

Into the Mystic

For our final webinar on Judeo-Christian spirituality, we will discuss the transition from traditional, exoteric or outer religion, to mysticism, which is an internal, experiential communion with the Divine.

We will first explore the role of attention in promoting mystic states of awareness. We will then discuss the differences between religious faith and mysticism. Finally, we will probe how exoteric religious faith interfaces with mystic communion, and tease out the continuum of relating to the Divine, when it is appropriate to share about mystic insights with others, and the role that exoteric religious training has in spiritual life.

The Role of Attention in Achieving Mystic Union

Excerpted from *Religions, Cults, and Terrorism: What the Heck Are We Doing?*

The state of personal identity is maintained when attention is focused on the Self. As your attention focuses on the Self, you gain awareness of the bands of the Conscious, Subconscious, and Metacconscious mind, and perceive the abilities of the Self that are operating within that field.

This state of personal identity is broken when the central focus of attention is refocused into the intuitive stream coming from the higher Planes. This is called Self-transcendence, or Transcendence meditation.

This intuitive stream coming down from the Superconscious mind might be experienced as light, sound, feeling the energy of life, or suffusion by sweetness and fragrance (nectar or ambrosia)—this is a sensory experience that culminates with locating the Soul and the Master, the Initiate who guides the Soul, in that stream.

This location of the ensouling entity beyond the personal Self marks the beginning of spiritual work. This inner work leads to (a) attentional union with a spiritual essence on that higher Plane, (b) manifesting abilities from that higher Plane, (c) performing meditation on the spirit and opening the channels of the Nada, and (d) unfolding the Soul's potentials.

Meditation not involving transference of attention from the personal Self into the Superconscious takes three basic forms:

- (1) You may receive an answer from the Higher Self to a question raised within the mind or use another creative method to commune with the Higher Self
- (2) You may concentrate and becoming aware of the personal Self, which is called Centering
- (3) You may creatively use your personal abilities to obtain a goal, to achieve something you desire, or to manifest your intention.

In (2) or (3), your awareness is not raised to any level beyond the personal Self, so insight into the Superconscious mind, the abode of Transpersonal experience, is not possible through these two methods. The creative techniques of method (1) however, are used to commune with the Soul and the Master. To contact the Higher Self might involve using a visualization of a symbol to represent the Soul and dialoguing with it; calling upon it through prayer or invocation; believing in it (faith); or connecting with it through singing, chanting, ecstatic movement or dance. It is via method (1) that the preparation is made for mystic meditation, which results in union with your Soul, and the activation of the potentials of your consciousness on that higher Plane.

To generate this attentional breakthrough, an Initiate directs energy through the higher Self, into the zone of the personal Self, and directly intercepts the point of attentional focus, and draws attention upward into the Superconscious mind.

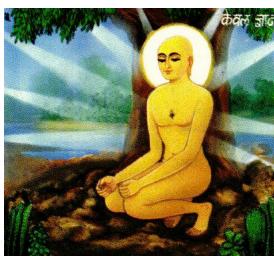
Through this burst of the spiritual will of a Master, the veil of personal identity is broken, allowing a reawakening at a higher level of existence —this is called initiation.

A mystic Master has the ability to draw the attention upwards in the Life Stream, and to refocus it at another point where spiritual existence, spiritual meditation, inner spiritual service, inner spiritual instruction may be experienced.

The purpose of the Master is to bring about full spiritual development. To perform this function, the overshadowing Initiate acts as guide to the personal Self, permitting the personal Self to act freely within certain parameters, and restricting it in others. This discipline imposed from within stops the creation of ever-new karmic issues, which entangle the spirit in the “payment of debts,” and allows the Soul to purify its vehicles in the most rapid means.

The curtailment of freedom at the time of the Master’s taking charge of the disciple’s karma is resisted quite heavily at first, but gradually comes to be accepted. As the inner core of spiritual experience grows, the personal Self begins to understand that it is involved in a process that is for the benefit of a higher aspect of itself. Then it begins to willingly cooperate in this process.

