

# OMG!



## A Bad Christian's Guide to Prayer

# How to be a **bad** Christian



...And a better human being

**Dave Tomlinson**

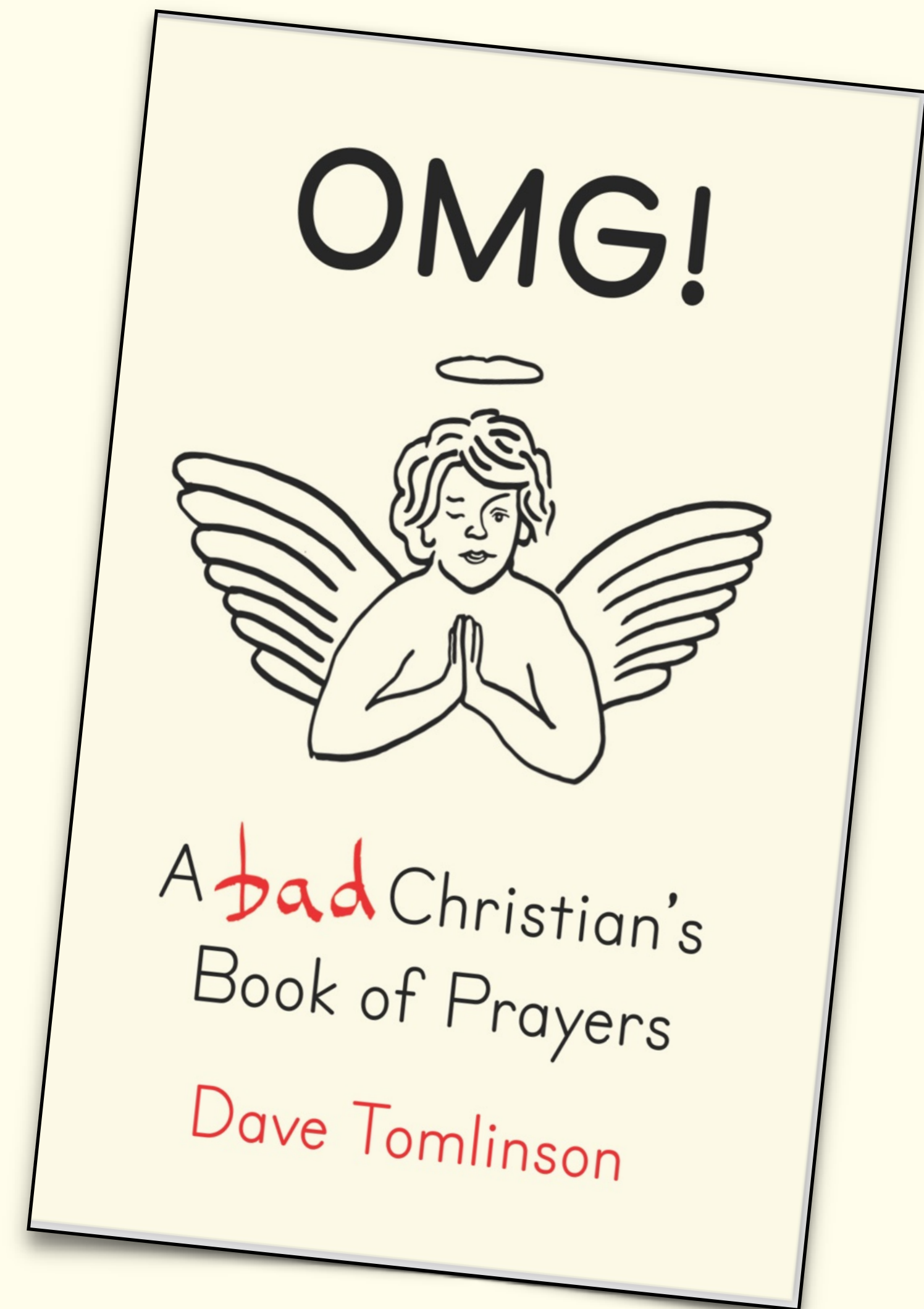
Anyone who experiences love, or appreciates beauty in art or nature, or who is fascinated by truth and meaning in life, or who simply senses gratitude for being alive on this beautiful planet knows something of God – however God is named.

Many people connect with God – and even pray without realising it...



