

# Light Over the Mountains

Voice of the Blue Mountains Interfaith Group

Volume 5 - July/August, 2013

## *Statement of Purpose for The Blue Mountains Interfaith Group*

We come together as representatives of the different religious and spiritual traditions in the Blue Mountains and we seek to work together on causes of common interest, such as the Care and Celebration of the Environment.

Each of us loves our own faith while respecting others who equally love theirs.

We recognize the Truth, that is a deep transcendent reality common to all, coming to us by different historical, scientific and cultural paths. We believe that we are spiritually enriched by our mutual sharing.

We are ready to share that richness more widely in the Mountains, catching a glimpse of sacred wonder in our Mountain surrounds.

## *Editorial*

Catholics have a new Pope, Francis. Amid the talks of crisis and in the swirl of debates and expectations leading up to the conclave, the election of Pope Francis cut through all the clamour with a fresh vision of hope.

In his first announcement, explaining the choice of name by which Jorge Bergoglio would henceforth be known, he revealed that the name which came into his heart was that of St Francis of Assisi. *“For me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation . . . Oh, how I would like a Church which is poor and which is for the poor”*. So he seemed to signal the priorities of his pontificate.

Four days later, at a meeting of religious leaders, including other Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Jain, he spoke on behalf of all present of the *“responsibility we all have for this world, for creation – which we must love and protect – and we can do much good for those who are poor, weak and suffering, to favour justice, to promote reconciliation to build peace. But more than anything, **we must keep alive in the world the thirst for the Absolute** . . . To be open to the transcendent, to seek God, is part of being fully human and continues to exist in the human heart”*.

He went on to remind the assembled religious leaders of the *“obligation we all have to be close to*

*people who do not belong to a faith community, but who are searching for the truth, goodness and beauty . . . **They are our precious allies** in the commitment to defending human dignity, in building peaceful co-existence among peoples and in safeguarding creation”*.

In quoting the new Pope at such length, we sense he has prophetically worded the ideals of our Blue Mountains Interfaith Group. Long ago it was planned that the topic of this issue of *Light Over The Mountains* would be prayer. Prayer is the core, the heart of our different faith traditions – what deeply draws us together. It touches on what the Pope called “the thirst for the Absolute – to be open to the transcendent”.

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*Please note that the contents of this newsletter are spiritual writings and that you should take care how you finally dispose of your copy.*



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<http://bluemountainheart.net/interfaith>

## Point of Departure

Huston Smith, opens his famous book *The World Religions* with reflections on World-Wide Communion Sunday. "From the mud huts in Africa to the Canadian tundra, Christians are kneeling today to receive the elements of the Holy Eucharist. It is an impressive picture".

Then his mind "wandered to the wider community of God-seekers. I thought of the Yemenite Jews I watched six months ago in their synagogue in Jerusalem: dark-skinned men sitting shoeless and cross-legged on the floor, wrapped in the prayer shawls their ancestors wore in the desert. Swaying backwards and forwards like camel riders as they recite their Torah.

Yalcin, the Muslim architect who guided me through the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, he too is praying today, five times as he prostrates himself toward Mecca.

Swami Ramakrishna, in his tiny house by the Ganges at the foot of the Himalayas, will not speak today. He will continue the devotional silence that he has kept for five years.

By this hour U Nu is probably facing the lot of a prime minister, but from four to six this morning, before the world broke over him, he too was alone with the eternal in the privacy of the Buddhist shrine.

Dai Jo and Lai San, Zen monks in Kyoto, were ahead of him by an hour. They have been up since three this morning, and until eleven tonight will spend most of the

day in intense absorption to plumb the Buddha-nature that lies at the centre of their being.

What a strange fellowship this is, the God-seekers in every land, lifting their voices in the most disparate ways imaginable to the God of all life. How does it sound from above? Like bedlam, or do the strains blend in strange, ethereal harmony? Does one faith carry the lead, or do the parts share in counterpoint and antiphony where not in full-throated chorus?

We cannot know. All we can do is try to listen carefully and with full attention to each voice in turn as it addresses the divine".



