



Center Community News

The Newsletter of the Center for Sacred Sciences

Holos Interviews Muslim Scholar

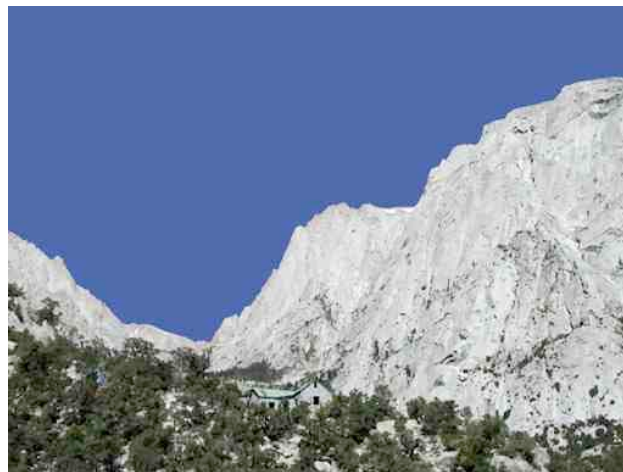
The CSS online journal **Holos** will soon publish an interview with Joseph Lombard, a professor of Classical Islam at Brandeis University and former Advisor for Interfaith Affairs to His Majesty King Abdulla II of Jordan. In the interview, Lombard discusses the importance of revitalizing the heart of Islam by reconnecting with its traditional roots in the classical scholarship of Islam. He also shares his perspective on the historical factors related to the modern turn away from tradition, and ways that the recovery of the essence of Islam can be fostered. The interview touches upon other topics, such as the nature of Gnosis in the philosophy of Ibn al-Arabi, and the relationship between this type of knowledge and scientific knowledge. Watch for the announcement of the interview publication on the CSS website, or point your browser to www.holosforum.org.

Love and Marriage Go Together at Center!

Last year was memorable for tracking matrimonial events. Apparently having been groomed for the prospect by others' nuptials in 2006, and bridling to rein in their respective mates, two couples affiliated with the Center raced on down to the proverbial courthouse to tie a double knot. Winding up later on Buck Street, the happy couples produced the following photo finish.



THEY MADE IT OFFICIAL: Newlyweds Robin Bundy and Todd Corbett; and Clivonne Corbett and Charlie Boberg.



The Spiritual Home of "Yogi:" Dr. Wolff's ashram, located on the eastern slopes of Mt. Whitney, California.

Wolff Conference 2007

Joel will be this year's keynote speaker at the annual Wolff Conference, held in Lone Pine, California. His talk is entitled "Final Thoughts," and here he gives an abstract for his talk:

"In his book **The Philosophy Of Consciousness Without An Object**, Dr. Wolff wrote:

*The final thought before the 'breakthrough' was the very clear realization that there was nothing to be attained. For attainment implied acquisition and acquisition implied change of content of consciousness. But the goal is not change of content but divorcement from content. Thus, Recognition has nothing to do with anything that happens. I am already That which I seek, and therefore, there is nothing to be sought. By the very seeking I hide Myself from myself. Therefore, abandon the search and expect nothing. This was the end of the long search. I died, and in the same instant was born again. Spontaneity took over in place of the old self-determined effort. (**The Philosophy of Consciousness Without An Object**, p 81.)*

In my talk at this year's conference, I will discuss these insights and how they relate to the teachings given by mystics of other traditions. I will also try to point out how they might be applied in our own personal practice."

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A Grand Ol' Holidays Party

As winter fades from memory and spring bursts into bloom, it's time to recall some snippets from the Center's winter season party. The party began, as it does every year, with the early arrival of the décor team, who brought with them loads of evergreen boughs, swags and wreaths, colored lights and candles. These they happily spread around on tables, walls and ceiling of the Campbell Senior Center's "ballroom," under the calm but sure command of Megan—from her surrey with the fringe on top—telling all where things went and how much was needed.

With tiny lights and candles sparkling around the dance floor, lights were dimmed except over the fabulous feast at the far end of the hall, and the crowd wisely moved toward the light. Only the strong-willed made it past the dazzling array of casseroles, salads and desserts over to the corner where Fred was waiting to serve wine and libations. The rest filled their plates as Vinnie and Lou serenaded them from the dark at the other end of the room, and George Mottur greeted the latecomers from his wheelchair, strategically placed near the food tables.

