

FOUR VIRTUES OF A MYSTIC

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We are told that some two millennia ago, there lived in the Roman province of Judea a person who was known simply as “the carpenter’s son” and, for many, he was nothing less than the one and only son of the Hebrew Deity. To some, however, he was known not so much as the only begotten son of the Divine, but as an extraordinary human being with deep spiritual insight, great intellect and compassion, and possessing a power of healing of an unworldly sort.

By his early thirties, this man had undoubtedly attained a high degree of spiritual maturity and wished to spread his insights and wisdom to as wide an audience as possible. Exhorting people to follow his example of living a life of spiritual devotion to an almost impossibly high level, he challenged them to do better and even greater things than he did. And in the two millennia since he lived, he has been regarded by billions as the ultimate template for a true mystic from whom billions of people the world over have derived comfort, inspiration, and even a reason for living.

Although the Christian gospels continue to inspire billions of people to live better lives, the details we can glean from them give us only a very broad outline of what the traits of a true mystic really are. Wide reading and research elsewhere is therefore essential in order to fill in the gaps; for there have existed some highly advanced mystics, men and women, who lived their

entire lives within the often suffocating boundaries of their ecclesiastical disciplines, yet still managed to leave us clues as to how, without leaving their religious faiths, they escaped the shackles of their confinement and silently, in great privacy, incorporated into their lives the sort of universal qualities that form the mark of every accomplished mystic.

Men and women of great spiritual attainment undoubtedly lived before the carpenter’s son, many have lived after him and, even in our own era, it is certain that some great souls are alive today. Truly accomplished mystics do not necessarily have to be affiliated with any particular religion, for they transcend all attempts at labeling while they privately commune in the stillness of the heart, in direct and unimpeded ways, with their highest concepts and experiences

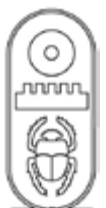
of a Supreme Deity.

Mysticism Misunderstood

Like “meditation,” the word “mysticism” is greatly misunderstood. For some, it evokes ideas of occult practices, incantations, and strange goings on and, to others, it is equated with something unwholesome or even malevolent. What great misunderstanding exists, for mysticism is nothing less than the deepest parts of the human quest for self-knowledge; the acquisition of an understanding through which men, women, and children of good will have glimpses of their most sublime



*A painting of Yeshua
from the fourth century.*





concepts of the primeval source of all human “Good.” Note that I did not use the word “God” but “Good,” for there are some who do not accept the existence of a power, force, or intelligence greater than anything that a sentient human can experience.

The intellectual notion of a higher “Good,” as in good human morals, good human virtues, decent human behavior, fairness in human interactions with all other creatures, justice towards all beings, good political governance, etc., more than suffices for such people as ideals to strive for and in no way reduces the personal goodness that many possess in abundance, simply because they have not yet experienced that “Good” in the form that others have, namely, in the form of their deepest and most reliable guide and friend through life, something they have experienced in deeply intimate terms and to whom they have assigned the word “God.”

A Mystic Defined

According to Rosicrucian philosophy, a mystic can be defined as one who communes with a deeply personal inner realization of a Supreme Reality, immanent in all things animate or inanimate, and who perceives that Reality directly, deliberately,

and with confidence, in an all-absorbing, whole-being experience often referred to simply as the God of his or her Realization.

For many others though, a mystic is not so much a person in tune with a personal Deity, as a person with extraordinary powers, a person of virtuous character perhaps, deep and mysterious and with great psychic abilities. Some Rosicrucian mystics certainly embrace these and many other admirable qualities, but such qualities are not ends in themselves; they are merely consequences of the manner in which the lives of such mystics are governed while keeping in sharp focus their main task, namely, an ever closer union with their personal, highest concepts of that Supreme Reality, and a constant striving for purity of purpose and sanctity in every thought, word, and deed that comes from them.

