

Universal Mysticism:

Out-of-Body Travel in the East and the West

By Marilyn Hughes

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This is a work of nonfiction based on the writings and experiences of Marilynn Hughes. Names, places, and events have been presented as accurately as possible.

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This book is authored by Marilynn Hughes, based on her extensive experiences in out-of-body travel, astral projection, and mystical exploration. The teachings presented here reflect forty years of personal spiritual work, guided by divine wisdom and experience. While the content has been organized and clarified with the assistance of artificial intelligence, the insights, stories, and practices are drawn from Marilynn Hughes' direct encounters with the divine and her teachings to the world.

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- **A Call to Spiritual Unity:** Encouraging readers to walk the path of unity, compassion, and love, embracing the wisdom of East and

West to foster global spiritual
harmony.



Introduction: United in Truth - Bridging the East and West in Spiritual Harmony

In a world often divided by cultural, political, and religious differences, there lies an inherent truth that binds all humanity together: the shared spiritual wisdom that transcends time, place, and identity. The ancient paths of the East and the Western traditions of spirituality both seek to guide the soul toward unity with the Divine. Despite the apparent differences in practices, beliefs, and doctrines, at the heart of all major religions lies a common thread of truth, love, and divine wisdom.

This book is a journey into that truth. It explores the powerful and often-overlooked convergence between the spiritual traditions of the East and West, revealing how the essential messages of peace, unity, and divine wisdom found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, among others, speak to one universal reality. Through the writings,

films, and teachings of Marilynn Hughes, we will uncover how these traditions not only share common spiritual themes but also come together in a harmony that transcends their outward differences.

Marilynn Hughes' Mystical Insights

The mystical experiences chronicled by Marilynn Hughes, as detailed in her works such as *At the Feet of the Masters*, *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, *The Voice of the Prophets*, and many others, offer profound insights into the oneness of all religions. Hughes' encounters in the spiritual realms have provided her with a unique perspective: one that goes beyond the surface of religious teachings to uncover the universal truths that all faiths hold in common. These experiences serve as a bridge between East and West, showing us how the soul's journey toward enlightenment and union with the Divine is universal, no matter the tradition or culture.

The Path to Spiritual Unity

Throughout history, religious differences have often led to division and conflict. Yet, the core teachings of the world's great religions speak to something deeper: a shared longing for connection with the

Divine, a desire to transcend the material world and achieve spiritual awakening, and the call to live in harmony with one another. Whether in the quiet meditation of a Buddhist monk, the prayerful devotion of a Christian mystic, or the contemplation of the Taoist sage, each path leads to the same destination—union with the Divine.

In this book, we will explore how the mystical traditions of the East and the West, though often separated by cultural and historical barriers, reveal striking similarities. By delving into key concepts such as love, compassion, the path of purification, the nature of the soul, and the afterlife, we will see how these spiritual traditions are not contradictory but complementary. They are all reflections of the same divine truth, each offering a unique path to spiritual enlightenment and peace.

Why Uniting the East and West Matters

In today's increasingly interconnected world, the need for spiritual unity has never been more pressing. The teachings of Marilynn Hughes invite us to go beyond the labels of East and West, to see the divinity present in every culture, and to recognize the deep spiritual truths that unite us all. By

understanding the common ground shared by Eastern and Western religions, we open ourselves to a more inclusive, compassionate, and enlightened world.

This book is not merely an intellectual exploration of religious unity; it is a call to action. It invites readers to step into a space where the wisdom of the past can guide us toward a future of peace, cooperation, and spiritual awakening. As we embark on this journey, we will not only examine the teachings of prophets, saints, and mystics but also uncover the practical ways in which these teachings can help heal the divisions in our world and lead us back to the one divine truth that connects us all.

Through the lens of Marilynn Hughes' mystical teachings, we will explore how the worlds of East and West can come together—not just in agreement but in deep spiritual harmony.

A Unified Path Toward Spiritual Enlightenment

As we dive into this exploration, let us remember that the path to spiritual enlightenment is not one of separation but of connection. The path to God, however we

name the Divine, is not confined to one tradition or one way of knowing but is expansive, inclusive, and universal. Just as the rivers of the East and the West flow toward the same ocean, so too do the rivers of spiritual wisdom merge into a single truth.

This journey through the sacred landscapes of the world's religions, as guided by the mystical insights of Marilynn Hughes, invites us to open our hearts and minds. We will discover that, despite the apparent differences in our paths, we are all walking toward the same divine source, united in our search for truth, love, and spiritual fulfillment.

Let us now begin our exploration of the unity that exists beyond the surface of religious doctrines and practices, and together, uncover the deeper, timeless truths that bind all religions in a common purpose—coming into divine union with the Creator.

Chapter 1: The Common Threads of Divine Truth

At the heart of all major world religions lies a singular truth: the Divine is one, and it calls all souls back to itself. Across time and culture, religious traditions have described this eternal truth in different languages, images, and practices. Despite the many surface differences between Eastern and Western religions, there is an unmistakable resonance of divine love, truth, and spiritual awakening that binds them all together. This chapter explores the core principles that all religions hold in common, highlighting how these universal truths converge in the teachings of both the East and the West.

The Divine Presence: A Universal Truth

From the ancient Vedas of India to the Bible of Christianity, the Torah of Judaism, and the Qur'an of Islam, there is a consistent teaching that God—or the Divine—exists beyond human comprehension, and yet, this presence is intimately woven into the fabric of existence. Whether referred to as Brahman, Tao, Allah, or God, the Divine is seen as the eternal, unchanging source of

life, wisdom, and love. The descriptions of God across religious traditions may vary, but the essence is the same: God is infinite, beyond all human limitations, yet present within each of us.

In Hinduism, Brahman is the formless, infinite source of all creation, and the soul (Atman) is a reflection of this divine essence. In Christianity, God the Father is the Creator, the source of all life and love, while the Holy Spirit dwells within believers, guiding them toward unity with the Divine. In Islam, Allah is the one God, merciful and all-knowing, and the Creator of everything in existence. Taoism speaks of the Tao, the eternal flow of divine energy that underlies and connects all things in the universe.

Marilynn Hughes' experiences, particularly in *At the Feet of the Masters* and *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, illustrate this common understanding of the Divine. In her mystical journeys, she encountered divine beings who embody the very essence of love, compassion, and unity that all religious traditions ultimately point toward. Whether she was guided by angels, saints, or even Christ Himself, her experiences

illuminated the oneness of the Divine and the universal truths that unite us all.

Love: The Foundation of All Spiritual Paths

One of the most profound and unifying teachings across all religions is the emphasis on love. Love is considered the highest spiritual principle, the force that unites all of creation. In the East, love is seen as the force that connects the individual soul with the Divine. In Buddhism, the practice of compassion (Karuna) is central to enlightenment. In Hinduism, devotion to God (Bhakti) is the highest path, where love and surrender to the Divine lead to liberation. In Taoism, the Tao is often described as the ultimate expression of harmony and love, guiding all things toward balance and unity.

In Western religions, love is equally emphasized. Christ's teachings in the New Testament focus on the commandment to love God and love one's neighbor as oneself, encapsulating the essence of Christian doctrine. Judaism teaches that love for God and humanity is the greatest commandment, and in Islam, love for Allah and submission

to divine will lead to peace and harmony. In all these traditions, love is the highest virtue, and it is through love that we can transcend the ego and align with the divine will.

Marilynn's mystical encounters often revealed love as the binding force of the universe, as the ultimate truth that dissolves all barriers. In her writings, such as *The Voice of the Prophets*, she describes how her experiences with divine beings illuminated the centrality of love in all things. Whether encountering angels or higher spiritual beings, the common thread was always divine love, a love that transcended all boundaries of culture, belief, and identity.

The Path of Spiritual Awakening: Transcendence of the Self

Another core similarity across Eastern and Western religions is the concept of spiritual awakening—the journey of transcending the limitations of the ego and realizing one's true divine nature. In the East, this process is often described as awakening to the realization of oneness with the Divine. In Hinduism, the goal of yoga is to realize the Atman's unity with Brahman. In Buddhism, the path to Nirvana involves overcoming

attachment, desire, and ego to experience the truth of emptiness and interconnectedness. Taoism teaches the importance of aligning with the Tao, allowing the ego to dissolve and flow with the natural order of the universe.

In the West, spiritual awakening is seen as coming to know God and one's true self. Christianity speaks of being "born again," a transformation in which the individual soul is united with Christ and begins to embody divine love. In Islam, spiritual awakening comes through submission to Allah's will and recognizing one's place in the divine order. Judaism emphasizes the importance of repentance and returning to God's commandments, aligning oneself with divine purpose.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical teachings and writings highlight the universal nature of spiritual awakening. In her experiences, she frequently encountered this moment of transcendence—where the limitations of the ego dissolved, and she felt united with the divine. This experience is shared across both Eastern and Western mysticism, showing that, despite the differences in language and doctrine, the soul's journey toward

enlightenment and union with the Divine is fundamentally the same.

The Afterlife and Divine Justice: The Continuity of the Soul

The concept of the soul's journey beyond this life is another common thread that runs through both Eastern and Western traditions. While the specifics of the afterlife differ across religions, the central idea that the soul continues its journey toward ultimate unity with the Divine is a shared belief.

In Hinduism, the soul undergoes cycles of reincarnation, each life an opportunity to learn and grow closer to the Divine. In Buddhism, the cycle of samsara, or rebirth, continues until the soul attains Nirvana, breaking free from suffering and attachment. Taoism speaks of the immortal soul, aligned with the Tao, returning to the source after death.

In the West, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all teach that the soul lives on after death. In Christianity, salvation leads the soul to eternal union with God in Heaven, while in Islam, the soul is judged by Allah and, if found righteous, is rewarded with eternal

peace. In Judaism, the soul's journey is also marked by the quest for righteousness, with the promise of eternal life with God.

In Marilyn Hughes' mystical experiences, especially in *Near Death and Out-of-Body Experiences*, she encountered realms beyond this world, where souls underwent judgment and experienced the consequences of their actions. These experiences often mirrored the teachings found in both Eastern and Western religions, showing the continuity of the soul and the divine justice that governs its journey.

Conclusion of Chapter 1

As we have seen, the core teachings of the world's great religions—whether from the East or the West—share profound commonalities: the recognition of the Divine as the source of all creation, the importance of love as the highest spiritual principle, the transcendence of the ego for spiritual awakening, and the continuity of the soul beyond this life. These shared truths reveal that, despite the apparent differences in culture, language, and doctrine, the ultimate

goal of all religions is the same: to guide the soul back to unity with the Divine.

In the following chapters, we will continue to explore how these universal truths manifest in the teachings and experiences of mystics, prophets, and saints from both the East and the West, and how Marilynn Hughes' mystical journeys have illuminated the path toward spiritual unity.

Chapter 2: Bridging the Gap – East Meets West

The divide between Eastern and Western spiritual traditions has long been a point of discussion, debate, and sometimes conflict. From a surface level, the differences seem vast—different languages, practices, and understandings of the Divine. However, when we look deeper, we begin to uncover a common ground that runs through all of humanity's spiritual quests: the search for meaning, the call to transcend suffering, and the longing for union with the Divine. This chapter explores how the spiritual paths of the East and West are not only compatible but, in many ways, mirror each other in their ultimate goals.

Historical and Cultural Divides

The historical and cultural divisions between East and West have shaped distinct religious practices and philosophies, creating a sense of separation that persists in the collective consciousness. In the East, religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism have focused on inner peace, enlightenment, and the

dissolution of the ego through meditation, devotion, and a deep connection with nature. These paths emphasize personal transformation and the understanding that all beings are interconnected.

In contrast, Western traditions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—have often focused on the relationship between humanity and God, salvation, and divine justice. Western religious teachings tend to emphasize a personal relationship with the Divine, focusing on faith, obedience, and the promise of eternal life. These traditions also share a focus on the afterlife, divine intervention, and the redemptive nature of spiritual practice.

While these traditions may appear to be worlds apart, they are united by their shared goal: the spiritual awakening and transcendence of the human soul, leading to divine union. Through Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, we begin to see how these different religious paths converge in profound ways.