*Pope Francis leads a meeting with religious leaders at the Vatican on 20th March, 2013. The Pope met the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Jain delegation that had come to the Vatican for his inauguration.*

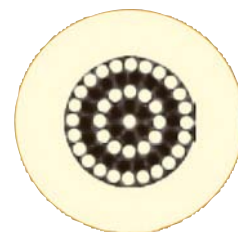
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## 'Dadirri'

Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, addressing the International Liturgy Assembly at Hobart, 1988, began by saying:

"Many Australians understand that Aboriginal people have a special respect for nature . . . that (they) have a very strong sense of community . . . that we are a people who celebrate together.

What I want to talk about today is another special quality of my people. I believe that it is the most important. It is our most unique gift. It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. In our language, this quality is called 'dadirri'.  
**IT IS THE INNER, DEEP LISTENING AND QUIET, STILL AWARENESS.**



'Dadirri' recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation'. When I experience 'dadirri', I am made whole again. I can sit on the river bank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find peace in this silent awareness . . . The contemplative way of 'dadirri' spreads over our whole life. It renews us and brings us peace. It makes us feel whole again . . .

And now I would like to talk about the other part of 'dadirri', which is **THE QUIET STILLNESS AND THE WAITING**. Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural courses – like the seasons. We watch the moon in each of its phases. We wait for the rain to fill our rivers and water the thirsty earth. When twilight comes, we prepare for night. At dawn we rise with the sun . . .

I would like to conclude by saying again that there are deep springs within each one of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the Word of God – Jesus.

# Tug of the Transcendent

Wonder, I find, is the single word closest in spirit to Aboriginal *dadirri*. Wonder recaptures that sense, long suppressed and long forgotten, of the wild-eyed child who once explored his or her new world.

The setting of our wonder is the familiar world in which we now reside, but viewed again in unfamiliar light. As far as I know or am concerned, there is no order of reality other than the one I am experiencing now. I find no need to entertain the customary sets of dualities: material/spiritual, natural/supernatural, body/soul, earth/heaven, secular/sacred. We need not think of several levels of being or a hierarchy of classes. There is simply greater or less profundity. Transcendence is felt to be not so much out of this world, an escape from reality, as deeper into it. So this reality I am experiencing now I can experience more deeply, and there, within it, I can touch God.

I may not regard myself as a religious person in the conventional sense of the term. I may be turned off by the caricatures of God often flaunted by fundamentalist religiosity. Those who deny God are often denying someone else's God. But for each of us there is something or someone uppermost in our lives, giving meaning and value to all the rest. It may be money, career, 'the Cause', our lover or whatever else we go after; or it may be the Unknown and the Unknowable One beyond the things we know. The urge to break out of ourselves, to reach beyond our powers, is a nameless longing giving shape within our spirits of One who is beckoning us on. Augustine found his God in his restless heart: 'Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee'. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous find in their powerlessness 'a power greater than ourselves'. We each experience the grace of an otherness, drawing us to reach out to the Transcendent and to transcend ourselves in the process. We can dull or smother this urge by apathy or distraction; we can channel it to other ends, to ambition, greed or other 'gods less than ourselves'. Or we can cultivate it and fine tune it to the Transcendent beyond our grasp. We all have a God who calls us out of ourselves, and whom we come to know by listening to the divine call within ourselves.

E. Stockton, *Wonder: A Way to God* pp.18-19

\* \* \*

If all this sounds too subjective for the ears of the scientists, let me call Albert Einstein as a witness:

This most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre of true religiousness.

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*Once an old woman came to the Buddha and asked how to meditate. He told her to remain aware of every movement of her hands as she drew the water from the well, knowing that if she did, she would soon find herself in that state of alert and spacious calm that is meditation.*

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# The Mystic in the Universe

*William Johnston:*

... the whole universe is so unified that every movement or action, however slight, has its repercussions throughout the world. And man is part of this network. At one time he thought he could extricate himself from the totality to view the universe objectively as a serene and detached outsider. Now we know this cannot be. Receiving influences from every corner of the mysterious universe, he likewise influences it; and his actions are like the proverbial pebble thrown into the pond and causing endless ripples. I myself believe that next to God the most influential person in the cosmos is the mystic.

