

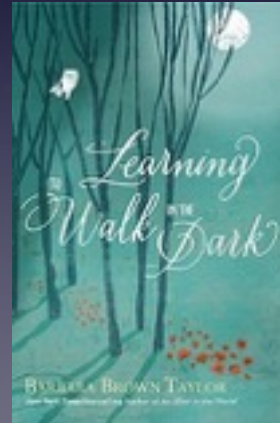
# Spiritual Darkness Two Studies

ACTS  
Fall 2014

St David's United Church  
Calgary

# Learning to Walk in the Dark

## Session 5



- Opening
- Introductions
- Chapter Summaries
- Media
- Discussions
- Closing

Opening  
-  
Tikkun  
Olam  
-  
The  
Shattering  
of  
the Vessels



For many modern Jews, the term tikkun olam (repairing the world) has become a code-phrase synonymous with social and environmental action. It is linked to a call for healing the ills of the world. ... This idea is rooted in the last great myth infused into Jewish tradition, a cosmological myth created in the sixteenth century by the great Jewish mystic, Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed, known as the Ari (1534-1572). Here is that story.

# The Myth of The Shattering of the Vessels

moovly

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSy7\\_bBhphg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSy7_bBhphg)

# Ch 7 The Dark Night of the Soul

ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS TO DECIDE DURING A DARK NIGHT IS WHETHER TO SURRENDER OR RESIST.



wrestling with belief... John of the Cross -- for him, the dark night was a love story, full of the painful joy of seeking the most elusive lover of all, God, “nada”, who cannot be grasped, but which eclipses the reality of all other things. Taylor says that John hoped to convince his readers that their images of and ideas about “God” are obstacles between them and the Real Thing.

# Ch 7 The Dark Night of the Soul

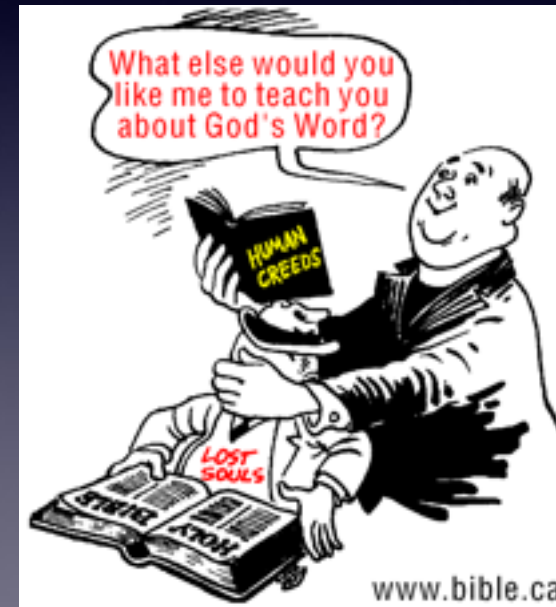
THE OLD WAYS OF BEING CHRISTIAN ARE NOT WORKING ANYMORE.



“Karen Armstrong says that we are living through a time of global transformation, when religions around the world are taking stock of what enmity has cost them and turning toward some new wisdom about what it means to be fully human?”

# Ch 7 The Dark Night of the Soul

“DOCTRINES AND CREEDS ARE NO LONGER  
ENOUGH TO KEEP FAITH ALIVE.”



Fowler's Fifth Stage of Faith is the "sacrament of defeat" where

one lives with the consequences of choices he or she cannot un-choose.



# Ch 7 The Dark Night of the Soul

“WHEN THE DARK NIGHT PASSES, ALL IS TRANSFORMED.”



“... the good news is that dark and light, faith and doubt, divine absence and presence, do not exist at opposite poles. Instead, they exist with and within each other, like distinct waves... faith becomes a verb, my active response to the sacred reality.”



# Ch 8 Working With Darkness

## GREEN MEDITATION: FINDING ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE DARK



Consequence of the incandescent light bulb...and the belief that we needed eight hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.

