**THE YAHWEH PRAYER – (Thought into Silence)**

In exploring silence during our conference of many words, I’d like to share with you The Yahweh Prayer…

It’s a mystery, which is both Foundation and Abyss… so, something you fall into…

So, mystery doesn’t mean you can’t understand it, only that you can’t pigeon hole it, like the mystique of a person, so as it draws us deeper it actually becomes ever more knowable.

For the contemplative it’s a practice, which I hope may become your own practice, in that it may become an experiential knowing…

The explanation of The Yahweh Prayer came from a conference some 6 years ago or so between scientists and religious when on the second session of the second day, a scientist who was also a Rabbi said, “You know, you Christians never really understood the translation, ‘Do not take the name of God in vain…’” It’s not really about *not* saying, ‘God Dammit’ which, of course, I hope you don’t! But in fact it’s saying that *any* use of the sacred word ‘Yahweh’ was in vain… Even to speak it was vanity! Because it really is a mystery that must lead you into this abyss of awe and wonder. You see, it was never to be spoken with your lips or your mouth which is why Elohim and Adonai became more commonly used.

Then the Rabbi said this, ‘Did you know that to correctly pronounce the consonants of the sacred name, you do not use your lips or move your tongue? In fact **it** **cannot be spoken… it can only be breathed!** An Inhalation and an exhalation… and he demonstrated this… Yah … weh. Yah … weh. Yah … weh.

So, think for a moment… The first word you ever spoke when you left your Mother’s body was the name of God. It was the first word you said when you woke up this morning. In fact we’re speaking it right now… not just us in this room but all six billion of us on this planet… whatever our religion, stance or belief system…

The same is true for our patients, their families and indeed ourselves as hospice and hospital chaplains. Remember, the very last word we will ever speak on this earth will also be the name of God… And all we can do is bring this to consciousness.

**So, Our Thought into Silence is just that…** become aware of our breath… for each breath is God, breathing us into and holding us into Being… and the first and last breath we will ever say on earth… is the name of God. Shalom!

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