



Contemplative
Prayer Retreat

Seattle September 11-18, 1987

Fr. Thomas Keating

In this world there is nothing
softer or thinner than water.
But to compel the hard and un-
yielding, It has no equal.

That the weak overcomes the
strong, that the hard gives
way to the gentle -- This
everyone knows, Yet no one
acts accordingly.

Lao Tzu



The readings and chants in this booklet represent an attempt to create an environment that is inclusive and ecumenical in the deepest and broadest senses of these terms. There was a conscious attempt to provide translations that were inclusive not only of the 52% of the world's population most often left out of civic and religious matters, but also of the rest of creation -- as well as the different Religious Traditions, social and physical sciences, poetry, literature and so on. Therefore, you will not only see familiar Scripture passages without the male-dominated references to God and humanity, but you will also find passages from physicists, psychologists, Taoist poets and mystics, Native Americans, Jewish and Christian mystics, and the like. We know that while God is surely experienced as a loving Father (and a nurturing Mother as well), our experience tells us that God is more than (or beyond) this experience and image of Father (or Mother, for that matter), and that humanity is more than man, and that the Ultimate Mystery can reveal ItSelf in a myriad of forms, facets and dimensions. Indeed It does.

What we are trying to do is, by listening to different voices, and learning new languages of the same Sacred Reality, and seeing through other lenses, come to a newer, deeper, and more profound appreciation and experience of the beauty, majesty, and mystery of our own Sacred Christian Tradition. By inter-relating and inter-penetrating with other Sacred Traditions and sciences, we hope to come to a better understanding and sense of the essence of the Christian Contemplative Path, and thus, to embody it in wholly new and creative ways, resonant with and responsive to our unique and emerging times.

Not all of these readings will appeal to everyone. Just let go of the ones that don't. But for some of you, a few of these readings may be like seeing something familiar for the first time. A light or two may turn on, and thus provide greater clarity for the journey ahead.

We are in an experimental time of rapid growth and change -- interior and exterior. And this booklet, along with the week ahead of us, is one way of responding to the need for personal, social and religious transformation(s).

While on retreat, let the readings that we use be like rain falling on thirsty soil, softening us up to be more receptive and open to God Who Is always already Present, and to God's activity within and around us in the very events and experiences of our day(s). Let these readings be occasions for reflections outside the time of contemplative prayer and/or outside this retreat altogether. Notice the similarities between the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and the voices of other Spiritual Traditions, other disciplines. They act like seeds where, in time, they can give birth to new insights, reflexive thought, worldviews, and hopefully, to new action on behalf of the whole planet and one another.

Our sincere desire is that these words be a comfort, an encouragement, and a challenge.... Comfort, in that some of them may affirm insights and experiences you may already have. Encouragement, in that you might find renewed hope and strength to carry on in the journey. And, challenge, in that some of the old patterns of thinking may have to drop away in order to make room for a whole new way of being, thinking, and doing in the 21st century.

Thank you for joining in this sacred experience and for entering into it with such open minds and hearts. May we support and love one another in our liturgy of silence, and continue to be open to the same support and love from all the saints and sages throughout the ages. And may Christ, Who dwells in our inmost being and Whose same Spirit reverberates in every aspect of creation, shine forth in each one of us now and in the days ahead -- healing, binding up, and making whole every dimension of our being.

Have a good retreat.

Peace --
Paul Peterhans, for the staff



P.S. In most cases, sexist language has been changed. Where it was impossible to do so, or where a particular meaning would have been changed drastically, I simply let the words stand on their own....



Psalms - Old Testament

Jeremiah's Interior Crisis: You duped me, O Lord, and I let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed. All the day I am an object of laughter: everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence and outrage is my message; The Word of the Lord has brought me derision and reproach all the day. I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it. Yes, I hear the whisperings of many: "Terror on every side! Denounce! let us denounce him!" All those who were my friends are on the watch for any misstep of mine. "Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail, and take our vengeance on him." But the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion; my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.... O Lord of hosts, you who test the just, who probe mind and heart, let me... sing to You, praise your Name. For You have rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked!

Jeremiah 20/7-13

Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help and God will say: Here I AM!

Isaiah 58/5-9

Hearken to my words, O God,
 attend to my sighing.
 Heed my call for help,
 my beloved and my God!
 To You I pray, O Lord;
 at dawn You hear my voice;
 at dawn I bring my plea expectantly
 before you.
 For You, O God, delight not in wickedness;
 no evil person remains with You;
 the arrogant may not stand in Your sight.
 But I, because of Your abundant kindness,
 will enter Your house;
 I will worship at Your holy temple
 in awe of You, O God.
 Because of my enemies, guide me in
 Your justice;
 Make straight Your Way before me.
 Let all who take refuge in You
 be glad and exult forever.
 Protect them, that You may be the joy
 of those who love Your Name.
 For You, O God, bless those who are just;
 You surround them with the shield of
 Your good will.

Psalm 5/ 2-6,8-9,12-13

O Lord, our God,
 How glorious is Your Name throughout all
 the Earth!
 You have exalted Your majesty throughout
 the Universe.
 Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings
 You have fashioned praise...
 to silence the hostile and the vengeful.

When I behold Your heavens, the work
of Your fingers,
the moon and the stars which You set in place --
Who are we that You should be mindful of us,
children of the Earth that You should care for us.
Yet, You have made us little less than the angels,
and given us glory and honor.
You have given us stewardship over the works
of Your hands,
putting all things in our care.
All sheep and oxen,
yes, and even those that run wild,
The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea,
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our God,
How glorious is Your Name throughout
all the Earth!

Psalm 8

O God, who shall sojourn in Your tent?
Who shall dwell on Your holy mountain?
Those who walk blamelessly and who do justice;
who think the truth in their hearts
and slander not with their tongues;
Who harm not their fellow men and women,
nor take up a reproach against a neighbor;
By whom the reprobate is despised,
while they honor those who love God;
Who, though it be to their loss, change
not their pledged word;
who lend not their money at usury
and accept no bribe against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be disturbed.

Psalm 15

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.
Day pours out the word to day,
and night to night makes known the message.
Not a word nor discourse
whose voice is not heard;
Through all the Earth their voice resounds,
and to the ends of the world, their knowledge.
God has pitched a tent there for the sun,
which comes forth like the groom from
his bridal chamber
and like a giant, joyfully runs its
course.
At one end of the heavens it comes forth,
and its course is to the other end;
nothing escapes its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul;
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy,
giving wisdom to the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
The command of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eye;
The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever;
The ordinances of the Lord are true,
all of them just;
They are more precious than gold,
than a heap of purest gold;
Sweeter also than syrup
or honey from the comb.
Though Your servant is careful of them,
very diligent in keeping them,

Yet who can detect failings?
Cleanse me from my unknown faults!
From unconscious sin especially, restrain
Your servant;
let it not rule over me.
Then shall I be blameless and innocent
of serious sin.
Let the words of my mouth and the
thought of my heart
find favor with You,
O God, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 19

As the hind longs for the running waters,
so my soul longs for You, O God.
Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.
When shall I go and behold the face of God?
My tears are my food day and night,
as they say to me day after day,
"Where is Your God?"
Those times I recall,
now that I pour out my soul within me,
When I went with the throng
and led them in procession to the
House of God,
Amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving,
with the multitude keeping festival.
Why are you so downcast, O my soul?
Why do you sigh within me?
Hope in God! For I shall again
be grateful
in the presence of my beloved and my God.

Psalm 42/1-6

Have mercy on me, O God, in Your goodness;
in the greatness of Your compassion,
wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.
For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:
"Against You only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in Your sight" --
That You may be justified in Your sentence
vindicated when You correct me.
Indeed, in guilt was I born
and in alienation did my father
and mother conceive me;
Behold, You are pleased with sincerity of heart,
and in my inmost being You teach
me wisdom.
Cleanse me of sin with hyssop, that
I may be purified;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness;
the bones You have crushed shall rejoice.
Turn away Your face from my sins,
and blot out all my guilt.
A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from Your presence,
and Your Holy Spirit take not from me.
Give me back the joy of Your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.
I will teach transgressors Your Ways,
and sinners shall return to You.
Free me from blood guilt, O God, my
saving God;
then my tongue shall revel in Your justice.

O Lord, open my lips,
 and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise.
 For You are not pleased with sacrifices
 should I offer a holocaust, You would
 not accept it.
 My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
 a heart contrite and humbled, O God,
 You will not spurn.
 Be bountiful, O Lord, to Zion in Your kindness
 by rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem;
 Then shall You be pleased with due sacrifices,
 burnt offerings and holocausts;
 then shall they offer up bullocks on Your altar.

