

Supplemental images and narrative to  
*Is Your God Big Enough? Close Enough? You Enough?*  
*Jesus and the Three Faces of God*  
by Paul Smith

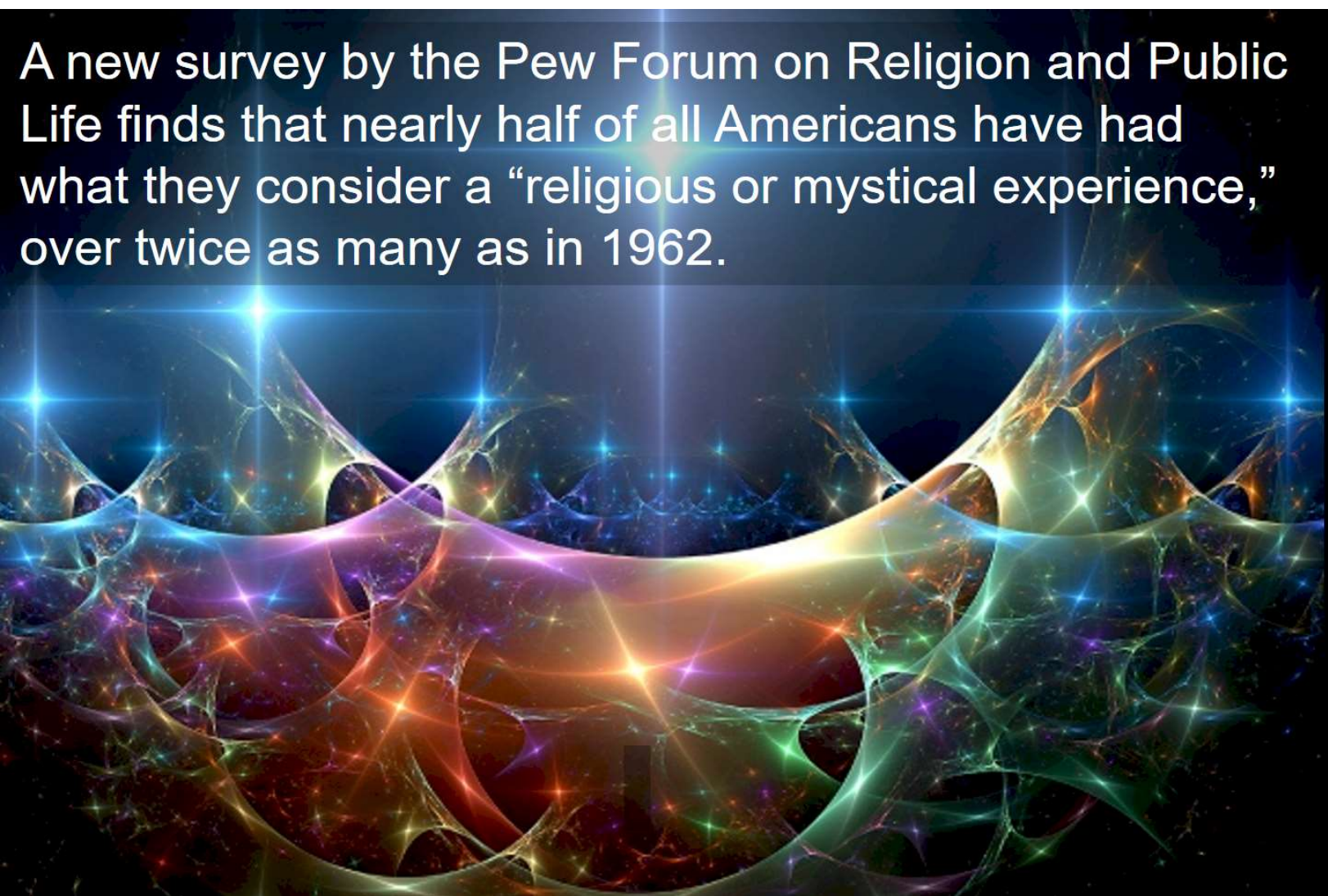
## CHAPTER 11



### THE REALITY OF AWAKENED CONSCIOUSNESS

(pages 245-268)

A new survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that nearly half of all Americans have had what they consider a “religious or mystical experience,” over twice as many as in 1962.



