



Meditation Monthly International

Agni Yoga and Obstacles

Everyone must admit that life's events do not happen for the reasons we think they do. One may often find evidence of Higher Guidance. To correlate this Guidance with one's own independence will be to achieve harmony.

Man will ask, "Are You always with us?" We can be, but man must want it. We disclose many features of Our Inner Life to you. We Ourselves have passed through all obstacles, and often when going to sleep, did not know if We would be alive in the morning. Each one of Us learned to steadfastly walk in the path of His Teacher.

In the most difficult days the Teacher says, "Consider yourself to be much happier than many. Be grateful."

Supermundane I, para.72

People do much harm to themselves by limiting their awareness to one earthly existence. They build obstacles for themselves everywhere. When We direct them into the future, they generally do not understand how to begin to think in this new way. One may think that he will be forever attached to one place; another may tell himself that he must always cling to one vocation; a third may convince himself that he cannot endure a change of location; a fourth may imagine that he will perish from his very first illness. Thus each one invents his own fetters, not realizing that in his former lives he has already experienced the many ways of existence. Such a conventional life on Earth, in complete ignorance of the past, does not allow one the opportunity to think about the future.

Most people leave Earth not realizing that they will have to return again. If they could remember at least something of the past, and learn to think about the future, they would save themselves from many errors.

Supermundane I, para. 75

Thus, let us acquire the joy of constant watchfulness and striving. They are among the foundations of the Teaching and of life. Only striving carries us toward the next steps. Only vigilance enables us to overcome successfully all obstacles. The Teacher calls us to pressing labor for the sake of victory. All victory depends upon the strength of our striving. Therefore, if striving decreases either because of the shortsightedness of a limited consciousness or because of internal discord and disunion in the actions of the warriors, defeat will be unavoidable. Therefore, I ask you not to weaken yourselves by internal discord when approaching a dangerous passage. It is also fatal to push each other because the one who pushes may very easily share the fate of the one pushed.

Letters Of Helena Roerich I, 17 December 1930





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Cover Picture taken from
Armageddon by Nicholas Roerich

Networkers' Letter

by Joleen D. Du Bois

Dear Friends,

This issue of *Meditation Monthly International* features an article on the 'dark night of the soul' as experienced by St. John of the Cross. It was written by Saskia Frau from Puerto Rico, a long-time student of Agni Yoga. The 'dark night of the soul' is a term familiar to most who study mysticism, but is less familiar at the experiential level. We hope you enjoy Saskia's article.

When a seeker finds the spiritual path and later undergoes certain spiritual disciplines such as meditation and service, over time, it seems as if the life of the seeker becomes increasingly difficult. The personal life and even life itself, which at one time seemed fairly pleasant and peaceful, has now become a seemingly "foreign entity." The seeker experiences increasing difficulties—turmoil's, trials and tribulations—and acts out in ways that at times seem outrageous and perhaps even frightening, events that seem in contradiction to the seeker's "earlier life." Relationships now may come into the life that could be unhealthy and try to lead the person away from his path of striving and service. Life may become filled with uncertainty and darkness. This is a cycle called the 'dark night of the soul' and is due to the outpouring of the Chalice, igniting the residue of impurities held over from previous incarnations, impurities which must be cleared away before the soul can advance.

For example, where once a person of humility, the disciple is now struggling with certain ego complexes (superiority or inferiority complexes); misuse of sexual energy stemming from past and ancient patterns; increased anger, bossiness, hatred, and fears that causes the Pilgrim to become a powerful source of destruction. There are also situations stemming from an ancient history of unhealthy conditions in the physical, emotional or mental vehicles, the sources of which can now be cleared away, or purified, by bringing the situation into the light. The 'dark night of the soul' is actually a stage of spiritual advancement, a

cycle through which the Pilgrim must pass successfully before taking the next advancing step on the soul's return path to home, the Tower, where the will of God is known. The 'dark night of the soul' can last for several years, an entire life, or more than one life.