Greater Challenges for Mystics

Accomplished or aspiring mystics are regularly tested with more challenging situations than people who care little about their inner growth, for mystics actively attempt to live by “higher,” more exacting laws than most other people. And the demands of those higher laws naturally imply the need for greater precision in personal thoughts, words, and

deeds. There is a need for greater control of every aspect of the mystic's life, in order to remain on a given path of inner involvement.

As abilities increase, ever more options are available to choose from. And with more choices comes the need for greater powers of discretion, the ability to accurately choose good from bad, right from wrong. With an ever broadening, more inclusive perspective of the world, an evolved mystic can often foresee the pitfalls of life long before becoming trapped in them. And whatever evasive action is needed, can then be taken before disaster strikes.

Mystics Act Positively and Deliberately

Real mystics are positive and deliberate in choosing only actions that produce results of only the highest moral and spiritual integrity. And they plan their actions carefully in ways that attract them to optimal learning experiences. Like mature students who need no tutors to encourage them to study, true mystics examine their place in life and their reactions to it with purpose and deliberation. And they seldom need any encouragement to do the highest good at every stage of life, for an inner certainty reassures them that they are on the right path.

The technique of development that true mystics practice does, however, carry with it certain safeguards against defeat. They are protected in ways that ordinary people are not, for they are part of an *égrégora* or group consciousness of psychic protection precisely because of their devotion to transcendent ideals that are common to the ideals of many others of high spiritual and moral values. Under the umbrella protection of those safeguards, they ease themselves



slowly and, with full understanding, into conducting their lives on an altogether “higher plane” than that of all other people. Although such mystics live in the here-and-now in material reality, and are governed by the same physical constraints as all other people, their real focus is on something immaterial and inward. Their single, most important goal is not of this world, but of a transcendent state of being far beyond the hustle and bustle of everyday life; and this they privately pursue above all else.

With the inevitable spiritual maturity that has emerged in those who have happily found and embarked upon genuine paths of spiritual unfoldment, there exist among them certain commonsense “virtues” that they steadfastly live by and which shield them from some of the more obviously wasteful and unnecessary struggles and temptations that so many people must deal with daily.

And it is by putting these virtues into practice that such people fortify and prepare themselves for the challenges that their karmic obligations require them to face and eventually overcome. The virtues they practice are not religious or moral allegories but down-to-earth practical actions that have both long-term and immediate, beneficial consequences for both themselves and the many others whose lives they secretly touch. I will list just four such virtues today, though there are, of course, many more.

First: Love and Compassion

First and foremost of the virtues is a deep and abiding love and compassion for all things in Creation. People intending harm will enter and exit the life of every mystic, just as mystics are sometimes graced as well by the presence of kind people too. But through it all, mystics are devoted to the



welfare of all people equally, just as devoted parents are devoted to the welfare of their children, whether they are well-behaved or not, whether they are bright or slow, and whether they love their parents in return or not.

Mystics can sense the faults and weaknesses of others, and they realize which lessons such people have yet to learn. Armed with that knowledge, their compassion for the struggles of such people comes to the fore and they surround them deliberately and purposefully with the spiritual Light of their being and do all they can to assist them to understand the full extent of their plight and what they need to do in order to improve their conditions. Such people may not know the mystics who are helping them. Indeed they may not care about their welfare, or even be grateful for the assistance they are receiving. But true mystics still silently hope and pray for the day that those they are secretly assisting will find the door that leads to their personal paths to spiritual unfoldment. Those are karmic bonds that can only be released upon accomplishment of this.

True mystics neither gossip nor engage in thoughts, words, or actions that are intended to bring harm to others. Whenever they cause harm through clumsiness or inexperience, they immediately go about setting things right, even if doing so takes the rest of their lives. Their every act is in the interests of harmony, and they conduct themselves accordingly. Their love is freely given, it is outgoing and unasked for, and they serve for the love of service, without thought of recompense. But their greatest and most overpowering love is for the very source of their existence. However they perceive it, this deeply personal Deity is the closest, most helpful and intimate companion they have, the only one who is at their side at all times, though especially during their most difficult moments. With clarity and understanding they concur with the exhortation of the Old Testament authors and the master Yeshua when they said: “Love the lord your God [Divinity] with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.” That is the highest law of a true mystic.