Prayer is less a religious activity than a universal instinct. It's a coverall term for how we sense, connect with, and respond to the divine or transcendent, named in different ways, or unnamed.

Prayer is the most democratic activity - all creation is itself a prayer





If 'woke' means imagining a better world, then surely woke has to be a great idea...right, God?

Some dismissed Lennon's dream as sappy sentimental tosh, 'all you need is love etc...' yet most people I know would wish to live in that world.

I know I'm not the only one who believes that goodness will outlive spitefulness, that kindness will beat the heck out of hatred, or that light will vanquish darkness – because finally...love will endure.

But I long for a world where freedom to 'be' outstrips the right to tell others how they should be, where social fears and phobias (xeno, homo, trans and the like) are a thing of the past, along with racism, misogyny and other senseless attitudes.

Surely, this can't be too much to ask!

I believe the golden rule of love and mutual respect trumps every other rule, and far outstrips our silly likings and proclivities,

Am I woke, dear God? I do hope so, especially if woke means living with compassion, striving toward a world that welcomes strangers whatever their story, that makes poverty history, that defends the rights of all people, and relishes this incredible planet.

I don't think woke is something new or faddish for bleeding liberal hearts like mine, it is the wisdom of old, emblazoned in every tradition – 'treat others how you wish to be treated', 'love your neighbour as yourself.'

Just imagine that I say – it is easy if you try!