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## Unceasing Prayer

The Russian Orthodox classic, *The Way of the Pilgrim*, describes how for a long time the anonymous pilgrim, wandered and searched for an explanation as to how one might follow St Paul's injunction "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). One day he heard that in a certain village there lived a gentleman who never left his estate but spent his time in prayer and reading devotional books. He ran to find him; he asked how it was possible to pray without ceasing.

The gentleman was silent and looked at me closely. Then he said: "Ceaseless interior prayer is a continual yearning of the human spirit towards God . . ."

The Prayer of Jesus is an uninterrupted calling upon the divine Name of Jesus with the lips, in the spirit, in the heart; while forming a mental picture of his constant presence, and imploring his grace, during every occupation, at all times, in all places, even during sleep.

The Prayer is expressed in these terms, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me". Accustom yourself to this prayer and you will experience as a result so deep a consolation and so great a need to offer the prayer always, that you can no longer live without it, and it will continue to voice itself within you of its own accord . . ."

And that is how I go about now, and ceaselessly repeat the Prayer of Jesus, which is more precious and sweet to me than anything in the world.

\* \* \*

This is the Prayer of the Heart, long nurtured by the Desert Fathers and treasured by Christians of the East. The ceaseless repetition of the Jesus Prayer (in one of various versions) is said to move from the lips to the head, in the midst of daily preoccupations, all the while aware of the presence of God, until it finally settles in the heart. As Theophan the Recluse has described it:

Into the heart he descends: into his natural heart first, and from there into the 'deep' heart - into the 'inner closet' of the heart which is no longer flesh. Here in the depths of the heart, he discovers first the 'godlike spirit' which is the Holy Trinity planted in man at creation, and with this spirit he comes to know the Spirit of God.

There one finds the Kingdom of God that is within "so passing the mysterious frontier between created and uncreated".

Greek guides in the spiritual life describe how this prayer of the heart creates *hesychia*: deep, silent, still presence. It fosters *Theosis*: deification ("I live no longer I but Christ lives in me". Gal. 2:20).



## Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim

With the Divine (God, Allah, Truth - whatever name one wishes to use for that which cannot be named) and through the Sacred, our life is a journey back to its source. As each journey is unique, our relationship to our Origin is unique.

*And when My servants question you (the Prophet Muhammad) concerning Me, then surely I am near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he cries unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright’.*

(Qur’an, 2:186)

Prayer is our communication with the Divine and our experience of feeling connected to the Divine. We may call on Allah for whatever reason and/or respond to a Call from Allah that only we can hear. Allah is as close as our jugular vein. Prayer is intimate. We are each in Relationship to the Divine. This means that every prayer is unique. We pray our own way. No one else can undertake to perform our prayer.

It also means that prayer can be more than addressing the Divine through words and movement. Our actions, thoughts, the state of our heart can be prayer if it is done with awareness of the connection and the state of our relationship. Whatever form it takes each prayer captures that moment in time and enriches our relationship with the Divine.

Staying in touch with our hearts so that we have the sense of whether Allah is pleased with us or forgiving and patient with us is a form of prayer. Removing whatever interferes with our loving relationship with Allah and with those close to us is prayer. Doing what we can to bring Allah’s qualities into this world, such as peace and love, truth and justice, is certainly a very practical form of prayer. Simply saying, “I love You Allah” is a wonderful prayer.

One of the formal prayers performed by Muslims is known as *Salat*. *Salat* is performed five times a day, early morning, before sunrise, at noon, at mid-afternoon, just after sunset, then finally at night. At these times the faithful are ‘called to prayer’. The call to prayer, the ‘*azan*’ is performed as a song/chant. The *azan* basically says “stop

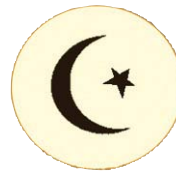
what you are doing, it is time to pray”. It also includes the key statement of Islamic faith, known as the *Shahada*; “I witness that there is no one worth worshipping but God, and Muhammad is Allah’s servant and Messenger”.

