	White Robed Monks of St. Benedict	<i>Volume 21 Issue 1</i>
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<i>Ausculta</i>		<i>Nondual: things remain distinct while not being separate.</i>
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Peace be with you.

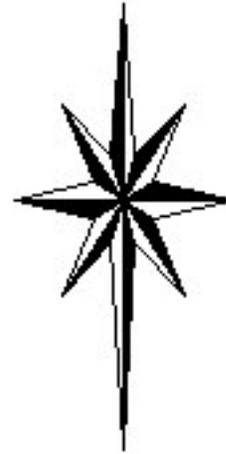
The first word of The Rule of St. Benedict is **LIS-TEN!** In the original rule (6.2), Benedict writes: *There are times when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence.*

Wisdom may be defined as the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. (Wikipedia) We may have heard of the old adage: Never talk about religion or politics.

We know from our human experience that great numbers of people in our evolution have been killed, murdered, or slaughtered out of conflicting political or religious beliefs . One example might be, depending upon one's chosen perspective (or spin), the so-called Old Testament as a whole.

Did not the Jewish God command Joshua to slaughter the Canaanites so that God's Chosen People could occupy the Promised Land? Did not a Latin Catholic Pope, under the aegis of The Crusades, murder approximately 30,000 Muslims sheltered in the Aqsa Mosque? (By the way, are not Muslims taught that should they die for the cause, they will have virgins to be at their call in the next life whereas, early on, Roman Catholics doing penance by warring against the infidels would bypass Purgatory should they die for the cause?)

Wisdom to remain silent, Courage to speak one's heart. In the USA there is a principle of "Free Speech". We experience what happens socially when The People speak so freely they incite discord. And does it matter? Some may say, *Surely, it matters in the moment*; others, *Surely, it matters not in the long run.*" Which brings us to: an article by



Peace I leave with you;
 my peace I give you.
 (John 14:27)

May the Peace
 of the Christmas Season
 be with you and yours

one Madisyn Taylor writes:

If we are to have true peace in the world, we must first find it within ourselves.

Most people agree that a more peaceful world would be an ideal situation for all living creatures. However, we often seem stumped as to how to bring this ideal situation into being. If we are to have true peace in this world, each one of us must find it in ourselves first. If we don't like ourselves, for example, we probably won't like those around us. If we are in a constant state of inner conflict, then we will probably manifest conflict in the world. If we have fighting within our families, there can be no peace in the world. We must shine the light of inquiry on our internal struggles, because this is the only place we can really create change.

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When we initiate the process of looking inside ourselves for the meaning of peace, we will begin to understand why it has always been so difficult to come by. This in itself will enable us to be compassionate toward the many people in the world who find themselves caught up in conflicts both personal and universal. We may have an experience of peace that we can call up in ourselves to remind us of what we want to create, but if we are human we will also feel the pull in the opposite direction--the desire to defend ourselves, to keep what we feel belongs to us, to protect our loved ones and our cherished ideals, and the anger we feel when threatened. This awareness is important because we cannot truly know peace until we understand the many tendencies and passions that threaten our ability to find it. Peace necessarily includes, even as it transcends, all of our primal energy, much of which has been expressed in ways that contradict peace

Being at peace with ourselves is not about denying or rejecting any part of ourselves. On the contrary, in order to be at peace we must be willing and able to hold ourselves, in all our complexity, in a full embrace that excludes nothing. This is perhaps the most difficult part for many of us, because we want so much to disown the negative aspects of our humanity. Ironically, though, true peace begins with a willingness to take responsibility for our humanity so that we might ultimately transform it in the light of our love

So in this Hall of Mirrors we call Human Life or The Human Condition we might ask: *Then, what the heck is real?*

Turning to Tagawa Shun'ei (Tricycle, Fall, 2017) we find:

Our so-called cognition, or the action of discerning the meaning of things as they are perceived by us, is never in any case a perception of the external world exactly as it is, but rather a world that can only be apprehended via its interface with our present mental state.

In other words, it is nothing other than our own mind that constructs things and determines their content. This is the meaning of "consciousness-only," or "nothing but the transformations of consciousness."

And, if we turn this around, we ourselves are nothing other than the things that dwell in a world defined by the limits of that which is knowable by the functions of our own mind. (Trans. Charles Muller)

Whoa!

.. we ourselves are nothing other than the things that dwell in a world defined by the limits of that which is knowable by the functions of our own mind.

We are our own limit?