“Once people learned how to light the night, they began to cut down on the number of hours they spend in darkness every day. .. The long hours of rest before, during and after sleep are gone, along with the state of consciousness that went with them -- the collateral damage of a world in love with light.”

# Ch 8 Working With Darkness

Growing up on the farm...



“For most of us, the main impediment to getting back to sleep is worrying about getting back to sleep. The older we get, the less sleep we need... There is not a reason in the world why you cannot get up and do something other than lie in bed trying to will yourself back to sleep.”

All the darkness in the world cannot  
extinguish the light from a single candle.

-- Francis of Assisi

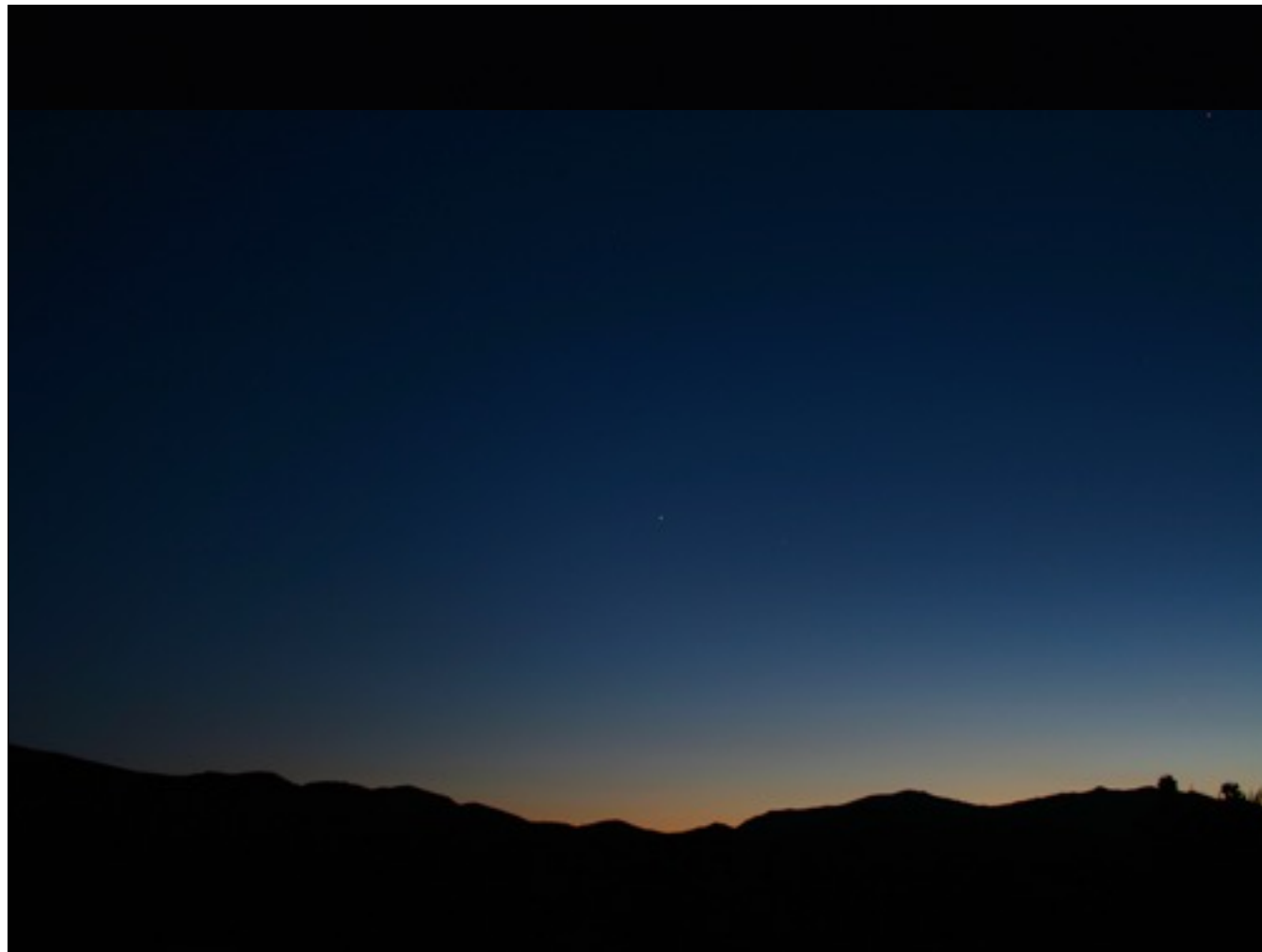


"I let the darkness manage me for once instead of trying to manage the darkness."