Psalm 51

O Lord, You have probed me and You know me;
 You know when I sit and when I stand;
 You understand my thoughts from afar.
 My journeys and my rest You scrutinize,
 with all my ways You are familiar.
 Even before a word is on my tongue,
 behold, O Lord, You know the whole of it.
 Behind me and before, You hem me in
 and rest Your hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 too lofty for me to attain.
 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
 from Your presence where can I flee?
 If I go up to the heavens, You are there;
 if I sink to the nether world, You are present there.
 If I take the wings of the dawn,
 if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
 Even there Your hand shall guide me,
 and Your right hand hold me fast.
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall hide me,
 and night shall be my light" --
 For You darkness itself is not dark,
 and night shines as the day.
 (Darkness and light are the same.)
 Truly you have formed my inmost being;
 You knit me in my mother's womb.
 I give You thanks that I am fearfully,
 wonderfully made;
 wonderful are Your works.
 My soul also You knew full well;
 nor was my frame unknown to You
 When I was made in secret,
 when I was fashioned in the depths
 of the Earth.
 Your eyes have seen my actions;
 in Your book they are all written;
 my days were limited before one of them existed.
 How weighty are Your designs, O God;
 how vast the sum of them!
 Were I to recount them, they would
 outnumber the sands;
 did I reach the end of them, I should
 still be with You.
 Probe me, O God, and know my heart;
 try me, and know my thoughts;
 See if my way is crooked,
 and lead me in the way of old.

Psalm 139



Gospels - New Testament

When he saw the crowds he went up on the mountainside. After he had sat down his disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them:

How blest are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs.

Blest too are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled.

Blest are the lowly; they shall inherit the land.

Blest are they who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill.

Blest are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs.

Blest are the single-hearted; for they shall see God.

Blest too the peacemakers; they shall be called children of God.

Blest are those persecuted for holiness' sake; the reign of God is theirs.

Blest are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me.

Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven; they persecuted the prophets before you in the very same way.

Matthew 5/1-12

No one can lay a foundation other than the one who is the foundation, namely Jesus the Christ. If different ones build on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, the work of each will be made clear. The Day will disclose it. That day will make its appearance with fire, and fire will test each ones work. If the building you have raised on this foundation still stands, you will receive your recompense; if your building burns, then you will suffer loss. You yourself will be saved, but only as one fleeing through fire. Are you not aware that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, they will be destroyed. For the temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 3/ 11-17

He came to Nazareth where he had been reared, and entering the synagogue on the sabbath as he was in the habit of doing, he stood up to do the reading. When the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, he unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. God has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, Recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, To announce a year of favor from the Lord." Rolling up the scroll he gave it back to the assistant and sat down. All in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. Then he began by saying to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4/14-21

A certain Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, came to Jesus at night. "Rabbi," he said, "we know you are a teacher come from God, for no one can perform signs and wonders such as you perform unless God is with them." Jesus gave him this answer: "I solemnly assure you, no one can see the reign of God unless they are begotten from above." "How can someone be born again once they are old?" retorted Nicodemus. "Can they return to their mother's womb and be born over again?" Jesus replied: "I solemnly assure you no one can enter into God's kingdom without being begotten of water and Spirit. Flesh begets flesh. Spirit begets spirit. Do not be surprised that I tell you you must all be begotten from above. The wind blows where it will. You hear the sound it makes but you do not now where it comes from, or where it goes. So it is with everyone begotten of the Spirit."

John 3/1-8

Jesus proposed still another parable to them: "The reign of God is like a mustard seed which someone took and sowed in her field. It is the smallest seed of all, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes so big a shrub that the birds of the sky come and build their nests in its branches." He offered yet

another image: "The reign of God is like yeast which someone took and kneaded into three measures of flour. Eventually the whole mass of dough began to rise." "The reign of God is also like a buried treasure which someone found in a field. He hid it again, and rejoicing at his find went and sold all he had and bought that field. Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant's search for fine pearls. When she found one really valuable pearl, she went back and put up for sale all that she had and bought it.... The person learned in the reign of God is like the head of a household who can bring from the storeroom both the new and the old."

Matthew 13/ 31-33, 44-46,52

Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns; yet your heavenly Creator feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Which of you by worrying can add a moment to your life-span? As for clothes, why be concerned? Learn a lesson from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work; they do not spin. Yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed like one of these. If God can clothe in such splendor the grass of the field, which blooms today and is thrown on the fire tomorrow, will not God provide much more for you, O weak in faith! Stop worrying then over questions like, "What are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear?" The unbelievers are always running after these things. Your heavenly Creator knows all that you need. Seek first God's reign within you, God's way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides. Enough, then, of worrying about tomorrow. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Today has troubles enough of its own.

Matthew 6/ 26-34

Do not live in fear, my friends. It has pleased God to give you the kingdom,(an intimate, personal relationship). Sell what you have and give alms. Get purses for yourselves that do not wear out, a never-failing treasure with God which no thief comes near nor any moth destroys. Wherever your treasure lies, there your heart will be.

Luke 12/32-34

Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into bread." Jesus replied, "Scripture has it: 'Not on bread alone is man and woman to live, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'." Next the devil took him to the holy city, set him on the parapet of the temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. Scripture has it: 'God will bid angels take care of you; with their hands they will support you that you may never stumble on a stone'." Jesus answered him, "Scripture also has it: 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'." The devil then took him up a very high mountain and displayed before him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, promising, "All these will I bestow on you if you prostrate yourself in homage before me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! Scripture has it: 'You shall do homage to the Lord your God; God alone shall you adore'." At that the devil left him, and angels came and waited on him.

Matthew 4/1-11

Anyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like the wise person who built a house on rock. When the rainy season set in, the torrents came and the winds blew and buffeted the house. It did not collapse; it had been solidly set on rock. Anyone who hears my words but does not put them into practice is like the foolish person who built a house on sandy soil. The rains fell, the torrents came, the winds blew and lashed against the house. It collapsed under all this and was completely ruined.

Matthew 7/24-27

"Sir," said the woman, "I can see you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you people claim that Jerusalem is the place where men and women ought to worship God." Jesus told her: "Believe me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.... An hour is coming, and is already here, when authentic worshipers will worship God in Spirit and in truth. Indeed, it is just such worshipers that God seeks. God is Spirit, and those who worship God must worship in Spirit and truth."

John 4/19-24

Be compassionate as your God is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it shall be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will they pour into the fold of your garment. For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you.... Why look at the speck in your brother's and sister's eye when you miss the plank in your own? How can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend, let me remove the speck from your eye,' yet fail yourself to see the plank lodged in your own? Hypocrite, remove the plank from your own eye first; then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your neighbor's eye.

Luke 6/36-38,41-42

About eight days after Peter's confession of faith, Jesus took Peter, John, and James, and went up onto a mountain to pray. While he was praying, his face changed in appearance and his clothes became dazzlingly white. Suddenly two men were talking with him -- Moses and Elijah. They appeared in glory and spoke of his passage, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. Peter and those with him had fallen into a deep sleep; but awakening, they saw his glory and likewise saw the two men who were standing with him. When these were leaving, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, how good it is for us to be here. Let us set up three booths, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah." (He did not really know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and the disciples grew fearful as the others entered it. Then from the cloud came a voice which said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." When the voice fell silent, Jesus was there alone. The disciples kept quiet, telling nothing of what they had seen at that time to anyone.

Luke 9/28-36

In the beginning was the Word;
the Word was in God's presence,
and the Word was God.
He was present to God in the beginning.
Through him all things came into being,
and apart from him nothing came to be.
Whatever came to be in him found life,
life for the light of men and women.
The light shines on in darkness,
a darkness that did not overcome it.
The Word was in the world,
and through the Word the world was made,
yet the world did not know who he was.
To his own he came,
yet his own did not accept him.
Anyone who did accept him
he empowered to become children of God.
The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we have seen his glory:
The glory of the Holy One coming from God,
filled with enduring love.
Of his fullness
we have all had a share --
love following upon love.

Prologue to John's Gospel

Zebedee's sons, James and John, approached Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to grant our request." "What is it?" he asked. They replied, "See to it that we sit, one at your right and the other at your left, when you come into your glory." Jesus told them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I shall drink or be baptized in the same bath of pain as I?" "We can," they told him. Jesus said in response, "From the cup I drink of you shall drink; the bath I am immersed in you shall share. But as for sitting at my right or my left, that is not mine to give; it is for those to whom it has been reserved." The other ten, on hearing this, became indignant at James and John. Jesus called them together and said to them: "You know how among the Gentiles those who seem to exercise authority lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve -- to give his life in ransom for the many.