"The universe we know is the image of our own self. We can only see what we are. And because we see only images of our own self, we

are blind to the fact that we are images too. The image maker strives to maintain the image at all costs — Controlling the reproduction by realigning the production (to meet out own preconceived notions of who, how, what, when, where, and why we are—or are not). (adapted R.D. Laing)

Wisdom to be silent. **IF WE ARE:**

- **The Horrified Humanist** who thinks there is a slim chance for us surviving our chaos and obsolescence. S/he calls for sweeping reforms, a world government, and national planning.
- **The Languishing Liberal** who realizes that these are troubled times in which we live. S/he calls for more money and programs and works specially toward racial integration.
- **The Middling Moderate** who really has no thoughts because s/he experiences cross-pressures. S/he offers various platitudes to avoid offending other policy pro posers.
- **The Counteracting Conservative** who recognizes the crime in, the centralization and crumbling of civilization. S/he communicates a need for law and order, soap and haircuts, Truth and Morality.
- **The Rabid Rightist** who detects that the United States of America is getting Redder all the time. S/he waves flags and

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calls for ever increasing of public and private arm and stockpiles.

- **The Primitive Populist** who describes his or her reality as dominated by pointy-headed pseudo-intellectuals. S/he is all for throwing briefcases in the Potomac to restore some common sense.
- **The Passionate Pacifist** who designs his or her environment as a garrison state. S/he calls for a peaceable kingdom.
- **The Radical Romantic** who concludes that we live in a cancered civilization. S/he decides that the only way out is by everyone living in small experimental communities.
- **The Rumbling Revolutionary** who knows that we live in a repressive, racist, imperialist, capitalist system and are run by the establishment who maintains The System. S/he signals the confrontation and destruction of The System (and to work out the details later).
- **The Apocalyptic Apostle** who communicates that Armageddon is coming to this sinful world. The only solution s/he offers is salvation .

**THEN, IN WISDOM.
WE BECOME
SILENCE**

Adapted from Michael Marien, *Public Administration Review*, Vol 30, No, 2, March/April 1970)

HENCE, IN WISDOM,

Silence is the total manifestation of our whole personality, in which we have digested the three flavors of optimism, tolerance, and mysticism. They never come up, because they are all digested. They become just energy for us.

This silence is quite different from silence in terms of human eyes.

According to human eyes, there is a vague, disconsolate pain or pensiveness in the depths of our life that we cannot wipe out.

In Wisdom, silence is exactly the total manifestation of our whole personality.

Whole personality means our individual personality is manifested with the whole universe. All other beings are the contents of our personality.

So when we manifest our whole personality it is not just our individual personality, but simultaneously through this personality we can feel the whole universe.

That is why we can feel magnanimity, tolerance, and compassion.*

Adapted from *Returning to Silence: Zen Practice in Daily Life*, Dainin Katagiri, Shambala, 1988.

**Listen and attend with the
ear of your heart
-St. Benedict**

Silent Mind/Chatter

Throughout Human History, in one metaphor or another, we have defined ourselves as basically energy fields. Today, we are quite aware of energy fields and that perhaps what we call reality is but a wave function.

Is the quest a silent mind? Such a question begs the question and, hence, is false. The question assumes that the mind is not silent. The mind, a metaphor, is silence. The chatter we recognize in our heads in whatever language we think is just energy passing through synapses.

Hence, as The Heart Sutra echoes, there are “no feelings, no perceptions, no impulses, no consciousness; no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of eyes until no realm of mind-consciousness; no ignorance and also no extinction of it until no old age-and-death and also no extinction of it; no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path; no cognition, also no attainment., hence, we depend upon Wisdom and our mind is no hindrance. without any hindrance no fears exist - Peace as we *Let it be* and *Just do it*.

Chatter, which we may confuse as mind, is no hindrance: just energy. Be the space, *Kumbhaka*, between the inhale and exhale Or, as the band Kansas would sing: *All we are is but dust in the wind*. Metaphors upon metaphors in this Hall of Mirrors we label The Human Condition. Amen.

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Thank you.

(New e-mail address, too.)




Peace and Joy!

How to Detach from a Belief—Why?

How to detach from a belief and experience freedom and peace of mind? Use a centering meditation taught by Tarthang Tulku in his *Hidden Mind of Freedom*:

"Working with thoughts (beliefs) by opening them as they arise can bring many pleasant feelings, which—without attachment—also become our meditation. We can even go into the thoughts that judge other thoughts, and, embracing this judging mind, become united with it."

"By relying on the light of awareness you can see that the difficulties you face are manifestations of your own concepts. Going deeply into your thoughts, you will see how you create your experience, how you alone are the judge who determines heaven and hell, good and bad."

"Whatever experience arises, stay with it, expand it, and heat it up. If you remain within the intense

core of the experience, the meditator unites with thoughts and emotions, and everything dissolves. Then awareness grows powerful and one-pointed. As thoughts and emotions are increasingly included within this field of awareness, they become more useful. Instead of being a cause of frustration or confusion, they become agents of well-being. . . "

And why?

A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt. He said, "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one." The grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" The grandfather answered, "The one I feed. (Thank you Michael Butler)

May all beings be happy.
Amen.

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And thank you. May many blessings be to you and yours now and forevermore. Peace and joy!

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