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## THE PRAYER OF THE *CLOUD* AUTHOR: A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CHRISTIAN *MANTRA*?

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*MANTRA*,” YOU MAY BE THINKING, “ISN’T THAT A WORD YOU SAY OVER AND OVER again, with your eyes closed, when you want to relax? Aren’t *mantras* supposed to put you in touch with your inner powers, your Cosmic Self?” These general views of *mantra* in the West owe much to the influence of Hindu Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s teachings through the spread of the Transcendental Meditation Movement™ in the past few decades. Popular understanding of the word *mantra* in Europe and America today defines the term as a single word or syllable whose effectiveness depends on its repetition. And here it is important to note that no common concept of what *mantras* **ought** to effect exists. Keeping in mind this common definition then, let us consider how an anonymous

Christian spiritual director who resided in England in the fourteenth-century has been credited by some individuals in the twentieth-century with promulgating a doctrine of so-called “Christian *Mantra*.” Very simply, the *Cloud* author, so named after his spiritual classic *The Cloud of Unknowing*, holds that “Contemplatives rarely pray in words but if they do, their words are few.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, maintains the *Cloud* author, “a word of one syllable is more suited to the spiritual nature of ... [contemplative prayer] than longer ones.”<sup>2</sup> And since the *Cloud* author himself actually names only three words for use in contemplative prayer - “God,” “love,” and “sin” - might it not be inferred that this form of prayer is necessarily repetitive? As we see, superficial connections between popular definitions of *mantra* and the *Cloud* author’s single-word form of prayer are obvious. In order to determine whether these connections are anything but superficial, however, we must examine *mantras* and the *Cloud* author’s prayer within their individual religious contexts.

Clearly, a survey of the definitions and uses of *mantras* throughout the entire range of Hindu and Buddhist sects moves far beyond the scope of this article; I shall, therefore, restrict my discussion here to the context of the Pancaratra sect of Hinduism. Insofar as this particular sect not only “believes in one all-inclusive god, who is a person ... the highest person ... creator, lord, and ruler of all,”<sup>3</sup> but furthermore teaches that divine grace is indispensable to human salvation, there appear to be substantial grounds for comparing the religious contexts of Pancaratra mantric utterance and Christian contemplative prayer. Let’s take a closer look, therefore, at key aspects of Pancaratra teaching on the nature of god, man, and their mutual relationship. In her article “The Pancaratra Attitude to Mantra,” Sanjukta Gupta explains that the:

Pancaratin sees god as the almighty lord who, with the aid of his intrinsic energy, has fashioned individuals ... from his own self, but he has made them limited in every sense.... These limitations involve the individual in a perpetually transient and changing existence, *samsara*.<sup>4</sup> The one aim of a Pancaratin is to get free of this involvement. Freedom is achieved when he

attains a clear understanding of his own essential nature, of god's nature, and of the nature of the world of experience, an understanding that amounts to grasping that the three are essentially identical. But, he can achieve this understanding only through divine intervention.... This divine grace is available only to the devotee who has totally surrendered himself to god's mercy ... and proved his devotion by incessantly and ardently performing god's service ... following the path of monotheism.<sup>5</sup>

For a Pancarattrin, one means of rendering service to god is meditation, an activity for which the use of mantras is essential.<sup>6</sup>

And although meditation is not the only means of serving god, it is the means by which salvation as the ultimate form of understanding is achieved.<sup>7</sup> Gupta writes that "in Pancaratra, salvation has two aspects.... On the one hand, salvation is *gnosis*, realization of one's unity with god. [In] this view salvation is achieved by meditation.... [In] the other view, salvation is a state of blissful communion with god, an emotional experience."<sup>8</sup> As we see here, salvation in its first aspect implies some sort of choice insofar as meditation is a conscious act; however, the most fundamental decision - whether one chooses to be fully united to god - is not granted man, for his union with god is a determined condition preexistent to his discovery of that union. And because one's unity with god is primary to one's realization of the same, at the deepest level human salvation is not a choice for the Pancarattrin, but a predetermined condition upon which depends the attainment of all knowledge. For man's union with god presupposes the human being's possession of all of god's attributes, including that which is primary to all the others according to Pancaratra doctrine: his omniscience.<sup>9</sup>