Though this process of cooperation and regular contemplation, you bridge the gap between the personal Self and the Higher Self. When this bridge is complete, you experience spiritual awakening, and enter a state of enlightenment. When you become enlightened, you become a channel of spiritual energy, inspiration, and wisdom for the world, channeled through your personal Self.



Religious Faith and Mysticism

Excerpted from *Religions, Cults, and Terrorism: What the Heck Are We Doing?*

There are two major forms of religious faith, Apollonian and Dionysian. Traditional Apollonian religious faith is structured and conservative. It is marked by:

- It advocates a rigid code of morality; individuals are shamed and frightened into following it.
- Established rituals are enacted on a regular basis.
- Mysteries of faith are presented symbolically and analyzed intellectually
- Doctrine is presented as beliefs that cannot be questioned
- One spiritual teacher and his/her teaching is idealized as supreme, and all other faiths are criticized or seen as inferior
- The truths of this religion are concretized in the form of scripture, which is studied, meditated upon, and expounded as teaching
- Prayer and singing hymns are the chief method of invocation and remembrance
- Those who teach the doctrines of the faith are not themselves realized Souls, but are theologians who interpret and expand the scriptures

Dionysian religious faith is revelatory and charismatic. While it builds upon the basic foundation of the Apollonian structures, it adds ecstatic and participatory experiences. Some markers of Dionysian faiths include:

- They practice morality to be pleasing to the Lord; believers pray to be relieved of their moral failings.

- They do have rituals, but their spiritual services may include unstructured times in which believers seek to receive the Holy Spirit or to practice the gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues or laying on of hands for healing.
- They seek to participate in the mysteries of faith, and may carry crosses, go on long arduous pilgrimages, or undergo fasting or penance to “identify” with the suffering of their Lord.
- While certain core beliefs of faith are not questioned, believers hold that they can receive personal revelation from the Lord as pertaining to the issues of their life.
- They hold one spiritual teacher as supreme, and actively worship and praise him or her as part of their religious ceremonies.
- The truths of the religion are codified in the scriptures and these may be observed literally, but in these groups establishing a relationship with the Lord through love is seen to be primary.
- Prayer and singing hymns are also used in these groups, but the songs are sung with such love and fervor that some believers enter a trance state. Dancing or “holy rolling” may accompany singing.
- Those who teach and “preach” in these groups are not realized Souls. They instead seek to channel the inspiration and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Beyond both types of religious faith is Mysticism. Mysticism goes beyond belief into the realm of direct experience, which is ecstatic and ineffable. While some mystic traditions grow up as secret branches of established religions, some exist as separate groups of believers who follow a Realized Spiritual Teacher.

Mystic teachings emphasize:

- A code of morality based on inner realization is advocated, and individuals take responsibility for their behavior.
- The only ritual is a regular time for meditation. Special clothes, signs, greetings, slogans, etc... are dispensed with.
- Mysteries of the faith are realized intuitively: initiates enter into the mysteries in their own being
- Doctrine is not belief-oriented, e.g., the initiate is not asked to believe anything, but to verify all statements through inner experience
- The source of spiritual teachings and the attainment of spiritual teachers in this tradition are directly cognized upon the Great Continuum of Consciousness, and not worshipped from afar
- The truths recognized are the wisdom the Soul gains in its upward journey. It recognizes that scriptures define and describe aspects of the Great Continuum of Consciousness, and as such, are guidebooks.
- Meditation, using transformational methods, and additional techniques are added to prayer
- Those who teach have realized the Soul and are empowered by the Divine to teach via Light Immersion and through Grace.

Most individuals feel comfortable with religious faith and are not moved to jump into the great unknown of Mysticism. Many have been taught to fear it.

Predatory cult leaders, who exploit seekers and trap them in altered states of consciousness, have sometimes waylaid those that venture into its Mysticism's deep waters. But there are genuine realized teachers who can guide the seeker safely across the Continuum.