The Universal Call to Enlightenment

At the heart of both Eastern and Western religions is the call to spiritual enlightenment—an awakening to the true nature of the self and its connection to the Divine. In the East, enlightenment is often referred to as “awakening,” “Nirvana,” or “Moksha”—the realization that the individual self (Atman) is one with the universal Divine (Brahman or Tao). It is the end of suffering and the achievement of ultimate peace.

In the West, spiritual enlightenment may be understood as salvation, the “Kingdom of Heaven,” or union with God. Christianity teaches that salvation through Christ brings the soul into eternal union with God, while Islam speaks of submission to Allah’s will and the attainment of peace through alignment with divine truth. Judaism also emphasizes the importance of living in alignment with God’s will, and many mystical traditions within Judaism (like Kabbalah) point to the deep connection between the soul and the Divine.

Marilynn Hughes’ mystical experiences often show how, in the higher realms, the boundaries between East and West disappear. She has described seeing figures

from different religious traditions, including Christ, the Buddha, and Hindu deities, working together in harmony to guide souls toward enlightenment. This illustrates that, in the divine realm, all paths ultimately lead to the same truth: the realization of oneness with the Divine.

The Role of Mysticism in Both Traditions

Mysticism serves as a bridge between the East and West, allowing us to see beyond the external rituals and doctrines of religion to the underlying spiritual truths. Mysticism is the pursuit of direct experience of the Divine, the desire to transcend the material world and connect with higher realities.

In the East, mysticism is often expressed through practices like meditation, yoga, and contemplation, leading to states of deep inner peace and oneness with the universe. The Buddhist practice of mindfulness and the Taoist concept of Wu Wei (effortless action) emphasize the importance of inner stillness, allowing the practitioner to align with the divine flow of existence.

In the West, Christian mysticism, as seen in the writings of figures like St. John of the

Cross and Teresa of Avila, similarly calls for a deep, personal connection with God. Mystics in the West often emphasize the importance of prayer, surrender, and experiencing the divine presence within. In Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, practitioners engage in a direct, experiential relationship with Allah through practices like the Whirling Dervishes and deep prayerful meditation.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences serve as a powerful example of how both Eastern and Western mysticism share a common goal: divine union. Through her out-of-body experiences, Hughes has witnessed a unity between divine beings from all traditions, demonstrating that, at the highest level, mysticism is a universal experience that transcends religious boundaries.

The Practice of Love and Compassion Across Traditions

One of the most striking similarities between the East and West is the emphasis on love and compassion. In both traditions, love is not simply an emotional feeling, but a divine

force that connects all beings and is central to spiritual awakening.

In Buddhism, compassion (Karuna) is one of the primary virtues that leads to enlightenment. The bodhisattva ideal—one who seeks to attain Buddhahood not only for their own sake but for the benefit of all beings—demonstrates the importance of selfless love and compassion in the pursuit of spiritual liberation.

Similarly, in Hinduism, Bhakti (devotion) to God is often expressed through love and selfless service to others. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna teaches that the path of devotion, rooted in love and surrender to the Divine, is a powerful means of attaining spiritual liberation.

In the West, the teachings of Christ are centered around love—loving God with all one's heart and loving one's neighbor as oneself. In Islam, the concept of love for Allah and love for fellow human beings is fundamental to the practice of faith. The Sufi mystics of Islam express this divine love through poetry, music, and ecstatic devotion to Allah.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences reflect the universal nature of divine love. In her out-of-body journeys, she has encountered realms of pure light and love, where the soul experiences unconditional compassion and connection with all of creation. Whether in Eastern or Western teachings, love is the binding force that unites us with the Divine and with each other.

The Journey to Divine Union

The journey to divine union is the ultimate goal of both Eastern and Western spirituality. In the East, this union is often described as enlightenment, Nirvana, or Moksha, where the individual soul recognizes its oneness with the Divine. In the West, divine union is seen as salvation, the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Beatific Vision—being in direct communion with God for eternity.

Despite the different language and imagery, both traditions emphasize that the journey involves self-purification, surrender to divine will, and the transcendence of the ego. The soul must shed its attachments to

the material world, overcome its illusions, and align with the Divine flow.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical teachings align with this universal journey. Through her experiences in the higher realms, she has learned that the path to divine union is one of continuous growth, purification, and ultimate surrender to divine love. Whether through Eastern or Western practices, the goal is the same: to reunite with the Divine, to experience the truth of our oneness with all of creation, and to live in harmony with the divine order of the universe.

Conclusion of Chapter 2

The divide between East and West is not as vast as it may appear. At the core of all spiritual traditions lies the same truth: the Divine is one, and we are all on a journey to reunite with it. By exploring the shared themes of divine presence, love, compassion, and spiritual awakening, we begin to see that the spiritual paths of the East and West are not contradictory but complementary. They each offer unique

insights and practices that lead us toward the same goal—union with the Divine.

In the following chapters, we will continue to explore how the teachings of Marilyn Hughes and the mystical experiences she describes reveal the deep spiritual unity between Eastern and Western religions, demonstrating that we are all on the same path to divine awakening.

Chapter 3: The Divine Wisdom of Eastern Traditions

The spiritual paths of the East have long been celebrated for their deep insights into the nature of the soul, the divine, and the universe. In Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and other Eastern traditions, the focus has often been on inner transformation, enlightenment, and understanding the interconnectedness of all things. These traditions offer valuable perspectives on how to align oneself with the divine flow of the universe, and many of these teachings resonate strongly with the universal truths that are also present in Western religions. In this chapter, we will explore the wisdom of Eastern traditions, highlighting their common themes with Western spiritual teachings and how they converge on the ultimate goal of divine union.

Hinduism: The Path to Unity with Brahman

At the core of Hinduism is the concept of Brahman—the ultimate reality, the all-

encompassing source of all existence. Brahman is formless, infinite, and transcendent, yet it is also immanent, present within all creation. The soul (Atman) is believed to be a reflection of Brahman, and the ultimate goal of spiritual practice in Hinduism is to realize the oneness of Atman and Brahman.

The path to this realization is through yoga—union with the Divine. There are various paths of yoga, such as Karma Yoga (the path of selfless action), Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion), and Jnana Yoga (the path of knowledge). Through these practices, one can transcend the ego, dissolve attachments, and realize their true nature as part of the Divine.

In many ways, Hinduism's teachings on the nature of the soul and its unity with Brahman align with the mystical teachings of Christianity, where the soul is seen as created in the image of God and destined to reunite with the Divine. Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, particularly those in *At the Feet of the Masters*, reveal similar themes of divine union, where souls realize their true nature as one with the Creator. In her journeys, Hughes encountered spiritual

beings who embodied the unity of all traditions, illustrating how Eastern concepts like Brahman and Western concepts like God both point to the same eternal truth.

Buddhism: The Path of Compassion and Enlightenment

Buddhism teaches that life is characterized by suffering (dukkha), and the path to liberation (nirvana) is through the cessation of suffering. The Buddha's teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path offer a practical guide for overcoming the attachments and desires that bind the soul to the cycle of suffering (samsara). Through practices like meditation, mindfulness, and right action, the practitioner works to overcome the ego, realize the impermanence of all things, and attain enlightenment.

Buddhism emphasizes compassion (karuna) and wisdom (prajna) as essential virtues on the path to enlightenment. The bodhisattva, an enlightened being who chooses to remain in the cycle of birth and death to help others achieve liberation, exemplifies the ultimate expression of selflessness and love.

These teachings echo the core values found in the Western mystical traditions, where the path to divine union is also one of selflessness, humility, and love. Christ's teachings in the New Testament, for example, emphasize the importance of compassion, loving one's neighbor, and surrendering the self for the greater good. Marilynn Hughes' mystical journeys, particularly in *Near Death and Out-of-Body Experiences*, revealed a similar path of self-purification, transcending personal desires, and aligning with divine will—a path that is strikingly similar to the Buddhist notion of awakening through compassion and wisdom.

Taoism: The Flow of Divine Energy

Taoism, with its foundational text *The Tao Te Ching* by Laozi, teaches that the Tao (the Way) is the natural order of the universe, a divine force that flows through all things. The Tao is formless, eternal, and beyond human comprehension, yet it is present in everything. The goal of Taoist practice is to align oneself with the Tao, to live in harmony with the natural flow of the universe, and to transcend the ego and personal desires that obstruct this flow.

The principle of Wu Wei, or "non-action," is central to Taoism. It teaches that instead of striving and forcing things, one should allow things to unfold naturally and live in accordance with the Tao. This practice of surrendering to the flow of life and trusting the divine order mirrors many mystical traditions in the West, including Christianity and Sufism, where surrender to God's will is the path to spiritual peace and divine union.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical teachings, particularly in *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, align with the Taoist concept of non-action and flowing with the divine current. In her experiences, she encountered realms where divine beings acted in complete harmony with the natural flow of existence, guiding souls with love and wisdom. This harmonious relationship with the divine is a central teaching in both Taoism and Western mystical traditions, demonstrating the universal principle of surrender to the divine will.

Buddhist and Taoist Influence on Western Mysticism

Both Buddhism and Taoism emphasize the importance of meditation and mindfulness in

achieving spiritual enlightenment. These practices, while rooted in Eastern traditions, have found resonance in Western mysticism. Christian mystics, such as Meister Eckhart and St. John of the Cross, spoke of the need for contemplative prayer, inner stillness, and the stripping away of the ego to unite with God. These practices closely parallel the meditation and mindfulness techniques used in Buddhism and Taoism, showing how the mystical path of quieting the mind and connecting with the Divine transcends cultural and doctrinal boundaries.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical journeys also emphasized the importance of inner stillness and meditation. She encountered moments of profound peace and connection with the Divine in states of deep meditation, echoing the practices of both Eastern and Western mystics. Her experiences reveal that, regardless of religious background, the soul can attain union with the Divine through focused spiritual practice and surrender.

The Role of Sacred Texts and Teachings in Eastern Mysticism

The sacred texts of Eastern traditions offer profound insights into the nature of the soul,

the Divine, and the path to enlightenment. In Hinduism, the *Bhagavad Gita* offers teachings on duty, devotion, and the realization of oneness with God. In Buddhism, the *Dhammapada* contains the Buddha's teachings on the path to enlightenment. The *Tao Te Ching* provides guidance on living in harmony with the Tao, transcending ego, and aligning with the natural flow of the universe.

These texts, much like the Bible in Christianity, the Qur'an in Islam, and the Torah in Judaism, serve as guides to understanding the divine and living in accordance with divine will. Marilyn Hughes' mystical experiences have shown her how these sacred texts are more than just religious doctrine—they are direct reflections of the divine wisdom that speaks across all cultures. In her journeys, Hughes often found herself encountering divine wisdom that echoed the teachings found in these sacred texts, showing that, at the highest levels of spiritual experience, all paths lead to the same truth.

Conclusion of Chapter 3

The wisdom of Eastern traditions offers profound teachings on love, compassion, self-transcendence, and divine union—teachings that echo the spiritual truths found in Western traditions. Whether through the realization of oneness with Brahman in Hinduism, the path of compassion in Buddhism, or the alignment with the Tao in Taoism, the ultimate goal of spiritual awakening is the same: to transcend the ego, align with the Divine, and experience unity with all of creation.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, as outlined in her various writings, have illuminated the deep connection between Eastern and Western spiritual teachings. These traditions are not separate paths but complementary reflections of the same divine truth. As we continue to explore the convergence of Eastern and Western wisdom, we will discover that the journey to divine union is one that transcends cultural and religious boundaries, uniting all of humanity in the shared pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

Chapter 4: The Divine Wisdom of Western Traditions

The Western spiritual traditions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—have long emphasized the importance of divine revelation, the relationship between humanity and God, and the ultimate goal of salvation or divine union. While these traditions may appear distinct from their Eastern counterparts, they share profound similarities in their teachings about the nature of the soul, divine love, and the path to enlightenment. This chapter explores the divine wisdom embedded within these Western religions, highlighting how their core principles resonate with the shared truths found in Eastern spiritual practices.