Mark 10/35-45

Your attitude must be that of Christ:

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not deem equality with God
something to be grasped at.
Rather, he emptied himself
and took the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of all men and women
He was known to be of human estate,
and it was thus that he humbled himself,
obediently accepting even death,
death on a cross!
Because of this,
God highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
above every other name,
So that at the name of Jesus
every knee must bend
in the heavens, on the earth
and under the earth,
and every tongue proclaim
to the glory of God
Jesus Christ is Lord!

Philippians 2/5-11



Literature - Poetry

Deprived and driven to dependency we learn to listen to the singular voice urging us to involuntarily, irrationally and aggressively gratify our contingent needs.

Bombarded by the slogans of producers and promoters familiar with our self-indulgent tendencies, we respond to the message: buy, spend, feel good, move up, stay in style. Seduced by clever manipulation our narcissism deepens and we flee to the sound-proof castle of the "good life", and become progressively deaf to the plight, pain, and pathos of brothers and sisters. Driven to aggressive deepening depression and despair, we hide in the dark shadows that screen out the voice of forgiveness, hope, and resurrection. Tricked into accepting simple answers to today's complex conditions, we are lured to false sanctuaries that offer only dated rejoinders or platitudes to pressing concerns.

In stark contrast to this kind of "listening", are the listening persons. Listening persons who hear and enter into communion with others; listening persons who hear and correspond with voice of their own interior; listening persons who hear and relate to the creative but often still small voice of God; listening persons who hear and converse with the witness of creation.

To listen to and to commune with others is not a passive act or a technique. To listen and commune with another is to actively sense the other's uniqueness, strength, struggle, limits, power, faith, condition, need. It is to discern and affirm, not to categorize, isolate, pigeonhole....

When I can listen to myself, I can be myself. When I can hear myself as I am, then I can change. We cannot intentionally change until we hear and accept who we are. To begin to hear our inner story is to begin to be listening persons.

Rev. J.L. Cedarleaf, "Listening Revisted"

And God had a vision,
a vision of surpassing beauty.

And so, God created... God created
and created and created and then
created more and more until a universe,
and more, was filled with the signs
of God's activity.

And God gave a special gift to this
creation... a gift so precious, so
unexpected, that creation rippled and
shook in surprise.

Freedom

And God was excited by the risk of
the gift. The beautiful vision
trembled now with uncertainty. God
reached out to all of creation as
suppliant, and begged its cooperation
for the vision. The beautiful vision.

And God has a vision,
a vision of surpassing beauty...

Kedda Keough, M. Div. Student @ S.U.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs --
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and ah! bright wings.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, God's Grandeur

Wind is far from hollow. It is the most vital of metaphors. Part of this vigor is revealed in language. In Arabic, the wind is ruh, but the same word also means "breath" and "spirit". While in Hebrew, ruach enlarges the sphere of influence to include concepts of creation and divinity. And the Greek pneuma, or the Latin animus are redolent, not just of air, but of the very stuff of the soul.

Without wind, most of Earth would be uninhabitable. The tropics would grow so unbearably hot that nothing could live there, and the rest of the planet would freeze. Moisture, if any existed, would be confined to the oceans, and all but the fringe of the great continents along a narrow temperate belt, would be desert. There would be no erosion, no soil, and for any community that managed to evolve despite these rigours, no relief from suffocation by their own waste products.

But with the wind, Earth comes truly alive. Winds provide the circulatory and nervous systems of the planet, sharing out energy and information, distributing both warmth and awareness, making something out of nothing. The combination of a force that cannot be apprehended, but nevertheless has an undeniable existence, was our first experience of the spiritual. A crack in the cosmos that widened to let the tide of consciousness flow through. We are the fruits of the wind -- and have been seeded, irrigated and cultivated by its craft. (May we celebrate and acknowledge our awesome debt to it.)

Lyall Watson from Heaven's Breath

"Tell me the weight of a snowflake," a coal-mouse asked a wild dove. "Nothing more than nothing," was the answer. "In that case, I must tell you a marvelous story," the coal-mouse said. "I sat on a branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow, not heavily, not in a giant blizzard, no, just like in a dream, without any violence. Since I didn't have anything better to do, I counted the snowflakes settling on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952. When the next snowflake dropped onto the branch -- nothing more than nothing, as you say -- the branch broke off."

Having said that, the coal-mouse scurried away. The dove, since Noah's time, an authority on the matter, thought about the story for awhile and finally said to herself: "Perhaps there is only one person's voice lacking for peace to come about in the world."

from New Fables Thus Spoke, "The Carabou", Kurt Kauter

Standing quite alone, far in the forest, while the wind is shaking down snow from the trees, and leaving the only human tracks behind us, we find our reflections of a richer variety than the life of cities. The chickadee and nuthatch are more inspiring society than statesmen and philosophers, and we shall return to these last as to more vulgar companions. In this lonely glen, with its brook draining the slopes, its creased ice and crystals of all hues, where the spruces and hemlocks stand up on either side, and the rush and sere oats in the rivulet itself, our lives are more serene and worthy to contemplate.

Henry David Thoreau, "A Winter Walk"

There is only one thing you should do. Go into yourself. Find out the reason that commands you to write; see whether it has spread its roots into the very depths of your heart; confess to yourself whether you would have to die if you were forbidden to write. This most of all: ask yourself in the most silent hour of your night: must I write? Dig into yourself for a deep answer. And if this answer rings out in assent,... then build your life in accordance with this necessity; your whole life, even into its humblest and most indifferent hour, must become a sign and witness to this impulse. Then come close to Nature.... (Again) go into yourself and see how deep the place is from which your life flows; at its source you will find the answer to the question of whether you must create. Accept that answer just as it is given to you, without trying to interpret it. Perhaps you will discover that you are called to be an artist. Then take that destiny upon yourself, and bear it, its burden and its greatness, without ever asking what reward might come from outside....

Rainer Maria Rilke from Letters to a Young Poet.



Physics - Psychology

Above all else, each person wants true transcendence, Atman consciousness, and the ultimate Whole; but above all else, each person fears the loss of the separate self, the "death" of the isolated ego. All a person wants is Wholeness, but all one does is fear and resist it (since that would entail the "death" of one's separate self). And there is the dilemma, the double bind in the face of eternity.

Because we want real transcendence above all else, but because we will not accept the necessary death of our separate-self sense, we go about seeking transcendence in ways that actually prevent it and force symbolic substitutes. And these substitutes come in all varieties: sex, food, money, fame, knowledge, power -- all are ultimately substitute gratifications, simple substitutes for true release in Wholeness. This is why human desire is insatiable, why all joys yearn for infinity -- all a person wants is Spirit; all one finds are symbolic substitutes for it.

Even an individual's feeling of being a separate, isolated, and individual self is a mere substitute for one's true Nature, a substitute for the transcendent Self of the ultimate Whole. Every individual correctly intuits that he or she is of one nature with Spirit, but distorts that intuition by applying it to the separate self. One feels the separate self is immortal, central to the cosmos, all-significant. That is, one substitutes one's ego for Spirit. Then, instead of finding timeless wholeness, one merely substitutes the wish to live forever; instead of being one with the cosmos, one substitutes the desire to possess the cosmos; instead of being one with God, one tries himself or herself to play God.

Ken Wilber, Up From Eden

The world contains all types of features and surfaces and lines, but they are all interwoven into a seamless field. Look at it this way: your hand is surely different from your head, and your head is different from your feet, and your feet are different from your ears. But we have no difficulty at all recognizing that they are all members of one body, and likewise, your one body expresses itself in all its various parts. All-in-one and one-in-all. Similarly, in the territory of no-boundary, all things and events are equally members of one body, the Dharmakaya, the mystical body of Christ, the universal field of Brahman, the organic pattern of the Tao. Any physicist will tell you that all objects in the cosmos are simply various forms of a single Energy -- and whether we call that Energy "Brahman," "Tao," "God," or just plain "Energy" seems to me quite beside the point.

Reality is no-boundary. Any conceivable sort of boundary is a mere abstraction from the seamless coat of the universe, and hence all boundaries are pure illusions in the sense that they create separation (and ultimately conflict) where there is none. The boundaries between opposites, as well as the boundaries between things and events, remain at last deceptions in depth....

To disclose reality as no-boundary is thus to disclose all conflicts as illusory. And this final understanding is called nirvana, moksha, release, liberation, enlightenment, satori -- freed from the pairs, freed from the enchanting vision of separateness, freed from the chains of one's illusory boundaries. This no-boundary awareness is commonly called "unity consciousness".