**You May Say  
I'm a Dreamer**



# PRAYER



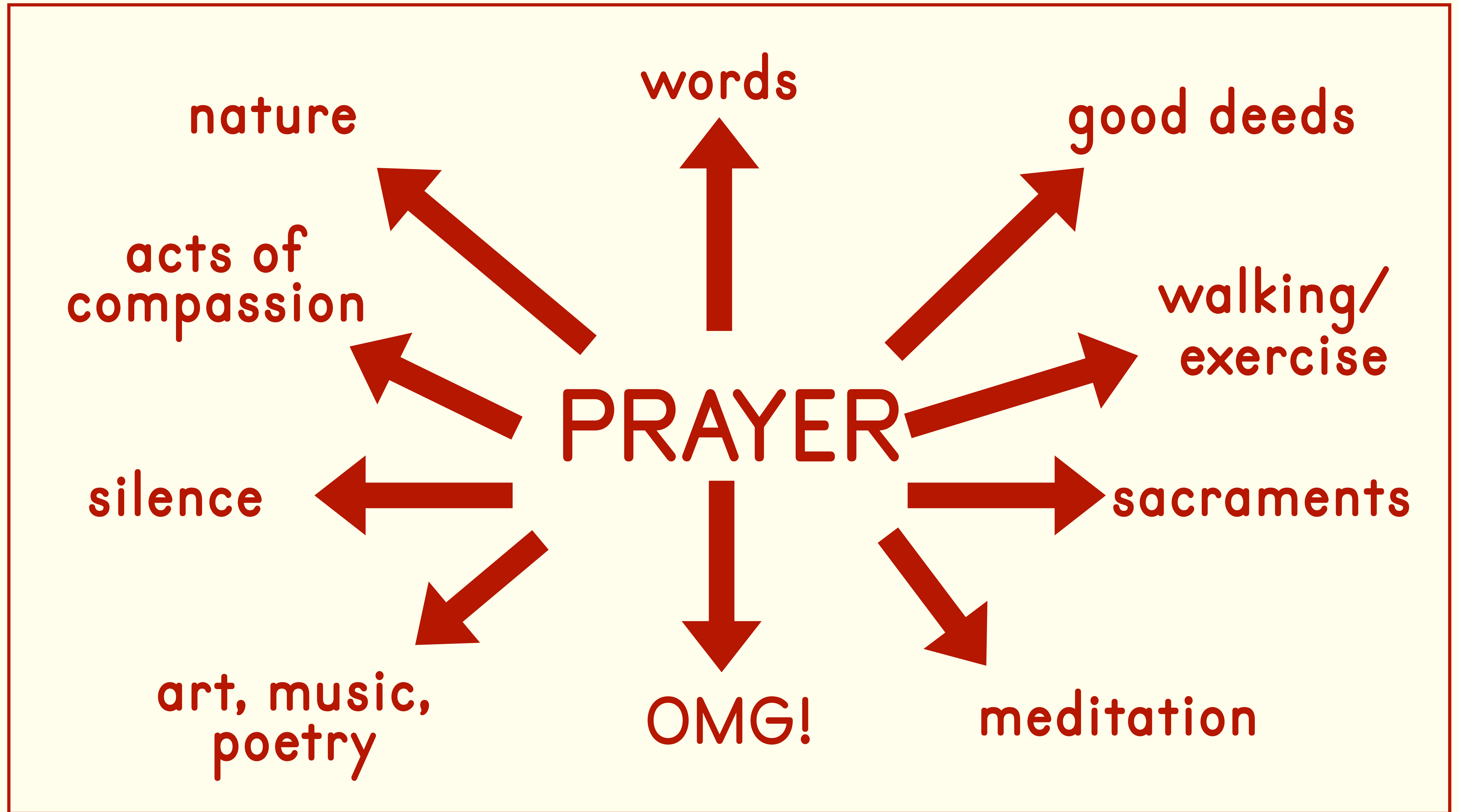
**Intentional**

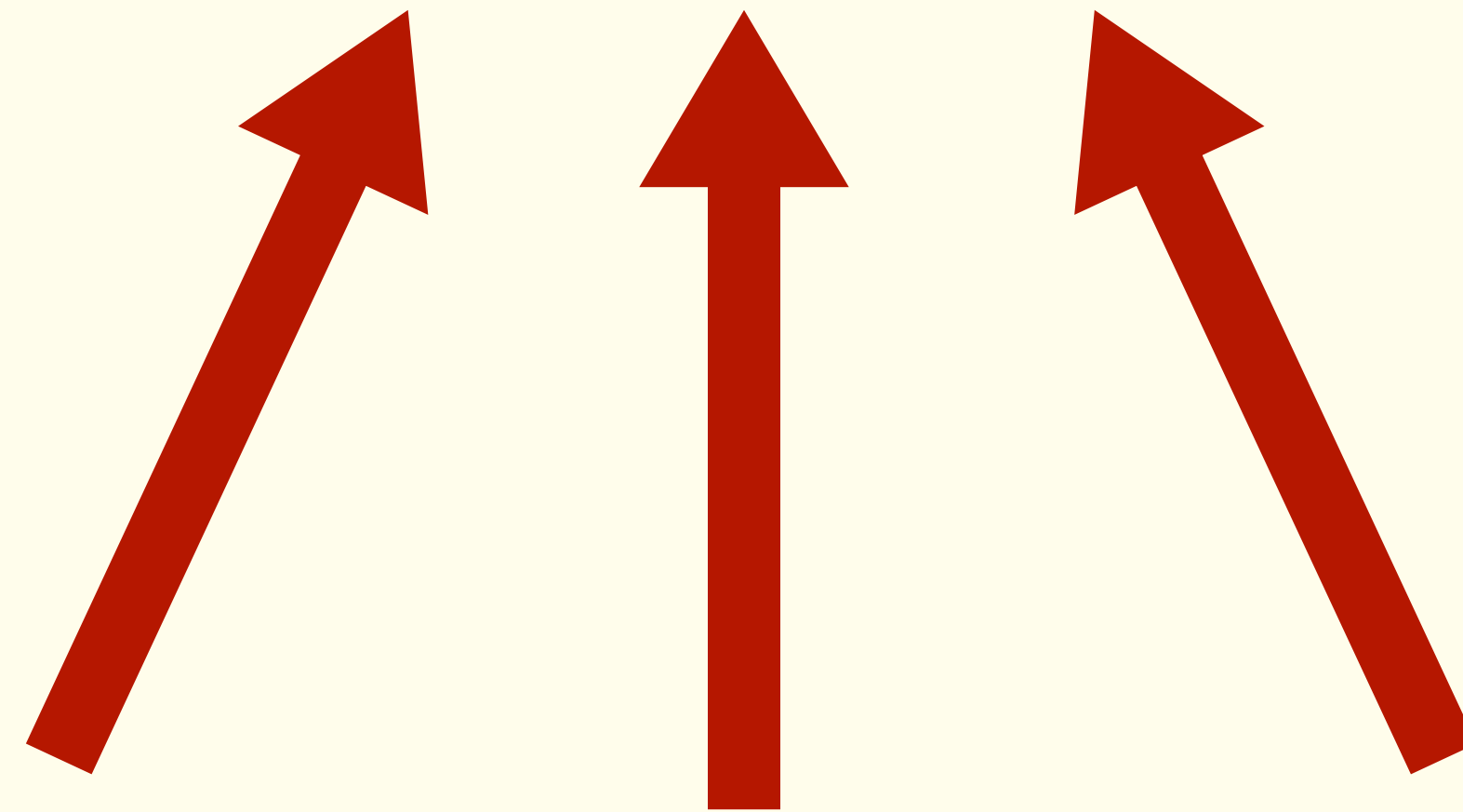