So, imagine what it would be like to be fully absorbed in some kind of routine task, perhaps to have completely forgotten what time it is, and then to hear a call to pray. We are being asked to pull ourselves out of our daily life and, in my personal experience it is as if the Divine is saying, “Come to Me, I want your full attention for about 5-10 minutes. Tell Me how your day is going. Is there anything you need?”

This daily prayer creates an opportunity for us to be mindful throughout each day: morning, afternoon and night; and to remember Allah. We are invited to know Allah better through the tasks that we are doing, and in doing this (with Allah’s Grace), come into a state of love, understanding, thankfulness and wonder. After all, Allah is All-Love, All-Compassion, All-Mercy.

It’s a simple practise but quite a treasure. It connects us to the miracle, wonder and unity of life.

With Allah’s blessings and grace, and through all of the forms that prayer takes, we learn directly just how wonderful Allah really is. How loving and compassionate, how generous and forgiving, how powerful and just.



Contributed by Yasmin Mayne,  
Ansari Sufi Order

## Steps to Prayer

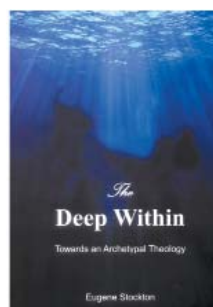
Most religious traditions agree on the movement to prayer, which may be schematised in the following steps:

**1. Setting out:** This is the beginning of losing oneself in relation to the other. It has been described as *ecstasis* (“standing out”), *kenosis* (“self emptying”) or “ego-death”. It is comparable to the foreplay of love or to the loss of the sense of self in a radiant smile. One’s relationship to the other is “I-Thou”.

**2. Communion:** “I Thou” becomes a new entity “we”, with equal and parallel subjectivity. The one is in the other as the other is in the one, without loss of differentiation: as Jesus said “I am in the Father and the Father in me” (Jn. 14:10).

This mutual embodiment or interpenetration as found in the Trinity of Divine Persons was called by the Greek Fathers *perichoresis* (lit. “dancing around”).

**3. Oneness:** “we” now becomes “I”. In the stark language of English mystics, two have become “oned” in shared subjectivity. The play comes to rest in pace, the lovers sink into each others embrace. All mystical traditions have recognised this ultimate state of oneness or enlightenment, a goal often aimed at but perhaps rarely attained. This is the personal transformation or self-transcendence which comes from reaching out to the other, ultimately through it to the transcendent Totally Other.



### The Deep Within

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E. Stockton *The Deep Within* pp.28-29

# THE MOURNER'S KADDISH

## – Prayer within the Jewish Tradition

Despite its pivotal role in the mourning process. It does not speak of death or bereavement . . . Instead, it is a prayer of praise affirming faith in the ontological mystery which we call Life.

This emphasis gives a particular insight into the Jewish mindset: that in the face of deep sorrow, life and faith are affirmed and the peace which all seek is invoked. Death is not ignored in ritual or in life - far from it - but the focus for a persecuted people, is that of survival and the will to thrive.

Regardless of one's personal beliefs about the nature of the divine, the Mourners' Kaddish unites Jews in prayer, for we stand together in our acceptance of the cycle of life and death and our sense of continuity born of our long history of survival despite often overwhelming odds. It is a profound affirmation of life.

*May the Name be exalted and sanctified (Amen)  
and infuse the world that The One called into being.  
Pre-eminent in your lifetimes and in your days  
and in the lifetimes of the entire Family of Israel,  
swiftly and soon. (Amen)*

*May The One be blessed forever and ever.  
Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled,  
mighty, upraised, and lauded be the Name of the Holy One  
Blessed is The One beyond any blessing and song,  
praise and consolation that are uttered in the world.  
(Amen)*

*May there be abundant peace from Heaven  
and life upon us and upon all Israel. (Amen)  
The One Who makes peace in the heights, make peace  
upon us and upon all Israel. (Amen)*



*Contributed by Angie Moore  
Emanuel Synagogue, Woollahra and  
the Jewish Community*

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## Oneness

### **Darryl Reaney**

The only knowing that has depth is that which occurs without between-nesses, when there is no gap between speaker of and speaker to. This is the completed act of love when two souls, who, in words, thought they were separate, in knowing, see they are one.

