

- Here is a collection of written accounts, poems, prayers, teachings from and about ‘mystics’. Within the ‘spirit’ of mysticism, I suggest you read them all first without trying to think too hard about the minutiae...just immerse yourself in the experience.
- To provide structure to your reading, for our later discussion on this set (‘Theme 1’):
  1. What primary theme or themes do you find running through this set of texts? (I’ve put these together for a reason...)
  2. Which readings or images resonate most strongly for you?
- I left out the details about who and where for each text. They’re on the last page...BUT, it might be interesting to first try to guess in which century and within which culture, region, or religion each text arose.

a.

Speaking of a visionary encounter with a Spirit of the Earth, [he] reports that he stared at the spirit, feeling that he knew him. As he did so the vision slowly changed as if the spirit were growing backwards into its youth. When it had finally become a boy, [he] recognized it as himself.

b.

When you make the two as One, and the inside like the outside, you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

c.

It was her custom that whatever she desired of God, she would never stop asking him for it until he granted it to her. And once she came to such union with God in her prayer that God appeared to her so clearly that for five weeks afterward, whatever she saw, she thought it was God.

d.

Disciple: Where is ‘the place of life, the pure light’?  
 Master: ‘Every one of you who has known himself has seen it.’  
 Disciple: Who is the one who seeks, and who is the one who reveals?’  
 Master: ‘The one who seeks is also the one who reveals.’

e.

Do not attach yourself to any particular creed exclusively, so that you disbelieve all the rest; otherwise you will miss much that is good, indeed, you will fail to see the real Truth. God the omnipotent and omnipresent is not contained by any one creed, for He says in the Qur’an, ‘Wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah.’

f.

It is told of one master that in times of entrancement he had to look at the clock in order to keep himself in this world; of another, that when he wanted to contemplate individual things he had to put on spectacles in order to subdue his spiritual sight, for otherwise he saw all the individual things of the world as one.

g.

He said, “I went from God to God, until they cried out from me into me, ‘O thou I!’”

h.

Between me and You,  
 there is only me.  
 Take away the me,  
 so only You remain.

i.

“One night in a dream I saw the Lord, who said to me, ‘What do you desire, Bayezid?’  
 ‘That which you desire, my God!’  
 ‘O Bayezid, it is you I desire, as you desire me.’  
 ‘But what is the way that leads to you?’  
 O Bayezid, whoever renounces himself comes to me.’

j.

“My mind fell like a hailstone into the vast expanse of Brahman’s ocean. Touching one drop of it, I melted away and became one with Brahman. This is wonderful indeed! Here is the ocean of Brahman, full of endless joy. How can I accept or reject anything? Is there anything apart of distinct from Brahman? Now, finally and clearly, I know that I am the *atman*, whose nature is eternal joy. I see nothing. I hear nothing. I know nothing that is separate from me.”

k.

A journeying man knocks on a door. ‘Who’s there?’ asks God from within.  
 ‘It’s me,’ says the man.  
 ‘Go away, then,’ says God. ‘There’s no room for me.’  
 The man departs and wanders in the dry desert until he realizes his error, returns to the door and knocks again.  
 ‘Who’s there?’ asks God.  
 ‘Thou,’ answers the man.  
 ‘Then come in,’ God replies.

l.

So in God is my being, my I, my strength, my bliss, my desire. But this I that I often call so – I do it because I cannot speak otherwise, but in truth I no longer know what the I is, or the Mine, or desire, or the good, or bliss. I can no longer turn my eyes on anything, wherever it be, in heaven or on earth. And if I nevertheless say a few words that have in themselves the form of humility or spirituality, in my innermost being I know and feel nothing of it; indeed, I am disconcerted that I speak so many words that are so different from the truth and from what I feel.  
 I do not want a love that would be for God or in God. I cannot bear to see this word *for*, this word *in*, for to me they indicate a thing that would be between me and God. But the pure and clear love cannot bear this, and this purity and clarity is as great as God himself is in order to be his own.

m.

What is to be done, O Moslems? For I do not recognize myself.  
 I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Parsi, nor Moslem.  
 I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea;  
 I am not of Nature's workshop, nor of the circling heavens.  
 I am not of earth, nor of water, nor of air, nor of fire;  
 I am not of the Heavenly City, nor of the dust, nor of existence, nor  
 of entity.  
 I am not of this world, nor of the next, nor of Paradise, nor of Hell;  
 I am not of Adam, nor of Eve, nor of Eden or Eden's angels.  
 My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless;  
 'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.  
 I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one;  
 One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.  
 He is the first, he is the last, he is the outward, he is the inward;  
 I know none other except "O he" and "O he who is."  
 I am intoxicated with Love's cup, the worlds have passed out of my  
 ken;  
 I have no business save mind's carouse and wild revelry.  
 If once in my life I spent a moment without thee,  
 From that time and that hour I repent of my life.  
 If once in this world I win a moment with thee,  
 I will trample on both worlds, I will dance in triumph forever.

n.