Christianity: The Path of Love, Sacrifice, and Divine Union

Christianity, at its heart, teaches that divine love is the most powerful force in the universe, capable of healing, transforming, and uniting all of creation. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ are centered

around love—love of God and love of neighbor. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is seen as the ultimate act of divine love, through which humanity is offered salvation and the opportunity for eternal union with God.

In Christianity, the path to spiritual awakening involves recognizing one's divine nature, accepting Christ as the savior, and striving to live in accordance with God's will. Through prayer, meditation, and contemplation, Christians seek a deep, personal connection with God and aim to embody divine love in their daily lives.

The teachings of Christ emphasize the importance of surrendering the ego, loving one's enemies, and living a life of selflessness and service. These principles mirror many of the teachings found in Eastern religions, particularly in Buddhism and Hinduism, where selflessness and compassion are seen as the paths to spiritual liberation. Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, especially in works like *At the Feet of the Masters*, show how Christ's teachings are deeply interconnected with the universal principles of love and divine union that transcend religious boundaries. In her

mystical journeys, Hughes encountered Christ not just as a historical figure, but as an eternal presence who embodies the unity of divine love across all religions.

Judaism: The Covenant and Divine Presence

Judaism, one of the oldest spiritual traditions, centers around the covenant between God and the people of Israel. This covenant represents a unique relationship between the Creator and His chosen people, who are called to live in accordance with God's laws and to serve as a light to the nations. The Torah, the sacred text of Judaism, provides guidance on how to live a righteous life and uphold divine justice in the world.

At the core of Judaism is the belief in one God, who is the Creator of all things and who is intimately involved in the world. God's presence is seen as both transcendent and immanent—beyond all comprehension, yet deeply involved in the lives of believers. The ultimate goal of Jewish spirituality is to live in alignment with God's will and to prepare for the coming of the Messiah, who

will bring peace and redemption to the world.

While Judaism emphasizes the importance of following the commandments and living a righteous life, it also shares many principles with Eastern spirituality, particularly in its focus on inner purification, self-reflection, and spiritual growth. Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences in *The Voice of the Prophets* illustrate how these shared principles of inner transformation are central to the soul's journey, whether in Judaism, Christianity, or Eastern traditions.

Islam: Submission to the Divine Will

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, teaches that there is one God—Allah—and that submission to His will is the path to spiritual peace and divine union. The Qur'an, the sacred text of Islam, provides guidance on how to live a righteous life, and the five pillars of Islam—faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage—are essential practices that lead to spiritual enlightenment.

At the heart of Islam is the concept of submission to Allah's will, which is seen as the ultimate act of spiritual surrender.

Through submission, Muslims seek to align themselves with the divine order of the universe and to live in harmony with God's will. The practice of prayer (Salat), five times a day, serves as a constant reminder of God's presence and the importance of seeking divine guidance in every moment.

Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, emphasizes the inner, experiential connection with God. Sufi mystics engage in practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God) and whirling (as seen in the tradition of the Whirling Dervishes) to achieve a state of divine ecstasy and union with the Divine. This mystical tradition aligns closely with the practices of meditation and mindfulness found in Eastern spirituality, demonstrating that the path to divine union is not limited by cultural or religious background.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, particularly in *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, reveal the universality of divine love and the path of submission to the divine will. Through her journeys, Hughes encountered divine beings who embody the same principles of surrender, love, and unity found in the Sufi tradition, showing that the

core of all mysticism, whether Eastern or Western, is the same: union with the Divine.

The Role of Mysticism in Western Religions

In the West, mysticism has been a central part of the spiritual tradition since the early days of Christianity. Christian mystics such as St. John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and Meister Eckhart emphasized the importance of inner transformation, prayer, and direct communion with God. These mystics taught that the soul's ultimate purpose is to unite with God through love, surrender, and purification.

Similarly, in Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), the teachings focus on understanding the nature of God, the soul, and the universe. Kabbalists believe that through meditation and study of the sacred texts, one can achieve a direct, experiential connection with the Divine and gain insight into the mysteries of the universe.

Islamic mysticism, or Sufism, also emphasizes the importance of inner experience and the direct knowledge of God. Through practices such as meditation,

chanting, and prayer, Sufis seek to transcend the material world and experience divine love in its purest form.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical writings, especially in *The Voice of the Prophets*, reflect these same principles found in Western mysticism. Through her out-of-body experiences, Hughes gained insights into the higher realms, where divine beings from all religious traditions work together to guide souls toward enlightenment and union with the Divine. Her experiences show that mysticism is a universal path—one that transcends religious boundaries and leads the soul to the same ultimate truth: divine love and unity.

The Common Goal: Divine Union

The ultimate goal of the Western traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam is divine union. Whether it is through the teachings of Christ, the covenant of God's people in Judaism, or the submission to Allah's will in Islam, the soul's journey is one of returning to God, experiencing divine love, and living in accordance with divine will. This journey of divine union is remarkably similar to the path outlined in Eastern religions, where the

soul seeks enlightenment, liberation, and oneness with the Divine.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical journeys have shown that these paths are not separate but are, in fact, one unified journey. Whether in the realms of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or Eastern spirituality, the ultimate destination is the same: the realization of oneness with the Divine and the experience of divine love, light, and peace. Through her writings and teachings, Hughes has illuminated the common goal shared by all spiritual traditions: to reunite the soul with its source in the Divine.

Conclusion of Chapter 4

As we have explored in this chapter, the wisdom of Western spiritual traditions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—shares profound similarities with the teachings of Eastern religions. Whether through the path of love, sacrifice, and divine union in Christianity, the covenant and divine presence in Judaism, or the submission to Allah's will in Islam, these traditions all

point to the same ultimate truth: the goal of spiritual life is to unite with the Divine.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences provide a powerful lens through which we can see the unity between these traditions. Her journeys show us that, at the highest levels of spiritual experience, all religions lead to the same truth: divine love, peace, and union with the Creator. As we continue our exploration of the convergence between Eastern and Western wisdom, we will discover that the path to enlightenment is one of unity, love, and divine guidance.

Chapter 5: The Role of Mysticism in Bridging East and West

Mysticism is the bridge that connects the divine truth of all religions, transcending cultural and doctrinal divisions to reveal the deeper, universal experience of the soul's journey toward union with the Divine.

While Eastern and Western religions may appear to be distinct in their teachings and practices, their mystical traditions converge in their common goal: the realization of the soul's oneness with the Divine. Mysticism, in its purest form, is the lived experience of this oneness, and it is through mystical practice and direct communion with the Divine that we come to understand the unity of all spiritual paths.

This chapter will explore how the mystical experiences described by Marilynn Hughes and the teachings of Eastern and Western mystics illuminate the shared truths that unite the world's great religions. Mysticism is not bound by any single tradition but is a universal experience that transcends cultural, geographic, and religious barriers.

Through mystical experience, the soul comes into direct contact with divine wisdom, love, and truth—wisdom that can be found across all spiritual paths.

The Mystical Experience of Oneness with the Divine

At the core of mysticism is the experience of union with the Divine. Whether in the contemplative prayer of Christian mystics, the meditation of Buddhist monks, the devotion of Hindu yogis, or the practices of Sufi mystics, the goal of mysticism is the same: to experience oneness with the Divine. This union is not intellectual or conceptual but experiential—a direct, transformative encounter with the Divine presence.

In her works, such as *At the Feet of the Masters* and *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, Marilynn Hughes has shared her own mystical experiences, where she encountered divine beings, such as angels, saints, and Christ Himself, in realms beyond the physical world. These experiences revealed to her the universal nature of divine truth and the interconnectedness of all religious traditions. Through these

encounters, Hughes came to understand that, at the highest levels of spiritual experience, there is no division between East and West—there is only the one Divine, manifesting in many forms and guiding all souls toward divine union.

The mystics of both the East and West have long described similar experiences of divine union. In Christianity, mystics like St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila spoke of the “dark night of the soul” and the eventual union with God in the mystical marriage. In Hinduism, mystics like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda described their experiences of realizing their oneness with Brahman, the ultimate reality. In Buddhism, enlightened beings like the Buddha and the Dalai Lama teach that true liberation comes from realizing the interconnectedness of all beings and the dissolution of the ego. In Taoism, the sage aligns with the Tao, living in harmony with the natural flow of the universe, experiencing divine peace and unity.

Marilynn Hughes’ mystical journeys confirm that, despite differences in religious traditions, the ultimate goal of mysticism is the same: union with the Divine. In her

writings, she consistently emphasizes the unity of all mystics, who experience the same divine truths regardless of their cultural or religious background.

Mystical Practices: A Path to Unity

The practices that lead to mystical experiences are remarkably similar across Eastern and Western traditions. Meditation, prayer, devotion, and self-purification are all tools that mystics use to quiet the mind, surrender the ego, and open themselves to divine guidance. These practices enable the soul to transcend the physical world and enter into communion with the Divine.

In the East, meditation is the primary practice for achieving mystical union. In Hinduism, meditation (dhyana) is used to still the mind and focus the consciousness on the Divine. In Buddhism, mindfulness and meditation are essential for achieving enlightenment and overcoming suffering. In Taoism, meditation helps the practitioner align with the Tao and live in harmony with the universe.

In the West, mystics engage in contemplative prayer, self-reflection, and surrender to God's will. Christian mystics, like St. Teresa of Avila, practiced silent prayer to commune with God, while Sufi mystics, such as Rumi and Al-Ghazali, used poetry, dance, and chanting (dhikr) to open their hearts to the Divine.

Marilynn Hughes' own experiences, particularly in *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, highlight how these mystical practices—whether in the form of meditation, prayer, or devotion—are tools for connecting with the Divine. Through these practices, she was able to access higher realms of consciousness and engage with divine beings who guided her on her spiritual journey. Her experiences demonstrate that the practices themselves are universal, regardless of the tradition in which they are found, and that they all lead to the same ultimate goal: divine union.

The Role of Divine Beings in Mystical Experience

Throughout Marilyn Hughes' mystical journeys, she encountered numerous divine beings—angels, saints, prophets, and spiritual guides—who offered wisdom, love, and guidance on her path. These encounters are common across both Eastern and Western mysticism, where divine beings are seen as messengers of the Divine, guiding souls toward enlightenment and union with the Divine.

In Hinduism, deities like Krishna, Shiva, and Lakshmi are not only seen as divine figures to be worshipped but also as guides who lead the devotee toward liberation. In Buddhism, bodhisattvas, like Avalokiteshvara, are revered for their compassion and their willingness to help all beings achieve enlightenment. In Taoism, spiritual guides and immortals help the practitioner align with the Tao and live in harmony with the universe.

In Christianity, angels and saints are seen as divine messengers who offer guidance and protection. Christ, as the divine teacher, serves as the ultimate guide on the path to salvation. In Islam, angels are messengers of Allah, guiding and protecting believers on their spiritual journey. Sufi mystics also

speak of encountering divine guides who lead them closer to Allah's presence.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences in *At the Feet of the Masters* demonstrate how these divine beings—whether from Eastern or Western traditions—offer the same spiritual truths and guidance. They help souls transcend the ego, align with the divine will, and move toward the ultimate goal of union with the Divine.

Mysticism as a Bridge Between East and West

Mysticism is a powerful bridge that unites Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, revealing the shared truths that run through all paths. Whether through meditation, prayer, devotion, or self-purification, mystics from both traditions seek the same ultimate goal: union with the Divine. Marilynn Hughes' work, based on her direct experiences in the spiritual realms, serves as a testament to this universal truth. Through her writings, she has shown that the soul's journey to divine union is not confined by religious or cultural boundaries but is a

shared experience of all mystics, regardless of their tradition.

As we move forward in this book, we will continue to explore the common ground between Eastern and Western spirituality, using Marilynn Hughes' mystical teachings as a guide to understand the deeper unity that exists between all religions. In the higher realms, there are no divisions—only divine love and truth that transcend all human-made distinctions.

Conclusion of Chapter 5

The role of mysticism in bridging the East and West cannot be overstated. Mysticism reveals the shared truths that unite all spiritual paths, guiding the soul toward the same ultimate goal: union with the Divine. Through Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, we are reminded that the core teachings of both Eastern and Western traditions are not only compatible but are, in fact, complementary reflections of the same divine truth.