All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light from a single candle. ...Francis of Assisi



“Nothing reminds me that I am an earthling like seeing the full moon.”



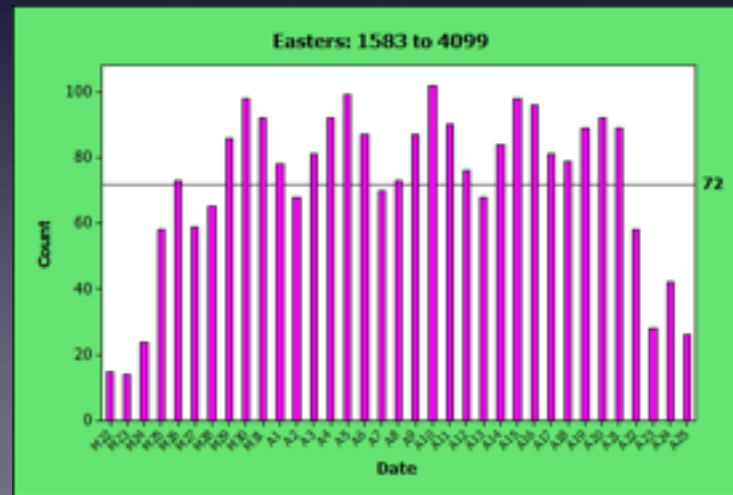
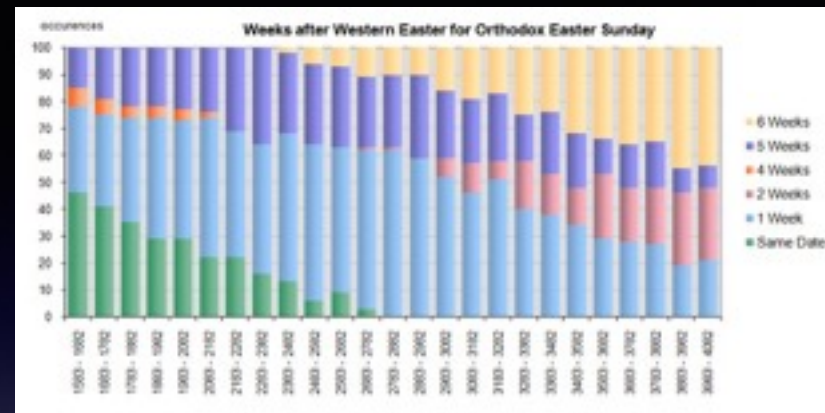
Jewish tradition imagines the Sabbath as a bride who arrives when the first three stars appear. Only then can the wedding begin.

## Ch 9 Our Lady of the Underground



In the Genesis creation story, darkness is first, then light. Darkness was not created -- it was always there. God separated the “created” light from the darkness, calling the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.



Easter Sunday's relationship to the full moon. Page 171

Here are the graphs showing the dates of Easter, for both Western Christians from 1583-4099 and the differences for the Eastern Christians.