By the time desserts were being polished off, dancers covered the floor to swing and sway to Lou and Vinnie's great music. Soon other songsters were invited forward, with the Dharma Brothers (Fred and Gene) singing the now-famous "Mushroom Buyer," totally out of tune. People moved to the smooth groove of Jack's tracks on sax, followed by Cathryn singing long-forgotten favorites, and Wesley with one of his altered standards. At the height of the festivities, 66 people were counted around the room, and most stayed to the end until the takedown décor team swung into action.

—SHARRY LACHMAN



Catalog Queen Takes Leave of Library

Sometimes we don't want to face facts; in fact, it's much easier to ignore what we don't like. Eventually though, the time comes, and you just have to do it. That's how we feel about Therese Engelmann. Though we don't want to let the last bits of her go, even if it's just in name, she has retired, and we must let go of her name from the masthead. During her fifteen years of library service, Therese was the champion of the card catalog. She also worked on the magazines, wrote descriptions for all of Joel's 200+ recorded talks, and developed procedures that others follow today. In deep gratitude, we thank her for all her work.

Bonnie Donahue spent several years volunteering in the library, for which we thank her, and wish her all the best with her Studio and other pursuits. There are two new faces to welcome: Bill Carter and Barbara Dewey joined the library staff last fall, and so far they are tireless in putting your books and CDs away.

—JENNIFER KNIGHT

We cling to pain as desperately as we cling to pleasure. We seek security in intensity, as well as in safety. We turn pain into a reference point and use it to prove we exist: "I hurt therefore I am." ...We tend our pain meticulously, and cultivate it through the process of thinking about it.... We experience our pain as security, because it seems to prove that we exist.

—Ngakpa Chögyam,
Spectrum of Ecstasy



Tom McFarlane, Mike Strasburger, Laurina Peters and Sharry Lachman listen intently as Joel (far left) delivers a key point during a dharma talk in Diamond Hall. This photo was taken last autumn at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center.



ECSTATIC: Todd Corbett during a teaching at the Center.

Spectrum of Ecstasy Commentary by one of our own

It really comes back to the four principles: Attention, Commitment, Detachment (or, as I prefer to call it, Nonattachment), and Surrender. The power of transformation lies in simply allowing full awareness of any emotional experience to arise by first *paying attention to how you feel*. (It's amazing how we resist this!) Once we are attentive, we can notice how distraction is so seductive, and so we continue to commit to being present. In this presence, the resistance or attachment to the emotional content becomes clearer, and we apply the principle of nonattachment to simply continue to be with the experience. In this space of not following or resisting feeling-thoughts, we discover that the emotion itself was colored by our conditioned reaction to it—and in not following the conditioning, the energy behind the emotion is liberated and appears nakedly, as it really is. Surrender happens by itself as we see that we are not slaves to our emotions, but that they are truly just conditioned misapprehensions of the intricate play of energies arising in awareness. Anger becomes vivid presence, or “clarity;” arrogance becomes peace or “equanimity;” desire becomes intricate appreciation, or “discriminating awareness;” and fear and paranoia become wu-wei, or “all-accomplishing action.”

In this analysis, we can see how Joel's four principles can be applied yet again to the spiritual path—truly a useful application of conceptual mind.

Of course, what I keep coming back to is that any of these practices require just that, practice; and if I allow myself to be distracted by pontificating on the process, I miss valuable opportunities to sit and cultivate the habit of being present.

—MATT SIERADSKI



LIBRARY CORNER

Library Hours:
Tuesdays 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Once the CCN Editor put out the call, the book reviews came pouring in! Take a taste of tantalizing tome testimonials from these talented, if tautologic, treatisors:

AWAKENING TO THE NATURAL STATE
by John Wheeler, Non-Duality Press, 2004.

If you're looking for an exposition of awakening free of the trappings of any tradition, Wheeler is one of your guys. Though it could be argued that he comes from the lineage of Indian Advaitist Nisargadatta, via “Sailor Bob” Adamson, Wheeler's dialogues with students (for the most part, via email exchanges) are refreshingly devoid of lingo or spiritual tradition references. His constant message is clear, simple, and profound: the Natural State is what you are, and one must simply remove thought-construed obstacles preventing you from recognizing this.

—VIP SHORT

THE BOOK OF ONE
by Dennis Waite, O Books, 2003.

This is a veritable textbook of Western as well as traditional East Indian Advaita. Waite does a commendable job of leading us “from the unreal to the Real” (a prayer in the Bridharanyaka Upanishad) in a well-laid out and systematic progression. The treatment is exhaustive, and by the end the reader will feel at least a mental assimilation of the topic. There is perhaps too much emphasis on already-outdated internet groups focusing on Advaita. Nice touches include a comprehensive glossary of Sanskrit terms, as well as a sprinkling of often-humorous quotes from all quarters, underscoring the points of the text. Highly recommended!

