

Editor of the new release by World Wisdom

Seeing God Everywhere: Essays on Nature and the Sacred

Barry McDonald



Barry McDonald's approach to the world's religions has been formed by a combination of academic study and first-hand contact with various sacred traditions throughout the world. In 1973 he spent six months in the Middle East, which initiated an ongoing study of the world's great religions, followed by travels to Asia, North Africa, Europe and the American West. He was closely associated with Frithjof Schuon for almost 20 years. Thomas Yellowtail, the venerable Crow medicine man and Sun Dance chief, adopted McDonald into the Crow tribe.

McDonald has edited *Every Branch in Me: Essays on The Meaning of Man* (2002), and is in the process of editing *Music of the Sky: an Anthology of Sacred Poetry* with Patrick Laude, which is scheduled for publication in the Fall of 2003. His poetry has appeared in such journals as *CrossCurrents*, *Sacred Web*, *Sufi*, and others.

Contributors of essays in *Seeing God Everywhere*

James Barr is an author, seaman, navigator and practicing Buddhist whose article "Of Metaphysics and Polynesian Navigation" first appeared in *Avaloka: A Journal of Traditional Religion and Culture*.

Wendell Berry is a conservationist, farmer, essayist, novelist, professor of English and poet. The *New York Times* has called Berry the "prophet of rural America." He is the author of 32 books of essays, poetry and novels. He is a former professor of English at the University of Kentucky and a past fellow at both the Guggenheim Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the T.S. Eliot Award. He was born in Kentucky, where he still lives with his wife.

Joseph Epes Brown was a university professor and a renowned author in the field of American Indian traditions. His best-known book was *The Sacred Pipe* (1953), in which the legendary holy man Black Elk recounted to him the sacred rites of the Oglala Sioux.

Titus Burckhardt was one of the primary authors of the Traditionalist school of thought. He wrote on metaphysics, cosmology, art, architecture, alchemy, symbolism, and traditional civilization. An anthology of his work, *The Essential Titus Burckhardt*, will be published by World Wisdom in Spring 2003.

J.C. Cooper was born in China where she spent much of her childhood. Informed by the perspective of the Perennial Philosophy, she wrote and lectured extensively on comparative religion and symbolism and is the author of lucid introductory works on Chinese religion such as *Taoism, the Way of the Mystic* (1972), *Yin and Yang* (1981), and *Chinese Alchemy* (1984). In addition she wrote several works in the field of symbolism, including *Symbolism, the Universal Language* (1986), *Symbolic and Mythological Animals* (1992), and the broad ranging *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols* (1978).

Rev. John Chryssavgis is Professor of Theology and former Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. He is the co-founder of St. Andrew's Theological College in Sydney, where he was Sub-Dean and taught Patristics and Church History. Rev. Dr. Chryssavgis also acts as theological advisor to the Patriarchal Commission on Religion and Science (Ecumenical Patriarchate), which focuses on the environment. He is the prolific author of numerous books and articles on the early Church Fathers and Orthodox spirituality.

World Wisdom



Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is both the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. In 1959 he was exiled by the Chinese invasion of Tibet and has since resided in Dharmasala, India, the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-exile. He is a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and an author of numerous books and essays, including *Kindness, Clarity and Insight* (1984), *A Human Approach to World Peace* (1984), and *Ocean of Wisdom* (1989).

Toshihiko Izutsu was Professor Emeritus at Keio University in Japan and an outstanding authority in the metaphysical and philosophical wisdom schools of Islamic Sufism, Hindu Advaita Vedanta, Mahayana Buddhism (particularly Zen), and Philosophical Taoism. His most important works include *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (1983) and a posthumously published collection of essays entitled *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things* (1994).

Oren Lyons is a member of the Wolf Clan of the Onondaga Nation, the Firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of American Studies at the State University of New York in Buffalo, and is publisher of *Daybreak*, an American Indian news magazine dedicated to the seventh generation.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is one of the world's most recognized authorities on Islam. He is University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University and the author of over 30 books and three hundred articles on topics ranging from comparative religion to traditional Islamic philosophy, cosmology, art, ecology, and mysticism. His books include *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (1966), *Knowledge and the Sacred* (the 1981 Gifford Lectures), *Sufi Essays* (1991), and *Religion and the Order of Nature* (1996).

