

# MOMENTS OF GRACE

## ENCOUNTER NOT PERFORMANCE

*I begin to think about what happens when a landscape or a great tree or the spectacle of the night sky presents itself and commands attention. That quite ordinary scene beyond the railway track had ceased to be merely an object I was looking at. It had become a subject imbued with a power that was offering me...a kind of mutual communication or exchange was taking place which did not originate entirely in myself....this was [also] a very ordinary, almost universal human experience. I was not an animist, so I did not credit the corn stooks with consciousness...*

*So this is what is meant by the Holy Spirit. This is the essential nature of his power....this is how God acts upon human beings....working from within, making them more aware.*

John V. Taylor

No wonder John Taylor could write in *The Go-Between God*:

*This is where we must now begin our talk about God -  
God working anonymously and on the inside:  
the beyond in the midst.*

And:

*We so commonly speak about {the Spirit}as the source of power.  
But in fact he enables us, not by making us supernaturally strong  
but by opening our eyes.*

Our first insight is to realize how blind we are- and how we miss so much.

We don't make "something happen". We learn to be present to what is. So recall moments in your life which have **spoken** to you, **engaged** you at depth, **grabbed** you attention, **resonated** with you. Let them speak again.. In what ways do they gift you now?

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*I am looking out my window in an anxious and resentful state of mind, oblivious of my surroundings, brooding perhaps on some damage done to my prestige. Then suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is nothing now but kestrel. And when I return to thinking of the other matter it seems less important. And of course this is something which we may also do deliberately: give attention to nature in order to clear our minds of selfish care.*

Iris Murdoch

**Can you recall moments like Iris Murdoch's 'kestrel moment'?**

**'Nothing changes yet everything is different'.**

**Iris Murdoch suggests a more intentional, deliberate disposing of herself.**

**As simply as you can, take time and attend to a part of nature around you –**

**in your back garden, or when you go for a walk.**

**'Waste time' each day for a few minutes.**

**'I know how to be idle and blessed' (Mary Oliver).**

**And give full rein, in turn, to your five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.**

God is essentially beyond thought, beyond human knowing. Yet God is embedded in everything that is visible to us. We might say that God is a kind of horizon- the context or basis of all our seeing and hearing and valuing.

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