As the seeker comes closer to his inner divinity, the fire of the Chalice evokes the trash of his ancient past, and the time has come that karmic hindrances must now be cleared before he can pass through the next Gate. It is in meeting the outpouring of spiritual fires that the pilgrim will find himself experiencing many resistances and obstacles. These resistances are not only created by the inner life of the pilgrim himself but are also due to certain outer conditions, for example, his lifestyle, personal environment, and certain relationships, all of which may call forth resistances that have been imposed upon the pilgrim, ideally, as a way to promote a clearing of the way.

It is in alignment to, and keeping his consciousness focused in, the future—remaining steadfast and aligned to his higher values, vision, and goals, that he will gradually find his way through the darkness.

Shanti,

WMEA President

St. John's Dark Night of the Soul

1542–1591

Introduction

Before reading this article about St. John's 'dark night of the soul,' let's review how the Ageless Wisdom defines the 'soul.' The human soul is a term that depicts all the stages of the development of the divine Spark. "One's divine Spark is like a photographic negative on which the true Self gradually comes into existence as the image of 'God.' When this image comes into existence, the soul is at an advanced stage of such a development."¹

When we say 'soul' this term also has a specific meaning. "The Spark during Its development eventually realizes that It is not the physical body, not the emotional body, not the mental body. It is aware that It is an independent entity *using* the lower vehicles as the channels of Its communication with the three worlds. We call this stage of the progressing Spark, 'soul.'"²

You become a soul when you radiate the twelve virtues of the Inner Lotus. The soul fuses with the Solar Angel and gives birth to itself, as a soul. And the soul now enters superhuman evolution.

The twelve virtues of the Inner Lotus are: "Striving, Courage, Daring, Discrimination, Solemnity, Harmlessness, Service, Compassion, Patience, Fearlessness, Gratitude, and Responsibility."³

From the early stages of discipleship up to reaching the entrance of the third initiation, there is the difficulty of a conscious duality as the soul is traveling on both the clockwise and counterclockwise wheel of the zodiac. There are many incarnations where the soul was conditioned by the signs of the zodiac in its clockwise motion, while the life of the disciple, who is focused in the Soul consciousness, is now governed by the reverse, the anti-clockwise, wheel. Both motions, the dual motion of the anti-clockwise wheel and the clockwise, places the disciple in a fiery tension, a spiritual tension that always precedes initiation. It is an event to which all mystics and initiates will attest. This stage

precedes the 'dark night of the soul,' where the soul cries out saying, "Where is the one God Who has forsaken me?" In the New Testament, "[T]he veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom..."⁴

The 'dark night of the soul' is *the moment before the dawn, the hour before the light streams forth.*

JOLEEN

In her book *Mysticism, A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*, Evelyn Underhill describes what it is to be a mystic:

"To be a mystic is simply to participate in the real and eternal life in the fullest, deepest sense which is possible to man."

Although this explanation is very broad, it includes also the viewpoint of the esotericist. When Underhill reviews the Western mystical writers, she seems to agree with the more accepted view, that mysticism is the final stage of advancement for the human soul, and not, as the Ageless Wisdom teaches, one of its stages.

Eight centuries of Islamic influence and dominion in southern Spain produced a prolific wave of mystics in the sixteenth century of which Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross were the most prominent.

"Saint John of the Cross inherits the rich symbology of the Sufi Masters through his culture or other means not yet clear to the scholars." We must remember that as the disciple and confessor of Saint Teresa of Avila, we sense that it is from her visions and revelations, apart from his own experiences, that his creative genius gained access to a secret wisdom not available through the general culture, especially when the Inquisition was established in Spain and the Muslims were seen as heretics.

"There is also a parallelism between



Saint John's *nocturnal ladder* meaning the secret contemplation by which the soul ascends and climbs, knows and possesses the treasury of heaven and the *mi'raj* [heavenly journey] of the Prophet Mohamed which depicts his ascension to heaven."

All these elements form part of *The Dark Night of the Soul* of Saint John of the Cross.

Saint John of The Cross

He was born on June 24, 1542, in the town of Fontevideos near Avila, Spain. His name at birth was Juan de Yepes y Alvarez, and he had two brothers, Francisco and Luis. Two years later [1544] his father died, leaving the family in the most abject misery.