That Pancaratra salvation precludes the possibility of choosing to offer oneself to god places Pancaratra meditation in diametrical opposition to contemplative prayer as described by the *Cloud* author. Christological to the core, the *Cloud* author's notion of contemplative prayer is based on the model of completely free and mutual self-giving found between the divine Son and His Father. Christ's gift of His entire being, soul and body, freely offered to the Father to be immolated for the salvation of all souls, was most pleasing to the Father;<sup>10</sup> consequently, the contemplative desires to make the same free offering of himself in his entirety, through Christ, out

of love for the Father.<sup>11</sup> The single-syllable words advocated by the *Cloud* author for use in contemplative prayer represent both the wholeness of the self-offering that the contemplative hopes to make to God, and the wholeness of God that the contemplative desires to receive into his soul. "Why do you suppose that this little prayer of one syllable is powerful enough to pierce the heavens?" asks the *Cloud* author.



Well, it is because it is the prayer of a man's whole being. A man who prays like this prays with all the height and depth and length and breadth of his spirit.... and it is with this prayer that a person comes to understand with all the saints the length and breadth and height and depth of the eternal, gracious, almighty, and omniscient God.<sup>12</sup>

The only single-syllable words that the author recommends - "God," "love," and "sin" - all reflect the mutual self-giving that forms the heart of Christian contemplative prayer. God's gift of His very Self to the human soul consumes it with the desire to pour itself out to Him in return, in a profound union of love with its creator. Once again, this mutual self-giving of divine Person and human person reflects the love shared by the First and Second Persons of the Holy Trinity. St. John the Apostle records Christ's testimony to the mutual gift of Self shared by Father and Son: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not spoken of myself; it is the Father who lives in me accomplishing his works."<sup>13</sup> As Father and Son give themselves over entirely to one another in divine love, so Jesus prays "that all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us."<sup>14</sup> Sin alone prevents both the soul's total receptivity to God's gift of Self and the completeness of the creature's self-offering to his God; therefore, use of the word "sin" in contemplation, as the *Cloud* author advises, is a prayer that God eradicate all evil in the soul by filling the contemplative to an ever increasing degree with the divine presence.

Clearly, the *Cloud* author's teaching on the use of single-syllable words in contemplative prayer presupposes that man has received from God the gift of free will; thus, God will not fully unite to Himself any human being who does not desire this union. In fact, burning desire for union with God is what fuels Christian contemplative prayer as the *Cloud* author describes it. For the Pancarattrin, however, union with god is a given. Therefore, the ultimate aim of the Pancarattrin meditator is not to give himself in the fullest sense of the expression, as the *Cloud* author teaches, but rather to **know** himself, for true self-knowledge is synonymous with knowledge of god. Understandably, therefore, the Pancarattrin's method of pursuing his ends through the use of *mantras* differs from the *Cloud* author's means of seeking his goals through the use of single-syllable words. The Pancarattrin's highly systematized and sophisticated procedures for attaining divine knowledge resemble in some degree methodologies for procuring natural knowledge. That is, just as systematic training in most disciplines is guaranteed to bring a student to some understanding of natural truth, so for the Pancarattrin, meditation on a *mantra* constitutes a sure way of attaining divine truth. However, as with beginning students of natural knowledge, the apprentice meditator possesses neither the tools nor expertise necessary to train himself in divine knowledge. For this reason, the role of the *guru* is pivotal to Pancaratra meditation. Gupta explains that the *guru*:

is the living incarnation of god's grace and the point where any devotee first makes direct contact with the divine. The *guru* is god incarnate. *The Laksmi Tantra*<sup>15</sup> asserts that a *guru*, irrespective of his sect or creed, is a manifestation of ... god's aspect as savior. He is like a doctor who knows the exact treatment for his disciple's ailment, the bondage of *samsara*.<sup>16</sup> He holds the key to the mysteries of the scriptures; he is the repository of the secret lore of the *mantras* and their applications in ritual and meditation.<sup>17</sup>

Gupta continues by providing a detailed description of the process through which the pupil will "finally achieve *gnosis*," provided he meditates with a "spirit of passionate devotion and total self-surrender."<sup>18</sup> Once again, the *guru* is the single most important factor in the facilitation of this process; and without his explicit instruction regarding every detail of meditation, the novice cannot hope to achieve his goal:

All the theology, philosophy, and liturgy ... [the meditator] learns from his *guru*, he is to apply to

his *mantra* and its relation to his goal, salvation.... [The meditator] must understand all the different aspects of his *mantra* and how it relates to god and himself. Though he may glean some idea of these matters from texts, friends, or general gossip, only direct instruction by a *guru* can provide even the most erudite aspirant with understanding and experience of the *mantra's* palpable divine personality.<sup>18</sup>

And finally, relates Gupta, once "the novice has learned the nature and function of his *mantra* and the rites connected with it,"

[he] retires to some holy and quiet place and starts his daily religious practice, the *upasana* of his *mantra*, which always culminates in a long meditation on the *mantra*. He withdraws his senses from external phenomena and contemplates the *mantra* by mentally repeating it ... a great many times. He determines the number of repetitions in advance.<sup>20</sup>

For the Pancarattrin, therefore, the knowledge of god that constitutes the aim of meditation - realization of one's own divine nature as well as the attainment of the power inherent in such knowledge - can be passed on from *guru* to novice through proper instruction and practice of specific teachings and meditational techniques.



Although the *Cloud* author himself illustrates one example of the principle of religious tutelage as employed in the Christian contemplative tradition, there are a number of important distinctions to be made between the medieval spiritual director and the Pancarattrin *guru*. First, as mentioned above, while the *guru* carries full responsibility for instructing his disciple in "[a]ll the theology, philosophy, and liturgy"<sup>21</sup> necessary for that disciple's personal salvation, the institutional Catholic Church assumes the role of providing for the salvation of all its members through catechesis, divine revelation, and the Sacraments. Obviously this does not preclude the possibility that one member of the Church might play a particularly significant part in the salvation of another; however, because every Christian's salvation is dependent on the divine grace made available through the Church

as a whole, it is impossible to isolate a single part of that whole and assign to it the responsibility that Christ alone, through His entire Mystical Body, can bear. Once again, as Gupta points out, “[t]he *guru* is god incarnate”;<sup>22</sup> he is therefore equipped to provide all that is necessary for his disciple’s salvation. In the *Cloud* author’s view, however, since no individual member of the Church can be regarded as equal to God, no member can attempt what God alone has the capacity to effect. Thus, although the *Cloud* author not only acts as a spiritual director himself, but firmly recommends that anyone embarking on the contemplative way do so only under the guidance of a spiritual director,<sup>23</sup> he does not equate the spiritual director with God. This viewpoint is illustrated by the fact that the *Cloud* author defines spiritual directorship as a specific office of the Church:

We may ask, is there anyone who can judge another man’s life?

Yes, of course, he who has the authority and responsibility for the spiritual good of others may rightfully censure the deeds of men. A man may officially receive this power through the decree and ordination of the Church, or it is possible that the Holy Spirit may inspire a particular individual well established in love to assume this office.<sup>24</sup>

Obviously, the spiritual director’s function in the Church is very important and yet it is one of many positions undertaken by various members of the Mystical Body; quite simply, even the best director cannot provide for all the spiritual needs of his disciple. More significantly, however, the spiritual director cannot ensure the union of either his own or his disciple’s soul with God. If the director is a priest he may administer the Sacraments without which his disciple cannot attain salvation, yet ultimately only God Himself can effect full union of the human and the divine. And because God incarnated Himself in only one man, Jesus Christ, no other human being is capable of perfectly instructing a soul on how it ought to dispose itself to the workings of contemplative grace. Thus the *Cloud* author always maintains that God Himself is the best spiritual director; for example, in offering advice to his own disciple concerning the best means of controlling distractions during prayer, the *Cloud* author writes:

If you become sorely tried you will probably begin to investigate techniques, methods, and the secret subtleties of occult crafts to help you control them, but believe me, techniques for control-

ling your thoughts are better learned from God through experience than from any man in this life.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, as a spiritual director himself, the *Cloud* author confesses his inability to teach his disciple how to contemplate:

If you ask me just precisely how one is to go about doing the contemplative work of love, I am at a complete loss. All I can say is I pray that Almighty God in his great goodness and kindness will teach you himself. For in all honesty I must admit I do not know. And no wonder, for it is a divine activity and God will do it in whom-ever he chooses.<sup>26</sup>