**form of  
expression**



**Non-Intentional**

**form of  
consciousness**

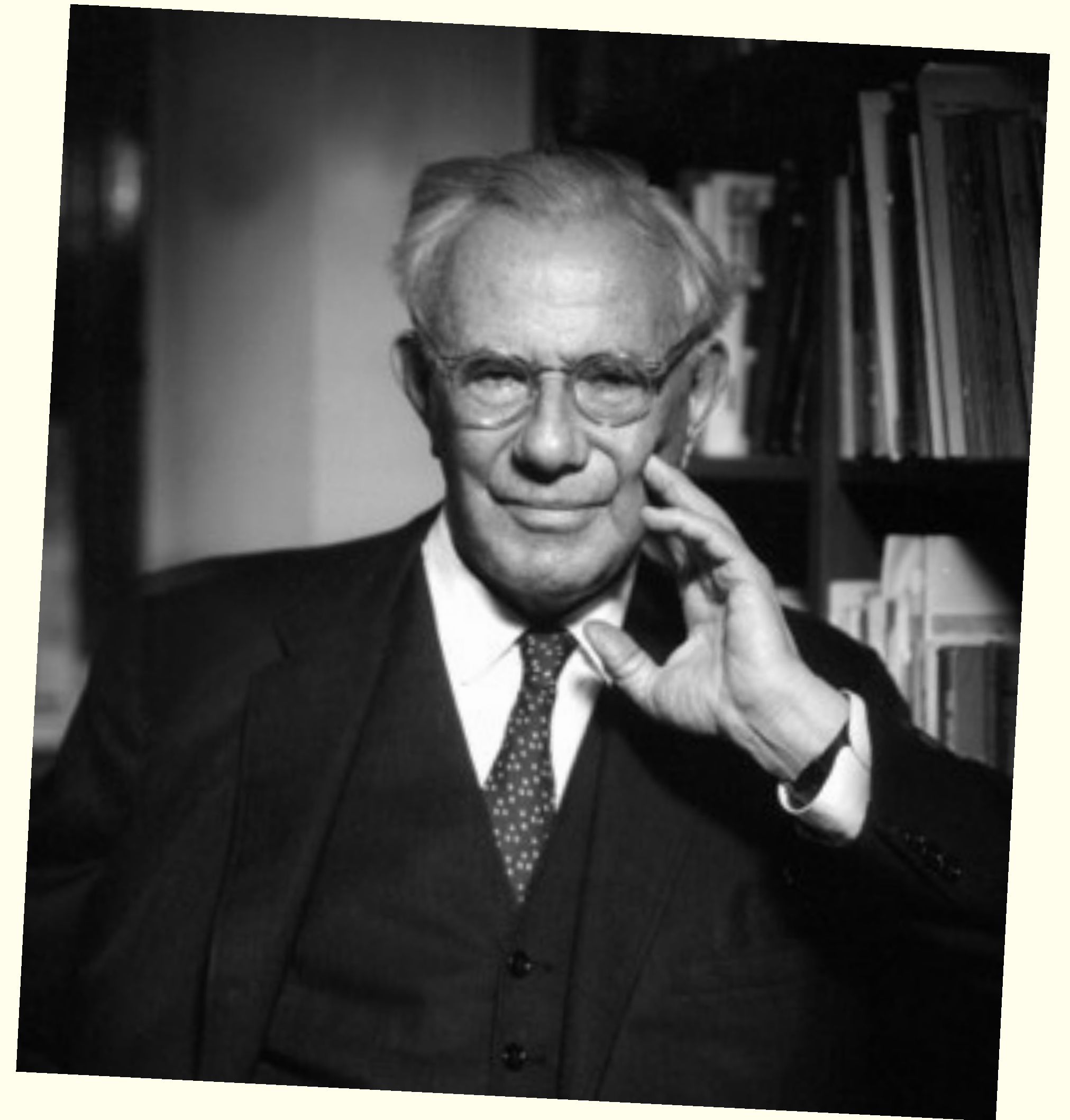




To whom do we pray?

