grows, it's something we choose. It happens in an instant.

What takes time is getting to the point where we want to make that choice. What we typically call the spiritual path is whatever time and effort it takes for us to get to the point where we finally decide to let go and embody our inherent freedom.

What if the choice to be free is simply a choice to be okay with the way things are, no matter how they are? What if our meditation became a practice of conscious contentment...a time of choosing to be content with things, exactly as they are?

If I am not ready or willing to be at peace with the way things are, I will stay busy trying to make things the way I think they need to be so I can feel peaceful. As long as this is the case, I will be a victim of circumstance, because I'll be insisting that my contentment is dependent on the circumstances around me.

The most supremely direct path to peace is to allow this moment, the one you are living right now, to be the one when you finally decide to be content with the way things are, forever. And as the mind begins to explain why that is too simple, why it will never work, you can decide to be content with its chattering...allowing it to move into the background, like a radio playing in another room. Remaining in a state of contentment...present in every moment...allowing the mind to do what it does...and remaining unattached to its rambling, consciously choosing contentment in every moment.

SILENCE – 3 Minute - Bell

Chris – *I Exist As I Am* (Stanza #20 of *Song of Myself*) from *Leaves of Grass*,

by Walt Whitman

Who goes there! hankering, gross, mystical, nude?
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man anyhow? What am I? and what are you?
All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own,
Else it were time lost listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,
That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth,
That life is a suck and sell, and nothing remains at the end but
threadbare crape and tears.

Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids
conformity goes to the fourth-removed,
I cock my hat as I please indoors or out.

Shall I pray? Shall I venerate and be ceremonious?
I have pried through the strata and analyzed to a hair,
And counselled with doctors and calculated close and found no
sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less,
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

And I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

And I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
I see that the elementary laws never apologize,

I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by after all.

I exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware, and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,
And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

Musical Meditation – *Listen to the Silence* by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Rev. Diana Closing

I invite you now to go even deeper into the silence, into the stillness. Stillness is infinite...there is always more stillness to be found. And as you move into that stillness, don't let anything be a problem. Allow everything to be exactly the way it is...

You may notice...the ungracious part of your mind may be unconvinced...it may point out the imperfections in this moment, or toward imagined possibilities of what might be better...and it may use these imperfections and possibilities to prove that this moment is not the one. The ungracious part of your mind may be unwilling to accept the gift of this moment, to allow itself to be content and satisfied.

But just because there is a part of your mind that is ungracious in the face of Divinity's most presence of this moment, gift, doesn't mean that you have to be. You can be gracious... you can be content... grateful for the presence of this moment, even if it contains an echo of an ungracious mind.

Be gracious, even in the face of the ungraciousness that you might hear in some corner of your mind. If you can be gracious enough to accept the Reality of perfect contentment, you will have gained the Keys to the Kingdom...you will have found the access point to Divine Will.

In this moment, I deliberately choose contentment. My will and Thy Will are one. As I become perfectly content with how things are in this moment...at peace with what is already happening, I am free. I begin to notice an inner Guidance...something that was already there, that was already happening...but now It can include me in Its process, because now I Am available.

Rev. Diana - Closing Prayer

Rev. Diana: Offertory – Blessing for the Offering

As I awaken to the God within me and all around me, I see Abundance everywhere I look. I consciously step into that flow of Abundance by this act of giving. I bless this gift, sending it forth to heal and prosper. It is evidence of my deep faith. It does good work in the world and blesses all of Creation. I give from a consciousness of Abundance! And so it is! Amen!

Offertory Music – *Be Here Now* by Narayan and Janet

Closing Gratitude, Brief Invitations, and Benediction