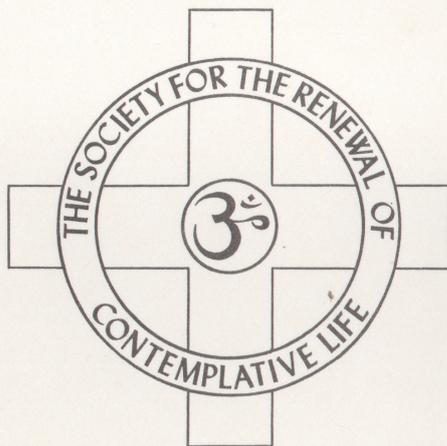


ROLAND R. ROPERS

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The Renewal of Contemplative Life

"Today we are discovering the call to the Transcendence, to realise the Spirit, the Infinite, the Eternal. It is a universal call and this is changing peoples' lives".



" I see in the Society a spiritual movement to renew contemplative life in the church and in the world. "

Bede Griffiths

Contemplation is the awakening to the presence of God in the human heart and in the universe around us. Contemplation is knowledge by love.

Dom Bede Griffiths. O.S.B.

September 22nd 1992.

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Dom Bede Griffiths O.S.B.

Kreuth, September 22nd, 1992

The monk and mystic Dom Bede Griffiths made a substantial distinction between meditation and contemplation. His idea was to renew the contemplative life as a movement outside the institutional monasteries and churches in the world.

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NEW CAMALDOLI HERMITAGE
BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA 93920

September 18th 1992

This is to confirm that Roland Romuald
Ropers is authorized to work for the renewal
of contemplative life in the church by
giving lectures and courses in contemplation
and arranging conferences for that purpose.

Bede Griffiths
O.S.B. Cam.

In **September 1992** I discussed Dom Bede's vision in length when we were together in **Big Sur, San Francisco, Kalamazoo** and in the **Vivekananda Monastery in Ganges**.

During my initiation on **15th December 1991** in Shantivanam **Bede Griffiths** gave a unique talk of which I summarize the essentials:

- The ***Renewal of Contemplative Life*** is a move out of the monasteries, out of the hierarchical church into the laity, the lay people, the people of GOD.
- The people of GOD are realising their calling, which is a universal call to contemplation.
- In India in the first millennium there is the break-through to the experience of GOD and that is done on behalf of all humanity. We relate ourselves to that break-through of the **Upanishads**, the **Bhagavad Gita**. Later we had the break-through in Israel and we saw Israel's discovery of GOD.
- And then in the **Gospel** we read how **Jesus** and only those who were born again can enter the **Kingdom of GOD** and this is this ***Life in the Spirit***.
- The Spirit blows where it wills. Everybody is born of the Spirit.