Obviously, if the human being’s contemplation of God can only occur when God shows himself to the soul, then contemplative prayer is entirely dependent upon God’s activity in the soul. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the *Cloud* author does recommend that if his disciple is interiorly prompted to pray in words, he use only single-syllable ones such as “God” and “sin.” Is not this advice simply instruction in specific techniques such as one encounters with *mantras*? The answer appears to be no for a number of reasons. First, the *guru* must explain “the secret nature of the letters” of the Sanskrit alphabet, each “in its own right a *mantra* with a distinct personality,”<sup>27</sup> in order for the Pancaratrin meditator to choose a *mantra* to begin meditation. And furthermore, as Gupta points out, *mantras* are the means and the path to salvation.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the *Cloud* author simply suggests that his disciple select a personally meaningful word to pray with, and this word is far from indispensable to contemplation. Second, while the efficacy of Pancaratra meditation is contingent upon the number of times a *mantra* is repeated,<sup>29</sup> so that the entire practice takes on a formulaic quality, the possibility of receiving Christian contemplation has nothing to do with the frequency with which a particular word or phrase is repeated. Teaching his disciples how to pray, Jesus warns: “Do not rattle on like the pagans. They think they will win a hearing by the sheer multiplication of words. Do not imitate them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”<sup>30</sup>

The *Cloud* author is actually reluctant to suggest that his disciple use any word during contemplative prayer, so he concedes the use of single-syllable words to those who feel inclined to pray in this way.<sup>31</sup> Yet the fourteenth-century spiritual director himself could never

prescribe the number of times a person ought to repeat a chosen word during contemplative prayer, for the frequency of the word's repetition reflects circumstances entirely beyond the control of either the director or his disciple. This is because the word is employed either to fight distractions that prevent the contemplative from reaching a state of recollection,<sup>32</sup> or to express the irrepressible ache that the soul feels for God. While it is true that the contemplative can anticipate and control certain types of exterior distractions by choosing a quiet environment in which to pray, it is the interior disturbances that are often the most unpredictable and difficult to battle. Likewise, although the contemplative's self-denial may be conducive to awakening or increasing his desire for God, this special love itself is an unmerited divine gift.<sup>33</sup> Incapable of foreseeing when or how often God might puncture the disciple's heart with divine yearning, the *Cloud* author simply assumes that contemplative prayer does not occur infrequently because "it is prayed in the length of the spirit which means that it is unceasing until it is answered."<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it is not a profusion of words that brings God down into the soul to effect contemplation, but rather God's gift of love that fills and spills forth from the undeserving soul in a word of profound longing. For no human activity can merit this gift, and there is no limit to the ways in which God gives Himself to individual souls through contemplation.

Clearly, the *Cloud* author's advocacy of the use of single-syllable words in prayer does not suggest that they are inherently powerful insofar as possessing the capacity to draw God down into the soul. To the contrary, these basic words simply reflect the effects of God's presence in the soul, which illuminates every trace of sin that defiles the Creator's image engraved therein, and overwhelms the soul with a good that it cannot comprehend. Filled with a disgust for its own sinfulness and a yearning for God's goodness, the soul restrains, with great difficulty, the intensity of its reaction to God Himself and in spite of its best efforts, erupts at times with words that mirror the extremity of its state. The *Cloud* author's single-syllable words, therefore, are significant only because they are indicative of the divine presence within a soul during contemplation. The role of a *mantra* in Pancaratra meditation is, how

ever, far weightier than that of a single-syllable word in Christian contemplation. The reason for this is, plainly speaking, that the *mantra* is god while the single-syllable word is not. Gupta explains that according to Pancaratra theology:

[d]eities have three forms ...: as personifications ...; as symbolic diagrams ...; and as sound.... The sonic form of a deity is a *mantra*. .... [I]s the sonic form of the god which is primary, since the designating epistemologically and ontically precedes the designated. The power ... of the deity inheres in the first instance in the *mantra* form and attaches itself to the other two forms by derivation.<sup>35</sup>

A number of logical conclusions follow from the fact that the *mantra* is god. First, as pointed out above, in order to recognize his own divine character, the Pancaratin meditator desires understanding of god's nature; since a *mantra* is god, then full comprehension of the *mantra's* essence ensures the meditator's full realization that he himself is god. The object of the Pancaratin's meditation is, therefore, the *mantra*. In contrast, since the *Cloud* author's single-syllable words are not forms of god, they do not constitute the proper object of the contem-