If when we think about  
God, we are thinking about  
something that may or may  
not exist, we are not  
thinking about God...To  
argue that God exists is to  
deny God.

Paul Tillich





# BEYOND GOD



**I can't believe you are bothered  
what name we give you when we  
feebly attempt to label the Ineffable.**

**I imagine you have greater things  
on your divine mind, if mind is  
something even worth contemplating  
where you are concerned.**

**Yahweh, Allah, Krishna, Waheguru,  
God, or the Far Shore as Buddhists say,  
what can these words possibly mean?**

**You are the vivacious presence  
saturating all things with joy –**

**landscapes, oceans, and wild meadows,  
statuesque trees, croaking frogs, and  
a skylark's bubbling aria of delight  
...sunshine transfigured into sound**

**May we find contentment in knowing  
that you are indeed utterly ours  
and utterly everyone else's –**

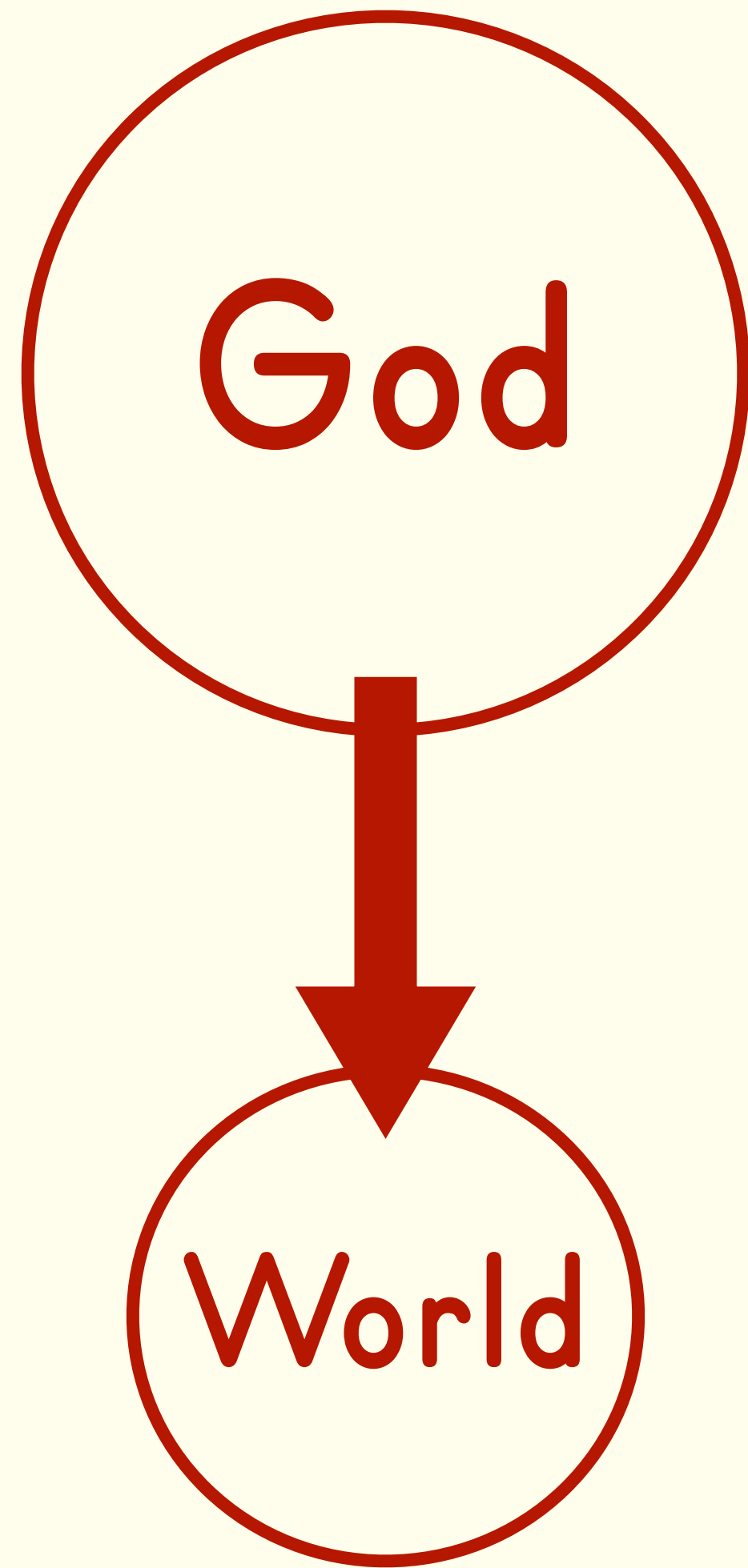
**the breath we share,  
the longing in our soul for goodness and love,  
the beauty and wisdom which all traditions  
aspire to express,**

