



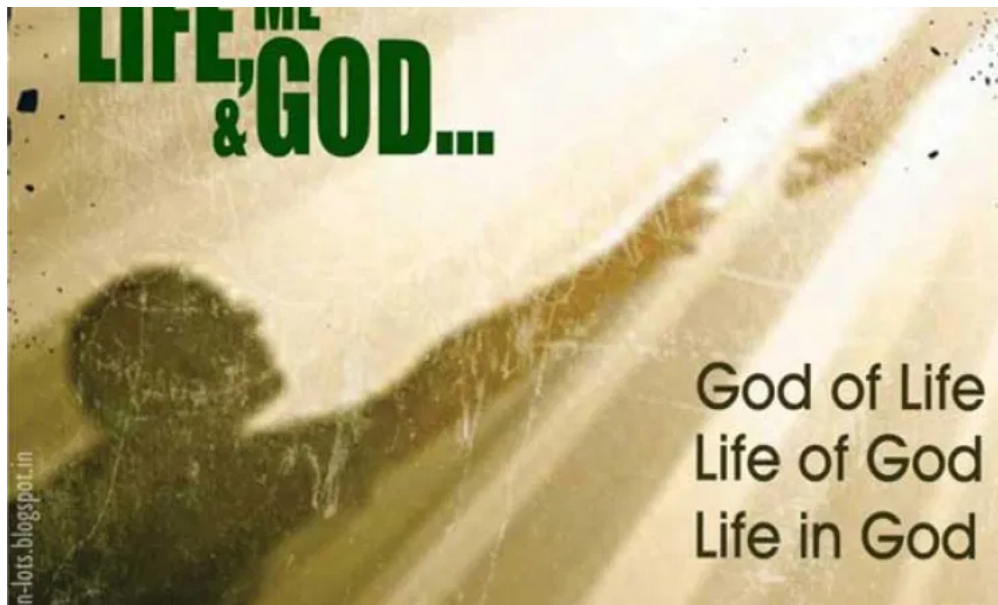
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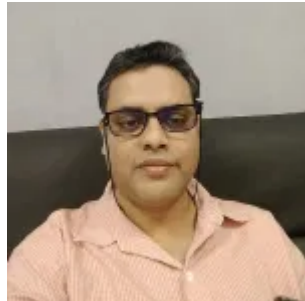
The Interior Life: An Interreligious Approach

📅 March 11, 2021 👤 Team ICM 📁 Faith / Spirituality

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By Subhasis Chattopadhyay –

If one is truly in love then one does not want to part from the beloved. If God is, and without God's Will not even a leaf moves, then why bother with exterior things? This is

the spirit of contemplation. This spirit of quietude is the bulwark of Christianity and within the ancient mode of Sanatana worship: Tantra. [Tantra](#) roughly translates into weaving meaning from the existential chaos called life. Tantra has nothing to do with black magic or anything esoteric. It has everything to do with silent and interior, liturgical actions leading to desired results resulting in the practitioner's progression through a sort of 'scala' mysticism. It has as much to do with angels and demons as Catholicism does. And God within Tantra is both weak and personal; and, simultaneously strong, being Power. God does not have power as an attribute, but is Power. To misread, in Harold Bloom's sense, God does not will to Power. God's Will is Shakti. God within Tantra is generally visualised as a Mother; just as Julian of Norwich (1342-1416 CE) thought of God during the European Middle Ages. The Tantric adept knows the interior world

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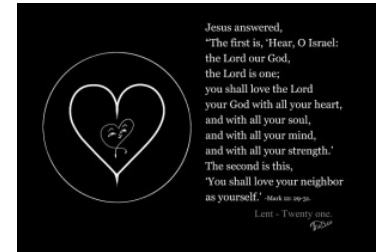
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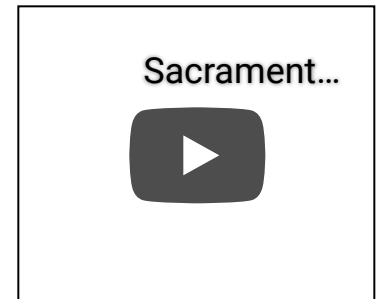
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COME BACK TO ME
WITH ALL YOUR HEART

as the most important object of cognition (the Tantric metacognises), and also like Catholics, understands that this world is very real. To me, my problems are real. And with the help of holy supernatural beings and God visualised within oneself as Power; the Tantric adept removes obstacles to the main aims of life whose summum bonum is experiencing beatitude in the here and the now. Tantric contemplation is more in sync with the spirit of Vatican II.