Ken Wilber, No Boundary

The beginning of the solution to the problem of the enemy is to recognize him within ourselves. We carry the enemy in our own hearts. We hate him because he contradicts us. We fear that if we acknowledge the enemy as our own he will take us over completely. The precise opposite is true. Not to acknowledge him is to fall into the power of the inner enemy who mocks our futile efforts to get rid of him by getting rid of those who carry the projected burden of our own darkness. To acknowledge him as our own is to begin to be released from his power and to find his constructive side.

For the recognition of the inner enemy has a transforming effect upon us. It necessarily causes us to relinquish an identification with our mask and to accept our reality as a person.... The inner enemy includes essential parts of ourselves which have been excluded from our conscious personality development. Now they can be included in the conscious personality instead of being relegated to the hell of being split off in the unconscious.... The inner enemy is transformed into a useful part of the personality once it has been consciously recognized and accepted as a legitimate and inevitable part of ourselves.

It takes real spiritual courage to recognize our inner division and see the enemy. But there can be no entrance into the kingdom of God without this act of "metanoia".

John Sanford, The Kingdom Within

The road to the kingdom will be an inner road, a way of the soul, in which a person becomes increasingly connected to his or her inner world. Nothing can be excluded which belongs to a person's wholeness. In the kingdom, body, soul, and spirit, sexuality, eros, and meaning -- all are part of totality. The final entrance into the kingdom subordinates consciousness to a great reality within. Creativity enters into the personality, shaking the old personality structure with apocalyptic power, and establishing a new personality not dominated by a narrow ego-consciousness but by God, for this new personality is creative and God is a Creator.

Since creativity comes from unity, and unity comes from a drawing together of opposites, the well-spring of the kingdom is love, for love alone can unite disparate things into one....

John Sanford, The Kingdom Within

The kingdom of God is a personal, psychologically real experience, but it is not a purely personal experience. It always has a transcendental character as well as an immediate character. The kingdom does not belong to us; we belong to the kingdom. In seeking for the establishment of the kingdom within our personalities, we do not reduce the kingdom to a narrow, personal dimension. Rather, we come to belong to a broad, transcendental dimension. What the kingdom is in itself can never be contained by rational consciousness but can only be expressed in symbols. It cannot be thought, but can only be embraced, perhaps for a moment, in mystical experience, for it transcends personal consciousness and the limitations of the ego's thinking.

In its transcendence the kingdom is a call into the future. In grounding our lives upon the kingdom within, we become a part of the evolving consciousness of humanity, which means being part of God's intention for humanity. Here, in the evolution of consciousness, taking place through individuals but always transcending the individual in its significance, is the Christianity of the future.

John Sanford, The Kingdom Within

True freedom makes tremendous demands upon us. Most of us, like Moses, resist the call to the free life. He was a reluctant hero who became free only when he feared God more than he feared Pharaoh. For most of us this is also the way it will be. We will not give up our comfort, security, and the pleasures of an ego-centric life until we are forced by God to do so. Then, unwillingly, we may set out on our journey to liberate ourselves from our personal Pharaoh's Egypt. But in the end we are glad that we did. We look back on our old life in the pleasant suburbia of Midian and rejoice that we left it for the hardships of the journey. For a journey with God is the only real source of satisfaction there is, and a life of freedom, no matter how demanding, the only life worth living.

John Sanford, The Man Who Wrestled with God

To be forced to undergo a journey through the wilderness is an archetypal experience. Perhaps everyone who is called upon to a higher psychological development must undergo such a wilderness experience. There are many ways we are forced to undertake such a journey. People can be plunged into a psychological wilderness, a dreadful time of doubt, anxiety, or depression, and never leave their doorstep. Looked at purely clinically, the journey through the wilderness appears to be a sickness or breakdown; looked at spiritually, it may be an initiation or rite-of-passage we must undergo in order that a change in consciousness may be brought about. Egocentricity dies hard in most of us. Often only the pain of a wilderness journey can bring about the desired new attitude.

John Sanford, The Man Who Wrestled with God

Rather than hiding from your death, or repressing your fear about death, embrace your death. It will serve you. How? By enabling you to show yourself. Precisely because you are aware of the limits of life, you are compelled to bring forth what is within you; this is the only time you have to show yourself.... The supreme insistence of life is that you enter the adventure of creating yourself. Each instant of your life has folded into it unnameable significance; all rests on your self-creativity, for out of you comes forth ultimate reality. The dynamics that fashioned the stars are now brought into your self-reflexive awareness, and what they create is your free adventure, your surprise for the universe.

Yes: death is terrifying. Do not belittle it. Do not try to reduce this. Do not project your puny ideas upon it. But use death's awareness as you would a fuel or lamp; as a secret guide who will lead you into the unknown and mysterious caverns of your self so that you can bring forth what you truly are. Your creativity needs your awareness of death, just as your muscles need long and painful workouts. Cherish your awareness of death as a gift to you from the universe.... What is especially exciting about our own time is the vision of the death of the species, and of the planet as a whole. Frightening, terrible, horrible -- yes, certainly. But this is exactly what has the power to ignite the deepest riches within us. We can no longer live within the previous world-picture.... The terrifying vision of an Earth gone black is psychic food for the human species. It brings us the energy that we need to re-invent ourselves as the mind and heart of the planet.

Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon

Everything comes from the same place out of which the primeval fireball comes: an empty realm, a mysterious order of reality, a no-thing-ness that is simultaneously the ultimate source of all things. In the language of physics we call it quantum fluctuation. Elementary particles fluctuate in and out of existence. They leap into existence, then disappear. A proton emerges suddenly -- where did it come from? Who made it? How did it sneak into reality all of a sudden?

What I am saying is that particles boil into existence out of sheer emptiness. That is simply the way the universe works. We have to get used to it. We didn't construct it; we just find ourselves here. If elementary particles are going to come leaping out of mysterious realms, then that's the way it is....

What I would like you to understand is that this plenary emptiness permeates you. You are more fecund emptiness than you are created particles. We can see this by examining one of your atoms. If you take a single atom and make it as large as Yankee stadium, it would consist almost entirely of empty space. The center of the atom, the nucleus, would be smaller than a baseball sitting out in center field. The outer parts of the atom would be tiny gnats buzzing about at an altitude higher than any pop fly Babe Ruth ever hit. And between the baseball and the gnats? Nothingness. All empty. You are more emptiness than anything else. Indeed, if all the space were taken out of you, you would be a million times smaller than the smallest grain of sand.

But it's nice knowing we are this emptiness, for this emptiness is simultaneously the source of all being.

Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon.

The creation story unfurling within the scientific enterprise provides the fundamental context, the fundamental arena of meaning, for all the peoples of the Earth. For the first time in human history, we can agree on the basic story of the galaxies, the stars, the planets, minerals, life forms, and human cultures. This story does not diminish the spiritual traditions of the classical or tribal periods of human history. Rather, the story provides the proper setting for the teachings of all traditions, showing the true magnitude of their central truths.

We are forging a cosmology that embraces humanity as a species, one that does not ignore the special cultural contributions of each continent, but that enhances these differences. Each tradition is irreplaceable. Not one can be reduced to any other. Each is vital to the work of the future. Each will flower beyond telling in fruitful interaction with the rest in the overall embracing story of the cosmos.

During the first centuries of the modern period, such a situation was impossible.... The scientific enterprise needed austere isolation... The great wonder is that this empirical, rational journey of science should have any contact at all with spiritual traditions. But in our century, the mechanistic period of science opened out to include a science of mystery: the encounter with the ultimacy of no-thing-ness that is simultaneously a realm of generative potentiality; the dawning recognition that the universe and Earth can be considered as living entities; the awareness that the human person, rather than a separate unit within the world, is the culminating presence of a billion-year process; and the realization that, rather than having a universe filled with things, we are enveloped by a universe that is a single energetic event, a whole, a unified, multifarious, and glorious outpouring of being.

Within this emerging story we can continue our journey to our fullest destiny... which is to become love in human form. Yes, the journey out of emptiness is the creation of love.

Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon

The star's own adventure captures the whole story. It is created out of the creations of the fireball, enters into its own intense creativity, and sends forth its work throughout the galaxy, enabling new orders of existence to emerge. It gives utterly everything to its task -- after its stupendous creativity, its life as a star is over in one vast explosion. But -- through the bestowal of its gifts -- elephants, rivers, eagles, ice jams, root beer floats, zebras, Elizabethan dramas, and the whole living Earth, become possible. Love's dynamism is carved into the principal being of the night sky.