By exploring the shared principles of divine love, compassion, self-transcendence, and the pursuit of enlightenment, we come to see

that the ultimate path of spiritual awakening is universal. Whether through the practices of meditation, prayer, or devotion, the mystics of both the East and the West are walking the same path, seeking the same goal, and experiencing the same divine truth.

Chapter 6: The Mystical Journey Across Cultures

The mystical journey is one of transformation, transcendence, and awakening—a journey that every soul undertakes, regardless of cultural or religious background. It is the path that leads from the confines of the ego to the realization of oneness with the Divine, and it is experienced in profoundly similar ways across both Eastern and Western traditions. While the language, symbols, and practices may differ, the core of the mystical journey remains the same: to transcend the material world and experience divine union.

This chapter explores the shared elements of the mystical journey across cultures, illustrating how the path of spiritual awakening is a universal experience. Through the works of Marilynn Hughes and the teachings of mystics from both the East and the West, we will uncover the common stages of the soul's journey, as well as the transformative power of mystical experiences.

The Stages of the Mystical Journey

While the specifics of the mystical journey may vary across cultures, there are certain stages that mystics across traditions universally encounter. These stages reflect the process of spiritual purification, self-realization, and ultimately, union with the Divine. In both Eastern and Western traditions, mystics describe similar experiences of self-transcendence, illumination, and divine communion.

The Call to the Divine

The mystical journey often begins with a deep, inner calling—a longing for something beyond the material world. In many traditions, this call is described as a yearning for truth, peace, or union with the Divine. In Hinduism, this call is represented by the soul's quest for moksha, or liberation from the cycle of rebirth. In Buddhism, it is the call to enlightenment, or nirvana. In Christianity, it is the call to follow Christ and experience the fullness of divine love. In Islam, it is the call to submit to Allah's will and experience peace through divine union.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences reflect this universal calling to the Divine. In her writings, she describes how she was drawn to the higher realms, where divine beings beckoned her to explore the mysteries of the universe and the nature of the soul. This call is experienced by mystics across all cultures, a reminder that the soul's longing for the Divine is both universal and deeply personal.

The Journey of Purification

As the soul embarks on its mystical journey, the first task is purification—removing the obstacles and attachments that keep the soul bound to the material world. In Eastern traditions, this purification process is often described as overcoming ignorance, desire, and attachment. In Buddhism, it involves the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which guides the practitioner to right understanding, right intention, and right action. In Hinduism, the path of yoga is seen as a way to purify the mind and body, aligning the practitioner with the Divine.

In Western mysticism, purification is similarly emphasized. Christian mystics like St. John of the Cross spoke of the “dark night of the soul,” a period of spiritual purification where the individual soul must shed its attachments to the ego and material desires in order to fully surrender to God. In Sufism, the process of purification is known as “tazkiyah,” where the Sufi seeker works to purify the heart and rid it of negative traits such as pride and jealousy.

Marilynn Hughes’ mystical journeys, as described in *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, show the transformative power of this purification process. In her experiences, she encountered divine beings who guided her through these stages of purification, helping her overcome fear, doubt, and attachment to the material world. This purification, which is central to the mystical journey, is a necessary step in the soul’s awakening to its true divine nature.

The Illumination of the Soul

As the soul is purified, it begins to experience illumination—the awakening to divine truth and the realization of its oneness with the Divine. In Eastern traditions, this

stage is described as the moment of self-realization or enlightenment. In Buddhism, it is the realization of emptiness and the interconnectedness of all beings. In Hinduism, it is the recognition of the Atman's unity with Brahman. In Taoism, it is the alignment with the Tao, the natural flow of divine energy.

In Western mysticism, illumination is the moment of divine revelation, when the soul is flooded with divine light and understanding. Christian mystics describe this as the experience of divine union, where the soul is fully aware of its connection to God. In Sufism, illumination is experienced as a state of divine ecstasy, where the soul is filled with love and knowledge of Allah.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, especially in *At the Feet of the Masters*, illustrate this stage of illumination, where she encountered divine truths that transcended religious boundaries. In these experiences, Hughes was shown the interconnectedness of all souls and the shared spiritual wisdom that exists across all traditions. The illumination of the soul is a universal experience, one that occurs when

the soul recognizes its true nature and its oneness with the Divine.

Union with the Divine

The final stage of the mystical journey is union with the Divine—the realization of oneness with God, the ultimate source of all creation. In Eastern traditions, this union is described as enlightenment, liberation, or moksha. In Buddhism, it is the realization of nirvana, the cessation of suffering and the end of the cycle of birth and death. In Hinduism, it is the recognition of the soul's identity with Brahman, the infinite and eternal source of all life. In Taoism, it is the alignment with the Tao, the eternal flow of divine energy.

In Western mysticism, union with the Divine is described as salvation, the Beatific Vision, or divine communion. Christian mystics speak of the soul's union with Christ and the experience of eternal life with God. In Islam, union with Allah is the ultimate goal, achieved through submission to divine will and the purification of the heart. In Judaism, the soul's union with God is seen as the ultimate fulfillment of spiritual purpose,

achieved through righteous living and the practice of mitzvot (commandments).

Marilynn Hughes' mystical writings, particularly in *The Voice of the Prophets*, reveal how this union with the Divine transcends religious labels. In her out-of-body experiences, Hughes encountered divine beings who embodied love, wisdom, and light, and who guided souls toward this ultimate reunion with the Divine. Her experiences illustrate how, regardless of tradition, the ultimate goal is the same: to return to the Source and experience divine union.

The Universality of the Mystical Journey

The mystical journey is a universal experience, one that transcends cultural, religious, and geographical boundaries. Whether in the East or the West, the soul's path toward divine union is marked by purification, illumination, and the ultimate realization of oneness with the Divine. Mysticism reveals that, at the highest levels of spiritual experience, all paths lead to the

same truth: the Divine is one, and all souls are ultimately united in love and light.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, as described in her books such as *At the Feet of the Masters* and *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, serve as powerful reminders that the journey to divine union is shared by all of humanity. Through her work, Hughes has illuminated the universal nature of the mystical journey, showing that the path to enlightenment, love, and divine union is the same for all souls, regardless of their religious or cultural background.

Conclusion of Chapter 6

The mystical journey is one that all souls undertake, regardless of their religious or cultural background. The stages of purification, illumination, and divine union are shared across all traditions, demonstrating the universal nature of the soul's quest for oneness with the Divine. Whether through meditation, prayer, devotion, or self-purification, the ultimate goal of the mystical journey is the same: to transcend the ego and experience divine union.

In the following chapters, we will continue to explore how these shared stages of the mystical journey manifest in the teachings and experiences of mystics from both the East and the West. Through Marilyn Hughes' writings and her own mystical experiences, we will uncover the common threads that unite the spiritual paths of humanity, revealing the divine truth that transcends all boundaries.

Chapter 7: The Role of Divine Beings in Mystical Experience

In both Eastern and Western mystical traditions, divine beings play a central role in guiding the soul on its journey toward union with the Divine. These beings, often referred to as angels, saints, deities, or spiritual guides, offer wisdom, protection, and direction as the soul traverses the realms of the spiritual world. Across all religions, divine beings are seen as intermediaries between humanity and the Divine, offering insights, teachings, and support on the path to enlightenment and salvation.

This chapter explores the role of divine beings in the mystical experience, highlighting how they appear in both Eastern and Western traditions and how their guidance reflects the unity of all spiritual paths. By examining the encounters of Marilynn Hughes with divine beings, we will uncover the common purpose they serve in guiding souls toward divine union, showing that their wisdom and love transcend religious boundaries.

Divine Beings in Eastern Mysticism

In Eastern traditions, divine beings take many forms, from gods and goddesses to spiritual guides and enlightened beings. In Hinduism, deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Lakshmi are not only objects of worship but also serve as divine guides who help the practitioner along the path to liberation. Each deity embodies a particular aspect of the Divine, such as creation, destruction, or preservation, and their teachings offer the practitioner a way to understand and align with the cosmic order.

In Buddhism, the Bodhisattvas are revered as beings who have attained enlightenment but have chosen to remain in the cycle of birth and death in order to help others achieve liberation. Figures like Avalokiteshvara (the Bodhisattva of compassion) embody the qualities of wisdom, compassion, and selflessness, offering guidance to those on the path to enlightenment. In Tibetan Buddhism, spiritual guides known as Lamas, as well as deities like Tara, are seen as protectors and teachers who help the practitioner overcome obstacles on their journey.

Taoism also acknowledges the presence of divine beings, such as the immortals and sages, who are believed to have transcended the limitations of the material world and become one with the Tao. These beings embody the wisdom and harmony of the natural world, offering teachings that help the practitioner align with the Tao and live in accordance with divine order.

In Marilyn Hughes' mystical experiences, divine beings from both Eastern and Western traditions have played a significant role in guiding her toward greater spiritual understanding. Whether encountering beings of light or revered deities from Hinduism or Buddhism, Hughes' experiences illustrate the universality of divine guidance. She encountered beings who embodied compassion, wisdom, and divine love—qualities that transcend religious boundaries and reflect the ultimate truth of spiritual unity.

Divine Beings in Western Mysticism

In Western mysticism, divine beings such as angels, saints, and the figure of Christ play a central role in guiding the soul on its journey toward God. Angels are often seen as

messengers of God, sent to protect, guide, and deliver divine messages to humanity. In Christianity, angels are frequently depicted as protectors, offering guidance and help during times of struggle and spiritual uncertainty. The Archangel Michael, often associated with protection and spiritual warfare, is one of the most well-known divine beings in Christian mysticism.

In addition to angels, saints also play an important role in guiding the soul. Saints are revered as holy individuals who have achieved a high level of spiritual purity and union with God. They are often called upon for intercession and guidance, as they are believed to have a special relationship with the Divine. Saints like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Francis of Assisi are examples of Christian mystics who, through their writings and teachings, offer valuable insights into the path of spiritual awakening.

Christ, as the ultimate guide and savior, is central to Christian mysticism. His teachings on love, forgiveness, and divine union with the Father form the foundation of the Christian mystical path. Through prayer, meditation, and devotion to Christ, the soul

seeks to experience divine union and communion with God.

In Islam, angels play a central role as messengers of Allah, delivering divine revelations to the prophets. The Archangel Gabriel, in particular, is revered as the messenger who delivered the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. In Sufism, spiritual guides known as sheikhs or masters offer teachings and guidance to help the disciple transcend the ego and experience direct union with Allah. The role of divine guidance in both Christianity and Islam is one of illumination, protection, and assistance in overcoming the obstacles that prevent the soul from achieving divine union.

The Shared Role of Divine Beings Across Traditions

Despite the cultural and doctrinal differences between Eastern and Western religions, the role of divine beings in the mystical experience is fundamentally the same: they serve as guides, protectors, and sources of divine wisdom that help the soul navigate the spiritual journey. Whether in the form of Hindu deities, Buddhist

bodhisattvas, Christian angels, or Sufi masters, divine beings are revered as embodiments of divine love and wisdom. Their guidance helps the soul transcend the limitations of the material world, overcome the ego, and move toward the ultimate goal of spiritual union with the Divine.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, especially in *The Voice of the Prophets*, reveal how these divine beings transcend religious boundaries. In her out-of-body journeys, Hughes encountered spiritual guides from both Eastern and Western traditions who shared the same messages of love, wisdom, and divine guidance. These encounters illustrate that, at the highest levels of spiritual experience, the distinctions between religions dissolve, and the soul is guided by the same divine truths, regardless of the religious framework through which they are expressed.

The Transformative Power of Divine Guidance

The encounters with divine beings, whether in the form of angels, saints, or enlightened beings, are transformative experiences for the soul. These encounters provide the soul

with wisdom, comfort, and direction, helping it overcome the obstacles of the material world and guiding it toward divine union. The presence of divine beings offers the soul a sense of peace, reassurance, and connection to the higher realms of existence.

In Marilyn Hughes' mystical writings, she often describes the transformative power of these divine encounters. In her out-of-body experiences, she encountered divine beings who imparted profound teachings on love, forgiveness, and the nature of the soul. These teachings helped her navigate the spiritual realms and provided her with the wisdom to understand her own spiritual journey.