***An ancient visionary experience recorded in the Bible:***

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Angelic beings were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 6:1-3

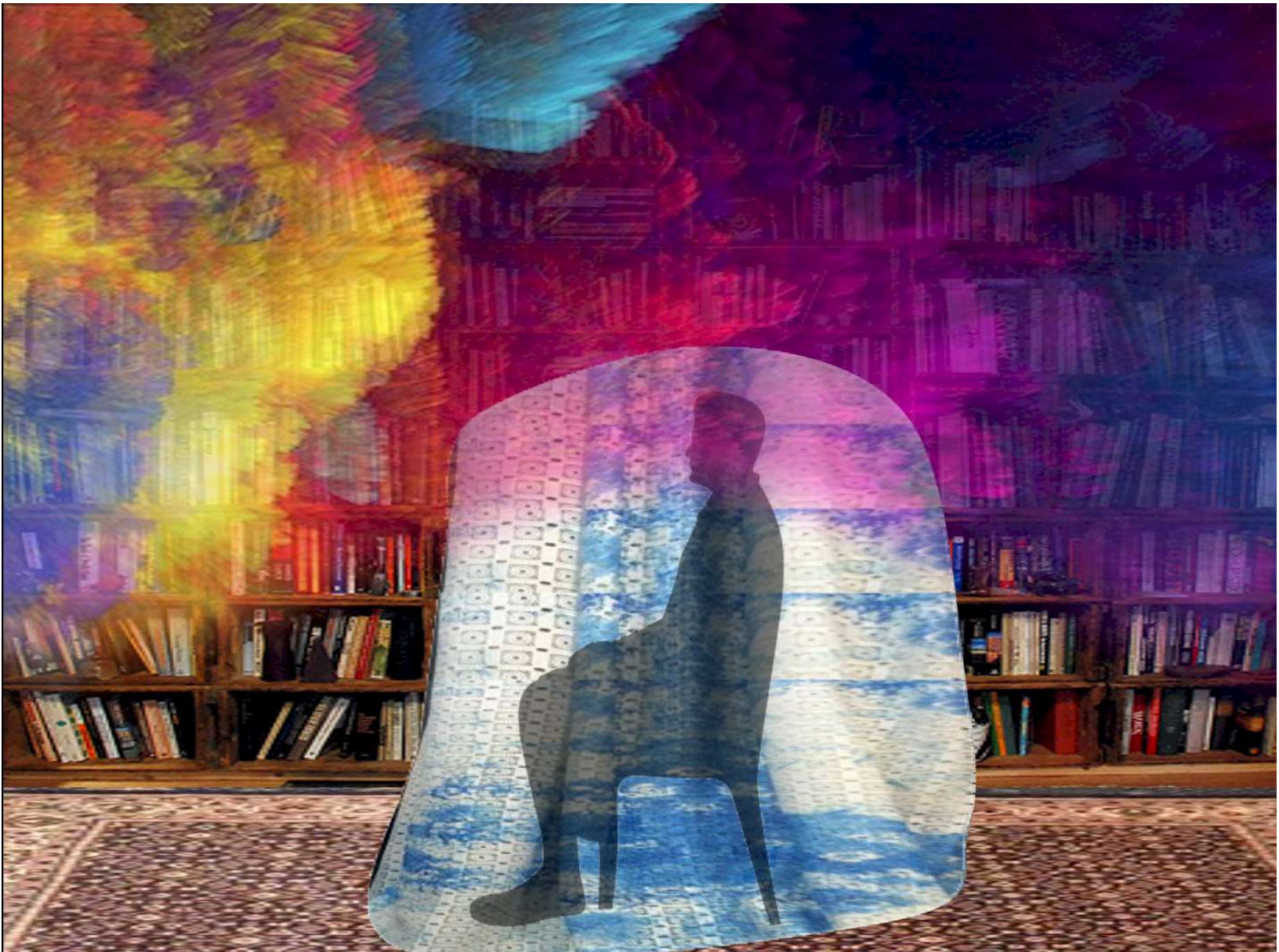


*Isaiah in the Temple by Luke Allsbrook*



***A modern visionary experience recorded in the person's journal:***

I was seated with my eyes open in a darkened room in my usual time of prayer and meditation. I felt drained, worn out, and anxious that I would not be able to complete my current work. Slowly, a beautiful, deep, darker than dark blackness filled the room which I sensed as the presence of God. Then gorgeous colors of gold, blue, purple, white, and red began rolling in like waves on a coastline from beyond. A wave of one color would roll by to be followed by another. It reminded me of God's glory often symbolized and seen as bright light. The waves receded as a luminous, undulating curtain of pale blue and gray lace formed around me.



The first account occurred some 2700 years ago with Isaiah.

The second event happened to me last year.

Isaiah and I were Infinite Consciousness  
having a human experience.

