



### **The Cave of the Heart**

Recently I walked a section of Mt Abrupt in Dunkeld, which hides a number of wonderfully secreted sandstone caves. There is something warmly inviting and darkly solitary about a cave. While we resonate with its power to enclose and protect, it also evokes a beckoning mystery, the unknown. In the early Christian pre monastic period people sought out the deserts of Palestine and Egypt to retreat for silent contemplation. A certain brother went to Abbot Moses in Scete, and asked him for a good word. And the elder said to him, ***'Go sit in your cell, and your cell will teach your everything'***. To know, to be inwardly led, requires developing a spiritual sensitivity to the subtleties of a quietened mind through which the yearnings and natural promptings of Self- Nature can be heard. In the Zen and contemplative traditions meditation is also spoken of as sitting.

We are both attracted and anxious by the intimacy being alone creates. Reducing or uncovering the demands and distractions of our modern way of life, we become naturally sensitive to that which is being lost to us, our own sensibility and potential.

The recently growing interest in pilgrimage is another indicator of a desire to simplify and unburden in order to come alive to the immediacy of our lives. This is also demonstrated by the rise of interest in mindfulness practice, as a ***sinking into this only moment given, as complete.***

Meditation is primarily a stopping and thereby creating the necessary mind to notice as inward recollection. The heart as the centre of awareness in many traditions is metaphorically instructive as the invitation to be more deeply attuned to our life.

Rather than seek secreted places we can cultivate an awareness of own body and mind as our true home, the cave of awareness. From this place of quite attention we are able to activate more accurately what to do, when to do it and how to do it. Clarity, insight and equanimity are cultivated by the stability and focus of intention which comes from residing in each breath moment. Rumi says so poetically while there is a tablet of recorded intelligence there is another kind of tablet.... ***"One already completed and preserved inside you...a freshness in the centre of the chest."***