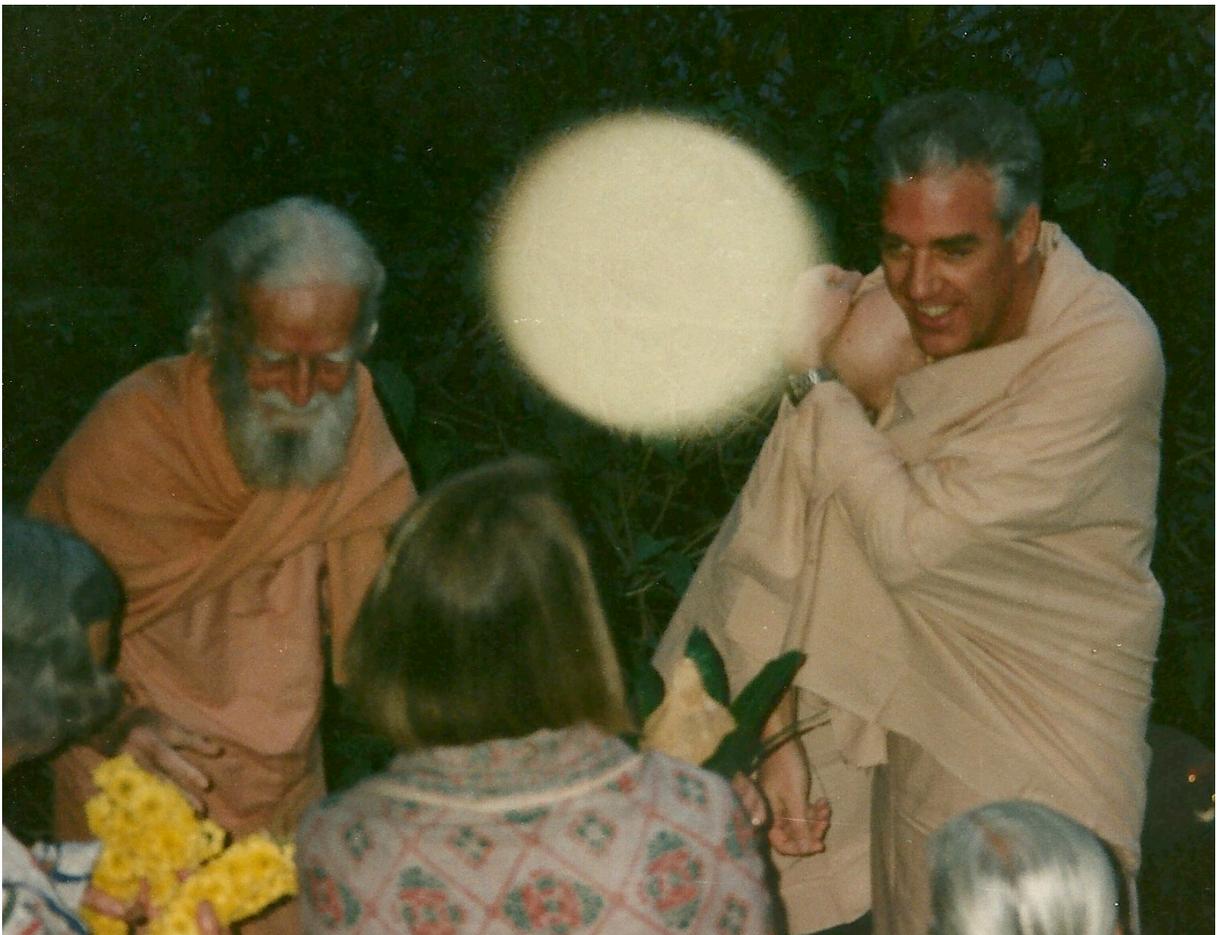
- Today a tremendous change is taking place and lay people all over the world are seeking to dedicate their lives to GOD as lay people.
- Many people meditate on the **Bible**, which is very good, and it is a message of the beginning, but it is discursive. But meditation in the deep sense of contemplation is when the mind goes beyond all these movements of GOD in there, on the **ONE REALITY**. Your mind stops and something new can begin.
- We must distinguish between meditation and contemplation. Meditation in the Christian tradition is reflecting on the word of GOD:
- There were four stages of prayer in the Middle Ages: *lectio divina, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio*. *Lectio* is reading, and that was considered very important and you always read aloud. They do it still in Tamil Nadu. And then meditation is reflecting on what you are reading. The next stage is *oratio*, where you begin to realise that you are not just reading words and thinking about GOD, you are beginning your relation with GOD, you begin to pray. *Prayer* could be partitioned into sessions, into praise, thanksgiving, worship and leading to contemplation.
- Contemplation is the experience of GOD beyond word, beyond thought; you experience the presence of GOD as the **ONE TRUTH**, the **ONE REALITY**, whatever name you give it in the depth of your heart.
- You have to give up, surrender yourself and GOD or the **INFINITE** comes into your life and begins to transform it. That is contemplation in the Eastern sense. Awareness of the **Transcendent Reality**.
- And that is what people are looking for today. They very much dislike all these searches, words, thoughts and wonderful books. They want to discover the reality of GOD in their lives, in the depth of their being.
- We need to make a clear distinction between **body, soul** and **spirit**. We have a body, a physical organism and most people assume the body through their senses. Beyond the body is

the psyche, which includes the senses, the feeling, imagination, reason, will and all the faculties of the soul. This is the conscious aspect of the unconscious.