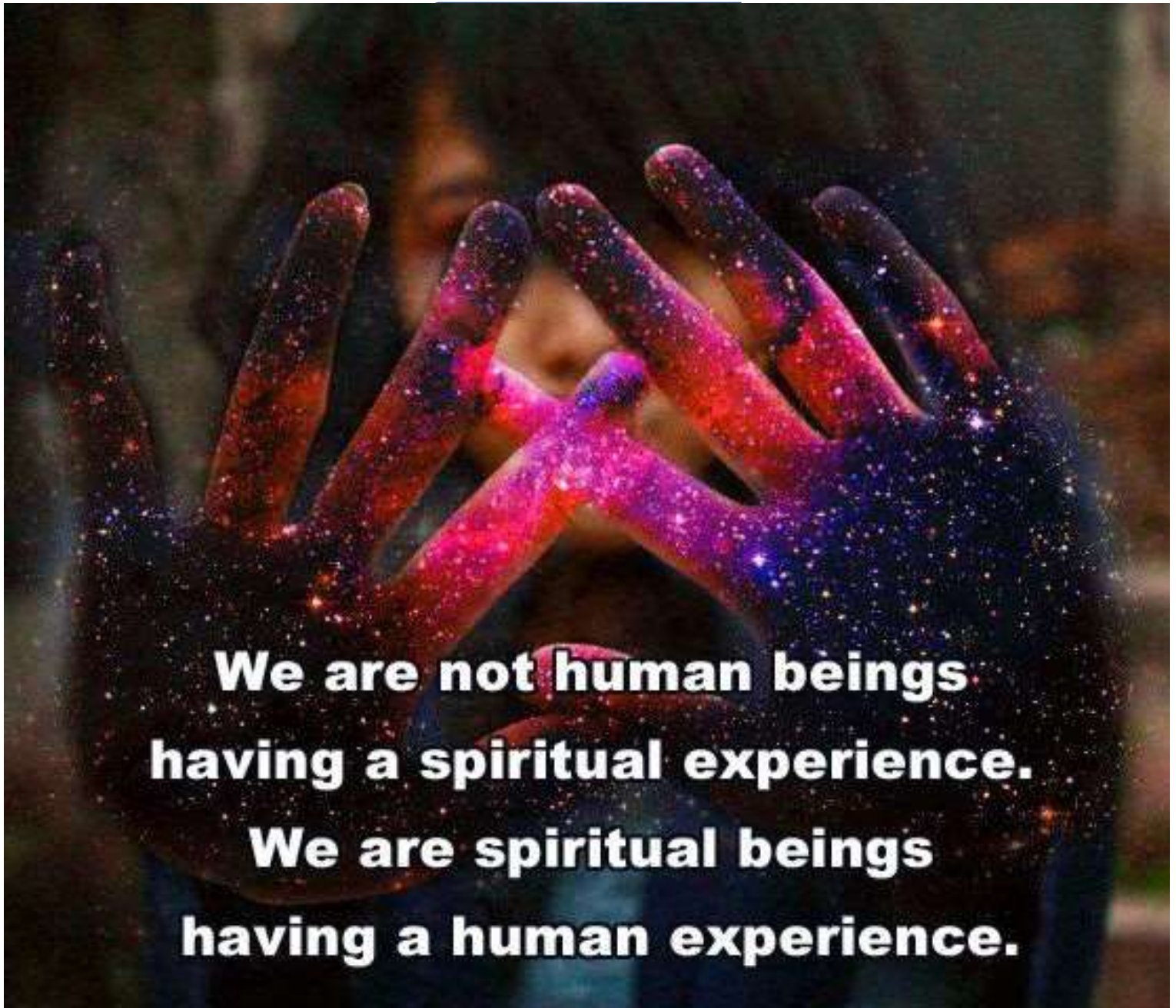
*So are you whenever you notice it!*





All of our spiritual experiences are shaped and interpreted by our stage of development, culture, and needs.

Isaiah needed a Temple.  
I needed a God's hand over me in the shape of  
a Jewish prayer shawl curtain.



**We are not human beings  
having a spiritual experience.  
We are spiritual beings  
having a human experience.**

# My journey

I was raised in a moderate (for the 40's and 50's) Southern Baptist Church in St. Louis, Mo. As a teen-ager I was fascinated by the Bible and the beliefs of my church. I was the twelve-year-old who keep asking my Sunday School teachers why the New Testament pictured a Christianity that seemed quite different from what we experienced at church.

Home life as an only child was filled with fighting and constant arguments between an emotionally absent father who had constant affairs and an anxious, over-protective mother who had periodic "nervous breakdowns." The only safe and sane place I found in life was at church. My Sunday School teacher may have beat his wife, but at church he was thoughtful and kind to me. Church was my sanctuary and I took a bus and a street car to get there several times a week as a teen-ager.

I was passionate about Christianity, president of my high school Bible club, and carried my Bible (on top of my other books) all four years of high school.



I was the smart kid at school who exceled in my studies and received a National Merit Scholarship which gave me a free ride at Washington University that I could have never afforded otherwise.



I was also busy then at church leading youth groups and playing the organ while leading the choir as in this old 1958 picture of me.



