

Being of Light ☼ by J.D. Frandsen

Meditation and transcendence inside Administrative Segregation

"The world of every day life cannot ever be taken as something personal that has power over us, something that could make us, or destroy us, because man's battlefield is not in his strife with the world around him. His battlefield is over the horizon, in an area which is unthinkable for an average man, the area where man ceases to be a man." - Juan Matus.

The cell door slams, gloved hands reach through a slot in the heavy metal door unshackling you. This is "The Hole" an administrative control unit. Most men explode in anger, spiting at the window, kicking the door relentlessly. Some flood the toilet and cover the window provoking the guards to suit up. Bear-mace is deployed and riot gear clad men burst forth, shock-shields out front. Hole-time for most is a nightmare. It is a true test of the human mind's coping systems, a small cold room with sparse sunlight, three meager meals per day shoved through the "bean shoot." Intense sensory deprivation is dangerously soul crushing for the untrained mind. Men can sometimes be left to live like this for years, inducing a caged-psychosis that is absolutely irreversible. Some men would rather hang themselves than to be trapped with themselves. An inmate can be thrown inside "add-seg" at anytime for no reason what so ever. This frustration eats you alive. A formula for madness for most, transcendence from suffering for few. Profound clarification of the mind through focused meditation is absolutely obtainable in any environment, even one that reeks of urine and sadness.

Before learning to meditate and learning to let go, doing time in the hole was like a delirium for me. The constant rehashing of the unimportant events of the past and my minds relentless nagging about the uncertain and nonexistent future was exhausting. My personal breakthrough came after a fit of selfish grief and violence. I thought about my mom Fancy, the most adoringly impeccable human being in my life. She always told me and still to this day tells me "Be here now." At this very fragile and traumatic moment in my life, a shift in conciseness came. Only this moment is real. The past is dead, the future is not yet, there is only now. In this moment my body maybe trapped in some way; in some slight misfortune, but my mind, my whole infinite being, the true essence of who and what I truly am is absolutely free.

"We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world." –Gautama Buddha

The true nature of our environment and our reality is only what we make it. Contentment is a perpetual state after grasping this simple concept. All can be wondrous when separation from the past and transcendence from the illusionary future is wholly embraced and the voice of worry is silenced. Let go, be here now. A genuine internalization of such notions ignites a transformation, a blissful hypersensitive compassion, a different response to the world of every day life. A joyful interest in the small miracles of being, replaces the energy draining lunacy of fear and worry from which the superficial human ego feeds. Living in the moment is magnificent.

After arriving, I clean the parking space sized cell as best I can and set up a comfortable practice space. Blankets and bedding are sometimes provide, but most of the time these are withheld for days, or weeks. I do some light stretching to get limber. A quick splash in the sink then I'm ready to sit. Once the screaming and banging blends into a tolerable white noise, I focus on my breath. The abrasive ego dissolves and my internal dialogue shuts off like the flipping of a switch. A wave of genuine peace, wellbeing and unconditional love surrounds me, envelops me, permeates my soul and resonates through the bricks, the barbed wire and throughout the infinite reaches of the universe. In this place, where psychosis and mental breakdowns are so common, I have found a peace unlike any other. No one can ever strip away my true identity as a being of infinite loving light. Meditation practice pushes me toward the path of knowledge and an altruistic objective. It leaves me in a state of heightened awareness that is absolutely divine. This prison is my home, I belong here. My physical self maybe ensnared, but my spirit is free, and I am truly content.

"You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even wait, be quiet still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet." – Franz Kafka