

# It's Self-Fulfillment, Not Self-Denial



*“The sacrifice which men of genius—mystics, artists, inventors—make of their whole lives to this one object, this one vision of truth, is not self-denial, but rather self-fulfillment. They gather themselves up from the unreal, in order to concentrate on the real. The whole personality then absorbs or enters into communion with certain rhythms or harmonies existent in the universe, which the receiving apparatus of other selves cannot take up. ... ‘The numbers came!’ says the poet. He knows not how, certainly not by deliberate intellection.*

*“So it is with the mystic. Madam Guyon states in her autobiography, that when she was composing her works she would experience a sudden and irresistible inclination to take up her pen. ... Similar statements are made of St. Teresa, who declared that in writing her books she was powerless to set down anything but that which her master put into her mind. ... The subliminal mind of the great mystic, however, is not disorderly.” ~Evelyn Underhill*

When people read of mystics and adepts giving up certain things like popular foods and sporting events they think of this as self-denial and see it as a lifestyle they are not interested in. But as Ms. Underhill points out, that is not the correct way to interpret it. What the mystic is giving up is something of very little value in exchange for which he gains something of much greater value. It is really not much different than the athlete who skips going to a movie with his friends so that he can go practice is swimming or jumping or whatever activity is involved in his sport. Generally speaking, people don't see that athlete as being in self-denial, but they often think that way when they see the spiritual person or the mystic giving up some of the fun materialistic activities that so many find enjoyable.

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