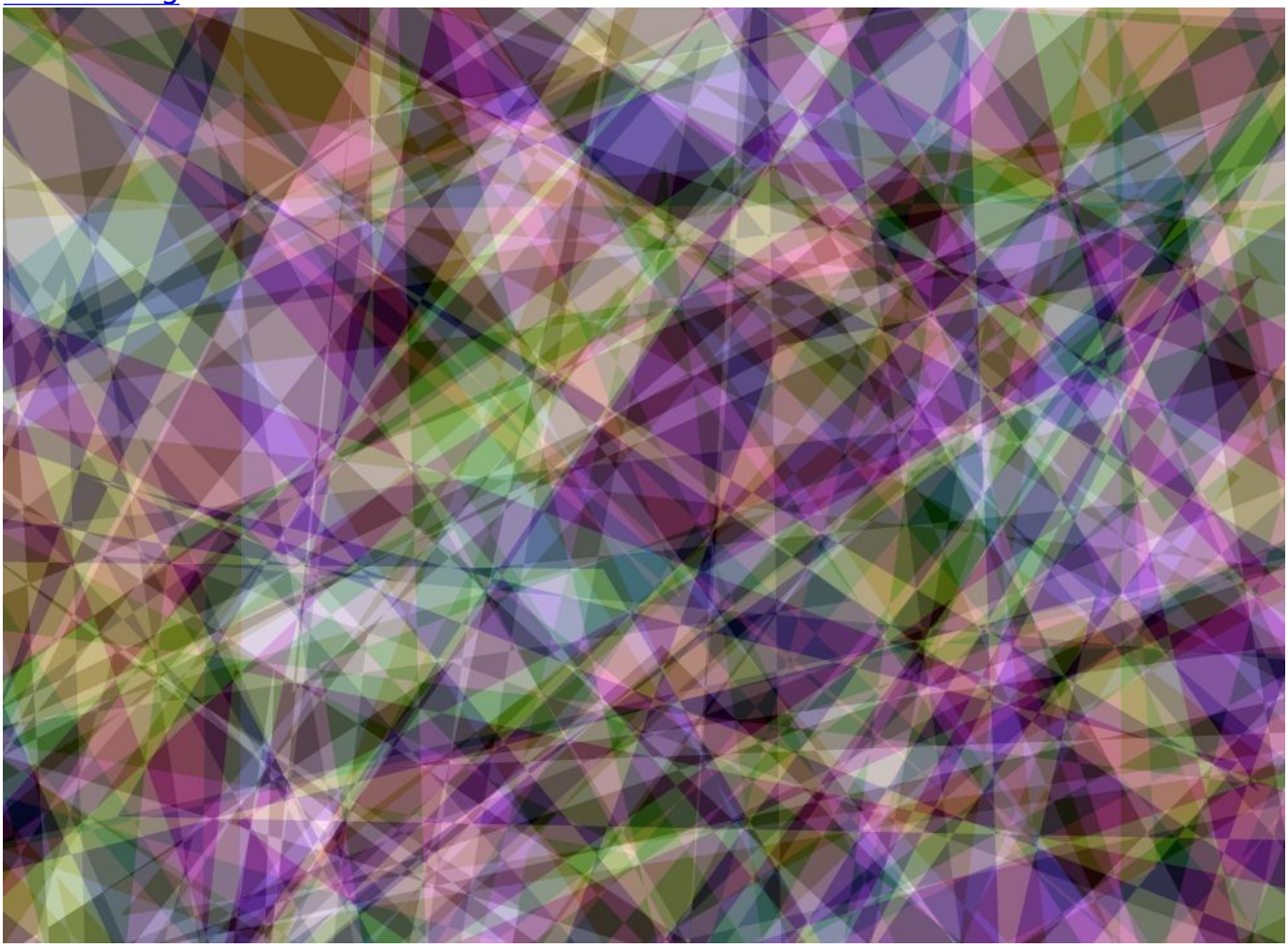
Spirituality
Soul Seeing



(Pixabay/Vicki Hamilton)

by Michael Leach

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

September 5, 2026

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

I don't know about you, but I am as adept at meditating as I am at putting a thread through the eye of a needle. You know the chattering monkey inside our heads? Well, the inside of my head is like the Amazon rainforest. Distraction comes easily to me.