These genuine teachers only work to grant seekers Liberation and inner Mastery. For those that have this aspiration to cross the Great Ocean of Consciousness, may you find the True One you seek.

The Interface of Exoteric Religion and Esoteric Mystic Communion

Excerpted from *Religions, Cults, and Terrorism: What the Heck Are We Doing?*

Spiritual development in exoteric religion can be seen to consist of eight stages starting with rudimentary faith to a global theological and moral grasp of the principles of the religious. In the Christian faith, these eight stages appear as follows:

1. Belief in God and Jesus, similar patterns exist for the exoteric stages of other faiths
2. Prayer to God and Jesus for fulfillment of desires, aid to individuals and groups of people
3. Passive reception of emotional comfort, forgiveness, emotional experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit
4. Anchoring of spiritual gifts that can be voluntarily activated through prayer, or by asking that they be activated within; these gifts may also spontaneously arise, such as speaking in an unknown tongue
5. Active study and reflection upon the scriptures, and listening to sermons, leading a cognitive framework of beliefs, values, and moral decisions based on study of the scriptures. This leads to the partial activation of the moral reasoning band of the Moon Soul. Personal behavior change and values, reformation occurs as a result of this study
6. Awakening as spirit, spiritual supplication and thanksgiving, asking that the Holy Spirit may be given to Self and others

7. Awakening as the Moon Soul, which highlights active moral judgment, and may be expressed through preaching
8. Discovery of the Shekinah, the Divine Spirit within History, the origin of the moral reasoning band, which brings understanding of entire theological domain—this is the seat of exoteric ministry.

It is to be noted that stages 2 through 7 need not follow any temporal order. For example, a believer may have an experience of emotional comfort (3), followed by a deep prayer session where he or she awakens as the spirit (6), or may have a full conversion experience conferring a sense of freedom and new identity almost immediately in their spiritual journey that comes with awakening as the Moon Soul (7). Step (8) represents the full exoteric maturation of the believer, conferring the ability to teach, counsel, or minister to others.

This last step is typically supplemented by formal education. This is typically felt as a “vocation” or calling to exoteric ministry, that leads an individual to these studies.



The Continuum of Relating to the Divine

Exoteric religion can be seen as existing on a continuum of attempting to relate to a conception of the Divine, ranging from contempt and antagonism towards that idea, to questing and developing a personal relationship with that Higher Power, to mystic communion with the Source of Light and the principles of consciousness in full awareness. These are shown in the table on the next page:

INNER (Paramartha)	(12) Grace-Bestowing Power	Becoming an instrument for the Divine
	(11) Initiation	Unfolding of the potentials of the Soul
	(10) Mastery	The development of powers and abilities of the Superconscious mind
	(9) Devotion	Traveling the path of the Nada by the spirit
	(8) Metavision	Seeing the inner realms by the attentional principle
OUTER (Swamartha)	(7) Revelation	Seeing the Light, a vision, or glimpse of the higher realities
	(6) Dialogue	Praying to and receiving guidance from God
	(5) Faith	Belief in God
	(4) Questing	Seeking answers and to understand, maintaining a willingness to suspend doubt and keep an open mind
	(3) Doubt	Discerning beliefs that do not reconcile with logic and rejecting them
	(2) Ridicule	Intellectual dissent and public diatribe; often colored by arrogance and attitude of superiority
	(1) Blasphemy	Attribution of evil to God and religion, active attacks against institutions and symbols of the sacred

Bands 1 through 3 give rise to active persecution of religion, labeling religious groups as cults, and adoption of an atheistic stance to the concept of a Divine Life as origin and Source of the Universe and Superconscious Mind. At these levels, the individual is identified with the ego, and cannot conceive anything greater than oneself.

Band 4 is a turning point in an individual's spiritual life, as he or she begins to ask what if there is some greater reality than can be known by the senses and proved by reason.

