

MEDITATION 12



IN A MONASTERY TIME IS CAREFULLY SPENT. Outside, we don't think much of letting one activity lead to another, each taking as much time as needed. But in a monastery there are fifteen minutes for reading, two hours for study, allotted periods for prayer and meditation, usually less than an hour here and there for recreation.

It does no good to think moralistically about how much time we waste. Wasted time is usually good soul time. But there is something especially fruitful in a regulated life, a fantasy of time in which regularity—monasticism is sometimes called the regular life—is not a prison but freedom.

The ritual quality of appointed times releases us from the burdens of free will.