His mother left him under the care of his father's relatives in Toledo. His brother Luis died in 1547, and his mother moved in 1551 from Arévalo to Medina del Campo, where Juan worked successively as an apprentice carpenter, tailor, sculptor, and painter. Later he would study the humanities, Latin, and rhetoric at the College of the Jesuits.

In 1563 he entered the Carmelite con-

vent as friar Juan de Santo Matía and was ordained as a priest in 1567. That same year he met Saint Teresa de Avila, who convinced him to participate as a coworker in the reform of the Carmelite Order. Saint John became her disciple and dear friend. Saint Teresa and Saint John worked together to reestablish the old rules of the order. They worked tirelessly for the same ideal, fought the same battles, and suffered the same persecutions.

By 1570 the tensions between the Discalced [bare-footed] Carmelites and the Calced [shoe-wearing] Carmelites grew bitter. Saint John was kidnapped by the abbots of the opposite rule (the Calced Carmelites), was charged with disobedience and imprisoned, but later was released. In 1577 he was incarcerated again in Toledo, and the Inquisition tribunal declared him a rebel and confined him to nine months of prison in his convent. He had no communication, his room had no windows and was dark, and he suffered physical abuse from his jailers. Many of his poems come from this time.

Saint John realized an intense labor as spiritual director, confessor and as a great judge of people's character. Saint Teresa affirmed that he had no equal, and praised his moral and intellectual virtues. She also called him a saint. From 1584 he founded new convents and occupied different positions, until in 1591, he was suspended by his enemies from all his functions and sent as a simple friar to another town near Jaén. On December 14, 1591, he became very ill and died, at the young age of forty-nine.

The Poetry of Saint John of the Cross

The themes of his poems are always the union of the soul with God. The theme of the Bride and the Groom he copies from the Songs of Songs by Solomon. The Bride is the soul that calls and looks for the Groom (God). All his work describes, in an intense manner, the secrets and mysteries that are hidden in the human soul. His friends and disciples asked him to write the meaning of his poems, and thanks to his commentaries, we can appreciate the capacity of his mind to go into deep reflection and the loving simplicity with which he describes the illuminative experience.



Some of his best poems are: *Noche oscura del Alma* (Dark Night of the Soul), *Llama de amor viva* (Living Flame of Love), *Cánticos espirituales entre el alma y Cristo*, (Spiritual Songs between the Soul and Christ), *Cántico epiritual*, (Spiritual Song), *Avisos y sentencias espirituales* (Spiritual Warnings and Sentences) and *Subida al Monte Carmelo* (Ascension to Mount Carmel).

Saint John never finished the commentaries of his poem *The Dark Night the Soul*. What we do have gives us important glimpses into the inner life of the soul in its ascension to its union with the Beloved. I have abridged considerably his commentaries, trying to retain the most essential, so that you can share in the beauty and joy of this Lover of God.

We can also appreciate that he teaches us the Science of Love, as we ascend the ladder of love that takes us to God. The original language of his poems is Spanish, and although some of its beauty was lost in the translation, the inner meaning of the verses still leaves the heart in awe and with an ineffable longing to experience as he did, the second phase of the Dark Night. Let us examine now his poem in his own words.

by Saskia Frau

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

by Saint John of the Cross
(1542–1591)

*On a dark night,
Inflamed by love's yearnings
Oh, joyous chance!
I departed unnoticed
Being now my house at rest.*

*In darkness and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised—
Oh, joyous chance!
In darkness and concealment,
Being now my house at rest.*

*In the joyous night,
In secret, when none saw me,
Nor I beheld aught,
without light or guide,
save that which burned in my heart.*

*This light guided me
More surely than the light of noonday
Where awaited he
well I knew who!
A place where none appeared.*

*Oh, night that guided me,
Oh, night lovelier than dawn,
Oh, night that united
Lover with Beloved,
Lover transformed in the Beloved!*

*Upon my blossomed breast,
Guarded wholly for himself alone,
There he fell asleep,
and I favored him,
And the fanning cedars gave a breeze.*

*The breeze from the turret
When I, his locks parted;
With his serene hand
my neck wounding
And all my senses suspending.*

*I remained, and in oblivion;
My face reclined on the Beloved.
All ceased, and abandoning myself,
Leaving my care
Forgotten among the lilies.*

Commentaries on
The Dark Night of the Soul
by Saint John of the Cross

In a dark night....