Second: Gratitude and Humility

The second group of virtues are gratitude for all that life brings, both





good and bad, and humility in accepting whatever their fate decrees. True mystics cannot help but feel humbled before the magnificence of Creation; for the more they learn of its intricate perfection and symmetry, the more they become aware of their utter insignificance in the broader scheme of things.

Because of their humility, they are therefore always ready to listen, always ready to learn, both from the meek and the humble, as well as from the arrogant and powerful; for lessons come from all quarters and at all times, and those with humility accept it from wherever it arises. Class distinction and privilege have no place with the law of karma, and true mystics know full well that their most important lessons could equally come from an abyss of poverty and deprivation as they could come from the heights of wealth and waste.

Without humility, many an opportunity of learning is lost. No person is so lowly or so unworthy that something could not be learned from them. Similarly, no person is so arrogant, high, and mighty that a mystic could not learn lessons from them too. A true mystic never takes offense, even under the gravest, most intimidating and unjust of circumstances. For the acts of taking offense or harboring feelings of hurt constitute the most serious and damaging error of all; and against this,

the mystic remains constantly alert. Yet, should they, despite their best attempts at retaining their composure, still succumb, and if the harsh treatment they receive causes them to stumble briefly and lash out in anger, they are quick to regain their composure, rise up, stand erect, and correct their error immediately. And then, with a spring in their stride and gratitude for the experience, they continue on their path, unperturbed and unencumbered by the past.

Their humility manifests as gratitude for all that passes their way. Everything that happens to them, whether pleasant or unpleasant, they accept gratefully as a part of their essential learning experience. They know how short life is and how soon their learning experiences on Earth will be over. And so, with gratitude and humility, they accept all that life brings them, both good and bad, and daily thank the God of their Realization for the experiences and lessons that come their way.

Third: Justice and Karma

The third virtue is a firm conviction that justice always prevails in the end, and karma is an inescapable law of life. True mystics know that they reap only what they themselves have sown. With confidence, they view no actions ever in personal terms, but as manifestations of the great lessons they are meant to learn



through the operation of the inviolable law of compensation, the law of karma.

Even if their limited time on Earth may not be long enough to see the full operation of this law, they have unshakeable confidence that the law is universally just and serves the best interests of all living creatures. True mystics cooperate with the law of karma eagerly and with enthusiasm. And if they know there is a need to answer for something they have done or for something they should have done, they do all they can to compensate for their error and bring on the learning process of karmic compensation as quickly and thoroughly as possible.

At all times and under all circumstances, true mystics are just in their thoughts, words, and deeds. They therefore mete out their responses to life carefully and with thought; for they know that no matter what a person may do in trying to escape the operation of this inviolable law, the full impartiality and severity of its operation will eventually manifest.

They therefore abide by the principles of justice to the best of their understanding and ability and make their judgments only in fair and equitable ways. The Cosmic contains all things, knows all things, experiences all things; and true mystics judiciously weigh the arguments of both sides in any controversy before taking

action in the best interests of all. They know they are not always deciding between right and wrong, but rather between two partial views of a single truth, like two observers looking at the same landscape, the one sunlit under a blue sky, the other lit only by moonlight. Both describe the same landscape but through different conditions of light and understanding. Both speak sincerely from their limited understanding and conditions, and both are therefore right as far as their inner development permits.

Without the compensatory laws and impartial justice of the law of karma, there can be neither order nor peace. Cosmic Law, with its inherent universal justice for all, is therefore openly invited to operate in the life of every true mystic, exacting and onerous as that law may at times be.

Fourth: Discretion

The fourth virtue is that of discretion. True mystics are always discreet and never flaunt their powers or wisdom, even though these may be considerable. Those who flaunt what they know or use their powers ostentatiously to impress others certainly have neither true wisdom nor real power, and are on a fast track to perdition.