—VIP SHORT

CALMING THE FEARFUL MIND
A ZEN RESPONSE TO TERRORISM
by Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press, 2005.

Taken from talks given after the cultural landmark known as 9-11, this book is a gem that every diplomat and politician should read and take to heart. “Thay” (“teacher,” in Vietnamese) shows the listener in simple and accessible prose that the roots of terrorism reside squarely in the individual human heart. Until we learn, as both citizens and nations, to deal in a spiritual and compassionate way with that afflicted emotion termed “fear,” there will be no peace in this world. The second chapter is entitled “Compassion is Our Best Protection,” and that assertion sums it up nicely.

—VIP SHORT



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MISSION AND PROGRAMS

The Center for Sacred Sciences is dedicated to the study, practice, and dissemination of the spiritual teachings of the mystics, saints, and sages of the major religious traditions. The Center endeavors to present these teachings in forms appropriate to our contemporary scientific culture. The Center also works to create and disseminate a sacred worldview that expresses the compatibility between universal mystical truths and the evidence of modern science.

Among the Center's ongoing events are Sunday public services with meditations and talks by the Center's spiritual director, monthly video presentations, and—for committed spiritual seekers—a weekly practitioners' group

and regular meditation retreats. The Center also maintains an extensive lending library of books, audios, videos, and periodicals covering spiritual, psychological, and scientific subjects. In addition, the Center provides a website containing teachings, information, and other resources related to the teachings of the world's mystics, the universality of mystical truth, and the relationship between science and mysticism. The Center publishes a newsletter containing community news, upcoming programs, book reviews, and other information and resources related to the Center's mission.

The Center for Sacred Sciences is a non-profit, tax-exempt church based in Eugene, Oregon, USA. We rely chiefly on volunteer labor to support our programs, and on public donations and membership pledges to meet our operating expenses. Our spiritual director gives his teachings freely as a labor of love and receives no financial compensation from the Center.

Center Community News is published three times a year by the Center for Sacred Sciences. Submissions, comments, and inquiries should be sent to:

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To update or change your subscription preferences on-line, please visit the Publications page of our website and click on the link to the "subscription and address form."

CSS CALENDAR

MAY 2007 - SEPTEMBER 2007

MAY 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
		1 Library 6:00-8:30	2 Practitioner 7:30
6 Video* 11 am	7	8 Library 6:00-8:30	9 Practitioner 7:30
13 Talk 11 am	14	15 Library 6:00-8:30	16 Practitioner 7:30
20 Talk 11 am	21	22 Library 6:00-8:30	23 Practitioner 7:30
27 Talk 11 am	28	29 Library 6:00-8:30	30 Practitioner 7:30 (ALL)

* Dharma River

This lushly filmed documentary takes us on a timeless journey up the rivers of Laos and Burma to explore ancient Buddhist temples and the lost civilizations that built them.

JUNE 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
3 Video* 11 am	4	5 CLOSED	6 CLOSED
10 CLOSED	11	12 CLOSED	13 CLOSED
17 Talk 11 am	18	19 Library 6:00-8:30	20 Practitioner 7:30
24 Talk 11 am	25	26 Library 6:00-8:30	27 Practitioner 7:30 (ALL)

* Nusrat Fatah Ali Khan

A series of intimate glimpses into the life of Nusrat Fatah Ali Khan, the Pakistani Sufi singer, whose remarkable spiritual music has moved eastern and western audiences alike.

JULY 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1 Video* 11 am	2	3 Library 6:00-8:30	4 CLOSED
8 Talk 11 am	9	10 Library 6:00-8:30	11 Practitioner 7:30
15 Talk 11 am	16	17 Library 6:00-8:30	18 Practitioner 7:30
22 Talk 11 am	23	24 Library 6:00-8:30	25 Practitioner 7:30 (ALL)
29 Talk 11 am	30	31 Library 6:00-8:30	

* Pema Chodron interviewed by Bill Moyers

Bill Moyers talks to Buddhist nun Pema Chodron about how to apply the Buddha's teachings on wisdom and compassion to the everyday situations of contemporary life.