We are the self-reflexion of the universe. We allow the universe to know and feel itself. So the universe is aware of itself through self-reflexive mind, which unfurls in the human. We were brought forth so that these experiences of beauty could enter awareness. The primeval fireball existed for twenty billion years without self-awareness. (The same with the stars)... But the star can, through us, reflect back on itself. In a sense, you are the star. Look at your hand -- do you claim it as your own? Every element was forged in temperatures a million times hotter than molten rock, each atom fashioned in the blazing heat of the star. Your eyes, your brain, your bones, all of you is composed of the star's creations. You are the star, brought into a form of life that enables life to reflect on itself.....

The universe is a single multiform event. There is no such thing as a disconnected thing. Each thing emerged from the primeval fireball, and nothing can remove the primordial link this establishes with every other thing in the universe, no matter how distant....

Our reverence for the holy must expand to include the whole numinous universe. What are the relics of today? We are the relics, the Earth and all beings of the Earth were there in the core of that exploding supernova. We were there in the distant, terrifying furnace of the primeval fireball. Not as mere witnesses, either, but as central to the event. Our bodies remember that event, exulting in the majesty of the night sky precisely because all suffered it together. The planet is a rare and holy relic of every event of twenty billion years of cosmic development.

When we deepen our awareness of the simple truth that we are here through the creativity of the stars, we begin to feel fresh gratitude. When we reflect on the labor required for our life, reverence naturally wells up within us. Then, in the deepest regions of our hearts, we begin to embrace our own creativity. What we bestow on the world allows others to live in joy....

Think of it! The Ultimate Mystery from which all beings emerge prefers Ultimate Extravagance, each being glistening with freshness, ontologically unique, never to be repeated. Each being is required. None can be eliminated or ignored, for not one is redundant.

Are you aware of the ways in which you have the power to evoke being? This question probes your destiny as a creative source, your ultimate value. To answer requires that you move more deeply into the primordial dynamism of the universe, for as you ripen into love's activity you simultaneously enhance the around you.

Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon

Humans are easily addicted to Beauty, even a clouded vision of it, and we can not break the addiction. Our agricultural processes poison our water and destroy four billion tons of topsoil on the American continent each year, and still we keep at it. We are captivated by our consumer lives, addicted, and apparently nothing can break through. Unable to see the simple sadness of our way of life, sunk into our addictions, we overstuff our homes and garages, carrying on, unmoved by the smoke rising over the burnt-out lives of fifty other nations and a million other species. The American mind resembles a glove compartment, jammed tight with useless junk that no one pays any attention to until we consider cleaning it out; and even then, even as we wonder why we so needlessly clog up our lives, unable to part with it all, we just jam it back in its place.

The way to break an addiction is to break out of a limited world view. Break out of egocentricity. Break out of ethnocentricity. Break out of anthropocentricity. Take the viewpoint of the Earth as a whole. In every fascination, in every allurements, include the vitality of the Earth. You are the Earth, too. The Earth is not

different from you. This planet bloomed through millions of years and arrived at the stupendous achievement of self-reflexion. She surpassed herself, shivering with joy at the thought of housing a creature through whom her depths, her beauty, her majesty could be cherished in a new intensity. Imagine Earth's astonishment to see us attempt to satisfy ourselves by transforming the Earth into throw-away tinsel, most of it noxious to all forms of life. Imagine the hilarity and pathology of a civilization devoted to stacking up this stuff, instead of plunging into the joy that has been prepared over billions of years.

Our task is to explore, to celebrate and delight in the depths of the universe. To enter this work often involves tremendous suffering.... and it is important to remember that reality is too complex, too subtle, too mysterious to submit to our demands to control it in this way or any other way. The realization that one responds to the depths is as subtle an achievement as the ability to respond to light from the primeval fireball.

Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon

The history of life can be understood as the creation of ever more sensitive creatures in a universe where there is always another dimension of beauty to be felt and savored. Think of yourself that way, as a supreme power of sensitivity surrounded by magnificence.

The paradox is this: the greater your sensitivity, the more unbearable the tension. It is much easier to latch onto just one of these allurements, making it the whole. Anyone who grabs a sliver of beauty and insists that it is the whole becomes a fanatic, workaholic, cynic, fundamentalist, or drug addict. To break the tension of living in a universe rich in allurements is to move toward the needless destruction of pursuing a partial vision. The glory of the human is also the difficulty of the human. Precisely because we are able to feel such beauty, we are simultaneously vulnerable to the addiction of fanaticism in any of a million forms.

Even the evil actions of human beings reveal the vast and deep sentience that entered the universe with Homo sapiens. Humans are especially created to respond to the depths of the magnificent reality of the universe. Therein lies the supreme challenge to live as a mature human.

Yet, an act of destruction resulting from a craving that disregards the whole story and the vitality of the whole is the first link in the chain. Destructive acts are linked through generations as one violence is transmitted and compounded into other violences. These chains of misery can stretch through millions of years, binding up whole societies in torment. In this way, needless destruction is a response to evil that has been handed down. Parents inflict their self-contempt upon their children in physical and psychic abuse, who in turn project their self-hatred onto others and their own children. The Earth suffers under the weight of accumulated misery and pathology, all of which has its ultimate source in acts of egocentric graving. Think of all this suffering, not only human feeling but the torment in so many realms of the planet!

Each individual person has the power of participating in the transformation of the Whole Earth. The evil that reaches you after so many millions of years of existence can be absorbed and transformed. You have the power to accept the suffering, to refuse to pass it on to another, to forgive, to end the needless torment, and, most of all, to transmute evil into energy for the vitality of the whole.

The task of maturing into a human being requires tremendous power. It is a matter of authenticity....

Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon



Sacred Traditions

I sit quietly, listening to the falling leaves --
A lonely hut, a life of renunciation.
The past has faded, things are no longer remembered.
My sleeve is wet with tears.

One Robe, One Bowl: The Zen Poetry of Ryōkan

Autumn night -- unable to sleep, I leave my tiny cottage.
Fall insects cry under the rocks, and
The cold branches are sparsely covered.
Far away, from deep in the valley, the sound of water.
The moon rises slowly over the highest peak;
I stand there quietly for a long time and
My robe becomes moist with dew.

Ryōkan, One Robe, One Bowl

If you speak delusions, everything becomes a delusion;
If you speak the truth, everything becomes the truth.
Outside the truth there is no delusion,
But outside delusion there is no special truth.
Followers of Buddha's Way!
Why do you so earnestly seek the truth in distant places?
Look for delusion and truth in the bottom of your own hearts.

Ryōkan, One Robe, One Bowl

Walking along a narrow path at the foot of a mountain
I come to an ancient cemetery filled with countless tombstones
And thousand-year-old oaks and pines.
The day is ending with a lonely, plaintive wind.
The names on the tombs are completely faded,
And even the relatives have forgotten who they were.
Choked with tears, unable to speak,
I take my staff and return home.

Ryōkan, One Robe, One Bowl

The Tao that can be spoken is not the Tao itself.
The name that can be given is not the name itself.
The unnameable is the source of the universe.
The nameable is the originator of all things.
Therefore, oftentimes without intention I see the wonder of Tao.
Oftentimes with intention I see its manifestations.
Its wonder and its manifestations are one and the same.
Since their emergence, they have been called by different names.
Their identity is called the mystery.
From Mystery to further mystery:
The entry of all wonders!

Lao Tzu, the Tao Te Ching, ch. 1
(trans. by Chang Chung-yuan)

There was a thing, a "gathering" chaos,
Which existed prior to heaven and earth.
Silent! Empty!
Existing by itself, unchanging,
Pervading everywhere, inexhaustible,
It might be called the mother of the world.
Its name is unknown;
I simply call it Tao.
If I were to exert myself to define it,
I might call it great.
Great means extending to the limitless.
Extending to the limitless means reaching the extreme distance.
Reaching the extreme distance means returning to "nearness".
Thus, Tao is great,
Heaven is great, Earth is great, and humanity is great, too.

Lao Tzu, the Tao Te Ching, ch. 25
(trans. by Chang Chung-yuan)

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and humanity -- all belong to the same family.

This shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred, and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lake tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or the rustle of insects' wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a person cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with the pinon pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath -- the beast, the tree, the human, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a person dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sign. And the wind must also give our children the spirit of life. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers....

For this we know. The earth does not belong to humanity; humanity belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. Humanity did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves....

We may be brothers (and sisters) after all; we shall see. One thing we do know, which the white man may one day discover -- our God is the same God. You may think that you own him as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. He is the God of humanity, and his compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. One thing we know. Our God is the same God....