It was natural for me to attend seminary and when I was twenty-three and on summer break from seminary, I attended a charismatic Episcopal prayer retreat. At one point they asked if they could pray for me. I wasn't sure about that. After all, I was a young preacher boy and already had everything I needed, thank you. I acquiesced and they gather around to pray for me. The group leader, a large African American woman clapped her hands and shouted, "Oh my, we've got our hands on a preacher boy!" I almost ran out then. They prayed quietly, some in English and some mumbling words I didn't understand. Of course, nothing happened because I drive with my spiritual brakes on and planned it that way.



However, two weeks later, I was home alone in bedroom reading an Agatha Christie mystery, when I suddenly felt very strange. I felt in love with the book I was reading. I felt in love with Agatha Christine. I loved the walls of the room, the bed, and desk. I loved my parents which had always been no easy task. I even loved the Catholics— back the Baptists and Catholics did not love each other. This overwhelming love and bliss last for ten or fifteen minutes. The effect lasted for a lifetime. However, it was to be many years before I experienced that kind love and joy again.

This was primarily because I didn't know what had happened or have a framework for it. Nor had I been taught how to continue that experience. Seminary was about head stuff—this was heart and spirit stuff.



After seminary, I became pastor of the only church I would lead for the next 49 years. I was the hotshot young pastor at my church who refused to wear a coat and tie on Sunday mornings and drove this classic Corvette.

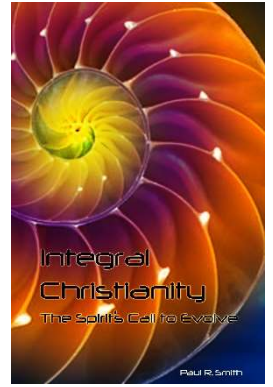


I was busy building my life and this wonderful church. The only thing I knew to do grow inwardly was to go to therapy which I did regularly for years. All I knew to do spiritually was to continue to hang out with charismatics. Gradually I learned to open myself to a flow worship and praise from within that was very satisfying. The church slowly changed its traditional worship services to foster

more freedom in worship and many in the congregation began to have spiritual experiences themselves. This brought new life to the church and we doubled and tripled in attendance.



Then around fifteen years ago I found one of the great philosophers and spiritual adepts of the world, Ken Wilber. His integral map and spiritual life as a practicing Buddhist opened me up to my own Christian path in deeper ways. The rest is seen in my last book, *Integral Christianity: The Spirit's Call to Evolve*, and this book.



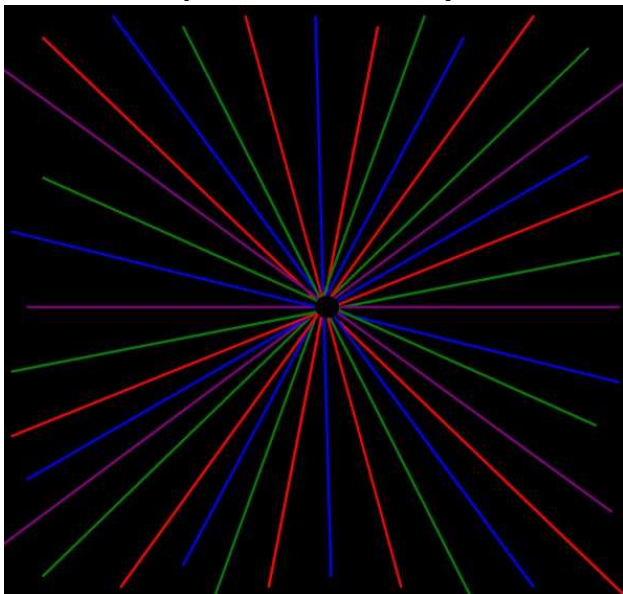
From left: Paul Smith, Corey deVos, Editor-in Chief of the Integral Life website, Ken Wilber in Ken's Denver loft.

### Out among the stars

I began taking daily prayer and meditation seriously. Soon I was having visions during my prayer/mediation times. At first, they were of the stars in outer space. I was not sure if I was out of body or not, but they were awesome. They looked like this, only they were moving and I was in the midst of them.