My tongue lacks words, and what is occurring in me my mind  
 sees, but does not interpret. It contemplates and would utter, but  
 it does not find the words. It sees the invisible, that which is bare  
 of all form, altogether simple, not composed of parts, and infinite  
 in greatness. For it sees no beginning, and beholds no end, and  
 is conscious of no center at all, and knows not how it shall say what  
 it sees. Something whole is appearing, as I believe, and not with  
 its own being, but through participation. For you may light a fire  
 from fire, and you receive the whole fire, yet the fire remains  
 undiminished and undivided as before. Nevertheless what is trans-  
 mitted separates itself from the first, and as something physical it  
 goes into several lights. But this is something spiritual, immeasura-  
 ble, inseparable, and inexhaustible. For in giving itself it does not  
 divide into many, but remains undivided, and is in me, and breaks  
 forth in my poor heart like a sun or the round disk of the sun, like  
 the light, for it is a light. I do not know what to say of it. And I  
 would be silent—would that I could—but the miracle, full of awe,  
 stirs up the soul and pries open my unclean mouth; and he who  
 awakened the sunrise in my dark heart now forces me, unwilling,  
 to speak and to write.

o.

Each soul must learn to stand up in its own right and live. How  
 blissful to lean upon another, to seek a sense of everlasting arms ex-  
 pressed in the vitality of a friend! We walk a part of the way together,  
 but on the upper reaches of life, each path takes its way to the heights  
 —alone. Ultimately, I am alone, so vastly alone that in my aloneness  
 is all the life of the universe. Stripped to the literal substance of myself,  
 there is nothing left but naked soul, the irreducible ground of individual  
 being, which becomes at once the quickening throb of God. At such  
 moments of profound awareness I seem to be all that there is in the  
 world, and all that there is in the world seems to be myself.<sup>6</sup>

p.

I am the Thought that dwells in the Light. She who exists above all. I move in every creature. I am the Invisible One within the All. I am perfection. I am knowledge. I cry out in everyone and they know a seed swells within them. I am androgynous. I am both Mother and Father, since I make love with myself. I am the womb that gives shape to All. I am the Glorious Mother.

q.

Whoever greatly desires a woman and contemplates her brightly colored garments has his mind not on the gorgeous cloth or colors, but on the splendor of the desired woman who is enveloped in them. But the others see only the garments and nothing more. So whoever desires and receives God in truth beholds in all the things of the world only the power and the pride of him who shaped them at the primal beginning, and who lives in things. But whoever is not on this level sees things as separate from God.

#### Sources of the Readings for ‘Mysticism Theme 1’

- a. Black Elk (1863-1950), a famous Wichasha Wakan (Medicine Man or Holy Man) of the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) in North America – Freke, p. 27
- b. Jesus, from the *Gnostic Gospel of Thomas* (dated to before 200 AD) – Freke, p.105
- c. Anna von Selden (ca. 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries), Christian in Germany – Buber, p.79
- d. Jesus, in dialogue with Matthew, from *The Dialogue of the Saviour* (one of the New Testament apocrypha texts found with the Nag Hammadi library, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century?) – Freke, p.105
- e. Ibn al-Arabi (1760-1823), Sufi in Morocco – Freke p.117
- f. an Hasidic saying (mid 18<sup>th</sup> century), Jewish in Eastern Europe – Buber, p. 147
- g. Bayezid Bistami (9<sup>th</sup> Century), Sufi in Northern Iran/India – Buber, p.20
- h. Mansur Al-Hallaj (858-922), Persian Sufi – Harvey, p32
- i. Bayezid Bistami (9<sup>th</sup> Century), Sufi in Northern Iran/India – Buber, p.18
- j. Adi Sankara (8<sup>th</sup> century), Hindu Brahmin in India – from Freke, p.39
- k. a Sufi story – from Freke p.111
- l. Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510), Christian in Italy – Buber, p.107
- m. “*From the Divan*” - Jalal Ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273), Persian Islamic – Buber, p.26
- n. Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), Eastern Orthodox church, Greece, Cypress – Buber, p.36
- o. Howard Thurman (1900-1981), Protestant Christian in the United States – Bridges, p.55
- p. a Gnostic text (one of the New Testament apocrypha texts found with the Nag Hammadi library, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century?) – from Freke, p.104
- q. Hasidic (mid 18<sup>th</sup> century), Jewish in Eastern Europe – Buber, p. 149