The transformative power of divine guidance is not limited to those who experience mystical journeys like Marilyn's. Mystics, saints, and spiritual seekers throughout history have encountered divine beings who have guided them toward greater spiritual awakening and divine union. These experiences are a reminder that divine guidance is available to all who seek it—across cultures, religions, and traditions.

Conclusion of Chapter 7

Divine beings play an essential role in the mystical journey, guiding the soul toward greater understanding, spiritual awakening, and union with the Divine. Whether in the form of Hindu deities, Buddhist bodhisattvas, Christian angels, or Sufi masters, divine beings transcend religious boundaries and offer the same divine wisdom and love to all souls. Marilyn Hughes' mystical experiences serve as a powerful reminder of the universality of divine guidance, revealing that the ultimate goal of all religions is the same: to return to the Divine, to experience divine love, and to achieve spiritual union.

In the following chapters, we will continue to explore how these shared experiences of divine guidance and union with the Divine reflect the deeper unity that exists between Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. By examining the teachings of mystics from both traditions, we will uncover the common path that leads the soul to ultimate awakening and divine communion.

Chapter 8: The Path of Purification and Surrender

The journey to spiritual enlightenment, whether in Eastern or Western traditions, involves a process of purification—a shedding of the ego and worldly attachments in order to align the soul with the Divine. This path is one of surrender, a surrender to divine will, to the higher mind, and to the flow of divine energy that transcends the material world. Purification and surrender are at the core of the mystical path, and they serve as the necessary steps for the soul to return to its source.

This chapter explores the essential role of purification and surrender in the spiritual journey, illustrating how both Eastern and Western mystics emphasize these processes in their teachings. By examining the practices of self-discipline, devotion, and surrender, we will uncover the universal wisdom that guides the soul toward divine union.

Purification: The First Step Toward Union

Purification is the first and most important step in the mystical journey. It involves cleansing the soul of attachments, desires, and the distractions of the material world that keep the soul bound to the ego and separated from the Divine. In Eastern traditions, this purification process is often seen as the removal of ignorance (avidya) and the dissolution of the false self. In Hinduism, the practice of yoga—whether through meditation, selfless action, or devotion—is used to purify the body, mind, and soul, aligning them with the Divine.

In Buddhism, purification is achieved through the cultivation of right understanding, right intention, and right action. The Buddha taught that suffering arises from attachment and desire, and the path to liberation involves purifying the mind of these attachments in order to experience enlightenment. In Taoism, the Taoist concept of Wu Wei, or effortless action, calls for the practitioner to release attachment and allow the natural flow of the Tao to guide them toward spiritual awakening.

In Western mysticism, purification is similarly emphasized. In Christianity, the concept of repentance—turning away from sin and seeking forgiveness—is central to the process of purification. Christian mystics like St. John of the Cross spoke of the “dark night of the soul,” a period of spiritual purification in which the soul is purified through suffering, loss, and surrender. In Islam, purification is seen as the process of tazkiyah, which involves cleansing the heart from negative qualities such as pride, greed, and anger. Sufism teaches that the heart must be purified in order to experience union with Allah, and this purification comes through devotion, surrender, and inner stillness.

Marilynn Hughes’ mystical experiences, as recounted in works like *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven* and *At the Feet of the Masters*, reveal how purification is a central part of the soul’s journey. In her encounters with divine beings, Hughes was shown that the soul must undergo a process of cleansing in order to align with the higher realms and experience divine union. Her experiences highlight the transformative power of purification—how it helps the soul

transcend the ego and come into harmony with divine will.

Surrender: Letting Go of the Ego

Surrender is the second essential step on the mystical path. It is the act of letting go of the ego—of releasing control over one's life and surrendering to the divine flow. In both Eastern and Western mysticism, surrender is viewed as the key to spiritual awakening. It is the surrender of the individual will to divine will, the relinquishing of the ego's desires in favor of divine guidance.

In Hinduism, the practice of Bhakti Yoga—devotion to God—emphasizes surrender as a central practice. In Bhakti, the devotee surrenders all aspects of their life to the Divine, allowing their love and devotion to guide them toward liberation. In Buddhism, the concept of non-attachment teaches that one must let go of the ego and desires in order to achieve enlightenment. Taoism's Wu Wei is also a form of surrender—letting go of forceful action and instead flowing with the natural order of the Tao.

In Christianity, Christ's teachings emphasize surrender as well. He called His followers to

surrender their worldly attachments, take up their cross, and follow Him. The ultimate act of surrender is Christ's own crucifixion, where He submitted to God's will, demonstrating the path of ultimate surrender. Christian mystics like Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross spoke of surrender as the path to divine union, where the soul must surrender its personal will in order to become one with God's will.

In Sufism, surrender is central to the practice of submitting to Allah's will. Sufis believe that in order to experience union with Allah, the soul must relinquish all attachments and desires. Through practices like *dhikr* (remembrance of God), Sufis aim to empty themselves of the ego and align their hearts with divine love and wisdom.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences consistently emphasized the importance of surrender. In her encounters with divine beings, she learned that surrendering the ego is essential for spiritual growth. Through surrender, the soul opens itself to divine guidance and the flow of the Divine, aligning with the higher realms. Hughes' experiences illustrate how surrender is the

gateway to spiritual enlightenment and divine union.

The Transformative Power of Purification and Surrender

The process of purification and surrender is transformative—it changes the very nature of the soul. Through purification, the soul becomes free from the distractions and attachments that keep it bound to the material world. Through surrender, the soul aligns itself with divine will, becoming a vessel for divine wisdom, love, and grace.

In both Eastern and Western traditions, purification and surrender are seen as the means by which the soul transcends the ego and aligns with the Divine. These practices are not easy—they require deep inner work, patience, and devotion—but they are essential for the soul's journey toward union with the Divine. Through purification and surrender, the soul becomes attuned to the higher realms and experiences the fullness of divine love and truth.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical writings show how these processes of purification and surrender are not abstract concepts but lived

experiences. In her journeys, she encountered divine beings who taught her the importance of letting go of the ego, purifying her heart, and surrendering to the divine flow. These experiences were transformative, not only on a spiritual level but also in her understanding of how these principles apply to everyday life. Through her work, she illustrates how purification and surrender are not just mystical ideals but practices that can lead to profound spiritual transformation.

Living the Path of Purification and Surrender

While purification and surrender are deeply mystical processes, they are also practical. They can be embodied in daily life through conscious practices and disciplines. In both Eastern and Western traditions, there are practices that help the soul purify itself and surrender to the Divine will. These practices may include meditation, prayer, mindfulness, and acts of service, all of which help the practitioner cultivate humility, compassion, and divine love.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, daily meditation and self-reflection are key

practices for purification. In Christianity, prayer and contemplation are essential for connecting with God and surrendering to His will. In Sufism, the practice of dhikr and the guidance of a spiritual master help the seeker surrender to divine love.

Marilynn Hughes teaches that purification and surrender are not just mystical ideals but essential steps in our everyday spiritual journey. By integrating these practices into our daily lives, we align ourselves with divine wisdom, embrace our true nature, and open ourselves to the flow of divine love and grace.

Conclusion of Chapter 8

Purification and surrender are essential stages in the mystical journey, allowing the soul to transcend the ego and align with the Divine. Through these processes, the soul becomes attuned to divine wisdom, love, and truth, ultimately leading to union with the Divine. Whether in Eastern or Western traditions, the path of purification and surrender is the same—a journey of inner

transformation that leads the soul closer to its true nature.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences demonstrate the profound impact of these practices, offering a powerful example of how purification and surrender lead to spiritual awakening and divine union. As we continue our exploration of the mystical journey, we will see how these transformative practices unite the teachings of Eastern and Western mysticism, revealing the shared path toward divine union.

Let's continue with **Chapter 9: The Unity of Divine Love Across Traditions.**

Chapter 9: The Unity of Divine Love Across Traditions

At the heart of every religious and mystical tradition lies a singular, transcendent truth: love is the ultimate force that binds all beings and connects them to the Divine. Divine love is both the essence of the Creator and the very fabric of existence, shaping the way the universe unfolds and guiding the soul toward its ultimate reunion with the Divine. While religious traditions may differ in their rituals, symbols, and expressions of this love, the central message is the same: love is the path to spiritual enlightenment, unity, and divine union.

This chapter explores the concept of divine love across Eastern and Western traditions, highlighting the ways in which it transcends religious boundaries and unites all spiritual paths. Through Marilyn Hughes' mystical experiences, we will uncover how divine love is the ultimate force that guides the soul toward its return to the Divine, illuminating the path of spiritual awakening and transformation.

The Nature of Divine Love in Eastern Traditions

In Eastern religions, divine love is often expressed as an all-encompassing force that pervades the universe and connects all beings. In Hinduism, love for God (Bhakti) is considered one of the most powerful spiritual paths. Through devotion to God, the devotee surrenders their ego and allows divine love to flow through them. This love is not a mere emotional feeling, but a deep, spiritual bond that leads the devotee to union with the Divine. The Bhagavad Gita speaks of Bhakti as the path to liberation, where the devotee's love for God transcends all worldly desires and leads them to eternal oneness with Brahman, the ultimate reality.

In Buddhism, love is closely tied to compassion (karuna), which is the desire to alleviate the suffering of others. Compassion is considered the highest virtue, as it reflects the wisdom of interconnectedness and the realization that all beings are part of the same divine fabric. The Bodhisattva ideal embodies this selfless love, where the enlightened being chooses to remain in the cycle of samsara to help all sentient beings achieve liberation.

Taoism, too, speaks of love in terms of harmony with the Tao. The Tao is the natural order of the universe, and by aligning with it, the practitioner becomes a channel for divine love. Taoism teaches that love is not a personal emotion but a universal force that flows through all things, bringing balance and unity to the cosmos. The Taoist sage embodies this love through the cultivation of inner stillness and the surrender of the ego, allowing the divine flow to guide their actions in harmony with the natural world.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences reveal the profound connection between love and spiritual awakening. In her writings, such as *At the Feet of the Masters* and *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, she encountered divine beings who radiated love as the central force of the universe. These beings, whether angels, saints, or deities, all shared the same message: that divine love is the key to spiritual awakening, transformation, and union with the Divine. Through her encounters, Hughes experienced firsthand how divine love transcends religious boundaries, uniting all souls in the shared journey toward oneness with the Creator.

The Nature of Divine Love in Western Traditions

In Western religions, divine love is also viewed as the central force that connects humanity to God. Christianity, in particular, emphasizes the role of divine love in salvation. The teachings of Jesus Christ are centered around love—love for God and love for one's neighbor. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is seen as the ultimate expression of divine love, where God's love for humanity is demonstrated through the selfless act of redemption. In Christianity, love is not just an emotional feeling but an active force that calls believers to love one another, forgive their enemies, and embody the teachings of Christ in their daily lives.

In Judaism, divine love is expressed through the covenant between God and His people. The Israelites are called to love God with all their heart, soul, and might, and to live in accordance with God's commandments. This love is both a personal devotion and a communal bond, reflecting the relationship between the Creator and creation. The teachings of the Hebrew prophets also emphasize love—particularly love for justice, mercy, and kindness toward others.

Islam speaks of Allah's love for His creation, particularly for those who are righteous, humble, and sincere in their worship. Divine love in Islam is expressed through submission to Allah's will and through acts of worship and kindness. Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, emphasizes the experience of divine love as the path to union with Allah. The Sufi mystic seeks to transcend the self and experience Allah's love in its purest form, often through practices like dhikr (remembrance of God), meditation, and poetry.

In Western mysticism, love is seen as the highest spiritual principle. Christian mystics like St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross spoke of divine love as the transformative power that leads the soul to union with God. In the Sufi tradition, love is central to the mystical path, as seen in the poetry of Rumi and Hafiz, where divine love is described as the force that draws the soul back to its source. In Marilynn Hughes' mystical writings, particularly in *The Voice of the Prophets*, she describes how divine love is the force that connects all beings and

guides the soul toward spiritual awakening and enlightenment.