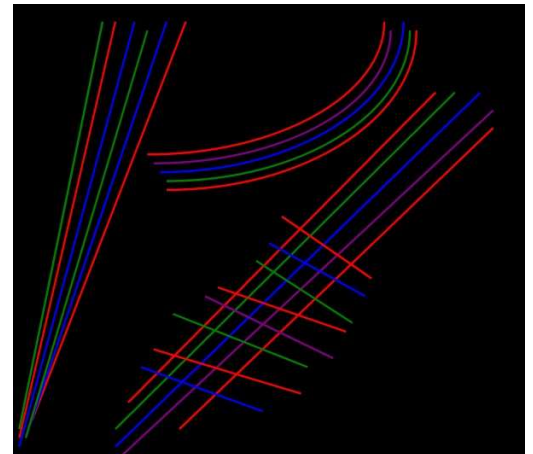


### Spiritual Geometry



Some weeks later came radiating, moving fine lines of red, blue, and green

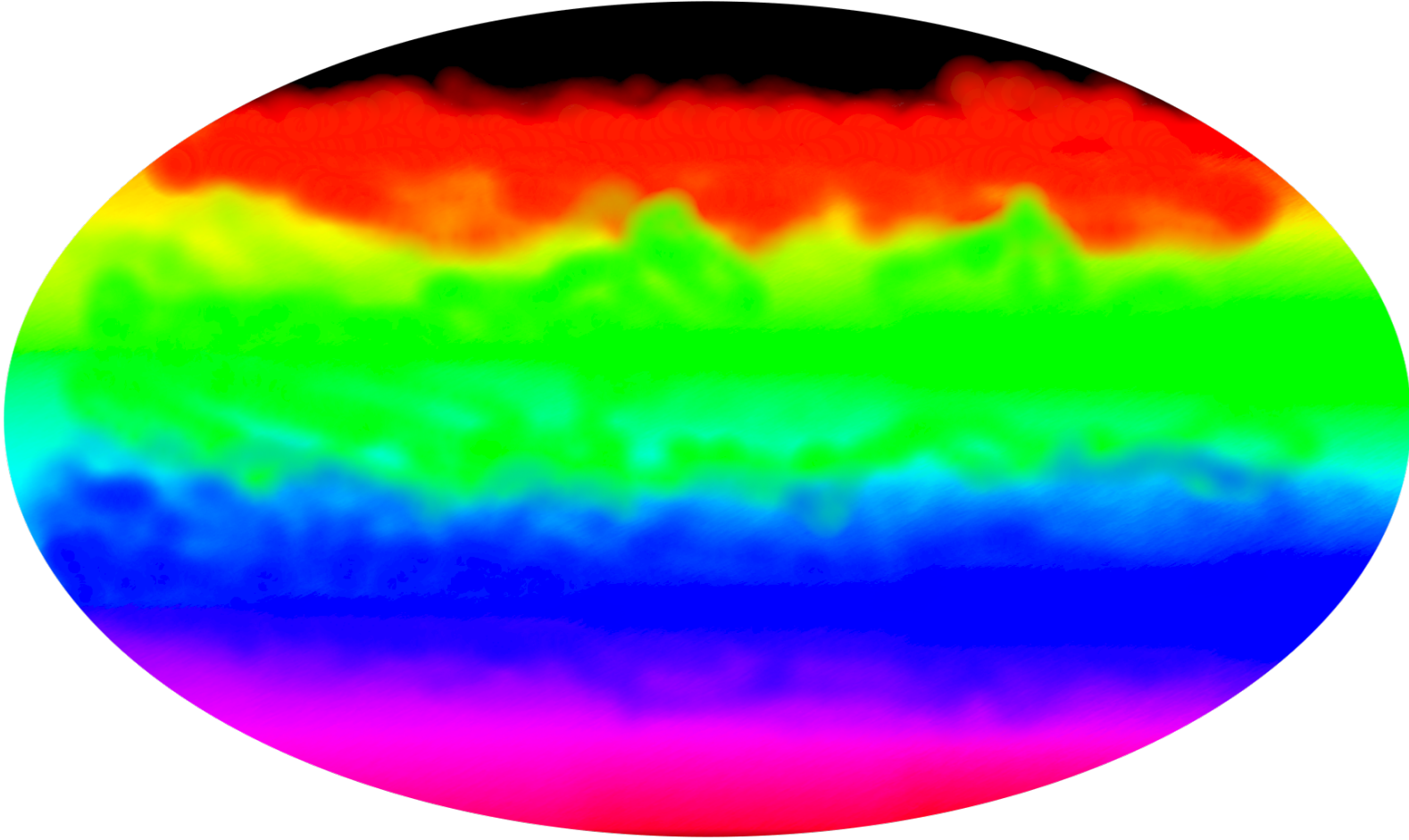
Then moving geometric patterns in the same colors.





## Spiritual fireworks

Then in a few months, waves of deep blackness followed by vivid colors would roll in from the top of my visual field and move on down. Imagine that you were in a darkened room with your eyes open and suddenly these rolling clouds and waves of brilliant colors began coming down from above you. It was like a spectacular fireworks show of blazing color. I called it my spiritual fireworks!



This would last anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes and then stop. Now, years later, these colors still appear when I am in prayer/mediation mode and sometimes when I am quiet. The stars and lines have stopped.

## World-wide rapid transit

I have one other kind of vision that used to occur regularly and now occasionally. I'll be in prayer-meditation mode and suddenly, without warning, rapidly moving scenes will pass in front of my eyes. These ranged from nature scenes to buildings, and people from all over the world.