Walking the labyrinth and “Our Lady of the Underground” page 178

## Ch 9 Our Lady of the Underground

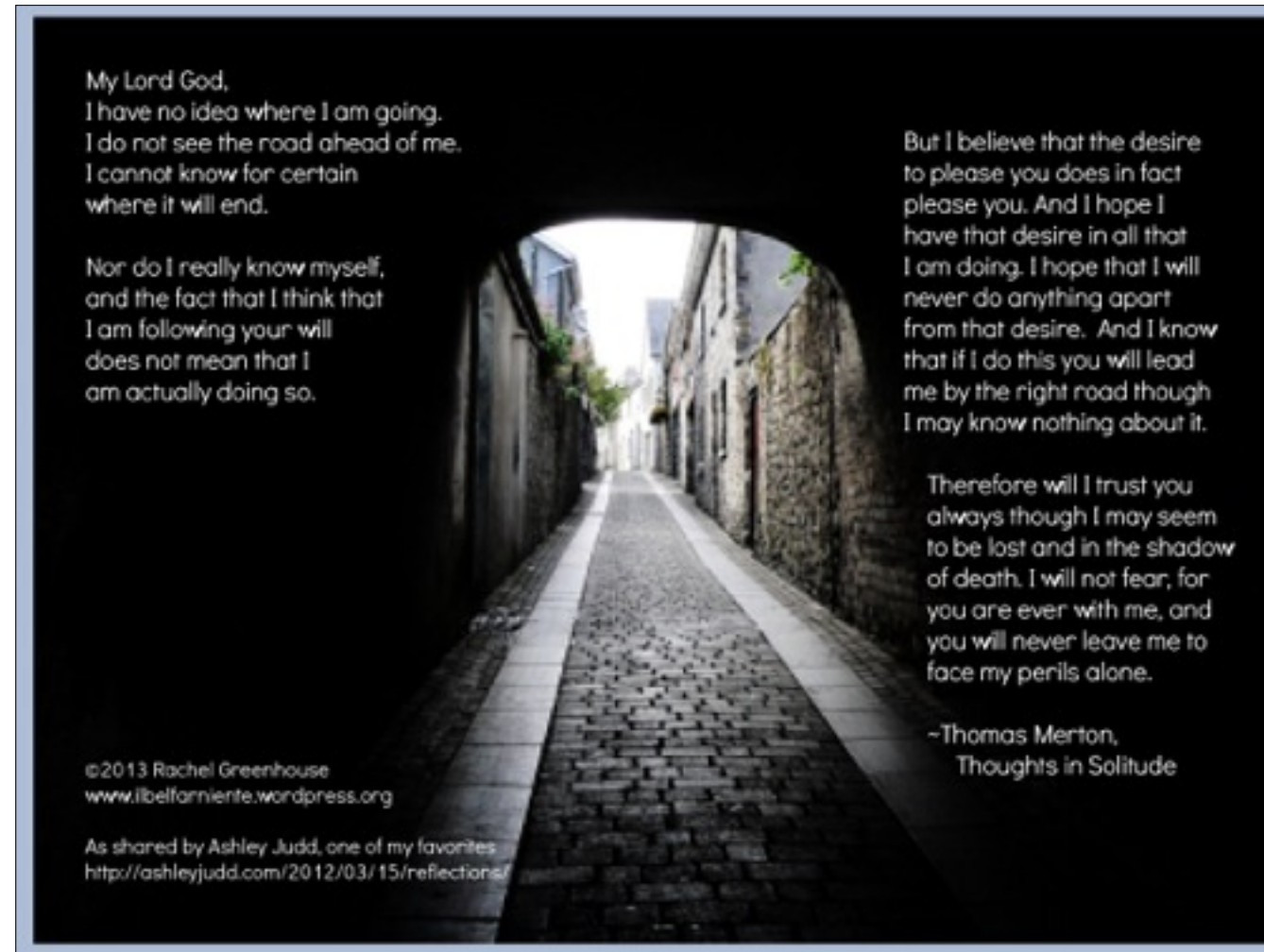
Leave place, leave time,  
Avoid even image!  
Go forth without a way  
On the narrow path,  
Then you will find the desert track.

