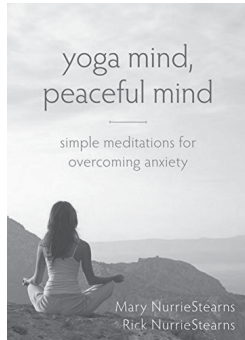


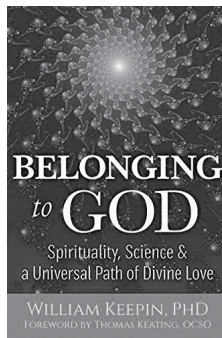
Reviews

Books



YOGA MIND, PEACEFUL MIND: Simple Meditations for Overcoming Anxiety by Mary NurrieStearns and Rick NurrieStearns; Paperback, 7x5, 183 pp, \$15.95; New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2015, newharbinger.com.

THIS SMALL BOOK packs abundant yogic wisdom along with compassionate psychological insights. After a beginning chapter, each one is arranged according to the chakras, with an overview, the benefits of strengthening and meditating upon that chakra, and a short meditation. Each meditation is unique. You may find pranayama (yogic breathing exercise), yoga poses, information about the chakras, and affirmations. Not only are the meditations beautifully written, they are also very practical. We have had occasion to try the meditations during trying times and found that they work. The book’s purpose is to “give you a yoga mind—one that focuses on love and the truth that you are a spiritual being....” Everyone on your gift list may benefit.

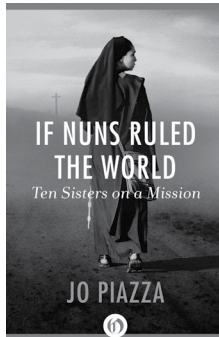


BELONGING TO GOD: Spirituality, Science and a Universal Path of Divine Love by William Keepin, Ph.D.; Paperback, 246 pp, 6x9, \$19.99; Skylight Paths 2016, skylightpaths.com.

“THERE IS A profound need today,” says William Keepin, “for people to understand how the religious traditions relate to one another, what they have in common, and how

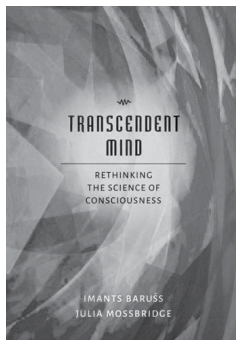
their remarkable differences are dwarfed by their even more remarkable common ground.” Keepin, a physicist, environmental scientist and long-time spiritual seeker, explores scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Qur’an and the Gospels, as well as accounts of mystics such as Shankara, Ibn Arabi and Meister Eckhart. What he finds is that the core or summit of the major religions is one and the same. There also is a universal path, the path of divine love, and within that path, a universal practice: devotional surrender to God, called *prapatti* or *sharanagati* in Hinduism. Parallels of this practice are shown in other traditions as well as in the testimony of mystics, for example, Brother Lawrence in Christianity and Rabi’ā within Islam.

Keepin next explores recent breakthroughs in the scientific investigation of consciousness, including data from research in disciplines such as physics, biology and transpersonal psychology. Parallels are found between relativity theory, fractal science, and various ancient religious insights, suggesting that consciousness may itself be fractal—existence within existence within existence. In sum, he charts a profound and peaceful journey into the depths of the heart for seekers in all traditions, and a paradigm-shattering century ahead for science. As Father Thomas Keating writes in the Foreword to the book, “It certainly will prove to be a primary resource for those engaged in the transformative process, and in grounding the interspiritual movement.”



IF NUNS RULED THE WORLD: Ten Sisters on a Mission by Jo Piazza; Paperback, 5X7.5, 260 pp, \$12.99; Open Road Integrated Media 2014, openroadmedia.com.

NUNS PROTESTING nuclear armament, campaigning against budget cuts affecting the poor, creating safe houses for survivors of human trafficking and former prisoners, fighting for women’s rights and LGBT rights, keeping an eye on corporate America, running the Ironman—these are not your typical Catholic sisters but a force of nature! With a lively journalistic style filled with personal conversations and experiences with each sister, Jo Piazza describes these “Ten Sisters on a Mission” with candor and heart, often sharing their individual prayers as well. Whatever their calling, each of these women is fearless and firm in her belief that she is serving God through her fellow beings. The nuns sparkle with humor, amazing energy, humility, deep faith, and most of all profound humanity. After a two-year journey researching and writing the book, the admittedly agnostic author writes in the Epilogue, “These days, I often find myself thinking, What would the nuns do?”



TRANSCENDENT MIND: Rethinking the Science of Consciousness by Imants Baruss and Julia Mossbridge; Hardcover, 7.25x10.25, 249 pp, \$69.95; American Psychological Association 2017, order@apa.org.

The authors of this cutting-edge book are experimental psychologists with a special interest in consciousness research. They are addressing, in somewhat technical language, psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, neuroscientists and all those interested in consciousness and the mind. After many decades of fruitless searching for a mechanism in the brain that creates consciousness, they propose that science look elsewhere.