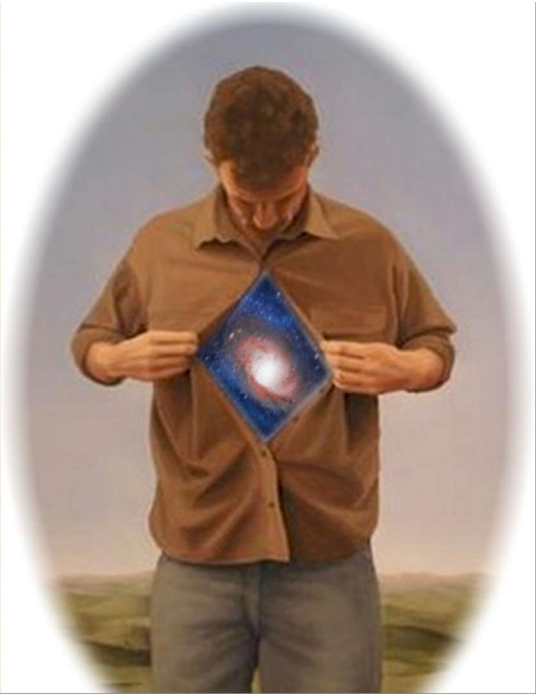
At first I would yell "SLOW DOWN!" But they would not. Sometime it would be cartoon like figures or a crazy deluge of object whizzing by. I gradually learned to relax and let the high speed movie flash by.

My question was, “What in the world, or out of this world, does this mean?”

I thought if I could just see Jesus or some famous saint that would make sense and be “spiritual,” But it seemed like I saw everything else in the universe but that!

I gradually came to understand that I was being trained to see that

everything out there was also in here. This is how being one with everything can be framed. There was no separation between me and the universe and what was happening in it.



### **Jesus' touch**

In my Sitting-with-Jesus practice I usually sensed the presence of Jesus several feet in from of me. This was not visual but a kinesthetic body sensing with a strong inward sense that he was there. One day I said, “Could you come closer.” Immediately Jesus' face was in front of mine an inch away. I said, “Not that close!” He laughed and moved around to my right side and put his hand on my arm. I heard, “Is this okay?” I said, “That's wonderful.” That touch has continued and become a constant sensation that I become aware of whenever I turn my attention to it.



### **There is so much more**

In Chapters 13 and 14 we move beyond the awakened realm to exploring the transcendent realm and Oneness consciousness which move us ever more deeply into the Reign of God



## My friend Jita



Jita lives in Pune, India, and here she is doing *japa* meditation with beads – the Hindu repetition of a mantra. She is a well-educated, well-read woman who contacted me from India one day after she had read an article about me.



As we talked, she told me about her experience of attending a Christian school as a young girl. She was about ready to give her heart to Jesus when one night she woke up and saw Krishna in all of his blue-skinned glory standing at the foot of her bed. The room was flooded with love. She gave her heart to Krishna that night and has been a happy Hindu in the ensuing years as the wife of an airline pilot and mother of one daughter. I affirmed her decision to follow Krishna.

A few years later she called and posed a question to me – Could she be both a Hindu and a Christian? I said, “Well of course! It sounds like something has happened.”

She said the previous evening she had been reading in her study when Jesus appeared to her, standing before her and radiating tremendous love for her. She spontaneously opened her heart to him and decided to be not only a follower of Krishna but also a follower of Jesus. Hence her dilemma and her question.

I told her that one of my favorite theologians, Raimon Panikkar, says that he became a Hindu and a Buddhist without ever ceasing to be a Christian.



I didn't see why she couldn't be a Christian without ever ceasing to be a Hindu. She now lives as a happy Christian Hindu.

I tell you about her to again point to the power of the presence of God in the form of a mystical experience. Here it was a Deity Presence in the form of her Beloved Krishna and her Beloved Jesus with whom she could connect heart to heart.





Christ and Buddha by Paul Ranson

## Seven qualities of authentic mystical experiences



1. Mystical experiences are meant to inform and transform us.



2. Sometimes it takes years before we realize what we have learned and how it has changed us.



3. Mystical experiences are not for our entertainment, specialness, or importance.

That's our shadow at work.



4. We should neither seek nor avoid any particular type of mystical experience but rather do the things that allow us to be open to all that God has for us. We are all different and will have a variety of different experiences.



5. All authentic mystical experiences are a mixture of reality and its shaping by our needs, culture, and stage of



development.





6. We are participating in the co-creation and evolution of spiritual reality by cooperating with our divine-human spirit consciousness in our own spiritual evolution.



Jesus changed Michelangelo's God's  
touching fingers with humanity  
to God and humanity in a creative divine - human handshake!