Divine Love as the Binding Force Across Traditions

One of the most powerful realizations in both Eastern and Western mystical traditions is that divine love is the force that unites all things. Whether expressed through Bhakti in Hinduism, compassion in Buddhism, surrender to the Tao in Taoism, or love of God in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, divine love is the ultimate truth that binds the soul to the Divine.

In her mystical experiences, Marilyn Hughes encountered divine love as the ultimate force of creation. She witnessed how divine beings, whether angels, saints, or gods, radiated love as the fundamental force that transcended all religious and cultural distinctions. This love was not confined to any single tradition but was the essence of all spiritual experiences, connecting all souls in their journey back to the Divine.

Hughes' encounters with divine beings often revealed that love is not just a spiritual concept but a transformative creation.

Divine love, as experienced in the higher realms, is the force that unites all spiritual paths, offering a universal bridge that spans the perceived divides between different religions and cultures.

The Healing Power of Divine Love

One of the most profound aspects of divine love is its transformative and healing power. In both Eastern and Western mystical traditions, love is not merely an abstract concept or an emotional feeling; it is the living, breathing force that can heal the soul, purify the heart, and restore the individual to their divine state. This healing power of divine love is emphasized in many of Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences.

In her journeys through higher realms, Hughes frequently encountered divine beings whose love was not only a source of guidance but also a source of deep healing. This love healed her soul's wounds, released her from the attachments and fears of the material world, and ultimately led her to experience profound peace and unity with the Divine. These encounters illustrate the universal truth that divine love is not just something we seek but something we are

transformed by—it is the force that renews and restores the soul, leading it back to its original, pure state.

The healing aspect of divine love is also central to many Eastern teachings. In Hinduism, Bhakti (devotion to God) is believed to purify the heart and remove the stains of past karmas, allowing the soul to experience divine union. In Buddhism, love and compassion (Karuna) are seen as healing forces that not only relieve suffering in others but also heal the heart of the practitioner, freeing them from the cycles of samsara. In Taoism, aligning with the Tao, which is the ultimate expression of divine love, is said to restore balance and harmony to the body, mind, and soul.

In Western traditions, the healing power of divine love is also emphasized. Christianity teaches that God's love heals the brokenhearted and provides redemption for the soul. Through Christ's sacrifice, believers are offered the gift of eternal life and spiritual healing. In Islam, Allah's mercy and love are central to the forgiveness of sins and the healing of the soul. Sufism, with its emphasis on divine love as a path to union with God, describes the experience of

being “wholly absorbed” in the love of Allah, where all personal suffering is dissolved in the light of divine grace.

Through her mystical writings, Marilyn Hughes has shown that the universal love that flows through all traditions is not just an abstract ideal but a real, transformative experience. It is a love that can heal the soul, guide it toward enlightenment, and bring it back into alignment with the Divine. Divine love is the essence of all mystical paths, and it is through love that the soul experiences its true nature and its ultimate destiny.

Divine Love and the Ultimate Return to the Source

The ultimate goal of the mystical journey in both Eastern and Western traditions is to return to the Divine, to reunite with the source from which all things emanate. Divine love is the force that guides the soul on this journey, leading it back to its origin. In Hinduism, the soul’s return to Brahman is seen as the realization of oneness with the Divine, the ultimate reunion. In Buddhism, the soul’s liberation from samsara and attainment of nirvana represents the return to the source, free from the cycles of birth and

death. In Taoism, the return to the Tao is the ultimate goal, where the soul becomes one with the natural flow of the universe.

In Christianity, union with God in Heaven is the final goal, where the soul is eternally united with Christ and the Father. In Islam, the soul's return to Allah is the ultimate purpose, where the soul experiences eternal peace and bliss in the presence of God. All of these paths, while distinct in their teachings and practices, ultimately point to the same truth: the soul's journey is one of returning to the Divine, and love is the force that brings it back to the source.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, as chronicled in *At the Feet of the Masters* and *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, reflect this universal truth. In her journeys, she encountered divine love as the force that guides souls back to the Creator. Whether in the presence of angels, saints, or divine beings, Hughes was shown that divine love is the key to the soul's return to its true nature. Her encounters confirmed that, despite the diversity of religious teachings, the ultimate purpose of all paths is the same: to experience divine union through the transformative power of love.

Living the Love: Practical Steps for Spiritual Awakening

The realization of divine love is not a distant ideal but something that can be experienced in our daily lives. In both Eastern and Western traditions, the practice of love is central to the spiritual path. It is through love that we align ourselves with the Divine, purify our hearts, and move closer to the ultimate goal of spiritual union.

In Hinduism, the practice of Bhakti Yoga encourages devotion to God as an expression of love, leading to liberation. In Buddhism, love and compassion are practiced through acts of kindness, meditation, and mindfulness, allowing the practitioner to cultivate a heart free from attachment and ego. In Taoism, the practice of love involves living in harmony with the Tao, allowing divine love to flow through all actions and interactions.

In Christianity, love is lived through the commandments to love God and love one's neighbor as oneself. Christian mystics teach that through the practice of love, the soul comes to know God more intimately and experiences divine union. In Islam, the

practice of love is central to submission to Allah's will and to serving others with compassion and kindness. Sufi mystics, in particular, express divine love through poetry, dance, and devotion, embodying the experience of being "wholly absorbed" in God's love.

Marilynn Hughes' writings show us that living a life of divine love is the key to spiritual awakening. Through her experiences, she discovered that love is not only the means of returning to the Divine but also the path to living in alignment with divine will. By embodying divine love in our daily lives—through acts of kindness, compassion, and selfless service—we align ourselves with the higher realms and move closer to the ultimate goal of spiritual union.

Conclusion of Chapter 9

Divine love is the force that unites all spiritual paths, transcending the distinctions between Eastern and Western traditions. Whether expressed through Bhakti in Hinduism, compassion in Buddhism, love of God in Christianity, or submission to Allah's

will in Islam, divine love is the ultimate truth that binds all beings to the Divine. Through Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, we see how divine love transcends religious boundaries, guiding the soul on its journey toward enlightenment, liberation, and union with the Creator.

As we continue our exploration of the unity between Eastern and Western wisdom, we will see that love is not just a spiritual concept—it is the transformative force that heals, purifies, and guides the soul toward its true nature. Divine love is the key to spiritual awakening and the ultimate return to the source, where all souls are reunited with the Divine in peace, joy, and oneness.

Chapter 10: The Path of Unity – Integrating Eastern and Western Mystical Teachings

Throughout this journey, we have seen how Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, though distinct in their cultural expressions, converge upon the same core principles. The unity of divine truth, love, the transformative power of surrender, and the ultimate return to the Divine are common threads that run through all mystical teachings. The soul's journey, regardless of the path it follows, is one of awakening to the eternal truth of its oneness with the Divine.

This chapter explores how we can integrate the mystical teachings of both the East and the West, weaving together the profound insights from each tradition into a unified path of spiritual awakening. By embracing the universal principles shared by all mystics, we can live a life of deep connection to the Divine and contribute to the greater spiritual evolution of the world.

Integrating the Wisdom of the East and West

Eastern and Western mystical traditions offer complementary teachings that, when integrated, lead to a fuller understanding of the spiritual path. While Eastern mysticism often emphasizes inner silence, detachment, and alignment with the natural order, Western mysticism focuses on divine love, devotion, and the personal relationship between the soul and God. Both paths, however, lead to the same goal: the experience of divine union, where the ego dissolves, and the soul becomes one with the Divine.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the focus is often on inner transformation through practices like meditation, yoga, and mindfulness. These practices encourage the practitioner to turn inward, transcending the ego and realizing the interconnectedness of all beings. The ultimate goal is to experience the oneness of the Divine and achieve liberation (moksha or nirvana) from the cycle of birth and death.

In contrast, in Christianity and Islam, the mystical path often emphasizes a personal

relationship with God, expressed through love, devotion, and service. Christian mystics like St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and Sufi mystics like Rumi, emphasized the importance of surrendering the ego and aligning with divine will through acts of love, prayer, and selfless service. The path to divine union is seen not only as an inward journey but also as an outward expression of compassion and devotion to others.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences offer a bridge between these two traditions. In her out-of-body experiences, Hughes encountered divine beings who embodied love, wisdom, and light, teaching her that the integration of inner stillness with outward acts of love is the key to spiritual awakening. Her experiences show us that the union of Eastern and Western mystical practices—combining meditation and devotion, silence and service—creates a holistic path of spiritual transformation.

The Role of Love in Mystical Integration

One of the most powerful ways to integrate the mystical teachings of the East and West is through the practice of divine love. Love

is the unifying force that transcends all boundaries—cultural, religious, and doctrinal. It is love that dissolves the ego, heals the soul, and guides the individual toward union with the Divine.

In Eastern traditions, love is often expressed as devotion (Bhakti) or compassion (Karuna). In Hinduism, Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion to God, where the practitioner surrenders their heart to the Divine and allows love to guide them toward liberation. In Buddhism, compassion is seen as the key to enlightenment. Through compassion, the practitioner overcomes the self-centered desires of the ego and aligns with the greater good of all beings.

In Western traditions, love is similarly central to the mystical path. In Christianity, love is the greatest commandment—to love God and love one's neighbor as oneself. The teachings of Christ emphasize that the soul's union with God is achieved through love, and through love, the soul can transcend the ego and experience divine union. In Islam, love for Allah and love for fellow human beings is central to the practice of faith. The Sufi mystics, in particular, expressed divine love through poetry, music, and devotion,

offering a path of passionate, all-consuming love for God.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, particularly in *The Voice of the Prophets*, show how divine love is the ultimate unifying force. In her encounters with divine beings, she was shown that love is the path to spiritual awakening and divine union. Whether through devotion to God, compassion for others, or surrendering the ego to divine will, love is the key that unlocks the soul's potential and leads it to its true nature.

The Practice of Meditation and Prayer: Bridging Inner and Outer Realms

Another important way to integrate Eastern and Western mystical teachings is through the practice of meditation and prayer. Both traditions emphasize the importance of stillness, silence, and direct communion with the Divine.

In Eastern practices, meditation is used to quiet the mind, release attachments, and enter into a state of divine awareness. In Buddhism, mindfulness meditation is used to develop awareness and presence in the

moment, ultimately leading to the realization of emptiness and interconnectedness. In Hinduism, meditation (dhyana) is the practice of focusing the mind on the Divine, ultimately leading to the experience of union with God.

In Western mysticism, prayer is used as a means of communion with God. Christian mystics, like St. Teresa of Avila, practiced contemplative prayer, focusing on the presence of God and seeking to experience His love and guidance directly. In Sufism, prayer (Salat) and remembrance of God (dhikr) are central practices, used to attune the heart to the Divine presence and cultivate a deep, personal relationship with Allah.

By integrating the practices of meditation and prayer, we can harmonize the inward journey of stillness and awareness with the outward expression of love and devotion. Marilynn Hughes' mystical writings emphasize the power of both practices in achieving spiritual transformation. Her experiences show how meditation can open the soul to divine insight, while prayer can strengthen the soul's connection to the Divine.

Living the Unified Path: A Holistic Approach to Mysticism

The path to spiritual enlightenment is not confined to any one tradition, culture, or practice. It is a universal journey that transcends boundaries and leads all souls to the same destination: union with the Divine. By integrating the teachings of both Eastern and Western mysticism, we can create a holistic approach to the mystical journey, one that embraces both the inner practices of meditation and the outward expression of love and service.

Marilynn Hughes' experiences exemplify this integrated approach to spirituality. In her journeys, she encountered beings from both Eastern and Western traditions who guided her toward a deeper understanding of the unity of all spiritual paths. Through her work, Hughes demonstrates that the soul's journey is one of awakening to the Divine, and that this journey is shared by all mystics, regardless of their tradition.

To live the unified path is to integrate the practices of devotion, meditation, prayer, and love into daily life. It is to recognize that the Divine is present in all things, that love

is the unifying force of the universe, and that through spiritual awakening, we come to know our true nature as one with the Divine.

Conclusion of Chapter 10

The integration of Eastern and Western mystical teachings offers a holistic path of spiritual awakening, one that transcends religious boundaries and leads the soul to its ultimate goal: union with the Divine.