### **Jesus**

I and the Father are one.

### **Bayazid of Bistun**

I went from God to God until they cried from me in me 'O thou I'.

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## Prayer in Hinduism - Vedanta

Prayer gets its meaning and context from an understanding, in Hinduism-Vedanta, of the three aspects or levels of the relationship between an individual and Divinity.

The first aspect is that of **Duality**: an individual who is separate, small, deficient and incomplete, turns to a larger force, Divinity, represented by a Person who is all-powerful, all-knowing and a dispenser of favours. Hence prayer in this context is a request for favours, a supplication.

The second aspect is that of **Modified Non-Duality**: I am in the Divine and the Divine is in me. Prayer here is the acknowledgement of closeness or oneness. Requests for favours may arise, but the focus is primarily on the unicity between the individual and the Divine, with complete surrender of the individual to the Divine.

The third aspect is that of **Non-Duality**: creation, including every individual form, including me, is the manifestation of the Divine. Hence, there is no separation (non-dual) between the Divine and the individual. The Divine is the Totality, the Substrate or Matrix from which everything arises and the nature of Divinity is unconditioned Presence of Being, pure Awareness, Fullness, Wholeness, Completeness, Peace itself, Happiness as such. In this context, prayer is really meditation, ie. recognising and being the Divinity manifested as my human form. The human form that I have, has its needs which have to be met but I abide as the Divinity, witnessing everything that happens.

This, then, is a short summary of the relevance and meaning of Prayer in Hinduism / Vedanta.

*Contributed by Ben and Susan de Silva*

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## How I Go to the Woods - By Mary Oliver.

Ordinarily I go to the woods alone, with not a single friend, for they are all smilers and talkers and therefore unsuitable.

I don't really want to be witnessed talking to the catbirds or hugging the old black oak tree. I have my way of praying, as you no doubt have yours.

Besides, when I am alone I can become invisible. I can sit on the top of a dune as motionless as an uprise of weeds, until the foxes run by unconcerned. I can hear the almost unhearable sound of the roses singing.

If you have gone to the woods with me, I must love you very much.

\* \* \*

Meister Eckhart

The knower and the known are one.

Simple people imagine that they should see God

As if he stood there and they here.

This is not so.

God and I, we are one in the knowledge.

\* \* \*

The other, the unknown, the stranger can be on occasion, not of fear, but of opportunity. St Columban said: "A life unlike your own can be your teacher". When we reach out to others, when we show hospitality, when we show respect and concern, most often we receive love in return, abundantly.

# Brahma Kumaris –

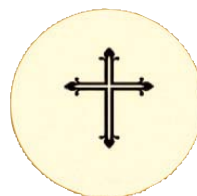
## *The Power of Prayer*

“..... (The) power of prayer works wonders. It works through the power of vibrations. When I pray to God, not only are my thoughts of love, reverence and respect reaching God but also truly, the power of prayer heals people. Nature is eternal and the soul is eternal. The most fundamental aspect of spirituality is the power of our relationship with the Divine. While we are connected to God, the vibrations reach all around us. This is not only true for people but also for nature. This connection gives us the opportunity to reverse the process of damage that we have been responsible for.

**Meditation for Nature:** Sitting comfortably, I focus my thoughts, in the centre of my forehead, and connect with the inner being, the being that I am. Aware of the light within, I connect with the Divine, the supreme light, and through that connection, I myself unfold, with peace, with love, with truth. And the light of the Divine, the light of truth, the light of peace radiates to my human family and reaches nature and all forms of life. The divine light of love begins to heal nature. Peace restores nature to order and harmony and we begin to recreate a better world for all. I hold this awareness, and come back to the things here in the physical dimension, keeping this awareness close to my heart.

