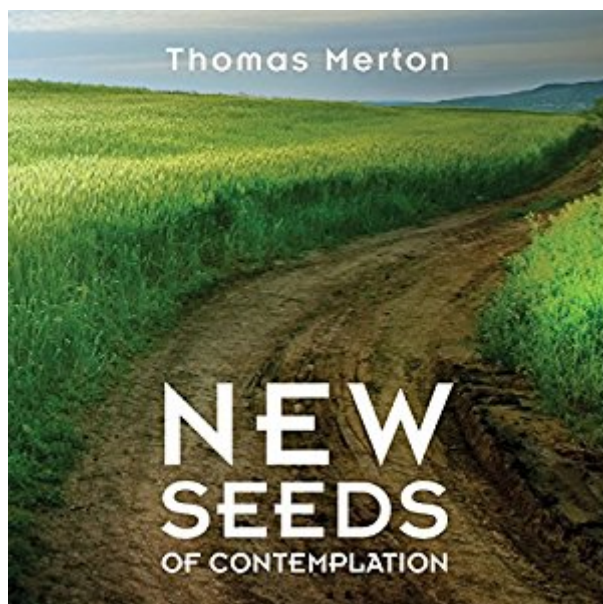


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# New Seeds Of Contemplation



## Synopsis

New Seeds of Contemplation is one of Thomas Merton's most widely read and best loved books. Christians and non-Christians alike have joined in praising it as a notable successor in the meditative tradition of St. John of the Cross, the Cloud of Unknowing, and the medieval mystics, while others have compared Merton's reflections to those of Thoreau. New Seeds of Contemplation seeks to awaken the dormant inner depths of the spirit so long neglected by Western culture, to nurture a deeply contemplative and mystical dimension in our lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Thomas Merton wrote "Seeds of Contemplation" when he was a young, relatively inexperienced contemplative. "New Seeds" is his reworking of that text, written after twelve years of intense spiritual effort. Among other things, "New Seeds" is a great companion piece to St. John's "Dark Night of the Soul." I struggled mightily with that book, due to the complexity of thought and of the writing itself. Merton goes through these same stages of spiritual awareness and development in language I found far easier to understand. But "New Seeds" is not merely a reworking of "Dark Night". I can't judge the value of his insights as they would apply to a true contemplative, but I suspect he offers much. For a worldly person who seeks spiritual growth, there is no question of this book's value. Merton's major theme is humility. Only through humility can we discover faith. Only through humility can we rid ourselves of the distractions that separate us from God. Materialism, pride, sensuality, and the like are so well accepted in our society that we seldom see or how deeply

they disrupt our souls. Merton's uncompromising reflections are a cold slap in the face."New Seeds" is also a moving defense of mysticism. God cannot be found through reason alone. He cannot be understood by reading or thinking. In fact, He cannot be understood at all. The emptying that we must do, the shedding of our selfish skins, can only begin when we decide to relinquish our selves to His will. Again, in a materialistic society, such ideas seem absurd; Merton conveys them with a power that makes any other idea seem absurd, even to the most rational reader.Finally...

I have a weakness for books pertaining to monastic life, regardless of whether or not that's a Christian or Buddhist source. I have always been drawn to this lifestyle. This book is a revised version of his initial text titled, "Seeds of Contemplation," which might be one of his most read out of everything he has written. Some of the best literature on the nature of self is to be found in the opening chapters of this work. In here we find stunning passages on contemplative spirituality unlike any we have ever seen in the wide variety of Christian bodies of work. There are actually 5 versions of "Seeds", but "New Seeds of Contemplation" is the only one I have read.I am not Catholic, and I don't claim to understand everything Fr. Merton writes about in these texts. But there is certainly a common denominator here in connection to the contemplative practices of us Zen practitioners and Christian contemplatives like Merton. What I do know of this book is that it attempts to release the sleeping being within us all while waking us up from our spiritually inactive state, fostering an innate and almost numinous experience in all of our spiritual lives. In this work Merton expresses, "Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men. Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, because men are not prepared to receive them: for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity and love."Wasn't that a wonderful passage? Come take a journey with Father Merton.

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