The soul does not grow by addition but by subtraction.”

## Ch 9 Our Lady of the Underground



“The light was in our eyes all along.”

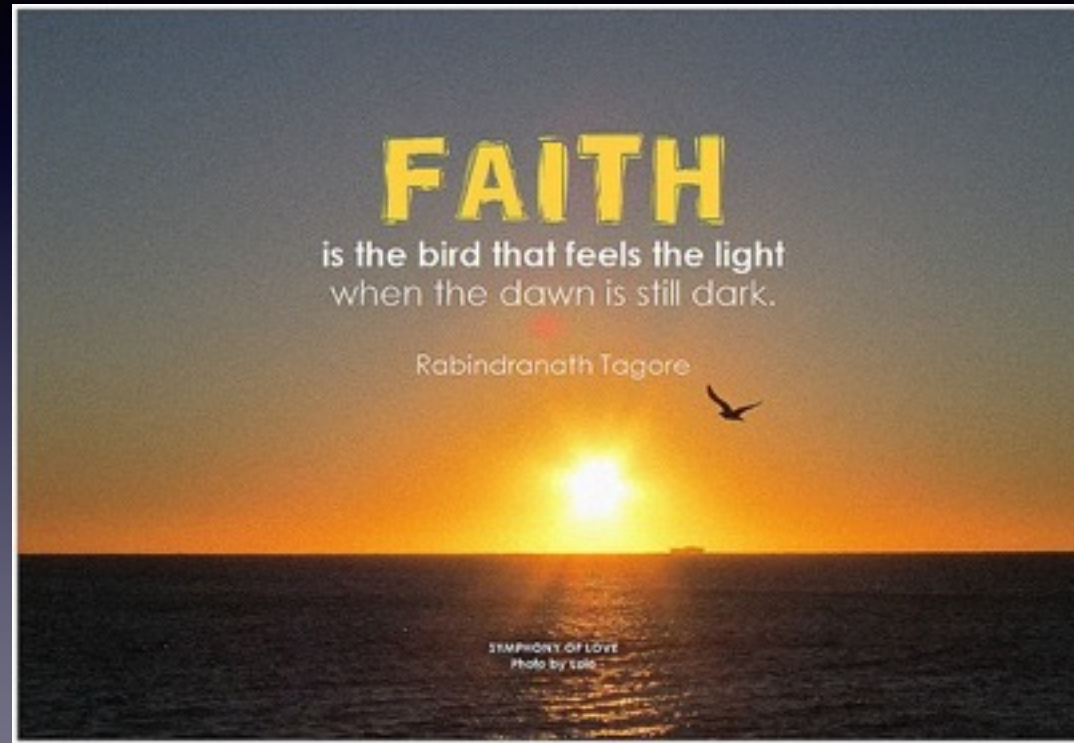


Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude, Page 181

1. My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. ... Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.
2. But I believe that the desire to please you, does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. ... Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death, I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton "Thoughts in Solitude"

# EPILOGUE: BLESSING THE DAY



Taylor's collection of Bible stories that happen after dark... "Loss is the way of life."

"Here at the end, I think this may be a book about living with loss... by avoiding full solar version of Christianity..."

"Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark." Rabindranath Tagore

Video - 14m

## Guillermo de Anda: Caves of the Maya Dead

A National Geographic Archeologist introduces the Caves of the Maya and the evidence of their spiritual rituals.

[http://library.fora.tv/2012/06/13/  
Guillermo\\_de\\_Anda\\_Caves\\_of\\_the\\_Maya\\_Dead#55izE1bXYUa  
E0FUp.99](http://library.fora.tv/2012/06/13/Guillermo_de_Anda_Caves_of_the_Maya_Dead#55izE1bXYUaE0FUp.99)

Video 14m

Guillermo de Anda: Caves of the Maya Dead

A National Geographic Archeologist introduces the Caves of the Maya and the evidence of their spiritual rituals.