Their presentation ranges from ancient philosophy to paranormal psychology, from classical physics to special relativity and quantum mechanics.

Citing abundant published research, they discuss topics such as shared mind experiences, rethinking the concept of time, mediumship, out of body and near-death experiences, telekinesis, mind-to-mind communication, and reintegration of subjectivity into consciousness research. Also discussed are implications for clinical practice, which still often assigns disease diagnoses to spiritual experiences, as well as opportunities for further scientific discovery. The authors’ expertise is enhanced by their objectivity and the ability to see the lighter side of weighty subjects. Scientists such as these, who step beyond dogma (and sometimes beyond job-preservation) into unexplored frontiers, deserve to be gratefully admired. Thirty-six pages of references are included.

Noteworthy

THE E-WORD, Ego, Enlightenment & Other Essentials by Cate Montana, MA—Cate Montana is a seeker, a writer, and was an editor for the film *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* In her lively, no-nonsense way, she likens our ego to a matrix in which we are wandering, always seeking “the calm, spacious truth underneath.” Ego Mechanics 101 is followed by Toward A Transpersonal Understanding of Self and Reality, always returning to two key words: *I Am*. A final section on The Spiritual Ego and Enlightenment sums up her findings: *I am the Truth and so are you*. Even her discussion of quantum mechanics is fun reading. Stories, practices and exercises are included. (Paperback, 221 pp, \$18.00; Enliven Books/Atria Books 2016, www.simonandschuster.com)

THE ROOT OF WAR IS FEAR: Thomas Merton's Advice to Peacemakers by Jim Forest—Thomas Merton’s efforts to prevent war and encourage the non-violent resolution of conflict were an integral part of his identity as a monk. His stance as a conscientious objector in WW II, and his writing, teaching and mentorship of peace activists during the Vietnam War was based in deep spiritual understanding. Jim Forest brings the 60’s antiwar movement to life in this account, including his correspondence and personal meetings with Merton. As he sums up, “How long we live is not as important an issue as how we live. At the heart of Merton’s writings is the message that fear need not rule our lives.” (Paperback, 223 pp, \$25.00, Orbis Books 2016, orbisbooks.com)

PATHLESS PATH: God, Grace, Guru by Charles B. Crenshaw, Jr.—“An African American life transformed through yoga and meditation,” reads the cover of this autobiography. Charles Crenshaw shares his unusual story: growing up “on the wrong side of the tracks,” a long search for

“something else,” meeting Swami Rama, his Indian Guru, years of training in the USA and India, and his work as a yogi, therapist and teacher. His writing style is light and entertaining; his lessons are deep. (Paperback, 190 pp, \$19.95; Ahyma Publishers 2013, ahymapublishers.com)

DRAWN TOGETHER: Uplifting Comics on the Curious Journey Through Life and Love by Leah Pearlman—Loveable stick figure comics illustrate wise and profound insights from the author/illustrator Leah Pearlman, and from other sources. These charming little drawings are grouped under five topics from love to life’s challenges, to peace. An original poem introduces each topic. The author/illustrator was a successful technologist at Facebook when her father’s cancer went into remission. To express her deep relief she drew a comic strip and posted it on Facebook. When her father’s cancer returned and proved fatal, Leah left her job to work through her grief by drawing her comic strips and founded Dharma Comics. As we chuckle or smile at her drawings and comics, we are inspired and cheered on our own life path. (Hardbound, 166 pp, \$16.00; TarcherPerigee 2016, tarcherperigee.com)

HOLY DARING: The Earthy Mysticism of St. Teresa, the Wild Woman of Avila by Tessa Bielecki—Bielecki brings Teresa of Avila to life with lively quotes in contemporary language. She is one of the spiritual heroes: fearless in her path to union with the Lord, fearless before men of authority in sixteenth-century Spain, fearless before the Inquisition, traveling, founding convents and her own order, and in confronting herself. She was a great mystic and also a woman of great common sense and practicality. For example, when a young novice came to her begging to learn the art of prayer, Teresa sent her to the kitchen, saying, “Learn to pray among the pots and pans.” She serves as a model today with timeless advice for all seekers. To become acquainted with St. Teresa, or to deepen your friendship with her, read this inspiring book. (Paperback, 131 pp, \$15.95; Adam Kadmon Books 1994, 2016, monkfishpublishing.com)

Children/Young Adults



KRISHNA: A Journey Within written and illustrated by Abhishek Singh; Paperback 7.5x9.5, 300 pp, \$26.83/\$11.99 Kindle & comiXology; Image Comics Inc. 2012, imagecomics.com.