## 7. Heart-centered devotion is a critical part of accessing spiritual reality.



The spiritual world does not casually reveal its secrets. *Nothing happens in the mystical spiritual realm without heartfelt devotion to God and spiritual realities.*

Jesus was devoted to us in great love, even to the cross. We respond to that love with our devotion and love to him.



Heart on Fire with admiration, adoration, and love.

## The heart, like the brain, generates a powerful electromagnetic field,

The heart generates the largest electromagnetic field in the body. The electrical field as measured in an electrocardiogram (ECG) is about 60 times greater in amplitude than the brain waves recorded in an electroencephalogram (EEG).



The heart's electromagnetic field contains certain information or coding, which researchers are trying to

understand, that is transmitted throughout and outside of the body. One of the most significant findings of HMI's research related to this field is that intentionally generated positive emotions can change this information/coding.

That discovery raises the question whether the cardioelectromagnetic field information transmitted from an individual who is angry, fearful, depressed or experiencing some other negative emotion, takes on beneficial properties when it is influenced by positive emotions. Also, is the care, compassion, love or other positive emotion not only transmitted throughout an individual's body as the cardioelectromagnetic field radiates through it, but transferred externally as well to people in close proximity or even, perhaps, over long distances?



<https://www.heartmath.org/articles-of-the-heart/science-of-the-heart/the-energetic-heart-is-unfolding/>



Jesus modeled the heart-centered life of devotion to God and others



Heart of Divine Mercy. 2017 by Stephen B. Whatley

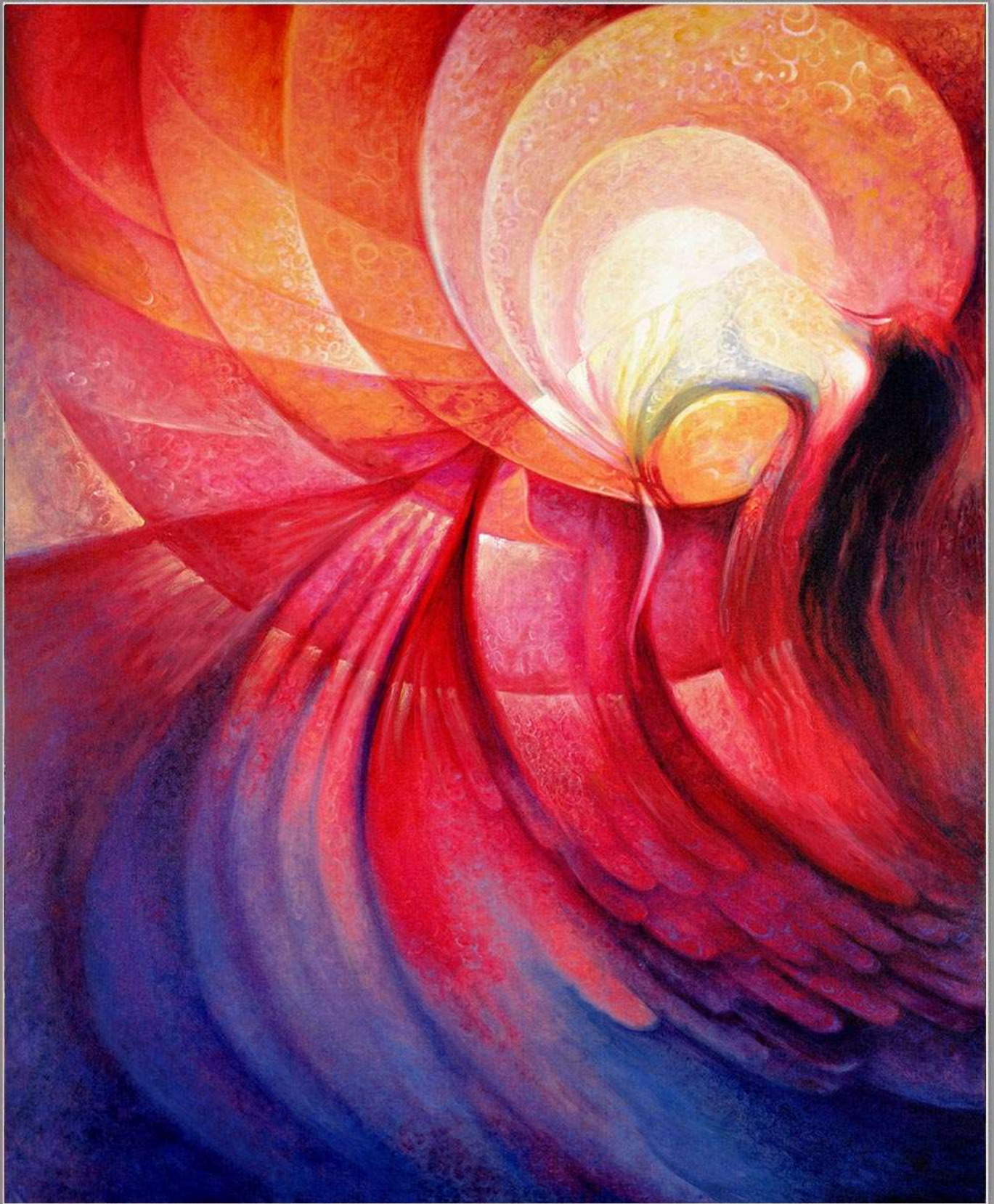
We can, too, can live a life of heart-centered devotion to God and others..