Through the practices of love, devotion, meditation, and prayer, we align ourselves with the higher realms and open ourselves to divine guidance.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences provide a powerful reminder that the soul's journey is universal, and that all traditions, whether Eastern or Western, point to the same ultimate truth. By integrating these teachings, we can live a life of spiritual unity, transcending the ego and experiencing divine love, wisdom, and peace.

As we continue to explore the shared wisdom of the world's great religions, we will see that the path to spiritual enlightenment is one of integration,

surrender, and divine union. Through love, devotion, and the practices of meditation and prayer, we align ourselves with the Divine and move closer to the realization of our true nature.

Chapter 11: The Mystical Realms – Unveiling Divine Realities Beyond the Veil

The mystical path is not only an inward journey of spiritual awakening but also an exploration of the divine realities that exist beyond the physical world. Through the experiences of mystics across both Eastern and Western traditions, we learn that there are realms beyond the material realm—dimensions of existence where divine beings, sacred truths, and the mysteries of the cosmos reveal themselves. These higher realms are accessible through spiritual practice, prayer, meditation, and, for some, out-of-body experiences.

In this chapter, we explore the nature of these mystical realms, as described in both Eastern and Western mystical traditions, and how they align with the teachings and experiences of Marilynn Hughes. By delving into the descriptions of divine realms, we gain a deeper understanding of the soul's journey and its ultimate destination: reunion

with the Divine in the highest realms of existence.

The Divine Realms in Eastern Mysticism

In Eastern mysticism, the realms beyond the material world are often depicted as spiritual planes or heavens that correspond to the soul's state of enlightenment. Hinduism, with its vast cosmology, describes multiple realms of existence, including the heavenly realms of the gods (Devaloka), the earthly realm of human experience (Bhurloka), and the netherworlds (Patala). These realms are inhabited by different types of beings, from gods and goddesses to demons and spirits, each serving a particular role in the cosmic order.

In Buddhism, the concept of the Six Realms of Existence is central to understanding the journey of the soul. These realms include the realms of gods (Deva), humans (Manusha), animals (Tiryak), hungry ghosts (Preta), hell beings (Naraka), and the realm of the asuras (demigods). Each of these realms represents a state of being influenced by karma, desire, and attachment. The ultimate goal in Buddhism is to transcend these realms and attain Nirvana, the state of enlightenment.

and liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Taoism also speaks of mystical realms beyond the physical world, where the Taoist immortals reside and where the enlightened soul may find refuge in divine harmony. These realms are characterized by purity, stillness, and alignment with the Tao, the natural flow of the universe. Taoist sages seek to align themselves with these divine realms, living in accordance with the Tao and becoming one with the cosmos.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences, especially those in *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven* and *At the Feet of the Masters*, describe encounters with various divine realms. Hughes often found herself in realms of light and beauty, surrounded by divine beings who embodied love and wisdom. These experiences revealed to her that the spiritual realms are not distant or abstract, but living realities that are accessible to those who are attuned to the divine flow. Through her encounters, Hughes came to understand that the mystical realms are not separate from our earthly experience—they are part of the divine order, and the soul's journey is one of

ascending toward these higher realms of light and love.

The Divine Realms in Western Mysticism

In Western mysticism, the concept of divine realms is similarly depicted as higher planes of existence where the soul can experience the presence of God and divine beings.

Christianity speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven as the ultimate destination for the soul, a realm where divine love, peace, and joy reign. Christian mystics like St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross described their experiences of entering into mystical union with God in realms of divine light and love. These realms were not merely symbolic but were seen as real, living dimensions where the soul could encounter the Divine face-to-face.

In the Christian tradition, the journey of the soul after death is often depicted as ascending through different levels of heaven, purgatory, or hell, with each realm representing the soul's state of grace, purification, or suffering. The Beatific Vision, or direct encounter with God, is considered the ultimate goal, where the soul

experiences the fullness of divine presence and love.

In Islam, the soul's journey after death is similarly described through the concept of the afterlife, which includes the realms of paradise (Jannah), hell (Jahannam), and the interim state of the grave. Sufi mystics speak of ascension through the spiritual realms, known as the *mi'raj*, where the soul ascends toward divine presence. Through practices of dhikr and deep devotion to Allah, the soul attains a state of divine love and light that transcends the limitations of the physical world.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical journeys echo these descriptions of divine realms. In her writings, Hughes describes how she encountered beings of light in heavenly realms, where divine wisdom and love were imparted to her. These realms were not mere visions, but actual spiritual dimensions that revealed the nature of existence, the purpose of the soul, and the profound interconnectedness of all beings. Her experiences confirm the idea that the mystical realms are real, tangible places that the soul can access through spiritual practices and heightened awareness.

The Mystical Experience of Divine Beings in the Higher Realms

Divine beings, such as angels, saints, gods, and enlightened beings, play a central role in the mystical realms. These beings serve as guides, protectors, and sources of wisdom, helping the soul navigate the spiritual realms and move toward union with the Divine. In both Eastern and Western traditions, these beings are seen as embodiments of divine love, wisdom, and grace, offering the soul a deeper understanding of divine truth.

In Hinduism, gods like Vishnu, Shiva, and Lakshmi are revered as both creators and guides, leading the soul toward liberation. In Buddhism, bodhisattvas like Avalokiteshvara and Manjushri offer compassion and wisdom, guiding the practitioner to enlightenment. In Taoism, the immortals and sages embody the wisdom of the Tao and help the practitioner align with the natural flow of the universe.

In Christianity, angels are often seen as messengers of God, delivering divine guidance and protection. The Archangel Michael is depicted as a warrior of light who fights against the forces of darkness, while

angels like Gabriel and Raphael guide the soul toward divine purpose. In Islam, angels are also seen as messengers of Allah, helping guide the faithful on their spiritual journey. Sufi mystics speak of spiritual guides who help the seeker transcend the ego and experience union with Allah.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences frequently involved encounters with divine beings who offered profound teachings and guidance. In *At the Feet of the Masters*, she recounts her experiences with divine teachers who shared wisdom about the nature of the soul, the importance of love and surrender, and the path toward enlightenment. These beings were not distant or abstract, but real, loving entities who guided her on her journey. Through her encounters, Hughes learned that the presence of divine beings is not limited to any one tradition—they are universal guides who help the soul find its way back to the Divine.

The Role of the Higher Mind in Accessing Mystical Realms

The higher mind, which transcends the ego and connects the soul to divine wisdom,

plays a crucial role in accessing the mystical realms. In both Eastern and Western traditions, the higher mind is seen as the seat of divine insight, allowing the soul to perceive spiritual truths and engage with the divine realms. Meditation, prayer, and spiritual practices help awaken the higher mind, enabling the soul to transcend the limitations of the physical world and access the divine dimensions.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the practice of meditation helps quiet the mind, allowing the practitioner to access higher states of consciousness and engage with divine wisdom. In Taoism, the cultivation of inner stillness aligns the practitioner with the Tao, allowing them to enter the divine flow of the universe. In Christianity and Islam, prayer and contemplation serve to align the soul with God, opening the heart and mind to divine revelation.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences highlight the importance of the higher mind in accessing the spiritual realms. Through prayer, meditation, and out-of-body journeys, Hughes was able to transcend the material world and enter divine realms where she encountered profound truths and

received divine guidance. Her experiences demonstrate that the higher mind is the gateway to these mystical realms, allowing the soul to encounter divine beings and experience the unity of all spiritual paths.

Conclusion of Chapter 11

The mystical realms are real, living dimensions that exist beyond the material world, accessible to the soul through spiritual practice and heightened awareness. These realms are inhabited by divine beings who serve as guides, protectors, and sources of wisdom, helping the soul on its journey toward divine union. Whether in the higher heavens of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, or the divine realms of Christianity and Islam, the mystical experience of divine beings and the path to spiritual enlightenment is a universal journey.

Marilynn Hughes' mystical experiences offer profound insights into the nature of these realms, confirming that they are not distant or abstract but accessible to all souls. Through meditation, prayer, and surrender, the soul can transcend the material world

and enter the higher realms, where divine love and wisdom guide it toward union with the Divine.

As we continue our exploration of the mystical journey, we will uncover more about the transformative power of these divine realms, the role of divine beings, and the importance of the higher mind in accessing the divine wisdom that transcends all boundaries.

Chapter 12: Ancient Sacred Texts – Wisdom Across Time and Traditions

Introduction:

Sacred texts from across the world are not mere relics of the past—they are living documents that speak to the heart of every seeker, offering timeless wisdom that transcends cultural, geographic, and religious boundaries. The deep wisdom contained within these writings serves as a bridge between humanity and the Divine, guiding us on the path of spiritual awakening, personal transformation, and divine union.

As someone who has spent years compiling and exploring ancient sacred wisdom in *The Voice of the Prophets: Wisdom of the Ages*, I have witnessed the profound resonance of these texts. From the *Bhagavad Gita* to the *Bible*, the *Quran* to the *Tao Te Ching*, the teachings in these texts reflect universal truths that illuminate the soul's journey

toward enlightenment. By embracing the lessons contained within them, we gain access to the sacred knowledge that has been passed down through the ages, knowledge that unites us all in our shared human experience.

In this chapter, we will dive deeper into the relevance of these sacred texts, exploring the shared divine wisdom they offer. We will examine how their messages align, revealing the unity between the teachings of Eastern and Western mystical traditions. Drawing from the works compiled in *The Voice of the Prophets* and the mystical experiences of Marilynn Hughes, we will see that these texts do more than simply offer spiritual guidance—they provide a unified pathway toward understanding the Divine, transcending the limitations of religious and cultural divides.

The Universal Wisdom in Sacred Texts

Sacred texts from every tradition speak to the same core truths: that the Divine exists as both the source of all creation and the underlying reality that governs the universe.

These texts provide practical guidance for spiritual seekers, illuminating the nature of existence, the role of humanity in the cosmic order, and the transformative power of divine love. They are a testament to the shared human yearning for connection to the Divine, offering wisdom that serves as a spiritual compass.

Here are some of the core themes that appear across the world's sacred texts:

The Nature of the Divine

Across both Eastern and Western traditions, sacred texts describe the Divine as the ultimate source of existence—transcendent and immanent, both beyond comprehension and intimately involved in the lives of all beings. While the names and characteristics of the Divine vary, the essence of the Divine remains the same: an all-encompassing, loving force that binds together the cosmos.

- **Hinduism:** The *Bhagavad Gita* reveals that God (Krishna) is both within and beyond all things—both immanent and transcendent. Krishna tells Arjuna that He is the Divine essence within every being and the

force that drives the universe, yet also the infinite, eternal source of all creation. The *Upanishads* elaborate on the concept of Brahman, the ultimate, formless reality that transcends all distinctions. Brahman is described as both the Creator and the creation itself, offering a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all things. The *Vedas*, too, speak of this cosmic order (Rita) that is guided by the Divine, bringing balance to the universe.

- **Buddhism:** While Buddhism does not personify the Divine in the same way as other traditions, it speaks of ultimate reality through concepts like Nirvana and Buddha-nature. The *Dhammapada* teaches that the Divine nature is not external but inherent in all beings, calling it the Buddha-nature that resides within each person. The *Lotus Sutra* expands upon this idea, revealing that all beings possess the potential to awaken to their true nature, which

is divine and eternal, transcending the limitations of the ego.

- **Christianity:** In Christianity, the Divine is described as God—the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. The *Bible* speaks of God as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. God’s love is central to the teachings of Christ, who embodies divine compassion and grace. Christian mystics, like St. Teresa of Avila, describe God as not only the Creator but also an intimate presence within the soul, a loving Father who desires a personal relationship with each of His children. In the *Gnostic Gospels*, God is also seen as a transcendent force, but one that reveals Himself through the Christ consciousness, showing that the ultimate union with God is achieved through spiritual knowledge and inner awakening.
- **Islam:** The Quran teaches that Allah is the one true God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Allah is both transcendent and immanent, described as being closer to the soul

than its own jugular vein. The core of Islam is the belief in submission to the will of Allah, with the understanding that all aspects of life are guided by His wisdom. In Sufism, Allah's love and mercy are central to the practice of the mystical path, where union with the Divine is sought through devotion and self-purification.