After some period of self-analysis, reading and study, and contact with religious messages, the individual comes to a conviction of belief and trust in God seen in band 5. This marks the beginning of immersion in exoteric religion.

Exoteric religion may be seen to inhabit bands 5, 6, and 7 of this continuum, marked by evocation and supplication of the Divine, and the answering of these needs by Divine Response. This establishes an ongoing dialog and relationship between the individual and the Divine. At the culmination of this phase, the individual may be granted revelatory insight into scriptures and glimpses of spiritual realms, which may be seen as prophetic visions or promises of a paradise world to come.

The esoteric or inner path begins with the activating of the four inner principles: opening the third eye, e.g., realization of the attentional principle (band 8); purifying the inner channels of the Nada and placing the spirit upon the path of salvation (band 9); the full energization of the Superconscious mind through the activating of the kundalini shakti and mobilization of the higher intuitive and ministerial functions of the Higher Mind (band 10), and the transformation of the spiritual evolutionary potentials of the ensouling entity (band 11). The esoteric path culminates in the achievement of the ability to awaken bands 8 through 11 in others, which is the state of the anointed and Divinely-empowered Initiates.

Our View of Proselytization

Even as it is difficult to reach an ego-identified individual to show them the verities and blessings that faith and developing a relationship with God grant, it too is difficult to reach a Moon Soul or spiritual-essence-atom identified believer in an exoteric faith.

To ask the religious to take the step into the great unknown beyond, into mystic communion, is highly anxiety provoking, and evokes great resistance.

Even as the ego puts up a surly fight when the individual attempts to reach beyond the world egg of the Conscious mind, the aspirant who has passed beyond the veil of the stable beliefs and values of religion has great difficulty in conveying the ineffable joy and wonder that comes from mystic communion and meditation.

It is suggested therefore that the zealous aspirant not attempt to convert those established in religious faith, but to pursue his or her own spiritual development using the tools given in the Mudrashram® Master Course in Meditation or Accelerated Meditation Program.

The aspirant may make it known to those individuals in a religion that a further step is possible, and that a means is available should they wish to investigate it.

The aspirant should only speak with those who are struggling with the boundaries and restrictions placed upon them by religious doctrine that block their further expansion into spiritual maturity and who seek “something more.”

It is to be further pointed out that those who are in the questing stage, who are without the moral training and knowledge of the scriptures imparted by religious involvement can sometimes have bad reactions to immediate immersion into mystic communion.

It is for this reason that many spiritual traditions emphasize that the seeker first adopt moral self-discipline and scriptural study before the keys to the beyond are imparted.

Seekers in the questing stage should be therefore clearly educated about what the path of mystic communion involves, and encouraged to gain a broad understanding of spiritual teachings and continually work upon themselves to become the best they can become, and to become noble and virtuous human beings.

Place of Exoteric Religion in Spiritual Life

The teachers of the Mudrashram® lineage emphasize that moral self-discipline and study of scriptures are very important in grounding spirituality in behavior and intellectual understanding.

The aspirant on the path to discipleship must observe Dharma Yoga, begin to supplant negative habits and actions with those more in keeping with his or her spiritual cutting edge, and thereby translate his or her realizations into virtuous behavior, loving positive relationships, and compassionate, gentle lifestyle.

Therefore, despite limitations of exoteric religious practices, there is still much of value that can be gained by learning about the world's scriptures, and developing a personal framework of morality by which to appropriately restrain adharmic words and deeds.



- Were you part of a religious group before you took up the practice of meditation? How did that religious group regard meditation?
- What enabled you to transition from your involvement with that religious group? What motivated you to move beyond the confines of exoteric religion?
- What enabled your shift on the continuum of relating to the Divine?
- Did you ever tell someone still involved in traditional religion about your mystic experiences? What was their reaction? What criteria do you use for telling others about your current spiritual affiliation?
- As you begin to transition into and stabilize on the platform of mystic spirituality, what do you feel that you learned that was valuable from your immersion in conventional religion?

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