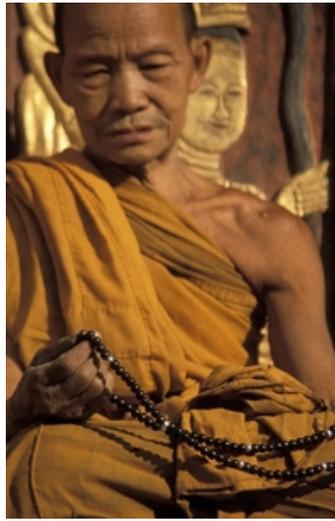
plative's prayer, which is God Himself. Second, because the *mantra* is god it is inherently powerful, and has the capacity to purify as well as enlighten the meditator. On the other hand, the simple words used by the Christian contemplative in his private prayer have no intrinsic value; they are simply crude representations of divine reality or its absence. This is not to deny that God can infuse certain words with His power. Most notably, the words with which the Sacraments of the Church are administered effect real spiritual changes; for example, the

Sacrament of Holy Orders endows its recipient with the power to transform bread into the Body of Christ (Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist). But the single-syllable words that the *Cloud* author recommends for use in contemplative prayer are not sacramental in this sense, for while they reflect the consequences of divine power, they can not effect that power. Furthermore, although the words that accompany the Sacraments possess, under proper circumstances, the power to effect divine grace, they are not forms of God. Thus, the fact that the Pan-

  
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caratra *mantra* is god while the *Cloud* author's single-syllable word is not divine constitutes the greatest difference between the use of words in Pancaratra meditation and Christian contemplation.

As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, a survey of the definitions and uses of the word *mantra* throughout the entire range of Hindu and Buddhist sects moves far beyond the scope of this article; however, our examination of mantric function within one tradition, the Pancaratra, is significant as we attempt to assess comparisons drawn between *mantras* and the *Cloud* author's single-syllable words. As Gupta skillfully demonstrates, mantric use in at least this one Hindu sect is a most sacred and complex affair. Penetration of the *mantra's* significance to the Pancaratra world view is possible only to one who has been properly initiated and instructed by a *guru*. In other words, true comprehension of a Pancaratra *mantra* is contingent upon personal commitment to the tenets of the religion. The fact that treatment of *mantras* is, as the Pancaratra example indicates, highly specific to a particular body of beliefs, undercuts the validity of any comparison between *mantras* and the *Cloud* author's single-syllable words, which assumes a more generalized definition and function of the term *mantra*. A notable illustration of the indiscriminate use of the word *mantra* with respect to the *Cloud* author's teaching occurs in William Johnston's introduction to his translation of the *Cloud* into modern English: "After speaking of good and pious meditations on the life and death of Christ.... [the *Cloud* author] introduces his disciple to a way that may well be attractive



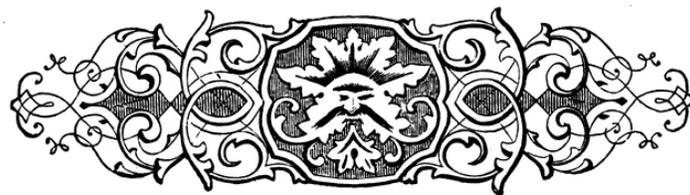
*Monk with mantra meditation beads*

also to the modern reader, namely the *mantra* or sacred word."<sup>36</sup> Nothing more is said to clarify Johnston's understanding of mantric use in any tradition; instead, he bases his comparison on a reductive concept of *mantras* that may well lead the uninformed reader to assume that all mantric use is more or less alike. Another critic, Katharine Watson, provides a much clearer definition of her use of the word *mantra* as she writes:

A *mantra* is a very special word, made up of specific sounds, which has the power to bring about a precise spiritual effect within the person who uses it. It is not simply any word that the person likes or feels would be helpful to him.

It is always given to the disciple by the guru who

However, despite the distinctions between *mantras* and the *Cloud* author's single-syllable words that are implied in the above definition, Watson nevertheless concludes that "in the actual practice the *Cloud*-author is putting forward, there is very great similarity with that of *mantra* meditation."<sup>38</sup> But the fact that our investigation of mantric practice in the Pancaratra tradition denies Watson's findings here once again illustrates the point that it is nearly impossible to make any general statement that applies to the use of *mantras* in all sects. For this reason, it is essential that comparisons applied to mantric utterance and single-syllable prayer as taught by the *Cloud* author properly define their use of terms within the context of varying religious traditions.