Lord Northbourne was a frequent contributor to the influential British journal *Studies in Comparative Religion* and wrote *Religion in the Modern World* (1963) and *Looking Back on Progress* (1970).

Kenneth Oldmeadow is co-ordinator of Philosophy and Religious Studies at La Trobe University in Australia and author of the acclaimed *Traditionalism: Religion in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy* (2000), an authoritative introduction to the perspective of Perennialism as it is found in the works of such authors as Frithjof Schuon, René Guénon, and Ananda Coomaraswamy. He is a frequent contributor to the traditional journals *Sophia* and *Sacred Web* and has published on a wide range of topics, including works on the Australian Aborigines, Hindu Advaita Vedanta, and Tibetan Buddhism.

Kathleen Raine, C.B.E. is an internationally recognized English poet and Blake scholar. She is the founder of Temenos Academy, an organization that advocates the primacy of the Imagination and which promulgates a traditional view of the arts and crafts in Britain. In addition to her many seminal works on the Romantic poet William Blake such as *Blake and Antiquity* (1979), *Golgonooza*, *City of the Imagination: Last Studies in William Blake* (1991), and *Blake and Tradition* (2002), all of which stress a neo-Platonic interpretative outlook, other of her more representative publications include *Defending Ancient Springs* (1985) and *Yeats the Initiate* (1986).

Leo Schaya was born in Switzerland where he received a traditional Jewish upbringing. From his early youth he devoted himself to the study of the great metaphysical doctrines of the Orient and Occident, particularly the works of neo-Platonism, Sufism and Advaita Vedanta. He published several articles on the metaphysical and esoteric wisdom of the Jewish Kabbalah, as well as a perspicacious book on that subject entitled *The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah* (1958).

Frithjof Schuon was the foremost expositor of the Perennialist perspective in the twentieth century. He is best known as a philosopher in the metaphysical current of Shankara and Plato, writing more than 25 books on metaphysical and religious themes, and publishing other books of his selected paintings and mystical poetry. His analyses of the spiritual problems facing modern people and societies were unique in content and style and continue to influence a new generation of Traditionalist/Perennialist thinkers.

Reza Shah-Kazemi is a Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. His major work is *Paths to Transcendence: Spiritual Realization according to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart* (forthcoming). His several contributions to the traditional journals *Sophia* and *Sacred Web* deal with themes relating to the Perennial Philosophy, Tradition, and prayer. He is currently preparing a new English translation of the Imam Ali's *Nahj Al-Balagha*.

Hari Prasad Shastri was born at Bareilly in Northern India and educated at Benares and Allahabad University. He was a gifted Sanskrit scholar well versed in the metaphysical wisdom of Advaita Vedanta. He founded the *Asiatic Review* and supervised the publication of the standard Chinese edition of the Buddhist Scriptures (over 5000 texts). Shastri traveled to Britain in 1929 where he founded Shanti Sadan, the Center of Adhyatma Yoga in the West, and made several distinguished translations of Advaita classics such as the *Avadhut Gita* of Mahatma Dattatreya (1934), *Ashtavakra Gita* (1949), the *Panchadashi* of Vidyananya (1954), and the *Aparokshanubhuti* of Shankara (1955).

Philip Sherrard's works express a combination of metaphysics, theology, art and aesthetics. He was one of the founders of the review journal *Temenos*. His works express an all-embracing vision, in which the natural and the supernatural come together in a wholeness that bears witness to the numinous wonder of life.

Arthur Versluis teaches literature, mythology, and writing and is the author of numerous books and articles on traditional religion, cosmology and culture, including *The Egyptian Mysteries* (1988), *Song of the Cosmos: An Introduction to Traditional Cosmology* (1991), *Sacred Earth: The Spiritual Landscape of Native America* (1992), and *TheoSophia: Hidden Dimensions of Christianity* (1994). He is currently editor of *Esoterica*, an on-line journal of traditional studies, and a former editor of *Avaloka: A Journal of Traditional Religion and Culture*.

Contributors of poems featured in Seeing God Everywhere

Seeing God Everywhere features poetry by some of the world's best known mystical poets, including:

Alfred Lord Tennyson: one of the great representative figures of the Victorian age, whose writings encompass many poetic styles and include some of the finest idyllic poetry in the English language.