ABHISHEK SINGH is an artist, graphic novelist and animation film designer/director. His graphic novel, *Krishna: A Journey Within*, is cinematic in design and scope, combining the ancient and modern with striking originality. Krishna tells his life story

throughout the narrative: from childhood to Kingship and the Mahabharat—"Great War"—that took place on India's soil five millennia ago. Interwoven in the story is Krishna's teaching from the Gita, the Ten Incarnations of Vishnu, and his Vishvarupa or Universal Form as revealed to his disciple Arjuna before the great battle. Each spread of this glossy, full-color book consists of a single image up to a dozen frames or more—a feast for the eyes with explosive color and energy. Needless to say, this is a work of art that will appeal to wisdom lovers of all ages and paths. To see more of Abhishek's awesome art and storytelling visit Abhishekart.com.

Audio



THE RAM SESSIONS by Carrie Grossman, 65 min, 2016; CD \$17.99/MP3 \$9.99, CarrieMusic.com.

CARRIE GROSSMAN's long-awaited new album, *The Ram Sessions*, like her first, is a soul-map of her spiritual journey. Through longing

she discovered the sweetness of chanting to *Ram*, like countless seekers and saints who have taken refuge in the holy Name over centuries. *Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* is the mantra that blesses this album as her lovely voice soars in Touch the Sky, Hanumate, Ram Sagar, Honey Hanuman Chalisa, and 108 Ram. These songs are meditations of the heart, a synthesis of East and West, traditional and original, like a river of grace carrying us toward the Infinite. They grow with us and within us... *Om Sharanam Narayana...* Hindi and English vocals melt into one in Say the Name, Thank You, and Deep Peace... *Deep Peace of the running wave to you/Deep peace of the flowing air to you/Deep peace of the quiet earth to you/Deep peace of the shining stars to you...* We hear you, sister, and are grateful to be able to share your blessed journey.



IMMORTELE by Deuter, 60 min, 2016; CD \$14/MP3 \$9.49, NewEarthRecords.com.

DEUTER'S INNOVATION in healing music is profound. In his latest album, *Immortelle*, he explores the sonic themes of medicinal plants

and flowers that have helped humanity for millennia. Through these idyllic melodies he shares his mystical insights into eight plants, including *Helichrysum Angustifolium*, commonly known as Immortelle, the "queen of medicinal plants." With instruments including flutes, keyboards, cello, piano, guitar and vocals, this album is a soothing balm by a celebrated master of therapeutic music. As he writes, "In my

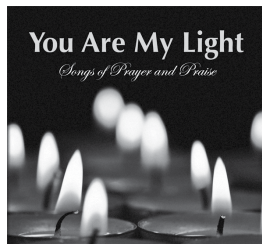
understanding, music is a horizontal journey.... But good music also creates a vertical journey, where it transcends time and keeps going indefinitely into higher octaves." This album takes you there.



SHAKTI SUTRA by Sheela Bringi, 57 min, 2016; CD \$13/MP3 \$9.49, NewEarthRecords.com.

SHEELA BRINGI's first album, *Incantations*, was hailed as "the birth of Vedic Jazz!" She is an Indian-American vocalist and

multi-instrumentalist whose musical talent is delightfully fresh. On her latest album, *Shakti Sutra*, featuring kirtan artist Dave Stringer, she sings verses from the Guru Gita, the Devi Mahatmyam, the Upanishads; mantras to Ganesha, the Gayatri; and traditional kirtan bhajans to Sita Ram, Krishna and Shiva. With an Indian classically trained voice, Sheela, also joined by Clinton Patterson and Subhashish Mukhopadhyay, weaves a musical spell with soulful rhythms and acoustic textures. Instruments including bansuri, harp, strings, tabla, manjira, harmonium, guitar and percussions create a captivating synthesis of East and West with Sheela's exceptional voice soaring above all else. Sublime!



YOU ARE MY LIGHT: Songs of Prayer & Praise by Sita Stuhlmiller, 54 min, 2016; CD \$11.95/MP3 \$9.99-\$9.99, Kirtan-Sacred Chants.org.

OUR HEARTS expand to a realm of peace in this latest release in Truth Consciousness' Kirtan &

Sacred Chants series. Sita Stuhlmiller's clear, sweet voice, full of sincerity, deepens our own aspiration for God in each of these fifteen chants. These chants in English are primarily original compositions by ashramites and devotees of Swami Amar Jyoti, written and sung over decades at the Ashrams He founded. To borrow a line from one of our favorites—Let My Life Be Simple—the chants flow "like a breeze that sings through the forest." Amazing Grace, In the Garden and Fairest Lord Jesus are traditional hymns also much loved at the ashrams. Chanting along or listening quietly washes away worries and worldly concerns, and prepares the mind for meditation. Love for the Divine blossoms in the original chants: Lord Let Me Be a Wildflower, Full With Light, O Glorious Joyful One, To Know Your True Reality and Your Love Is the Sweetest. Recorded live at Sacred Mountain Ashram and Desert Ashram. Vocals and arrangements, guitar, synthesizer and Celtic harp by Sita, with tablas by Chetna Geller and violin improvisations by Haiden Davis. This collection is a blessing for any seeker.