## NOTES

1*The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counseling*, trans. William Johnston (New York: Doubleday, Image Books, 1973), ch. 37, p. 95. Hereafter all references to *The Cloud of Unknowing* will appear as *Cloud*. The original in Middle English reads: “[Y]if thei [contemplative prayers] ben in wordes, as thei ben bot seldom, than ben thei bot in ful fewe wordes” (*The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counseling*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson, *Early English Text Society* 218 [London: Oxford University Press, 1944], p. 74, 8-9). The Middle English “thorn” and “yogh” have been modernized in all quotations from the original.

2Ibid. The Middle English reads: “& yif it be bot a lityl worde of o silable, me think it betir then of to, \* more acordyng to the werk of the spiryte” (p. 74, 9-11).

3Sanjukta Gupta, “The Pancaratra Attitude to Mantra,” in *Understanding Mantras*, ed. Harvey P. Alper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 224.

4The “beginningless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth,” samsara is intimately connected to the concept of reincarnation or transmigration, which “denotes the process by which, after death, either a spiritual or an ethereal, subtle, and thinly material part of the personality, having left the body that it previously inhabited, ‘migrates’ and enters (i.e. is reborn in) another body (human or animal) or another form of being (plant or even inanimate object).” Taken from Mircea Eliade, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: MacMillan, 1987), s.v. “Samsara,” by Brian K. Smith and “Transmigration,” by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky.

5Gupta, 232.

6Ibid., 231.

7Ibid.

8Ibid.

9Ibid., 225.

10John 10:15, 17-18.

11*Cloud*, ch. 25

12Ibid., ch. 38, p. 96. The Middle English reads: “& whi peersith it heuen, this lityl schort preier of o lityl silable? Sikirly for it is preyed with a fulle spirite, in the height & in the depnes, in the lengthe and in the breed of his spirit that preieth it.... In this tyme it is that a soule hath comprehended, after the lesson of Seynte Poule, with alle seyntes ... whiche is the lengthe & the breed, the height & the depnes of Euerlastyng & Al-louely, Almighty & Alle-witty God” (p. 75, 6-8; 13-17).

13John 14:9-11 NAB (New American Bible).

14John 17:21 NAB.

15One of the sacred texts upon which Pancaratra teaching is based.

16See note 4.

17Gupta, 235.

18Ibid., 240.

19Ibid., 236.

20Ibid., 239-40.

21Ibid., 236.

22Ibid., 235.

23For example, see *Cloud*, ch. 36.

24*Cloud*, ch. 30, p. 87. The Middle English reads: “But, I preye thee, of whom schal mens dedis be demyd? Sekirly of hem that han power & cure of theire souls, other geuen in aperte by the statute & the ordinance of Holy Chirche, or elles priuely in spirite at the specyal steryng of the Holy Goost in parfite charite” (p. 65, 10-13).

25Ibid., ch. 31, p. 88. The Middle English reads: “[Y]if thee think that the traueyle be grete, thou mayst seek sleightes & wiles & priue sotiltees of goostly sleightes to put hem [distractions] away: the whiche sleightes ben betir lernyd of God by the profe then of any man in this liif” (p. 66, 9-12).

26Ibid., ch. 34, p. 90. The Middle English reads: “[Y]if thou askest me by what menes thou schalt com to this werk, I beseche Almyghty God of his grete grace & his grete curtesye to teche thee hym-self. For trewly I do thee we] to wyten that I can not telle thee. & that is no wonder. For whi that is the werk of only God, specyally wrought in what

soule that hym likith, withoutyn any deseert of the same soule” (p. 68, 20-21; p. 69, 1-4).

27Gupta, 236-37.

28Ibid., 228.

29Ibid., 239-40.

30Matthew 6:7-8 NAB.

31Cloud, ch. 37.

32Ibid., ch. 7. Jordan Aumann defines “recollection” as a state in which a person’s attention has been entirely withdrawn from internal and external distractions, and rests solely upon God. Taken from *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v. “Recollection,” by Jordan Auman.

33Cloud, ch. 34.

34Ibid., ch. 39, p. 98. The Middle English reads: “it is preied in the lengthe of the spirite; so that it schuld neuer sees tyl the tyme were that it had fully getyn that that it longid after” (p. 78, 3-5).

35Gupta, 230.

36William Johnston, introduction to *The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counseling* (New York: Doubleday, Image Books, 1973), 8.

37Katharine Watson, “The Cloud of Unknowing and Vedanta,” in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1982), 95.

38Ibid.