Angelus Silesius: born Johann Scheffler. He was a Catholic monk who had converted from Lutheranism. His epigrams are perfectly suited to the intrinsic problems of any mystical writer—expressing the ineffable in words.

Han Shan: one of the greatest of the T'ang Dynasty poets. His Chinese Buddhist writings are expressive of the poet's search for enlightenment and peace.

Mechthild of Magdeburg: German visionary and poet. An early Latin translation of her book *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* is said to have inspired Dante.

Robert Herrick: one of the best English lyrical and mystical poets. In his younger days he was one of the "Sons of Ben," Cavalier poets who idolized Ben Jonson. In later life he was vicar of Dean Prior.

Sa'd-ud-Din Mahmud Shabistari: author of *Gulshan-i Raz (The Secret Rose Garden)*, and one of the great Persian Sufi poets.

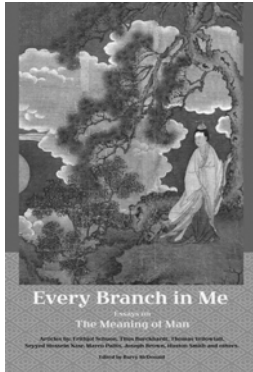
Matsuo Basho: considered by many to be the "father" of haiku poetry in the Japanese tradition. Zen Buddhism was a formative influence in the school of poetry that he founded.

Yunus Emre: an unlettered Turkish shepherd from the fourteenth century, whose mystical songs are still popular today.

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Praise for Barry McDonald's recent publication,
Every Branch in Me: Essays on the Meaning of Man



Every Branch in Me: Essays on the Meaning of Man is a collection of essays by 18 thinkers and spiritual leaders of recent times, which offers a variety of perspectives on the age-old question that poses itself to each new generation: What is human life all about, and what should I do to make my life fit into this greater scheme?

“Here is an anthology of uncompromising essays, written with sovereign authority and cutting through the fog of confusion and misunderstanding that envelops the modern world and degrades our sense of who we are. These authors recall us to our proper vocation which alone constitutes the unique privilege and responsibility of the human condition and which we ignore at our peril. This is a most timely and propitious volume which should be read by all those who wish to discover the deepest roots of our contemporary predicament.

“*Every Branch in Me* is a most welcome addition to the library of perennialist works; indeed, it is the most significant anthology of its kind since *The Sword of Gnosis* appeared more than twenty-five years ago. It will return some readers to the sources from which these essays are taken while for others it will serve as an introduction to those riches which are to be found in the spiritual treasuries of the world’s great religions.

“The contemporary world stands in the most urgent need of that timeless wisdom which these authors have sought to re-express in a way which, even in these dark and troubled times, is accessible and intelligible. In so doing they offer us some signposts along the path we must travel if we are to be true to our human vocation.”

- **Prof. Kenneth Oldmeadow** – La Trobe University, Australia

“Schuon, Burckhardt, Yellowtail, Nasr and numerous other leading perennialist authors direct the reader through the pages of this comprehensive tour de force to the center of that ‘spiritual anthropology’ which is the universal heritage of all mankind: nothing that is properly human can be separated from the intrinsically spiritual nature of man.”

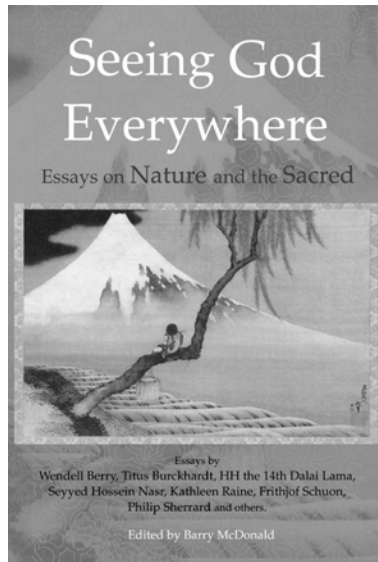
- **Whitall N. Perry** – author of *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*

“Compiled and edited by Barry McDonald, *Every Branch in Me: Essays on the Meaning of Man* is an anthology of profound, thought-provoking essays that search for the essence and purpose of existence in human life itself. Regarding various religious teachings, modern history, and philosophical dilemmas with evenhanded scrutiny, essays such as ‘The Role of Culture in Education’ and ‘The Survival of Civilization’ stretch the boundaries of commonly held wisdom in search of a deeper unifying truth. *Every Branch in Me* is an impressive compilation and highly recommended reading for students of religion, philosophy, and metaphysics.”