“This night, which, as we say, is contemplation, produces in spiritual persons two kinds of darkness or purgation, corresponding to the two parts of man’s nature—namely, the sensual and the spiritual.... Wherein the soul is purged and stripped according to the spirit, and subdued and made ready for the union of love with God. The night of sense is common and comes to many: these are the beginners; and of this night we shall speak first. The night of the spirit is the portion of very few, and these are they that are already practiced and proficient, of whom we shall treat hereafter.

“Since, then, the conduct of these beginners upon the way of God is ignoble, and has much to do with their love of self and their own inclinations, as has been explained above, God desires to lead them farther. He seeks ... to lead them to a kind of spiritual exercise wherein they can commune with Him more abundantly and are freed more completely from imperfections. For they have now had practice for some time in the way of virtue and have persevered in meditation and prayer.”

“When they are going about these spiritual exercises with the greatest delight and pleasure, and when they believe that the sun of Divine favour is shining most brightly upon them, God turns all this light of theirs into darkness.... And thus He leaves them so completely in the dark that they know not whither to go with their sensible imagination and meditation; for they cannot advance a step in meditation, as they were wont to do afore time, their inward senses being submerged in this night, and left with such dryness that not only do they experience no pleasure and consolation in the spiritual things ... but instead, on the contrary, they find insipidity and bitterness in the said things.

“To recollected persons this commonly happens sooner after their beginnings than to others, inasmuch as they are freer from

occasions of backsliding, and their desires turn more quickly from the things of the world, which is necessary if they are to begin to enter this blessed night of sense.”

Saint John mentions the three signs by which a spiritual person can know if he/she has started to walk along the way of this night and purgation of sense.

“The first [sign] is whether, when a soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, it also fails to find it in any thing created; for, as God sets the soul in this dark night to the end that He may quench and purge its sensual desire.... The second sign whereby a man may believe himself to be experiencing the said purgation is that the memory is ordinarily centered upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding, because it finds itself without sweetness in the things of God.

“If those souls to whom this comes to pass knew how to be quiet at this time, and troubled not about performing any kind of action, whether inward or outward, neither had any anxiety about doing anything, then they would delicately experience this inward refreshment in that ease and freedom from care. So delicate is this refreshment that ordinarily, if a man have desire or care to experience it, he experiences it not; for, as I say, it does its work when the soul is most at ease and freest from care; it is like the air which, if one would close one’s hand upon it, escapes.

“The reason is that, in this state of contemplation, which the soul enters when it forsakes meditation for the state of the proficient, it is God Who is now working in the soul.

“The third sign whereby this purgation of sense may be recognized is that the soul can no longer meditate or reflect in the imaginative sphere of sense as it was wont, however much it may of itself endeavor to do so. For God now begins to communicate Himself to it, no longer through sense, as He did aforetime, by means of reflections which joined and sundered its knowledge, but by pure spirit, into which consecutive reflec-



tions enter not; but He communicates Himself to it by an act of simple contemplation, to which neither the exterior nor the interior senses of the lower part of the soul can attain.... For God sets them in this night only to prove them and to humble them, and to reform their desires, so that they go not nurturing in themselves a sinful gluttony in spiritual things.”

Saint John describes the way in which these souls are to conduct themselves in this dark night:

“During the time, then, of the aridities of this night of sense, drawing forth the soul from the life of sense into that of the spirit—that is ... from meditation to contemplation ... spiritual persons suffer great trials, by reason ... as of the fear which they have of being lost on the road, thinking that all spiritual blessing is over for them and that God has abandoned them since they find no help or pleasure in good things. Then they grow weary, and endeavor ... to concentrate their faculties with some degree of pleasure upon some object of meditation, thinking that, when they are not doing this and yet are conscious of making an effort, they are doing nothing.