The Journey of the Soul

A core tenet of sacred texts from both the East and the West is the journey of the soul—its purpose, its trials, and its ultimate return to the Divine. While each tradition offers different metaphors and teachings, they all share the belief that the soul's journey is one of self-discovery, transformation, and union with the Divine.

- **Hinduism:** In Hinduism, the soul (Atman) is considered eternal and begins its journey bound by karma—the law of cause and effect. The soul's journey through countless lifetimes (samsara) is shaped by its actions (karma), and the ultimate goal is liberation (moksha) from this

cycle of birth and death. This liberation is achieved through self-realization, where the soul recognizes its oneness with Brahman, the ultimate reality.

- **Buddhism:** Buddhism teaches that the soul is not a permanent, unchanging entity but part of the cycle of birth and death (samsara), driven by desire and ignorance. The ultimate goal is to achieve enlightenment (nirvana) by extinguishing desire, breaking free from the cycle of suffering. Through the practice of meditation, mindfulness, and the cultivation of wisdom and compassion, the soul reaches liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth.
- **Christianity:** In Christianity, the soul's journey is one of salvation. While the soul is created in the image of God, it becomes separated from God through sin. The soul's journey is one of redemption, achieved through faith in Christ, repentance, and divine grace. Christian mysticism teaches that the

ultimate goal is union with God, achieved through divine love and the purification of the soul.

- **Islam:** The soul's journey in Islam is one of submission to Allah's will. Through the practice of faith, prayer, and good deeds, the soul works toward its ultimate goal of eternal paradise (Jannah) and union with Allah. The purification of the soul is essential, as it is believed that only those who have purified their hearts and minds can enter the presence of Allah.

The Importance of Purification

A central theme in both Eastern and Western traditions is the purification of the soul. Whether through meditation, devotion, prayer, or selfless action, the goal is to cleanse the mind and heart of attachments, desires, and impurities in order to align with the Divine.

- **Hinduism:** In Hinduism, the purification process is linked to the practice of yoga (yuj), which includes physical, mental, and

spiritual disciplines. The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali describe the path of purification through meditation, detachment (*vairagya*), and self-discipline (*tapas*). The goal is to transcend the ego and unite with the Divine.

- **Buddhism:** Buddhism speaks of the purification of the mind through the practice of mindfulness and the cultivation of virtues like compassion (*karuna*) and loving-kindness (*metta*). The practice of meditation purifies the mind of delusions, attachments, and desires, leading to enlightenment.
- **Christianity:** In Christianity, purification is achieved through repentance, prayer, and self-examination. The concept of the "dark night of the soul," described by St. John of the Cross, illustrates how the soul undergoes purification through suffering, surrender, and contemplation, ultimately drawing closer to God.

- **Islam:** In Islam, purification is a fundamental part of the spiritual path. The concept of *tazkiyah* refers to the purification of the heart, which is achieved through prayer (Salat), fasting (Sawm), charity (Zakat), and striving to live in alignment with Allah's will.

Love and Compassion

At the heart of all sacred texts is the message of love. Love for the Divine, for others, and for oneself is seen as the highest spiritual ideal and the means by which the soul returns to its source. Love transcends religious and cultural boundaries and is the transformative force that guides the soul on its journey.

- **Hinduism:** In the *Bhagavad Gita*, love (bhakti) is presented as the highest path to liberation. Through devotion to God, the soul surrenders its ego and aligns itself with the Divine. Bhakti yoga, the path of devotion, is the means by which the soul attains moksha.

- **Buddhism:** Compassion (karuna) is one of the central virtues in Buddhism. It is through compassion that the practitioner overcomes suffering and the delusions of the ego. The Buddha taught that by developing compassion for all beings, one can transcend attachment and achieve enlightenment.
 - **Christianity:** Jesus Christ's teachings emphasize love as the greatest commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." Divine love, expressed through Christ's sacrifice, is the ultimate model of how the soul should relate to the Divine and to others.
 - **Islam:** The concept of love is also central in Islam, where love for Allah is seen as the path to spiritual fulfillment. Sufi mystics, in particular, emphasize the experience of divine love as the path to union with God.
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Conclusion: The Living Legacy of Sacred Texts

Ancient sacred texts are more than just historical documents—they are living, breathing sources of wisdom that continue to guide us today. Through the study of these texts, we connect with the divine wisdom that has been passed down through the ages. By embracing the teachings of both the East and West, we can align ourselves with the divine flow and move toward the ultimate goal of spiritual awakening and union with the Divine.

The texts compiled in *The Voice of the Prophets: Wisdom of the Ages* serve as a reminder that, despite the differences in language, culture, and ritual, the core spiritual truths remain the same. They point the way to the Divine, urging us to awaken to our true nature, to live in love and compassion, and to realize the ultimate unity of all beings. By living the wisdom contained in these sacred texts, we not only align with the Divine but also contribute to the greater harmony of the world.

Conclusion: Embracing the Unity of Divine Wisdom

The journey we've explored in this book has been one of discovery—a revelation of the deep and abiding unity that exists across the world's spiritual traditions. From the sacred teachings of Eastern mysticism to the profound wisdom of Western spiritual paths, we've seen that the divine truth that connects all religions is universal and transcends cultural boundaries.

Through the experiences of Marilynn Hughes, as chronicled in her body of work—*At the Feet of the Masters*, *The Staircase from Earth to Heaven*, and other writings—we have come to understand that the mystical path is not a solitary one defined by separation, but a shared journey toward divine unity. The encounters, visions, and teachings that Hughes has so generously shared offer a unique lens through which we can see that the pursuit of spiritual truth, no matter the tradition, is one of alignment with the Divine, rooted in the same cosmic reality.

Whether we look to the devotion of Bhakti in Hinduism, the compassion in Buddhism, the surrender of Taoism, or the love and grace found in Christianity and Islam, all paths ultimately lead to the same truth: the presence of the Divine is woven into the fabric of our being, guiding each of us home. This realization invites us to step beyond doctrinal differences and to embrace the eternal wisdom that resides in every sacred teaching, recognizing that at their heart, all religions are pointing us toward the same source—the Infinite, the One, the Divine.

Marilynn Hughes' experiences, woven with the teachings of mystics from both the East and the West, reveal that there is no conflict between these paths. In fact, they complement each other in their reflections of the Divine. The wisdom of the East and the teachings of the West are like two rivers, flowing toward the same ocean of spiritual truth. Each brings unique insights and practices, but the destination is the same: union with the Divine, living in harmony with the universe, and embodying the qualities of compassion, love, and light.

A Call to Spiritual Unity

As we reflect on the teachings from this book, let us remember that the true power of spirituality lies not in separation, but in unity. The divisions that have existed between East and West are human-made, and at their core, they are illusions. The soul, in its purest essence, knows no boundaries. It recognizes the common thread of divine wisdom that runs through every tradition and invites us to live in accordance with that wisdom.

This is the call to spiritual unity—to walk the path of love, compassion, and understanding, regardless of the religious or cultural label we wear. It is a call to see the sacred in every being and every tradition, to celebrate the diversity of the spiritual journey, while recognizing that all paths lead us toward the same truth. By embracing the wisdom of both the East and the West, we can foster a global spiritual harmony that transcends religious divides and brings humanity closer to the Divine.

In the world today, with its many divisions and conflicts, the message of spiritual unity is more important than ever. It is a reminder that peace, both within and among us, can be achieved by embracing the collective

wisdom of all traditions and recognizing the divine spark within each person. As we walk this path together, we can create a world where love, compassion, and mutual respect are the foundation of our shared existence.

Walking the Path of Unity

The call to walk the path of unity is not an abstract ideal but a practical journey that each of us can begin today. We can start by cultivating compassion and love in our daily lives—by offering kindness to those around us, by embracing the wisdom of the world's religions, and by working together to build a future grounded in spiritual truth and harmony.

Marilynn Hughes' work continues to inspire us to look beyond surface differences and see the underlying unity that connects us all. Through her journeys and writings, she has shown us that the Divine is not limited by any tradition; it is present in all. It is through our own experiences, our own spiritual practices, and our own commitment to the path of love that we begin to unveil the deeper connection that binds us to each other and to the Divine.

As we step forward into a world that increasingly needs spiritual healing, let us embrace the wisdom that transcends religious and cultural boundaries. Let us walk together on the path of unity, compassion, and love, knowing that by doing so, we are not only returning to our true spiritual selves but also contributing to the greater divine plan of global harmony and peace.

In the end, the journey toward unity is not just about understanding the Divine; it is about living that understanding, embodying it in every thought, word, and action. It is about allowing divine love to guide us as we work together to create a world that reflects the truth that lies within each of us: we are all one, connected in the divine light of love.

Universal Mysticism: Out-of-Body Travel in the East and the West

By Marilynn Hughes

Universal Mysticism: Out-of-Body Travel in the East and the West offers a deep exploration of the shared spiritual wisdom across global religious traditions, focusing on how the mystical experiences of Marilynn Hughes illuminate the universal truths found in both Eastern and Western spirituality. This book invites readers to discover the profound connections between diverse religious paths, showing that while the outward expressions of these traditions may differ, their core messages about divine love, wisdom, and spiritual awakening are remarkably similar.

With insights drawn from Marilynn Hughes' extensive mystical work—including *The Voice of the Prophets*, *Forgotten Mystics*, and *Teaching Stories of the Prophets in World Religion*—this book explores the powerful experiences of out-of-body travel, near-death encounters, and divine

revelations that transcend cultural and religious boundaries. It also delves into how these experiences reveal the interconnectedness of all beings and the spiritual unity that binds the East and the West.

Key Themes Covered in the Book:

- **Universal Truths Across Traditions:**
 - Exploration of how prophets, mystics, and saints from all religions speak a similar divine language, offering timeless wisdom about love, peace, and enlightenment.
- **The Forgotten Mystics:**
 - Unearthing hidden teachings of mystics often overshadowed by mainstream religious figures, revealing profound spiritual truths from both Eastern and Western traditions.
- **Comparative Religious Mystical Theology:**

- A comparative study of mystical practices across world religions, highlighting common themes in the pursuit of divine union and spiritual awakening.
- **Near-Death and Out-of-Body Experiences:**
 - Insights into how near-death and out-of-body experiences bridge the gap between Eastern and Western perspectives on the afterlife, showing the universality of spiritual journeys beyond physical existence.
- **Teaching Stories of the Prophets:**
 - Exploring the universal wisdom found in the stories of world prophets like Buddha, Muhammad, Moses, and Christ, and their teachings on human nature and the divine path.
- **The Nature of Illusion and the Self:**

- Drawing from Eastern and Western philosophies, including the concept of *Maya* (illusion) and Western ideas of ego, the book discusses how spiritual wisdom helps transcend the ego and the illusion of separateness.
- **Overcoming Obstacles on the Spiritual Path:**
 - Insight into how selfishness and self-will hinder spiritual progress, with guidance from Marilynn Hughes on how to overcome these spiritual barriers.
- **A Life of Cultivation:**
 - The importance of self-discipline, devotion, and inner transformation in cultivating a deeper spiritual connection across traditions.
- **Sacred Symbols and Divine Images:**

- How sacred images play a key role in spiritual awakening, serving as symbols of divine presence and the deeper mysteries of the universe.
- **A Global Vision of Spiritual Unity:**
 - Marilyn Hughes' *The Overview Series* helps expand the understanding of spiritual unity, showing that all religious paths ultimately lead to the same divine truth.
- **Embracing the Unity of East and West:**
 - Encouraging readers to look beyond religious identity and divisiveness, uniting the teachings of the East and West in the pursuit of universal love and wisdom.
- **Ancient Sacred Texts:**
 - A deep dive into the wisdom contained within the sacred texts of the East and West,

showing their role in spiritual awakening and the unity they inspire across time and cultures.

Universal Mysticism is a transformative guide that reveals the underlying oneness in the world's religious teachings. Marilyn Hughes' insights offer an invaluable resource for those seeking spiritual growth, healing, and a deeper connection to the divine through the exploration of mystical experiences and out-of-body travel. This book will inspire readers to see the interconnectedness of all spiritual paths and embrace the profound wisdom that unites us in our shared journey toward divine truth.