Chief Seattle in 1854 addressing the U.S. gov't

The leader of a great people stood at the edge of a steep cliff. He gazed at the vastness below, and then called to his people, "Come to the edge".

"No, no. We will fall!" they replied in fear. But their leader coaxed them, "It is all right. Come to the edge". "Surely we will fall and die. Please don't ask this of us." "Come to the edge. No harm will befall you", assured their leader. So they came to the edge as he had asked: then their leader pushed them off.... and they flew.

A Sufi Teaching Tale

In my former days of bitter poverty
every night I counted other people's wealth
today I thought and thought then thought it through
everyone really must make their own.
I dug and found a hidden treasure
a crystal pearl completely pure
even if that blue-eyed foreigner of great ability
wanted to buy it secretly and take it away
I would immediately tell him that
this pearl has no price.

Han-Shan, Taoist poet 6th century
(The "blue-eyed foreigner" referred to in this poem is the Bodhidharma,
the first Patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism.)

St. Francis de Sales wrote: "If the heart wanders or is distracted,
bring it back to the point quite gently... And even if you did no-
thing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back,
though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would
be very well employed." Do not be discouraged by wandering
thoughts or daydreams. Each time there is awareness of the mind
wandering, gently bring it back to the breath or sensations (or
sacred symbol). No matter how many times this happens, if each
time the wandering mind is brought back, the hour will be well
spent. Be gentle with yourself. Be persevering. Though it may not
be apparent to you, there is a great transformation taking place.
It is like fruit ripening on a tree. As the sun shines on it, the
fruit ripens, although from one day to the next, the process may
be imperceptible. In the same way, the changes and ripening in
our own mind are also going on. And as St. John of the Cross said,
it is in silence and work that this transformation is brought to
completion.

Joseph Goldstein, The Experience of Insight

Praise Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.
Curse Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.
Praise Me or curse Me, and I will know that you love Me.

Sing out My graces, says God.
Raise your fist against Me and revile, says God.
Sing out graces or revile,
Reviling is also a kind of praise, says God.

But if you sit fenced off in your apathy, says God,
If you look at the stars and yawn,
If you see suffering and don't cry out,
If you don't praise and revile,
Then I created you in vain, says God.

Rabbi Richard Levy

Most people who come to meditate are blocked in some way or another, and this is where the sitting is very important. Through sitting, all the pains -- physical and emotional -- surface. Whenever there is physical pain or discomfort in sitting, there is emotional or psychological pain that must be explored (recognized and let go of). People have to be patient enough with themselves to allow the pain to come to full consciousness... to be open, to accept the feeling whatever it is. At first, when you begin to watch yourself in meditation, it is distorted. You begin from wherever you are, and that is (usually subjective and judgmental). A very important factor in this practice is in not identifying with whatever you see or experience. You have anger, you have fear, but you realize that you are not your anger and your fear. You have an impulse, but you are not it. You don't stop the feeling -- you allow it to emerge. (You are impartially aware of your attachments.) You are not your car or your house, yet you care for them, enjoy them. It is the same with feelings. You shouldn't separate yourself from them -- that is neurotic detachment. But full participation without attachment -- that is creative detachment. It is learning the process of disidentification that leads to non-attachment. So with this practice we make space, we transcend boundaries -- patterns and perceptions -- expanding our consciousness.

Dhiravamsa, Vipassana master in an interview
in Insight Northwest magazine, April/May 1985

There are two main processes that people have to go through: go through the body blocks. It's a big process... there is no way to avoid it. The second process is psychic development -- opening the psyche. This level of consciousness is very big. We may have to encounter a whole lot of things in our psyche, the archetypes, shadows -- all myths within ourselves. At this stage people get attached to psychic power, to spirit guides and such things. They like to become teachers, channels, someone who knows, and they can get stuck there.... There are an infinite number of ways to get stuck, and at any point along the way. We know that in thereapy, a key element of this "stuckness" is a person's fear of his/her authentic self. Anxiety surfaces when the individual begins to truly contact him or herself. This is always a precarious place in our journey, because there is a dynamic tension between the part of the self which wants to expand, to be more alive, and the part of the self which is so heavily invested in the old patterns that are no longer supportive of a growing self, but have enabled survival. What I tell someone at this stage is to stay, stay with the feeling now! I give more attention, more love to that person. I encourage them to go through the feeling. It's not so bad as some think. Sometimes the mind exaggerates a situation in order to maintain what is. So my goal is to embrace life without being attached. That is our challenge. Opening the heart means to really experience love within yourself. Love, within each of us, is the connecting point to the universal energy of love. The heart is connected to the body, so certain exercises and meditation will allow that feeling of love to come to the heart.

Dhiravamsa, Ibid.



Christian Contemplative Spirituality

Suppose one has reached inner resurrection, transforming union, and no longer experiences the turmoil of one's emotions because they have all been transmuted into virtues. Christ is living in such persons in a remarkable way, and they are aware of their permanent union with him. Suppose God should then ask them to give up that state of enlightenment and to go back to the kind of trials, or worse, that they endured before. Their union with God would remain, but it would be completely hidden from them on the psychic level. This is one form of vicarious suffering. The transforming union is not a free ticket to happiness in this world. For some, this may mean a life of complete solitude full of loneliness; for others, it may mean an active apostolate that prevents them from enjoying the delights of divine union; for others again, it may mean intense suffering -- physical, mental or spiritual -- which they undergo for some special intention or for the whole human family. Their transformed humanity makes their sufferings of immense value for the same reason that Jesus, because of his divine dignity, became Saviour of every human being, past, present, and future.

Thus the greatest trials of the spiritual journey may occur after the transforming union. They would not take away the union, but the union would be so pure that, like a ray of light passing through a perfect vacuum, it would not be perceived....

Life, once one is in union with God, is what God wants it to be. It is full of surprises. You can be sure that whatever you expect to happen will not happen. That is the only thing of which you can be certain in the spiritual journey. It is by giving up all your expectations that you will be led to Medicine Lake, the Native American's term for contemplative prayer. The medicine that everyone needs is contemplation, which alone leads to transformation.

Thomas Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart

Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to divine union. One's way of seeing reality changes in this process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists....

Contemplation is not a relaxation exercise... it is not a charismatic gift. Contemplative prayer is not parapsychological phenomena such as pre-cognition, levitation, out-of-body experiences, etc. Still further, contemplation is not mystical phenomena such as visions or locutions. Nor must we confuse contemplation with mystical graces, such as a spontaneous inflowing of God's presence into our faculties.... Rather, contemplative prayer transcends any impression of God's radiating or inflowing presence. The essence of mysticism is the path of pure faith. Pure faith, according to John of the Cross, is a ray of darkness to the soul. There is no faculty that can perceive it. One can only remark its presence by its fruits in one's life....

What is the essence of contemplative prayer? The way of pure faith. Nothing else. You do not have to feel it, but you have to practice it.

adaplation from Thomas Keating's Open Mind, Open Heart

The Eucharist is the celebration of life: the coming together of all the material elements of the cosmos, their emergence to consciousness in human persons and the transformation of human consciousness into God consciousness. It is the manifestation of the Divine in and through the Christian community. We receive the Eucharist in order to become Eucharist.

Thomas Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart

These desert monks insisted on remaining human and "ordinary". This may seem to be a paradox, but it is very important. If we reflect a moment, we will see that to fly into the desert in order to be extraordinary is only to carry the world with you as an implicit standard of comparison. The result would be nothing but self-contemplation, and self-comparison with the negative standard of the world one had abandoned. Some of the monks of the desert did this, as a matter of fact; and the only fruit of their trouble was that they went out of their heads. The simple men (and women) who lived their lives out to a good old age among the rocks and sands only did so because they had come into the desert to be themselves, their ordinary selves, and to forget a world that divided them from themselves. There can be no other valid reason for seeking solitude or for leaving the world. And thus to leave the world, is, in fact, to help it in saving oneself. The Coptic hermits who left the world as though escaping from a wreck, did not merely intend to save themselves. They knew that they were helpless to do any good for others as long as they floundered about in the wreckage. But once they got a foothold on solid ground, things were different. Then they not only had the power but even the obligation to pull the whole world to safety with them.

This is their paradoxical lesson for our time. It would perhaps be too much to say that the world needs another movement such as that which drew these men (and women) into the deserts of Egypt and Palestine. Ours is certainly a time for solitaries and hermits. But merely to reproduce the simplicity, austerity, and prayer of these primitive souls is not a complete or satisfactory answer. We must transcend them, and transcend all those who, since their time, have gone beyond the limits which they set. We must liberate ourselves, in our own way, from involvement in a world that is plunging to disaster. But our world is different from theirs. Our involvement in it is more complete. Our danger is far more desperate. Our time, perhaps, is shorter than we think.

