

Spiritual Paths

By Marguerite Kirsch

Today there is a genuine effort around the world at “deep ecumenism,” or “interfaith,” the coming together of the spiritual wisdom traditions of the world.¹ The world’s great spiritual traditions seem to have similar notions of the sacred potential of our innermost being. Even present day Depth Psychology shares this notion. It might be called the Buddha nature, Enlightenment, Divine Indwelling, the Cosmic Christ, or even Individuation, or Wholeness.² As Unitarian Universalists, in a way we are ahead of the curve in this, as other faiths are just now reaching out to the religious pluralism and the Sources that already inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life. Many of the world religions also teach us that the sacred potential of our deep Self can expand to pervade our entire being, if we will only engage wholeheartedly in spiritual practice³. This is called mysticism.

Change is necessary for our survival right now, and we often turn to the mystics at critical times like this.⁴ “The crises we find ourselves in as a species require that we shake up all our institutions — including our religious ones — and reinvent them.”⁵ Jung said: ‘Only the mystics bring what is creative to religion.’⁶ The Buddha was a mystic who shook up the prevailing Hinduism of his day; Jesus was a mystic shaking up his religion and the Roman Empire; Gandhi was a mystic shaking up Hinduism and challenging the British Empire; and Martin Luther King Jr. shook up his tradition and America’s segregationist society. The mystics walk their talk and talk their walk.⁷ Patriarchal culture by itself has been unable to tap into the deep feminine aspects of Wisdom, Compassion, Creativity, Love for the Earth. But the mystics, male and female, do not present such a one-sided reality. The yin/yang, female/male dialectic has always been and **is** still alive and well in the mystical tradition -- the mystics seek wisdom,⁸ compassion, creativity, and Love for our Interdependent Web.

Our species must draw on the deepest gifts we possess to survive. Mysticism is among the finest of these gifts. Mysticism is about awe and gratitude, letting go, and letting be, birthing and creativity, and compassion — including healing, celebration and justice making. The prophet or spiritual warrior is “the mystic in action,” as American philosopher William Hocking observed. Every mystic is a healer, too. We all are healers, called to heal each other, ourselves, our world.⁹

Deep down, each one of us is a mystic [with a little m] waiting to be birthed. We want to serve in whatever capacity we can. Getting in touch with the mystic inside is the beginning of our deep service. When we tap into the deep energy inside us we become alive again. From the creativity that we release is born the prophetic vision and work that we all aspire to realize as our gift to the world.¹⁰ To be a mystic it isn’t necessary to be connected to anything “supernatural.” What is essential is maintaining connection with the depths of ourselves. Through fidelity to our spiritual practices, we will be able to do this, thus finding the wisdom, compassion and energy we need to live and work creatively and with purpose.

In Unitarian Universalism we all share a larger path, but we each follow or choose smaller paths, or perhaps these paths choose us. They will vary according to our prior experience, our temperament, our environment.

On the small insert in your program is a list of some online resources for spiritual paths and practices that may be of help to some of you.

<http://www.intensivejournal.org>
<http://www.questaspiritualjourney.com>
<http://www.uusdn.org>
<http://www.clf.uua.org>
<http://lists.uua.org>
<http://www.uua.org/directory/organizations>

<http://www.uuchristian.org>
<http://huumanists.org>
<http://www.cuups.org>
<http://uuja.org>
<http://www25.uua.org/uubf>

<http://www.hadeninstitute.com>
<http://www.jeremytaylor.com>
<http://www.asdreams.org>

<http://www.movingboundaries.com>
<http://www.faithandreason.org>
<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com>
<http://www.journeyconferences.com>