“These souls turn back at such a time if there is none that understands them; they abandon the road or lose courage; or, at the least, they are hindered from going farther by the great trouble which they take in advancing along the road of meditation and reasoning. Thus they fatigue and overwork

their nature, imagining that they are failing through negligence or sin. But this trouble that they are taking is quite useless, for God is now leading them by another road, which is that of contemplation, and is very different from the first; for the one is of meditation and reasoning, and the other belongs neither to imagination nor yet to reasoning.

“It is well for those who find themselves in this condition to take comfort, to persevere in patience and to be in no wise afflicted. Let them trust in God, Who abandons not those that seek Him with a simple and right heart, and will not fail to give them what is needful for the road, until He bring them into the clear and pure light of love. This last He will give them by means of that other dark night, that of the spirit, if they merit His bringing them thereto.

“The way in which they are to conduct themselves in this night of sense is to devote themselves not at all to reasoning and meditation, since this is not the time for it, but to allow the soul to remain in peace and quietness. What they must do is merely to leave the soul free and disencumbered and at rest from all knowledge and thought, troubling not themselves, in that state, about what they shall think or meditate upon, but contenting themselves with merely a peaceful and loving attentiveness toward God, and in being without anxiety, without the ability and without desired to have experience of Him or to perceive Him. For all these yearnings disquiet and distract the soul from the peaceful quiet and sweet ease of contemplation, which is here, granted to it.

“For if such a soul should desire to make any effort of its own with its interior faculties, this means that it will hinder and lose the blessings which, by means of that peace and ease of the soul, God is instilling into it and impressing upon it.”

Inflamed by love's yearnings....

“And because at times the enkindling of love in the spirit grows greater, the yearnings for God become so great in the soul that the very bones seem to be dried up by this thirst, and the natural powers to be fading

away, and their warmth and strength to be perishing through the intensity of the thirst of love, for the soul feels that this thirst of love is a living thirst....

“For contemplation is naught else than a secret, peaceful and loving infusion from God, which, if it be permitted, enkindles the soul with the spirit of love.

“Meanwhile, however, like one who has begun a cure, the soul knows only suffering in this dark and arid purgation of the desire by this means it becomes healed of many imperfections, and exercises itself in many virtues in order to make itself meet for the said love.”

Oh, joyous chance!...

“When God leads the soul into this night of sense in order to purge the sense of its lower part and to subdue it, unite it and bring it into conformity with the spirit, ... The soul gains so many benefits that it holds it to be a happy chance to have escaped from the bonds and restrictions of the senses of its lower self, by means of this night aforesaid.”

Saint John enumerates the benefits from this night of the soul giving

1. “... the first and principal benefit caused by this arid and dark night of contemplation: the knowledge of oneself and of one's misery.... And from this attire of aridity proceed, as from their fount and source of self-knowledge.

2. “...another excellent benefit, which there is in this night and aridity of the desire of sense, ... God will enlighten the soul, giving it knowledge, not only of its lowliness and wretchedness, as we have said, but likewise of the greatness and excellence of God.

3. “Likewise, from the aridities and voids of this night of the desire, the soul draws spiritual humility, which is the contrary virtue to the first capital sin, which, as we said, is spiritual pride.

“In this condition, again, souls become submissive and obedient upon the spiritual road, for, when they see their own misery, not only do they hear what is taught them,

but they even desire that anyone whomsoever may set them on the way and tell them what they ought to do.

4. “With respect to the soul's imperfections of spiritual avarice, because of which it coveted this and that spiritual thing and found no satisfaction in this and that exercise by reason of its covetousness for the desire and pleasure which it found therein, this arid and dark night has now greatly reformed it.

5. “Another very great benefit for the soul in this night, which is that it practices several virtues together, as, for example, patience and long-suffering, which are often called upon in these times of emptiness and aridity, when the soul endures and perseveres in its spiritual exercises without consolation and without pleasure.... It practices the charity of God and ... It likewise practices here the virtue of fortitude.

