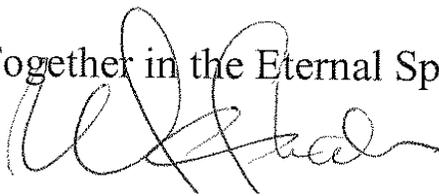


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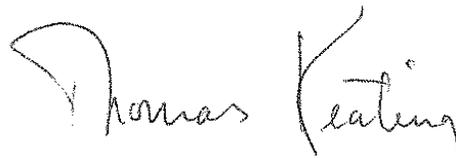
Open Letter to the Jewish and Christian Communities,

As many may know we have been collaborating for many years on the ecumenical effort to bring contemplative prayer into the ordinary lives of people of many faith beliefs. Every faith has some form of contemplative practice but it is especially important that the common roots of the Jewish and Christian traditions be united in prayer to contribute to healing the divisiveness so common in today's world. In silence there is no doctrinal reflection, so we are open to God speaking to us. To encourage this we have blest the attached Judeo-Christian "Oneness Prayer Guidelines" that would encourage the two communities to learn and pray together and open themselves up to the gift of a deeper contemplative prayer practice.

Together in the Eternal Spirit,



Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi



Fr. Thomas Keating

ONENESS PRAYER

Judeo-Christian Contemplative Guidelines

- I. SACRED WORD - Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to a higher power that exists both within and without.
 1. The sacred word is chosen during a brief period of reflection and may arise spontaneously to your awareness, unique to your personal needs.
 - a. Examples: One, Oneness, Echad, Abba, Adonai, God, Hineini, Father, YHWH (unpronounceable “tetragrammaton”), etc.
 - b. Other possibilities: Love, Shalom, Peace, Ahavah, Silence, Ayin, Stillness, Trust, etc.
 2. Instead of a sacred word noticing one's breath may be more suitable for some persons. The same guidelines apply to these symbols as to the sacred word.
 3. The literal meaning of the word is not important. It is a symbol of your intention and consent to the omnipresent Oneness.
 4. We may try different words before arriving at our choice. However the word should not be changed during a period of Oneness Prayer because that would be a start to thinking again.
- II. PHYSICAL BEING – Remove shoes and loosen constricting clothing. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word.
 1. "Sitting comfortably" means relatively comfortably so as not to encourage sleep during the time of prayer.
 2. Whatever sitting position we choose, we keep the back straight during the prayer.
 3. We close our eyes as a symbol of letting go of what is going on around and within us.
 4. We introduce the sacred word inwardly as gently as laying a feather on piece of absorbent cotton.
 5. Should we fall asleep upon awakening we continue the prayer.
- III. THOUGHTS & MEANING – When you become aware of being engaged with your thoughts, return ever so gently to the sacred word.
 1. “Thoughts” is an umbrella term for every perception, including body sensations, sense perceptions, feelings, images, memories, plans, reflections, concepts, commentaries, and spiritual experiences.
 2. Thoughts are an inevitable, integral, and normal part of Oneness Prayer.
 3. By “returning ever so gently to the sacred word” a minimum of effort is indicated. This is the only activity we initiate during the time of Oneness Prayer.
 4. During the course of Oneness Prayer, the sacred word may become vague or disappear.
- IV. SILENT RETURN – At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.
 1. The additional 2 minutes enables us to bring the atmosphere of silence into everyday life.
 2. If this prayer is done in a group, the leader may slowly recite a prayer such as: “be still and know that I am God” [Psalm 46:11], while the others listen.