- The majority of people don't get beyond the psyche. **C.G. Jung**, who was perhaps the greatest psychologist of modern time, never really got beyond the psyche.
- As long as we remain in the psyche we use words and images and thoughts, and we are conditioned: **I**, our bodies, our minds and the limitations of our human nature.
- But at the point of the Spirit we transcend our human limitations and we become aware of the **PRESENCE of the INFINITE, the ETERNAL, the ONE.**
- In the Sanskrit you have the senses and you have the **Manas**, the **Buddhi**, the **Ahamkara** (the Ego-maker). The **Manas** represent the rational mind, working through the senses. The **Buddhi** is the intelligence which enlightens the rational mind, and the **Ahamkara** is the Ego-maker, and we all focus on that Ego. And that is rational limitation, we are all little separated selves, which is the main problem of life.
- Beyond your Ego, your **Ahamkara** is your **Atma**, your **Spirit**, the point of your **Communion with the Transcendent**, with the **Eternal**, the **Infinite**, with **GOD.**
- **The Renewal of Contemplative Life** is a wonderful movement, it is really an event, something is happening in the human race today.
- The old tradition of religion is breaking down, because there are many people which are still taught largely on the psyche. You have all your images, in the temples, in the churches etc., and you have all your rituals which all have a deeper meaning, of course, and then you have all your doctrines, your theologies and philosophies. It is all a wonderful business. That is all limited by our senses.
- We exist as a person in relationship. We go beyond ourselves or get relationship with others, with the world and with the source of all others in the world.

- Today we are discovering the call to the **Transcendence**, to realise the **Spirit**, the **Infinite**, the **Eternal**. It is a universal call and this is changing peoples' lives.
- There is a deep centre in every human being that nothing but **GOD, the INFINITE, the ETERNAL** can satisfy.
- You just focus on the **ONE REALITY** in yourself and when you find it in yourself you find it everywhere. **The ONE REALITY** in you is in each one and in the whole universe and it embraces the whole universe, that is **the ONE**.
- Contemplation is first of all the art of calming the senses. The body becomes quiet, the mind becomes quiet and the deeper consciousness emerges. It is an experience of Oneness, it is beyond the multiplicity of the world around, your mind and your thoughts. Gradually the **Awareness of the Eternal Spirit** begins to grow and to take possession.
- Since the second century the priesthood and sacraments have taken over the whole Church. But sacraments belong to the world of signs and the **Ultimate Reality** is beyond the signs.
- **Jesus** founded the **Eternal**, not the **Institutional Church**. Jesus himself was not a priest and the Apostles were not priests either.
- Jesus did not start the Church, it is really important to know. All the structures of the Church came later. He really founded the **Eschatological Church**, the Church for the end of time, the Church which is final fulfilment of humanity, that is what he came to establish.
- We are all being called to go beyond the sacraments and signs, and doctrines etc.. You have to go beyond all that and discover the **Divine Reality**. That is the way of contemplation.
- It is the end of the spiritual journey, it is to discover that hidden present in the heart of yourself.
- For us as Christians one of our big problems is **HEAVEN**. There is no GOD up there, as spaceships with astronauts have gone up and they found no GOD up there at all.
- What people are finding today is a God within the their hearts, in their innermost centre of being.

- We find the being of the whole universe in contemplation.
- People are coming from all different directions in search of **the Inner Reality, the ONE REALITY** beyond all word and all thought.
- Even the word GOD is very dubious today. It becomes so corrupted and it has so many different meanings that you better give it up.
- But it is, of course, with all these symbols, if it is **GOD** or **BRAHMAN** or **ATMAN** or **TAO** or **NIRVANA**. They all have a deep meaning. You can get behind the appearances, the outer form and discover the reality which they are intended to awaken, to signify.
- We all have our own background, our symbols and our language, and we all have to go through the different things to discover the reality behind it. And the reality is in the depth of your heart.



Sat-Chit-Ananda Ashram - Sunday 15th December 1991 - 6:15 a.m.