7. “With respect to the imperfections of the other three spiritual sins..., which are wrath, envy and sloth, the soul is purged hereof likewise in this aridity of the desire and acquires the virtues opposed to them; for, softened and humbled by these aridities and hardships ... during this night, it becomes meek with respect to God, and to itself, and likewise with respect to its neighbor.”

I departed unnoticed....

“That is, ‘I went forth’ from the bonds and subjection of the desires of sense and the affections, ‘without being observed’—that is to say, without the three enemies aforementioned [world, flesh & devil] being able to keep me from it. These enemies, as we have said, bind the soul as with bonds, in its desires and pleasures, and prevent it from going forth from itself to the liberty of the love of God; and without these desires and pleasures they cannot give battle to the soul, as has been said.”

Being now my house at rest....

“It was a happy chance for this soul that on this night God should put to sleep all the domestics in its house—that is, all the facul-

ties, passions, affections and desires which live in the soul, both sensually and spiritually.”

In darkness and secure....

“A thick and heavy cloud is upon the soul, keeping it in affliction, and, as it were, far away from God. It is in this kind of ‘darkness’ that the soul says here it traveled ‘securely.’”

“[T]he soul never strays save through its desires or its tastes or its reflections or its understanding or its affections; for as a rule it has too much or too little of these, or they vary or go astray, and hence the soul becomes inclined to that which behooves it not. When all these operations and motions are hindered, it is clear that the soul is secure against being led astray by them; for it is free, not only from itself, but likewise from its other enemies, which are the world and the devil.”

By the secret ladder, disguised....

“First, it describes this dark contemplation as ‘secret,’ since, as we have indicated above, it is mystical theology, which theologians call secret wisdom, and which, as Saint Thomas says is communicated and infused into the soul through love.... But the Holy Spirit infuses and orders it in the soul, as says the Bride in the Songs, without either its knowledge or its understanding it is called secret... Even then it is still so secret that the soul cannot speak of it and give it a name whereby it may be called; for, apart from the fact that the soul has no desire to speak of it, it can find no suitable way or manner or similitude by which it may be able to describe such lofty understanding and such delicate spiritual feeling.”

Saint John says,

“We can call this secret contemplation a ladder for many reasons.

“By means of this secret contemplation, without knowing how, the soul ascends and climbs up to a knowledge and possession of the good things and treasures of Heaven.



“And they shall go from virtue to virtue as from step to step, and the God of gods shall be seen in Sion.’ This God is the treasure of the strong place of Sion, which is happiness.”

“For this ladder of contemplation, which, as we have said, comes down from God, is prefigured by that ladder which Jacob saw as he slept, whereon angels were ascending and descending, from God to man, and from man to God, Who Himself was leaning upon the end of the ladder.

“[W]e shall observe that the principal characteristic of contemplation, on account of which it is here called a ladder, is that it is the science of love. This, as we have said, is an infused and loving knowledge of God, which enlightens the soul and at the same time enkindles it with love, until it is raised up step by step, even unto God its Creator. For it is love alone that unites and joins the soul with God.”

Saint John explains that the ladder of divine love has ten steps:

“The first step of love causes the soul to languish and this to its advantage.

“The second step causes the soul to seek God without ceasing.”

“The third step ... is that which causes the soul to work and gives it fervor so that it fails not.

“The fourth step is that whereby there is caused in the soul an habitual suffering because of the Beloved, yet without weariness.”

“The fifth step makes the soul to desire and long for God impatiently.

“On the sixth step the soul runs swiftly to God and touches Him again and again; and it runs without fainting by reason of its hope. For here the love that has made it strong makes it to fly swiftly.

“The seventh step ... makes the soul to become vehement in its boldness.... Hence follows that which the Apostle says, namely: That charity believeth all things, hopeth all things and is capable of all things.”

“The eighth step of love causes the soul to seize Him and hold Him fast without letting Him go.