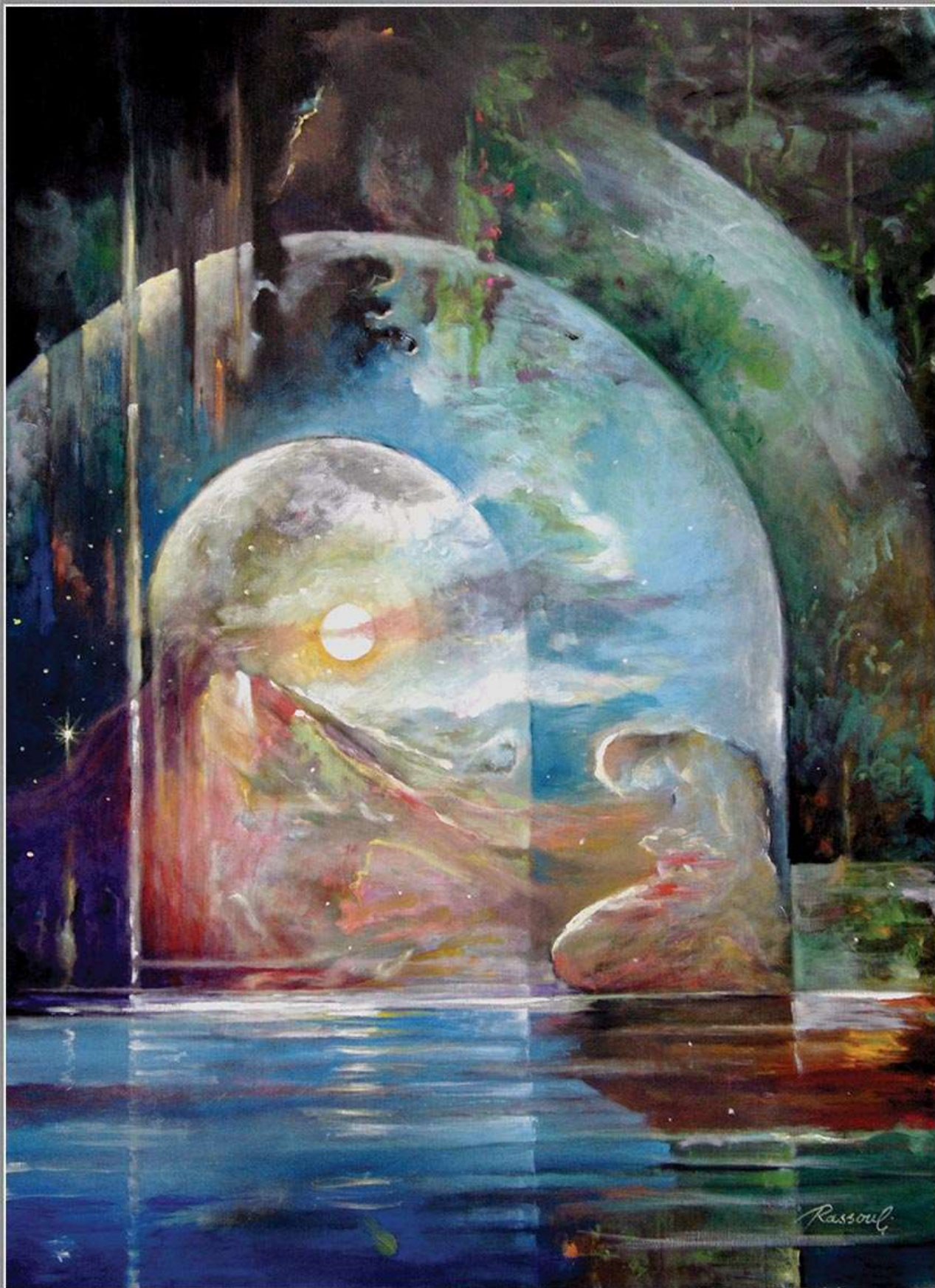




Light of the Heart by Rassouli

[Rassouli.com](http://Rassouli.com)





Altar of Devotion by Rassouli

Rassouli.com