The only time I even try to meditate for more than a few minutes is when I'm suffering. Really suffering. Then it's, "Help me, Jesus, I can't stand these worries anymore! Give me your thoughts. Or no thoughts. Please!" I light a red candle and place it on the kitchen table. A cardboard poster sits on the chair across from me: It's a picture of my wife, Vickie, in her favorite red suit jacket I had made for her memorial service. She is now free as a bird — here, there and everywhere — and will sometimes brush a soft wing across my head just as she promised, through a poem about a bird that appeared on my screen a few weeks after she died.

Then I place two hands on the table, breathe deeply and endeavor to be still. Sometimes, in the space between thoughts, as in the silence between two musical notes, a miracle happens. The rainforest goes quiet. Vickie's smile flickers in the candle's glow. The shadows on the wall dance. I am aware of awareness, and know peace, love and assurance, if only for a few moments. If it happens at night, I sleep well till morning.

When I wake up, the mighty jungle wakes up too.

Rinse and repeat. Or not.

Fortunately, I don't suffer, really suffer, all that often. So I don't meditate that often, either. But what I have learned to do, at any old time at all, that I would like to share with you is something akin to meditation, something that has been helpful to me. I close my eyes and ask God a simple question: "God, what do you want me to know right now?"

I first did this many years ago, and a voice for God in the form of my own inner voice answered immediately: "I am here for you." My eyes popped open. The voice was as clear as the echo from a singing bowl. It was my voice and it wasn't my voice. If it is true, as Meister Eckhart said, that "we see God with the same eye God sees us," then it must also be true that we hear God in the same voice God hears us.

"God, what do you want me to know?"

"I am here for you."

Advertisement

I hear the same answer almost every time I ask the question. Sometimes it's a slight variation, like "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20), or "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). My prayer may begin with petitioning, but it bears fruit in listening. Sometimes I may not hear an answer at all. I remain still. I say, "Be with me." And God's words follow: "I am here for you."

Some days I marvel at that idea for a minute or two. Other times, I just get on with my day. And sometimes — whole days at a time, even — I'm so involved with the chattering monkeys in my head that I forget the practice. Thoughts swing from branch to branch and soon enough they scratch and bite, and my own inner voice calls again, "Be with me." And God whispers, "I am here for you."

At first, the words "I am here for you" meant that no matter what I am going through, God is here for me. Whether I walk through the shadow of the valley of death or stand atop the Mount of Transfiguration, God's light is shining on me. Despite appearances of clouds and storms, God is here for me, so just wait, all shall be well because the star over Bethlehem is still in the sky. All shall be well because all is already well.

Later I understood "I am here for you" to also mean I am here for God — two sides of the same lost coin. My purpose is to manifest love, forgiveness, kindness and compassion, the stuff of God I am made of. My spiritual teacher in the 1970s, Thomas Hora, used to say, "You are a place where God reveals himself." I am made to be here for God. Therein is happiness.

Sometimes my mind focuses on the word "here." God — the name we use for omniactive Love and unbidden wisdom — is present here, not somewhere out there. "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), "within us" (Luke 17:21), "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet" (Tennyson). There is nowhere I am that God isn't, and nowhere God is that I am not also. When we are aware that God is here for us, we awaken to the beauty in front of our eyes because it is in our eyes. We see the red roses bloom. Sing it, Louie: "What a wonderful world!"

Recently the first two words "I am" have resonated for me. I am here for you. God told Moses, "I AM that I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). These words are pointing to something deeper than a name. They are pointing to being itself, the living presence that is always here, always aware. God is not just everywhere; God is pure awareness, the light in which everything exists and through which everything is seen.

And because we live inside that awareness, we share in it. Jesus assured us, "I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20). It is one continuous life. Just as the leaves are one with the branches and the branches are one with the tree and the tree is one with its roots, we are expressions of the one I AM. The leaf doesn't have to "try" to be part of the tree; it simply is. In the same way, we don't have to strain to be connected to God. We already are. That's why if we hurt someone, we literally hurt ourselves; and if we help someone, we actually help ourselves.

Jesus also said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), and "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). All creation –– you and I and every bird, flower and stream —- is like tiny bits of colored glass in a kaleidoscope. Each piece seems separate, but only when the kaleidoscope is held to the light do the pieces come alive. Turn it and they swirl into new and beautiful designs, each one different, all belonging, all part of the same radiance. The light of Christ is here for us, and we are here for it. We are part of its turning.

And so, this little practice is not a technique, not a discipline, not a heroic attempt to silence the jungle. Just a question. A turning. A willingness to listen.

If you feel moved, give the question a gentle try: "God, what do you want me to know?"

You may hear something. You may hear nothing at all. But either way, you will be exactly where you already are: in the quiet, steady embrace of love.

Close your eyes … be still … breathe … and ask.