“The ninth step of love makes the soul to burn with sweetness. This step is that of the perfect, who now burn sweetly in God. For this sweet and delectable ardor is caused in them by the Holy Spirit by reason of the union which they have with God.”

“The tenth and last step ... causes the soul to become wholly assimilated to God, by reason of the clear and immediate vision of God which it then possesses; when, having ascended in this life to the ninth step, it goes forth from the flesh.”

By the secret ladder, disguised...

Saint John then explains what disguise means here:

“For the understanding of this it must be known that to disguise oneself is naught else but to hide and cover oneself beneath another garb and figure than one’s own.” And adds that there are times when “a man assumes the garments and livery which best represent and indicate the affection of his heart and which best conceal him from his rivals.”

Saint John even describes the colors of this disguise:

“Thus the livery, which it wears, is of three chief colours—white, green and purple—denoting the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity.”

“They constitute a most fit preparation for the union of the soul with God, according to its three faculties, which are understanding, memory and will. For faith voids and darkens the understanding as to all its natural intelligence, and herein prepares it for union with Divine Wisdom. Hope voids and withdraws the memory from all creature possessions; and sets it on that for which it hopes.

“Charity, in the same way, voids and annihilates the affections and desires of the will for whatever is not God, and sets them upon Him alone; and thus this virtue prepares this faculty and unites it with God through love.”

Oh, joyous chance!...

“Having attained liberty of spirit, so precious and so greatly desired by all, it went forth from low things to high; from terrestrial, it became celestial; from human, Divine. Thus it came to have its conversation in the heavens, as has the soul in this state of perfection.”

In darkness and concealment....

“When the soul, then, says ‘in darkness and in concealment,’ it means that, inasmuch as it journeyed in darkness ... it went in hiding and in concealment from the devil and from his wiles and stratagems.... When the soul has genuine visions by the instrumentality of the good angel (for it is by this instrumentality that they habitually come, even though Christ reveal Himself, for He scarcely ever appears in His actual person), God also gives the wicked angel leave to present to the soul false visions of this very type in such a way that the soul which is not cautious may easily be deceived by their outward appearance, as many souls have been.... And not only does the evil one imitate God in this type of bodily vision, but he also imitates and interferes in spiritual communications which come through the instrumentality of an angel, when he succeeds in seeing them, as we say.... At other times the devil prevails and encompasses the soul with a perturbation and horror which is a greater affliction to it than any torment in

this life could be. For, as this horrible communication passes direct from spirit to spirit, in something like nakedness and clearly distinguished from all that is corporeal, it is grievous beyond what every sense can feel.... But in this connection it must be known that, when the good angel permits the devil to gain this advantage of assailing the soul with this spiritual horror, he does it to purify the soul and to prepare it by means of this spiritual vigil for some great spiritual favour and festival which he desires to grant it, for he never mortifies save to give life, nor humbles save to exalt, which comes to pass shortly afterwards.”

Being now my house at rest...

“Inasmuch as, by means of that war of the dark night, as has been said, the soul is combated and purged after two manners—namely, according to its sensual and its spiritual part—with its senses, faculties and passions, so likewise after two manners—namely, according to these two parts, the sensual and the spiritual—with all its faculties and desires, the soul attains to an enjoyment of peace and rest.”

“This repose and quiet of this spiritual house the soul comes to attain, habitually and perfectly (in so far as the condition of this life allows), by means of the acts of the substantial touches of Divine union whereof we have just spoken; which, in concealment, and hidden from the perturbation of the devil, and of its own senses and passions, the soul has been receiving from the Divinity, wherein it has been purifying itself, as I say, resting, strengthening and confirming itself in order to be able to receive the said union once and for all, which is the Divine betrothal between the soul and the Son of God.”

In the joyous night....

“The first, it says, is that in this happy night of contemplation God leads the soul by a manner of contemplation so solitary and secret, so remote and far distant from sense, that naught pertaining to it, nor any touch of created things, succeeds in approaching the soul in such a way as to disturb it and detain it on the road of the union of love.