There are always those who claim to have unusual powers, who claim to walk with Cosmic Masters, or to be specially



chosen by them for elite tasks. Many claim to be messengers of the Divine, but do not practice even the most basic of virtues they preach. The internet is filled with such fraudsters, some extremely wealthy and plausible sounding, but they must not be heeded. Their ends are for personal glory and financial benefit exclusively, and they are not worthy of being called even aspiring mystics, even though they may have accomplished a great deal in the past and may have accumulated great psychic powers.

True mystics are known by their writings, their words, and above all, their deeds. With silence, sensitivity, and discretion, they pass through life much as a gentle breeze can be felt but not seen. For most of us, they are the gentle souls we know, respect, and can trust with anything. But for accomplished mystics like themselves, they are like rods of Light of intense and scintillating brilliance, acting purposefully with efficiency, and always entirely in secret and in the interests, not only of their own inner evolvment, but especially in the interests of the inner lives of as many other beings as they can.

And so, I have briefly covered the four virtues of a mystic that I wanted to highlight. They are not the only ones, of course, but they are nevertheless important. And now that I have briefly outlined them, you would be right in asking if there are any simple techniques of bringing such virtues into active use in one's own life. Well, there are many well-worn paths to such accomplishments but one that struck me

as the simplest I've ever encountered came about unexpectedly in the following way.

One day, I saw a small message on a noticeboard cluttered with many different messages, none of them of interest to me. But this one message, brief as it was, struck a deep chord in me and I knew immediately it was a gift of great simplicity. It said: "Before you speak, your intentions must pass through portals three, one of each kind in letters bold to see: Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?" That was all I needed to know to understand that, hidden beneath those words, was a simple truth, a new rule of life for me.



Over the next month, my mind repeatedly returned to those three brief questions and I set about tracing their origin. Some said they originated in antiquity with Socrates, others said they were originally from the Buddha, Confucius, or Lao Tzu. And then others said they were from the

thirteenth-century Persian mystic Rumi, and others ascribed them to a litany of other individuals from Abraham Lincoln to Eleanor Roosevelt, William Shakespeare, Sai Baba, and even Queen Victoria herself. None of them were anywhere near to being plausible until I found an 1872 poem by the author Mary Ann Pietzker entitled, yes, "Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?" It is a delightful poem and still widely available. But inspired by her words, I would like to end with words in a similar vein which summarize the kernel of truth and deeper understanding that I gained from her lovely poem.



Hear dear friend of things of your heart,
of things you must know afore we part. For portals three before you now stand,
inviting safe passage through strength of your own hand.

Be awake dear child to what you see for portals stood here before you met Me. In heart and mind and most loving soul,
to Light, Life, and Love your dear self will unfold.

And so, dear friend, a caution I give you this day,
that through these words with dearest wish, you will find the life and path that was ever destined to be your way.

As to what you're about to think, say, or do,
pass first through these portals three
True – Necessary – Kind.

And if 'tis TRUE what you're about to think, say, or do,
pass with great verity through this portal first,
and seek truth above all to quench your mystic thirst.

But stay dear child and rest a while if truth walks not with you this day, 'neath the shadow and dark umbra of an unhappy life.

And if 'tis NECESSARY what you're about to think, say, or do,

pass with urgency through this portal too,
and seek only what's needed to find the mystic view.

But stay dear child and rest a while if necessity walks not with you this day 'neath the shadow and dark umbra of an unhappy life.

And if 'tis KIND what you're about to think, say, or do,
pass with kindness through this portal last, and seek but gentle feelings t'wards all creatures who've shared your path, and brought happiness and fulfilment to your life, until arrival of that final breath that was destined from life's start, to be your very last.

But stay dear child and rest a while if kindness walks not with you this day 'neath the shadow and dark umbra of an unhappy life.

But if through portals three you've easily passed,
'neath Light and blue skies of blessed day on your path;
go sow good seed 'mongst mortals few,
to one day reap great harvests anew, 'mongst mortals drew,
awakened to Light,
with fond gratitude for what is Kind, Necessary, True; and great love for the Life that is you.

