

The Inner Light and Our Experience of the Inner Light

The Light Within is the fundamental and immediate experience for Friends. It is that which guides each of us in our everyday lives and brings us together as a community of faith. It is, most importantly, our direct and unmediated experience of the Divine.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Faith and Practice

"The experience of the Inner Light is the center of the life of Friends and the ultimate source of all our testimonies. The Inner Light is what friends call "that of God" in every person. The Inner Light gives illumination and clarity to conscience, generating an inward compulsion to follow the leading's of its Spirit. This Spirit is the love of God, implanted in all, overcoming the ambivalence of conscience."

"Friends regard their worship and daily life as being guided by the Inner Light. They have no use for dogma and creedal formulas. Quakerism can be described as an inner vision and outward lifestyle rather than a theological worldview....The emphasis is on transformation and mutual accountability.

"Ben Pink Dandelion - "The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction"

It sounds like Quakers can believe anything they like—is that so?

Quakers invite the word of God to be written in our hearts, rather than as words on paper—we have no creed. But we also believe that if we are sincerely open to the Divine Will, we will be guided by a Wisdom that is more compelling than our own more superficial thoughts and feelings. This can mean that we will find ourselves led in directions or receiving understandings that we may not have chosen just from personal preference. Following such guidance is not always easy. This is why community is important to Quakers, why we turn to each other for worshipful help in making important choices, and why we read the reflections of other Quakers who have lived faithful lives.

Friends General Conference, <http://www.fgcquaker.org/explore/faqs-about-quakers>

Experiencing the Inner Light allows us to be sensitive to and to respond to one's connectedness to others and to the physical world. Experiencing the Inner Light implies being connected to everything, in all directions – vertical and horizontal.

Experiencing the Inner Light enables us to be alive to the present, when anxieties about the past and the future disappear and attention is focused wholly on the present. We experience a sense of serenity when past and present lose their urgency. We become in tune with the rhythm and oneness of life through conscious breathing, walking in the present moment, feeling at one with all creation in the present.

Experiencing the Light gives us an openness to something both beyond and within us. We are sensitive to the needs of others. The Light opens us to reaching out to others and to acting as a positive force in the world. We find communion in the community of people and nature; we reach out and become open and receptive to the Divine in others. Living in the Light is being mindfully in touch with the deepest connection within us, which is God. This is mindfulness of a Greater Presence. Perhaps this is what we mean we liken "experiencing the Light" to walking towards love.

Experiencing the Light also means being able to give up our control, becoming enveloped in trust. At such times, Friends experience a sense of joy, of worth; they feel exhilarated, yet calm and attuned to the spiritual value and meaning of everyday actions.