“The second property whereof it speaks pertains to the spiritual darkness of this night, wherein all the faculties of the higher part of the soul are in darkness. The soul sees naught, neither looks at aught neither stays in aught that is not God, to the end that it may reach Him, inasmuch as it journeys unimpeded by obstacles of forms and figures, and of natural apprehensions, which are those that are wont to hinder the soul from uniting with the eternal Being of God.

“The third is that, although as it journeys it is supported by no particular interior light of understanding, nor by any exterior guide, that it may receive satisfaction therefrom on this lofty road—it is completely deprived of all this by this thick darkness—yet its love alone, which burns at this time, and makes its heart to long for the Beloved, is that which now moves and guides it, and makes it to soar upward to its God along the road of solitude, without its knowing how or in what manner.”

Saint John finishes his commentaries with this line, as if he intended to go back to it, but never had the chance:

Being now my house at rest....

compiled by Saskia Frau

^{1&2} T. Saraydarian, *Dynamics of the Soul*, p. 107. © 2001 The Creative Trust

³ T. Saraydarian, *The Psyche and Psychism*, Vol. 2, pp. 939–940. © 1981 Torkom Saraydarian

⁴ Matthew 27:51.

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[Ed. note: To learn more on the subject of contemplation, refer to *The Science of Meditation* by Torkom Saraydarian.]



February / March 2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Florida (Sarasota)
WMEA Study Group meets at 9:30 a.m., on alternate Wednesday mornings in Sarasota. Please call **GINETTE Parisi** at (941) 925-0549 for complete information.

The Ohio (Ashville) WMEA
Study Group meets twice a month for meditation gatherings. For upcoming meeting dates and times, please call **Kate Studebaker** at (740) 983-6030.

The Puerto Rico WMEA
Group – Please call **Saskia Frau** at (787) 780-6276 or (939) 389-1149 for complete information.

The Oregon (Lebanon)
WMEA Study Group meets each month for a meditation gathering. Please call **Vickie Stevens** at (541) 258-6142 for complete information.

February 2005

- Tue. 1** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 2** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 6** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“Beauty & the Spiritual Path”** with Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **Creekside Center, 337 N. Rush St., Prescott**
WMEA Men’s Study Group – Taj Mahal Restaurant
- Tue. 8** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 9** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 13** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“Beauty & Life”** with Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **Creekside Center, 337 N. Rush St., Prescott**
- Tue. 15** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 16** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 20** **Sun Festival of Pisces Group Meditation & Discussion on World Affairs**, will include information about the world’s esoteric communities, facilitator – Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **Creekside Center, 337 N. Rush St., Prescott**
- Tue. 22** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 23** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 27** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“Ya Latif Beauty Is the End and the Beginning,”** with Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **Creekside Center, 337 N. Rush St., Prescott**

March 2005

- Tue. 1** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 2** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 6** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“Culture in the New Age I”** with Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **WMEA Center, Eastwood Dr**
WMEA Men’s Study Group – Taj Mahal Restaurant
- Tue. 8** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 9** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Sun. 13** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“Culture in the New Age II”** with Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **Creekside Center, 337 N. Rush St.**
- Tue. 15** Pre-Conference Work Night – WMEA Center
- Wed. 16** **WMEA Living Ethics Conference, Opening Ceremonies, 7–9 p.m.**
- Sun. 20** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“Dark Night of the Soul”** with Rev. Saskia Frau, Holy Communion, with Rev. Joleen DuBois, 10:00 a.m., **Chapel Rock, St. James Bldg**
- Tue. 22** **SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS**
- Wed. 23** **SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS**
- Fri. 25** **Sun Festival of Aries Group Meditation**, with Valarie Drost, 7–8 p.m. **WMEA Center**
- Sun. 27** Sunday Service: Meditation, Singing, and Lecture **“The Easter Service”** with Rev. Valarie Drost, 10:00 a.m., **Creekside Center, 337 N. Rush St.**
- Tue. 29** Class: **Initiation – The Esoteric Tradition**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center
- Wed. 30** Class: **Cosmic Shocks**, 7–8 p.m., WMEA Center

Ask about classes for kids and teens on Sundays.

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