— Sister Jayanti Kirpalani, Brahma Kumaris  
<http://environment.brahmakumaris.org/resources>

*Contributed by Greg and Jessica Yuille*



# Spirituality and Religion

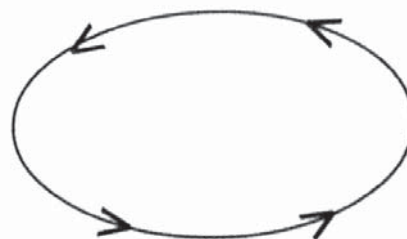
## The Cycle of Spirituality

The spiritual moment  
(awakening, awareness)

The religious movement  
(interpretation, evaluation)

**(1) attending**  
(recognising that something is beckoning us)

**(4) acting**  
(unifying the world in response to this beckoning)



**(2) inquiring**  
(exploring deeper aspects of this beckoning)

**(3) interpreting**  
(reflecting on the deeper meaning of this beckoning)

The personal sphere  
(pre-creedal:  
expressed in art)

The social sphere  
(creedal:  
expressed in worship)

The cyclic nature of spirituality involves the four core activities of (1) attending, (2) inquiring, (3) interpreting and (4) acting. These activities occur in a sequence of inter-related phases which may be spread over a short or long period.


The cycle may be split in half by stalling in phases (1) and (2) or in phases (3) and (4), so separating ‘spirituality’ from ‘religion’. Hence, one may settle for ill-defined awareness and expression of what beckons us; alternatively, one may remain uncritically loyal to a code of religious conduct.

Again, the cycle may be split but into ‘triangles’, Omitting (1) “to attend” leads one into a spirituality lacking interiority; Omitting (2) “to inquire” leads one into an uncritical, devotional spirituality; Omitting (3) “to interpret” leads one into a spirituality characterised by prejudice; Omitting (4) “to act” leads one into a cerebral pseudo-spirituality.


David Ranson, *Across the Great Divide: Bridging Spirituality and Religion Today* St. Paul’s Publications, Strathfield 2002

### Thomas Merton

When the veils are removed . . . intuition reaches Him by one final leap beyond itself . . . In this last ecstatic act of knowing, the gap between our spirit as subject and God as object is finally closed, and in the embrace of mystical love we know that we and He are one.



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God as Gift and Present

**October 19** *Dr Tim O’Hearn*  
Seeing Things Differently

**November 16** Fr Kevin Bates sm

*Come and enjoy the reflection, silence and solitude in peaceful surrounds*

\* You are warmly welcome

\* Entry by donation

\* Morning Tea provided

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# Buddhist Prayer

Buddhist prayer may be thought of as a focused expression of the sentiments of yearning, commitment, and appreciation. It is, however, distinguished by the fact that Buddhism locates the divine within the life of the individual practitioner. The purpose of Buddhist prayer is to awaken our innate capacities of strength, courage, and wisdom, rather than to petition external forces.

## ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Buddhist prayer is a practise  
to awaken  
our inherent capacities  
of  
strength, compassion and wisdom.  
It is a form of meditation,  
An inner reconditioning.  
Prayer expresses  
an aspiration  
to pull something into one's life,  
some new energy  
or  
purifying influence  
and  
share it  
silently  
with  
everyone  
everywhere.



*Contributed by Renee Buhler and Pamela Croci*

## Meditation in Tibetan-Buddhist Tradition

### *Sogyal Rinpoche:*

The Buddha sat in serene and humble dignity on the ground, with the sky above him and around him, as if to show us that in meditation you sit with an open, sky-like attitude of mind, yet remain present, earthed, and grounded. The sky is our absolute nature, which has no barriers and is boundless, and the ground is our reality, our relative, ordinary condition. The posture we take when we meditate signifies that we are linking absolute and relative, sky and ground, heaven and earth, like two wings of a bird, integrating the sky-like deathless nature of mind and the ground of our transient, mortal nature.

### *Christine Longaker:*

Through spiritual training, we can learn meditative practices that enable us to connect with our inherent wisdom and compassion. When our mind settles deeply in meditation, the conceptual mind and ordinary sense of self may temporarily dissolve. Then we experience a gap or space between our thoughts: a wakeful, clear, radiant awareness unstained by hopes, fears, or habitual projections. Pursued deeply and sincerely, spiritual practice enables us to purify and release the emotional conditioning and self-grasping ego that separate us from reality. Meditation connects us ever more reliably and profoundly to a natural, effortless awareness, in which there is a deep relaxation and spaciousness, an unbounded gratitude, and an all-embracing, joyful compassion.