AUGUST 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
			1 Practitioner 7:30
5 Enlightenment Day Talk 11 am	6	7 CLOSED	8 CLOSED
12 CLOSED	13	14 CLOSED	15 CLOSED
19 CLOSED	20	21 CLOSED	22 CLOSED
26 CLOSED	27	28 CLOSED	29 CLOSED

* NO VIDEO

SEPTEMBER 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
2 CLOSED*	3	4 CLOSED	5 CLOSED
9 CLOSED	10	11 CLOSED	12 CLOSED
16 CLOSED	17	18 CLOSED	19 CLOSED
23 Talk 11 am	24	25 CLOSED	26 Practitioner 7:30 (ALL)
30 Talk 11 am			

* NO VIDEO

**MEETING ADDRESS:
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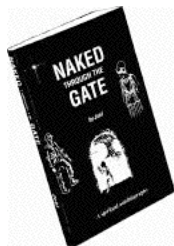


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Center Publications

For a complete catalog of our current publications and for pricing and ordering information, please visit our website at www.centerforsacredsciences.org

Book Publications



Naked Through the Gate: A Spiritual Autobiography

by Joel, Center for Sacred Sciences, 1985. Paperback, 262 pages, \$11.95

Joel's personal account of his remarkable spiritual path, ending with a Gnostic Awakening.

Through Death's Gate: A Guide to Selfless Dying

by Joel, Center for Sacred Sciences, 1996. Paperback, 83 pages, \$6.95.

A guide to death and dying from a spiritual perspective, including fundamental teachings and practices from the world's great mystics.

Audio Publications

Enlightenment

Consciousness Unveiled: Fred's Awakening

Fred Chambers, March 29, 2006

Tape# 1915; CD# cd450; 61 minutes

Foundational Teachings

Four Kinds of Practice

Joel, June 26, 2005

Tape# 1898; CD# cd400; 59 minutes

Mysticism and Society

The Feminine Face of Mysticism

Joel, July 31, 2005

Tape# 1903; CD# cd413; 45 minutes

Aspects of Practice

Truth Has No Name

Todd Corbett, November 12, 2006

Tape# 1928; CD# cd476; 69 minutes

Drop the Story

Joel, July 9, 2006

Tape# 1920; CD# cd465; 58 minutes

Aspects of Practice—Devotion Series

Devotion #1: Verbal Prayer

Joel, October 16, 2005

Tape# 1908; CD# cd416; 60 minutes

Devotion #2: Prayer-in-the-Heart

Joel, October 17, 2005

Tape# 1909; CD# cd417; 62 minutes

New MP3 Audio CDs

Meditation Series

5 Talks by Joel on an MP3 CD, from the Fall 2003 Retreat:

#1: Concentration Practice; #2: Choiceless Awareness; #3: Liberating Thoughts, Desires, and Aversions; #4: Returning to the Source; #5: Doing Nothing

Joel, October 2003, \$20.

Devotion Series

7 Talks by Joel on an MP3 CD, from the Fall 2005 Retreat:

#1: Verbal Prayer; #2: Prayer-in-the-Heart; #3: Purifying the Heart; #4: Entering the Spiritual Heart; #5: Unceasing Prayer; #6: Silent Prayer; #7: Doing Nothing

Joel, October 2005, \$28.

DVD Publications

Shifting the Base of Reference

Joel, August 8, 1992; Great Space Center, Lone Pine, CA
DVD-32; 67 minutes \$17.95*

Joel discusses two of Dr. Wolff's most important concepts: *shifting the base of reference*, and *substantiality is inversely proportional to ponderability*. These ideas served as steps to Dr. Wolff's own Recognition of that Truth which transcends all concepts and ideas, and Joel shows how they can be used as the basis for a meditative inquiry by anyone following a *jnana* path.

* Please note that while the quality of the audio is fine, some portions of the video display sharp contrast fluctuations.

Here and Now News Service:

Joel Interviews Franklin Merrell-Wolff

Joel, June 21, 1983; Great Space Center, Lone Pine, CA
#DVD-30; 70 minutes \$17.95

Readers of *Naked Through the Gate* know that during the final months of Joel's path, he took to the road, visiting spiritual communities and teachers to record the video magazine "The Here and Now News Service."

Meeting Franklin Merrell-Wolff, Joel recognized he was someone special and dropped the 15-minute "Here and Now" format for a longer interview. Today Joel says of this recording, "I didn't know the right questions to ask Dr. Wolff. I wish I'd thought to redo this video after my awakening." This film also has some spots of snow and segments of hand-held camera work. Even so, it's a fascinating document for those familiar with Dr. Wolff's work, or interested in the formation of Joel's teachings.

Quan Yin Vow:

Never shall I seek nor receive
Private individual Salvation;
Never shall I enter the final Peace alone;
But forever and everywhere shall I
Live and strive for the Redemption
Of every creature throughout the world.