Break

# Discussion Questions

1. HOW DO WE LET DARKNESS MANAGE OUR LIVES RATHER THAN INSIST ON MANAGING DARKNESS?
2. TO SURRENDER OR TO RESIST, IS THAT THE QUESTION?



Expulsion From the Garden of Eden - Gustave Doré

## credo 2 - intention

we ever wish the life of simple trusting -  
believing submission is its key,  
and willing to suppress our knowing.


for eden's story was of submission -  
that truth was trust in its simplicity,  
and wanting to know more was rebellion.

there is a nexus of awareness that has no name -  
that has given the human race it's illuminated ones,  
through insight, conversion, and dark nights of the soul.

they describe not submission but relationship -  
these saints, these avatars, these prophets,  
do not believe, but come to know we are not alone.

for good action comes from clear intention,  
where compassion guides understanding.

credo considers what is - after considering what is not.  
what follows when we have come to feel excluded because submission was not enough?

[1journey.net](http://1journey.net)  jun 2007 elias

<http://1journey.net/1journey/Kirk/credo2.htm>

there are parallels to taylor's thinking here. in discussion we collectively wondered about just what it meant to surrender or submit. just how did that look? perhaps intention might be the key between this choosing.

wrestling with this very issue of religious submission a few years back, and thinking of the various world models of religion, i came to a new view of the creation story where adam and even get expelled from eden because they did not submit. that this was our destiny, not the submission of being kept without knowledge in a garden.

... jock

# Closing

Karen shared an interest in night gardens, as did Taylor.  
From Moon Flowers in North Carolina to an issue of  
Canadian Gardening on night gardens. The Moon Flower  
is a member of the Morning Glory family. It blooms in the  
evening and is usually closes by morning.

The Moon Flower ... FT Prince (1912-2003)

The secret drops of love run through my mind:/ Midnight is filled with sounds of the full sea/ That has risen softly among the rocks:/ Air stirs the cedar-tree.

Somewhere a fainting sweetness is distilled:/ It is the moonflower hanging in its tent/ Of twisted broad-leaved branches by the stony path/ That squanders the cool scent.

Pallid, long as a lily, it swings a little/ As if drunk with its own perfume and the night,/ Which draws its perfume out and leaves the flower/ The weaker for its flight.

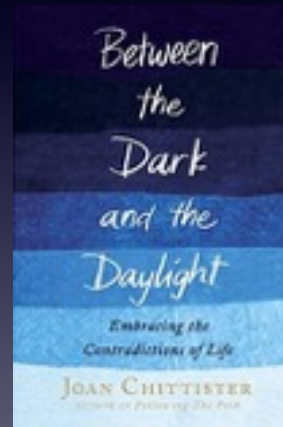
Detached from my desires, in an oblivion/ Of this world that surrounds me, in weariness/ Of all but darkness, silence, starry solitude, I too feel that caress -

Delicate, serene and peaceful, lonely, strange/ To the intellect and the imagination,/ The touch with which reality wounds and ravishes/ Our inmost desolation.

All being like the moonflower is dissatisfied/ For the dark kiss that the night only gives,/ And night gives only to the soul that waits in longing/ And in that only lives.

# Between the Dark and the Daylight

## Next Readings



1. THE LIGHT FOUND IN DARKNESS
2. THE DELUSION OF FRUSTRATION
3. THE PLACE OF TSUNAMIS IN THE OCEAN OF LIFE
4. THE MIRAGE OF SECURITY
5. THE INSECURITY OF CERTAINTY
6. THE FRAGILITY OF ACHIEVEMENT

## Study Website

<http://dark.stdavidscalgary.net>

The next readings are in Chichester's book "Between the Dark and the Daylight"

The first 6 chapters for next week please.

Since there are so many little meditations in this book we will look at half of them. The ones in yellow: 1,2 and 5.