## Affiliated Traditions and Members

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Jessica Yuille, Sue Morrison,  
See Yeung Olivia Yao

*Kunsang Yeshe Retreat Centre*  
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*Ansari Sufi Order*  
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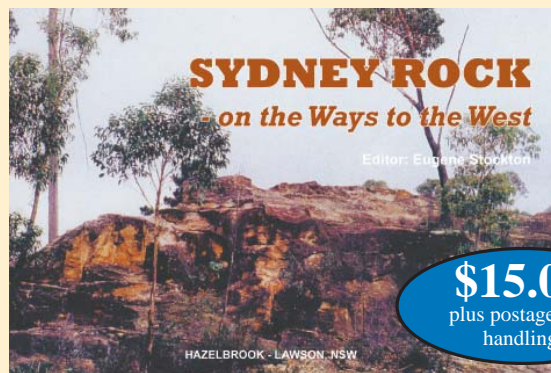
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# Apophatic Contemplation

The apophatic tradition, the way of negation, stemmed from the fourth century Cappadocian Fathers and reached the climax in *The Mystical Theology* of Pseudo-Dionysius in the fifth century. His opening words express it well:

As far as is possible, raise thyself up in unknowing even unto union with Him Who is beyond all essence and all knowledge, for it is indeed by going out of thyself and out of all things with an irresistible leap, free and pure, that thou shalt raise thyself up to the pure and superessential ray of the divine darkness, after having abandoned all things and having liberated thyself from them all.

Then, delivered from all objects and from the very organs of contemplation (the contemplative) penetrates into the truly mystical *Cloud of Unknowing* in which he closes his eyes to all objects and knowledge and finds himself in utter intangibility and invisibility, since he now belongs entirely to Him Who is beyond all, and belongs no longer to any thing, neither to himself, nor to any other being, and is thus united in the most noble union with Him Who is utterly unknowable, by the cessation of all knowledge; in this total unknowing he now knows with a knowledge that is beyond understanding.

The *Cloud of Unknowing* is the title of the English spiritual classic (14th C) by an anonymous writer. In the sixth chapter he imagines being asked the question, how might one think of God in prayer.

Unto this I cannot answer thee, except to say: "I know not". For thou hast brought me with thy question into that same darkness, and into that same *cloud of unknowing*, that I would thou wert in thyself. For of all other creatures and their works – yea, and of the works of God himself – may a man through grace have fullness of knowing, and well can he think of them; but of God himself can no man think. And therefore I would leave all that thing that I can think, and choose to my love that thing that I cannot think. For why, *he may well be loved, but not thought*. By love may he be gotten and holden; but by thought neither. And therefore, although it be good sometime to think on the kindness and the worthiness of God in special, and although it be a light and a part of contemplation: nevertheless in this work it shall be cast down and covered with a *cloud of forgetting*. And thou shalt step above it stalwartly, but listily, with a devout and a pleasing stirring of love, and try to pierce that darkness above thee. And *smite upon that thick cloud of unknowing with a sharp dart of longing love*; and go not hence for aught that befalleth.

## Hindu Upanishad

'Thou art that'.

## Rumi

The light of the sun is one.  
Yet when it enters the houses  
it takes a hundred shapes.  
Take down the walls  
and it becomes one again.

## News Items and Advertisers



## Holy Land Pilgrimage

Eugene Stockton is scheduled to lead a pilgrimage 8th to 25th October. Six days in Jordan will include Amman, Jerash, Pella, Petra and Wadi Rum Desert. Thence north to Galilee (including Nazareth, Lake Tiberias, Capernaum Mt. Tabor), south to Jericho, Qumran, Bethlehem, with five days devoted to Jerusalem.

**Cost \$4,660**

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The next edition of *Light Over the Mountains* having as its general topic "*Liberation/Salvation in each Tradition*" will be published in November/December 2013, please send any copy to [allan.walsh@exemail.com.au](mailto:allan.walsh@exemail.com.au).

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