We cannot do exactly what they did. But we must be as thorough and as ruthless in our determination to break all spiritual chains, and cast off the domination of alien compulsions, to find our true selves, to discover and develop our inalienable spiritual liberty and use it to build, on earth, the Kingdom of God.... Let it suffice to say that we need to learn from these men (and women) of the fourth century how to ignore prejudice, defy compulsion and strike out fearlessly into the unknown.

Thomas Merton, The Wisdom of the Desert

The spiritual life is first of all a life.

It is not merely something to be known and studied, it is to be lived. Like all life, it grows sick and dies when it is uprooted from its proper element. Grace is engrafted on our nature and the whole person is sanctified by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual life is not, therefore, a life entirely uprooted from humanity's condition and transplanted into the realm of the angels. We live as spiritual persons when we live as persons seeking God. If we are to become spiritual, we must remain human. And if there were not evidence of this everywhere in theology, the Mystery of the Incarnation itself would be ample proof of it.... Jesus lived the ordinary life of the people of his time, in order to sanctify ordinary lives of all time. If we want to be spiritual, then, let us first of all live our lives. Let us not fear the responsibilities and the inevitable distractions of the work appointed for us by the will of God. Let us embrace reality and thus find ourselves immersed in the life-giving will and wisdom of God which surrounds us everywhere.

Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude

A monk should always act as if he was going to die tomorrow; yet treat the body as if it was going to live for many years. The first cuts off the inclination to listlessness, and makes the monk more diligent; the second keeps the body sound and self-control well balanced.

Evagrius Ponticos, "On Watchfulness", in The Philokalia

My Lord God.
 I have no idea where I am going
 I do not see the road ahead of me.
 I cannot know for certain where it will end.
 Nor do I really know myself.
 And the fact that I think
 I am following your will
 does not mean that I am actually doing so.
 But I believe that the desire to please you
 does in fact please you.
 And I hope that I have that desire
 in all that I am doing.
 I hope that I will never do anything
 apart from that desire.
 And I know that if I do this
 You will lead me by the right road,
 though I may know nothing about it.
 Therefore, I will trust you always
 though I may seem to be lost
 and in the shadow of death.
 I will not fear,
 for you are ever with me.
 And you will never leave me
 to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude

Those who attempt to act and do things for others or for the world
 without deepening their own self-understanding, freedom, integrity
 and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others. They
 will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of their own
 obsessions, their aggressiveness, their ego-centered ambitions,
 their delusions about ends and means, their doctrinaire prejudices
 and ideas.

Thomas Merton, Contemplation in a World of Action

Contemplative prayer is, in a way, simply the preference for the
 desert, for emptiness, for poverty. One has begun to know the
 meaning of contemplation when he or she intuitively and spontaneously
 seeks the dark and unknown path of aridity in preference to every
 other way. The contemplative is one who would rather not know than
 know. Rather not enjoy than enjoy. Rather not have proof that God
 loves him or her. The contemplative accepts the love of God on
 faith, in defiance of all apparent evidence. This is the necessary
 condition, and a very paradoxical condition, for the mystical ex-
 perience of the reality of God's presence and of God's love for us.
 Only when we are able to "let go" of everything within us, all
 desire to see, to know, to taste and to experience the presence of
 God, do we truly become able to experience that presence with the
 overwhelming conviction and reality that revolutionize our entire
 inner life.

Thomas Merton, The Climate of Monastic Prayer
 (also entitled Contemplative Prayer)

Merton was convinced that if you let the hours of the day saturate
 you, and you gave them time, something would happen. He said that
 one of the best things that happened to him when he became a hermit
 was "being attentive to the times of the day: when the birds began
 to sing, and the deer came out of the morning fog, and the sun came
 up... The reason why we don't take time is a feeling that we have
 to keep moving. This is a real sickness... We must approach the whole
 idea of time in a new way. We are free to love. And we must get free
 from all imaginary claims. We live in the fullness of time. Every
 moment is God's own good time, God's Kairos. The whole thing boils
 down to giving ourselves in prayer a chance to realize that we have
 what we seek. We don't have to rush after it. It was there all the
 time, and if we give it time, it will make itself known to us...
 There is in all this a sense of the unfolding of mystery in time,
 a reverence for gradual growth."

from A Hidden Wholeness/ The Visual World of T. Merton

I am out of bed at two-fifteen in the morning, when the night is darkest and most silent. Perhaps this is due to some ailment or other. I find myself in the primordial lostness of night, solitude, forest, peace, a mind awake in the dark, looking for a light, not totally reconciled to being out of bed. A light appears, and in the light an ikon. There is no in the large darkness a small room of radiance with psalms in it. The psalms grow up silently by themselves without effort like plants in this light which is favorable to them. The plants hold themselves up on stems which have a single consistency, that of mercy, or rather great mercy. Magna misericordia. In the formlessness of night and silence a word then pronounces itself: Mercy. It is surrounded by other words of lesser consequence: "Destroy iniquity," "Wash me," "Purify," "I know my iniquity." Peccavi. Concepts without interest in the world of business, war, politics, culture, etc. Concepts also often without serious interest to ecclesiastics.

Thomas Merton, "Day of a Stranger" in A Thomas Merton Reader

Out of the heart of that dark warmth comes the secret that is heard only in silence, but it is the root of all the secrets that are whispered by all lovers in their beds all over the world. So perhaps I have an obligation to preserve the stillness, the silence, the poverty, the virginal point of pure nothingness which is at the center of all other loves. I attempt to cultivate this plant without comment in the middle of the night and water it with psalms and prophecies in silence. It becomes the most rare of all trees in the garden, at once primordial paradise tree, the axis mundi, the cosmic axle, and the Cross. Nulla silva talem profert. There is only one such tree. It cannot be multiplied. It is not interesting.

Thomas Merton, "Day of a Stranger"

It is necessary for me to see the first point of light which begins to dawn. It is necessary to be present alone at the resurrection of Day, in the blank silence when the sun appears. In this completely neutral instant I receive from the eastern woods, the tall oaks, the one word "Day", which is never the same. It is never spoken in any known language.

Thomas Merton, "Day of a Stranger"

The breakthroughs in history have developed from intensification of elements previously present in human consciousness. Axial consciousness developed from and intensified the rationality present in and called for by the era of the great civilizations. Historical self-consciousness developed from and intensified the axial sense of individuation... I would suggest that a transcultural individual would be someone who has developed an even more refined sense of individuation....

Involved in the experience of individuation, when it is developed far enough, is the breakdown of all partial views of the self. The self is not identical with family, society, position, or culture. As Merton indicates, the person then "apprehends his (or her) life fully and wholly from an inner ground that is at once more universal than the empirical ego and yet entirely one's own." This new apprehension leads to a more liberated self, a self freed from the partial, the cultural, the social. This does not mean that the individual necessarily rejects any of these; it only means that one recognizes them as partial elements co-constituting him or her as the individual he or she is. A transcultural consciousness, then, would be one with a heightened and intensified awareness of this "liberated self". Additionally, Merton maintains that this transcultural person is precisely what Christian belief should lead to. In his words:

"For a Christian, a transcultural integration is eschatological. The rebirth of humanity and of society on a transcultural level is a rebirth into the transformed and redeemed time, the time of the Kingdom, the time of the Spirit, the time of "the end". It means a disintegration of the social and cultural self, the product of merely human history, and the reintegration of that self in Christ, in salvation history, in the mystery of redemption, in the Pentecostal "new creation"."

William M. Thompson, Christ and Consciousness

Most High, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
 All praise is yours, all glory, all honor
 And all blessing.
 To you alone, Most High, do they belong.
 No mortal lips are worthy
 To pronounce your name.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,
 And first my lord Brother Sun,
 Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
 How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendour!
 Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
 In the heavens you have made them, bright
 And precious and fair.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
 And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,
 By which you cherish all that you have made.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
 So useful, lowly, precious and pure.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
 Through whom you brighten up the night.
 How beautiful he is, how gay! Full of power and strength.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our Mother,
 Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
 Various fruits and colored flowers and herbs.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
 For love of you; through those who endure
 Sickness and trial.
 Happy those who endure in peace,
 By you, Most High, they will be crowned.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
 From whose embrace no mortal can escape.
 Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
 Happy those She finds doing your will!
 The second death can do no harm to them.
 Praise and bless my Lord, and give God thanks,
 And serve God with great humility.

St. Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother
 Sun" in The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of
 Union by Eloi Leclerc, O.F.M.

The masters of the spiritual life incessantly repeat that God wants
 only souls. To give those words their true value, we must not forget
 that the human soul, however independently created our philosophy
 represents it as being, is inseparable, in its birth and its growth,
 from the universe into which it is born. In each soul, God loves
 and partly saves the whole world which that soul sums up in an in-
 communicable and particular way. But this summing-up, this welding,
 are not given to us ready-made and complete with the first awakening
 of consciousness. It is we who, through our own activity, must in-
 dustriously assemble the widely scattered elements. The labour of
 seaweed as it concentrates in its tissues the substances scattered,
 in infinitesimal quantities, throughout the vast layers of ocean;
 the industry of bees as they make honey from the juices broadcast
 in so many flowers -- these are but pale images of the ceaseless
 working-over that all the forces of the universe undergo in us in
 order to reach the level of spirit. Every human, in the course of
 one's life, must not only show himself or herself obedient and
 docile. By one's fidelity one must build -- starting with the most
 natural territory of his or her own self -- a work, an opus, into
 which something enters from all the elements of the earth. We make
 our own souls through our earthly days.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu

A brother at Scetis committed a fault. A council of elders was called to which Abba Moses was invited, but he refused to go to it. Then the priest sent someone to say to him, "Come, for everyone is waiting for you." So he got up and went. He took a leaking jug and filled it with water and carried it with him. The others came out to meet him and said, "What is this, Father?" The old man said to them, "My sins run out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I am coming to judge the errors of another." When they heard that, they said no more to the brother, but forgave him.

Benedicta Ward, The Desert Christian

Alongside the elements of spirit, soul, and body, there is another aspect of (Humanity's) nature which lies outside this three-fold classification -- the heart. The term "heart" is of particular significance in the Orthodox doctrine of the human.

It is the primary organ of our being, whether physical or spiritual; it is the centre of life, the determining principle of all our activities and aspirations.... it embraces in effect everything that goes to comprise what we call a "person".

The Homilies of St. Makarios (of the 5th century) develop this idea of the heart: "The heart governs and reigns over the whole bodily organism; and when grace possesses the ranges of the heart, it rules over all the members and the thoughts. For there, in the heart, is the mind, and all the thoughts of the soul and its expectation; and in this way grace penetrates also to all the members of the body.... Within the heart are unfathomable depths. There are reception rooms and bedchambers in it, doors and porches, and many offices and passages. In it is the workshop of righteousness and of wickedness. In it is death; in it is life.... The heart is Christ's palace: there Christ the King comes to take His rest, with the angels and the spirits of the saints, and He dwells there, walking within it and placing His Kingdom there.

"The heart is but a small vessel: and yet dragons and lions are there, and there poisonous creatures and all the treasures of wickedness; rough, uneven paths are there, and gaping chasms. There likewise is God, there are the angels, there life and the Kingdom, there light and the apostles, the heavenly cities and the treasures of grace: all things are there."

The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology by Igumen Chariton of Valamo

Abba Lot went to Abba Joseph, and said unto him, "Father, according to my strength I sing a few psalms, and I pray a little, and my fasting is little, and my prayers and silent meditations are few, and as far as is within my power I cleanse my thoughts. What more can I do?" Then the old man stood up, and spread out his hands towards the heavens, and his fingers became like ten lamps of fire, and he said to him, "If you so desire, why don't you let the whole of you become like fire?"

The Sayings of the Holy Fathers: The Apophthegmata Patrum, trans. by Sir E.A. Wallis-Budge

Certain of the old men used to say, "If temptation comes upon you in the place where you dwell, do not forsake the place in the time of temptation, lest you find wherever you go that from which you flee. Rather, endure and persevere until the period of temptation passes, and your departure can be effected without offence and without affliction, for you will have departed in a time of peace. Now, if you depart during a period of temptation, many will be afflicted because of you, and will say that you did depart because of the temptation, and this will be unto them a source of grief."

The Apophthegmata Patrum

Union of the soul with the Godhead and the harmony of all things in the Divine Ground are the supreme goals in Angelus Silesius' poetic endeavor. All else is subordinated to those ideas. Once the soul gains awareness that its core is indestructible, and in its deepest ground identical with God, this awareness gives it a wonderful serenity. If the soul can know and unfold it, nothing in the world can affect it.....

Strictly speaking God is neither this nor that. In point of essence, nothing we say about God is appropriate:

The more you know of God, the more you will confess
That what God is GodSelf, you can name less and less.

God is for us the hidden God, Deus absconditus, or, the Incomprehensible. "God is dwelling in a light unapproachable, whom no one has seen or can see". This is the mystery of Divine Transcendence. Again and again Silesius warns us to make sure that when we are thinking about God, it is really about God we are thinking and speaking

God far exceeds all words that we can here express
in silence God is heard, in silence worshiped best.

We cannot, as it were, crowd God into a concept. "If you have comprehended," St. Augustine said, "What you have comprehended is not God." Since God is subject to no categories, we must shatter them by going beyond them. We must, Silesius says, remove from God all similarity to the corporal and spiritual world as we know them:

Most perfect purity is image-, form-, and love-less,
Defies all attribute, as much as does God's essence.

Angelus Silesius, The Cherubinic Wanderer

In literature you will find the words "meditation" and "contemplation" used in different ways. In the Christian tradition, meditation emphasizes more your doing; you take a passage and meditate on it, which means that you think about it on a deeper level, perhaps, or you move it lovingly around in your heart, or you repeat the mantra, or whatever. Then comes a higher stage called "contemplation", where you are no longer in control of the process. Instead, you open yourself, you drop the word or passage or image you've been dealing with, and you're just there. And this does something to you.

from an interview with Br. David Steindl-Rast in Yoga Journal 1985

CHANTS

- 1) Ubi caritas, et amor, Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est
(trans: "Where there is charity and love, there God is".)

- 2) We all come from God, and unto God we shall return
We all come from God, and unto God we shall return
Like a stream flowing back to the ocean;
like a ray of light returning to the sun.

ABBREVIATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Companion Books to Open Mind, Open Heart

- 1) WILL AND SPIRIT: TOWARD A CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOLOGY, Gerald May
- 2) THE KINGDOM WITHIN, John Sanford. From an Episcopal Priest's/Jungian analyst's point of view.
- 3) UP FROM EDEN: A TRANSPERSONAL VIEW OF HUMAN EVOLUTION, Ken Wilber. Transpersonal psychologist.
- 4) HANDBOOK TO HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS, Ken Keyes, Jr. A good exploration and description of the energy centers.
- 5) THE UNIVERSE IS A GREEN DRAGON: A COSMIC CREATION STORY, Brian Swimme. An excellent and accessible little book describing the process of creation and evolution from a physicist's perspective.
- 6) CHRIST AND CONSCIOUSNESS: EXPLORING CHRIST'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS, William M. Thompson. Similar to Wilber's book, only from a Judeo-Christian point of view.

Other suggested readings

- 1) CONTEMPLATION, Nemeck and Coombs
- 2) THE WAY TO CONTEMPLATION, Willigis Jäger (Paulist Press)
- 3) CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER, Thomas Merton
- 4) CENTERING PRAYER, Basil Pennington
- 5) NO BOUNDARY, Ken Wilber
- 6) THE HEART OF THE WORLD, Thomas Keating
- 7) MAGICAL CHILD MATURES, Joseph Chilton Pearce
- 8) TAO: A NEW WAY OF THINKING, Chang Chung-yuan
- 9) JESUS, LORD AND SAVIOUR and THE JESUS DEBATE, both by William M. Thompson
- 10) THE WAY OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, Nemeck and Coombs
- 11) CONTEMPLATION IN A WORLD OF ACTION, Thomas Merton
- 12) JESUS BEFORE CHRISTIANITY, Albert Nolan
- 13) THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS, Ken Wilber and Jack Engler
- 14) THE ART OF PRAYER: AN ORTHODOX ANTHOLOGY, Faber Publications
- 15) THE PHILOKALIA -- three volumes
- 16) THE EXPERIENCE OF NO-SELF and THE PATH TO NO-SELF, both by Bernadette Roberts
- 17&18) THE WISDOM OF THE DESERT, two books by same name -- one by Benedicta Ward, the other by Thomas Merton
- 19) CARE OF MIND/CARE OF SPIRIT, Gerald G. May, M.D.
- 20) DOORS TO THE SACRED: A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO SACRAMENTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, Joseph Martos

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