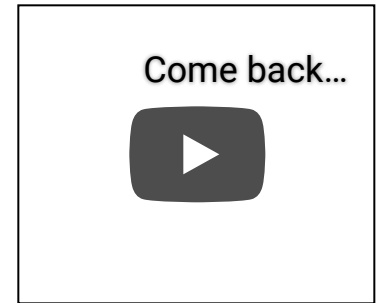
There are three crucial differences between Tantric praxes and hermeneutics and all the major branches of Christianity including Roman Catholicism:

1. There are no centralised teaching loci within Tantra.
2. Tantrics are by their calling contemplatives and their apostolic gestures lie in supernaturally removing human obstacles in the here and the now only if removing such obstacles are perceived to help those in trouble to later find 'mukti'. For instance, a Tantric would understand the life of Saint Padre Pio (1887-1968) who had the gifts of healing and being at two places at the same time. A Tantric is in so in love with her image of a Powerful and simultaneously weak Godhead that she would hardly leave the vita contemplativa. (For understanding a strong God refer to Adi Shankaracharya, CE 788 – 820, and to understand the weakness of God, refer to John Caputo, b.1940.)
3. Honest Tantrics would be married and yet finally, celibate. They choose to remain within this world which they consider permeated



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CREATING RIPPLES OF FMA INDIA IMPACT: ING PROVINCE ST MARY'S MALIGAON

with the Self, but they would be ascetics. Jesus asks each to pray and fast in such ways that none knows. A true Tantric leads this life and tries to have a mystical union with God as Power and Mother in the here and the now through liturgies which consist of 'Lectio Divina'; internal sacrifices and silence. But all within this passing, though real, world. A true practitioner is not known through external marks because, in her social life, this adept would live by Vedic norms. In her private life, this same person would practise intense deity-visualisation to become one with this path's understanding of the Supreme Godhead as the Divine Mother. Deity visualisation is similar to Adoration. Vatican II would understand why a true Tantric adept eschews external symbols of Tantric praxes.

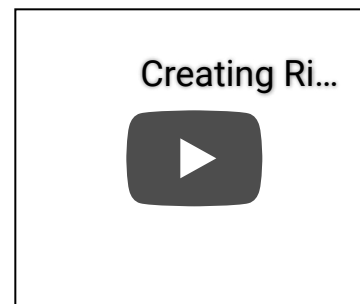
This involvement with the culture of the self with the Self is the path of both Tantra and Roman Catholicism. St. John of the Cross comes to mind with his spiritual love poetry and countless Benedictines of strict enclosures and of course, the Carthusians. All of them know that holy beings and beings filled with hatred are there. These beings too are finally under the Will of God or Power (Shakti).

To know of Catholic Doctrine in its purest form, read Dom Paul Delatte's (1848-1937) books and to understand Tantra begin with Sir John Woodroffe's (1865-1936) works.

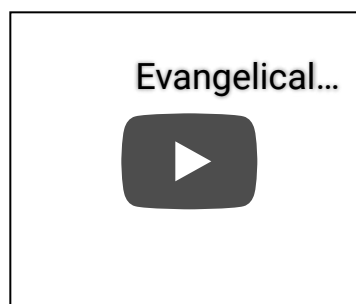
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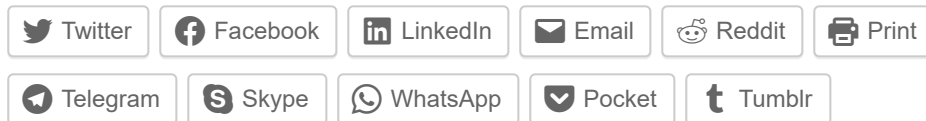
STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART: BISHOP THOMAS DABRE & PROF FRANCIS GONSALVES

Let us leave the dead to bury their dead for we are as grass in this quicksand called the world. If we act in haste to help others; we will be entangled in Samsara. Let us not escape, but practise detachment through the presence of God as Brother Lawrence taught us long ago.

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥ (Salutations to my Master who is God to me for none has seen God but God sent the Master so that the disciple does not differentiate between God and the Master. I salute my Guru. Aum.)

Subhasis Chattopadhyay is a bibliophile; and has completed formal studies in the Bible and separately, in Hinduism from the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies. His Biblical studies were completed from the Pontifical Atheneum, Bengaluru. He writes on interreligious dialogues for us. His book reviews from 2010 to 2020 in Prabuddha Bharata have been showcased by Ivy League Presses. He earns his living by teaching English at the UG and PG levels in a non-community college in West Bengal; affiliated to the University of Calcutta. He annotates the Bible here and is now writing his own books on religious scriptures and on literature.

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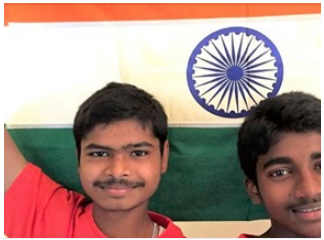
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