- **Midwest Book Review**



Seeing God Everywhere: Essays on Nature and the Sacred



Throughout the centuries, and across many religious traditions, we have sought the presence of the Real in wilderness landscapes. Whether this Reality was referred to as God, Brahman, Allah, Wakan Tanka, Shunyamurti, Tao, or by some other Name, every branch of human society has, without doubt, seen traces of the One in the many wonders of nature. Deserts, forests, mountains and oceans are all places where the eye of the heart has opened and we have caught a glimpse of the beauty and majesty of the Divine. Immersed in the silence of the great forest cathedrals and listening to the pure song of a mountain stream, we have come to know the inner man who has always lived upon the threshold of Heaven.

This collection of essays on the relationship between nature and the sacred reflects the thought of some of the most important religious authorities and scholars from Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Native American traditions. Covering subjects ranging from flower viewing in Japan to the spiritual dimension of the environmental crisis, some of these articles are simple and poetic meditations while others are richly layered metaphysical studies concerning the divine root of creation. Following each essay is a short poem, echoing the underlying theme of the book, and which is drawn from various traditions of spiritual poetry.

The most important and urgent message of this anthology is that our current environmental crisis results from a loss of our spiritual center and that the physical world cannot be separated from the metaphysical without suffering potentially disastrous consequences. Its fundamental thesis is that our continuing physical and spiritual well being is ultimately linked with our ability to “see God everywhere” and to “remember Him in all things.” Whether this view is theistic, according to Western and Native American traditions, or non-theistic, according to the Buddhist perspective, all of the essays in this collection underline our need to recognize and embrace the interdependence of all things in the unity of the Real and to extend our definition of the spiritual into the ecological. This vision of the immanence of God in nature is the most radical of all ecological perspectives because it points to the Origin of all that is.

An excerpt from the Preface

“Why are we drawn into the heart of nature? Why do we feel uplifted and spiritually renewed after spending time in some wild place far removed from the ordinary business of men? It is not only through sacred books like the Bible, the Upanishads, and the Quran that God reveals himself to man. He also shows us the shining facets of His Reality through the beauties of the natural world; and just as we learn something about the nature of an artist through his art, we may discover the presence of the Creator in His creation.”

- Barry McDonald, editor

World Wisdom



*Which readers will be interested in **Seeing God Everywhere**?*

- ❖ **Environmentalists** will be drawn to this work because unlike other perspectives on the ecological crisis, the essays in this book emphasize the link between the physical and the metaphysical, suggesting a deeper perspective where the spiritual and the ecological merge into a single vision of the immanence of the Divine in nature.
- ❖ **Students of Comparative Religion** will find that these essays, which focus on the topic of nature and the sacred, combine authoritative voices from Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Native American religious traditions, all of which underline the interdependence of all living things in the unity of God. This shared vision, found at the core of all religious traditions, suggests an opportunity for inter-religious dialogue despite differences in theology.
- ❖ The vision of the immanence of God in the world has been an important theme in the spiritual lives of saints and sages from both Eastern and Western traditions. This book will inspire all **Spiritual Seekers**, regardless of specific religious affiliation, and lead to a deeper understanding of the sacred root of creation.

*What issues are addressed in **Seeing God Everywhere**?*

- ❖ Why are we drawn into the heart of nature? Why do we feel uplifted and spiritually renewed after spending time in the wild?
- ❖ If we understand that creation is the sacred art of the Creator, what should be our role in relationship to the surrounding world?
- ❖ How can we learn to see God everywhere and remember Him in all things?

Additional publication details

Seeing God Everywhere also contains a collection of beautiful poetry from authors such as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Han Shan, Matsuo Basho, and Sa'd-ud-Din Mahmud Shabistari. It is scheduled for publication in October 2003 and at a price of \$19.95.