**you are the Ultimate Concern of  
all our best desires and yearning,**

**you are God beyond 'God'!**



# Theism



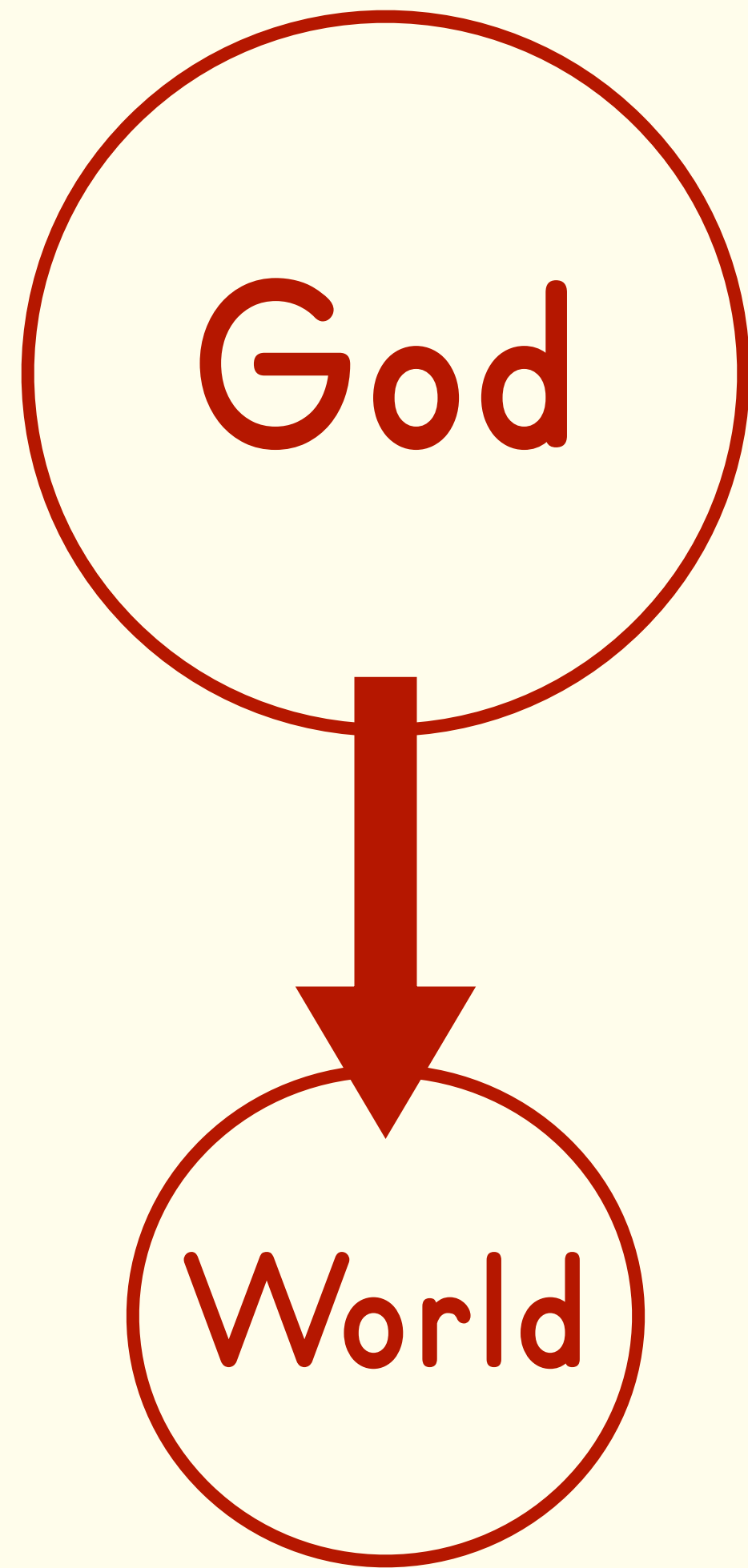
# Pantheism



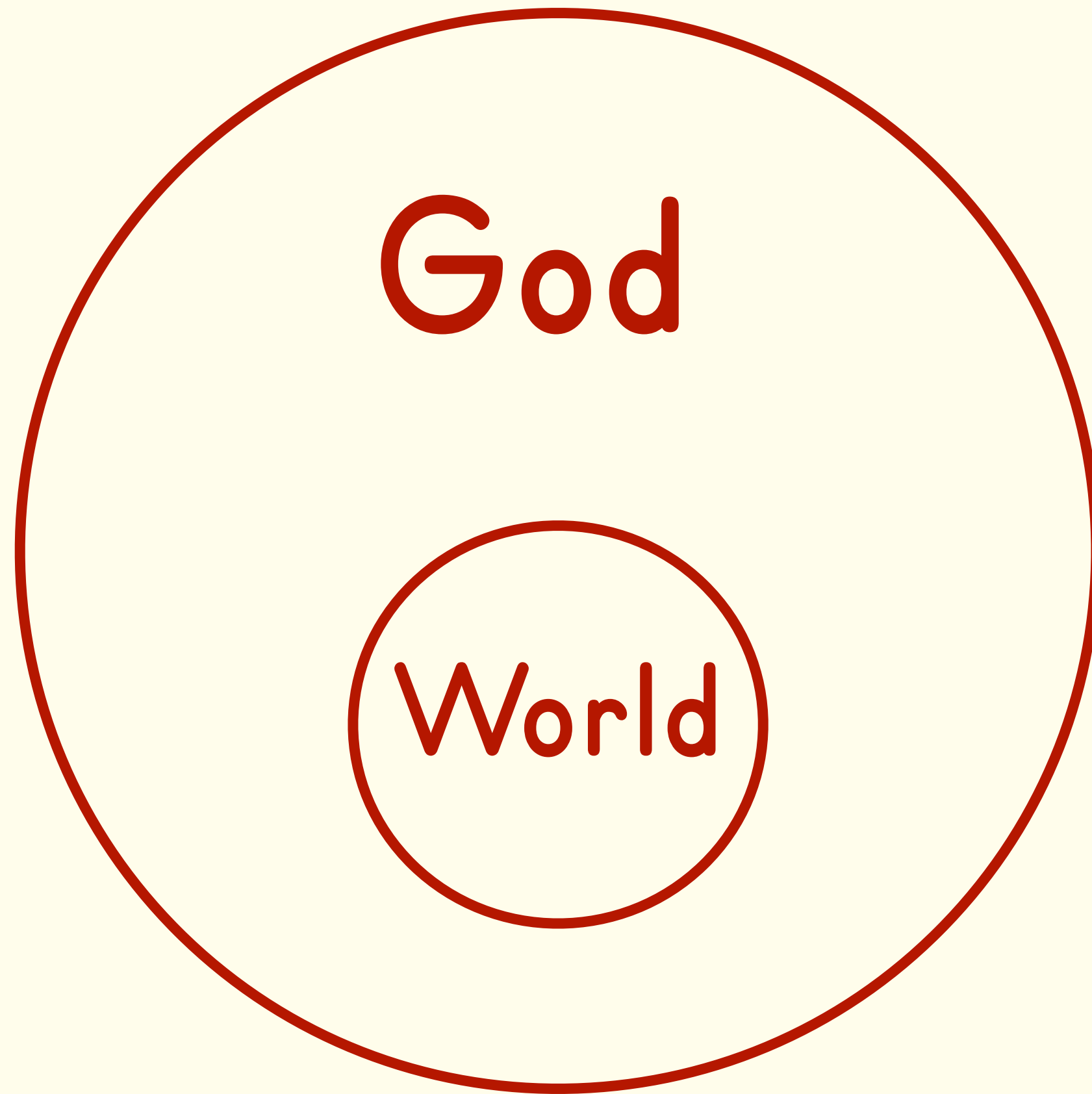
# Atheism



# Theism



# Panentheism



In God we live and move  
and have our being



# Constant Divine Interaction



In God we live and move and have our being

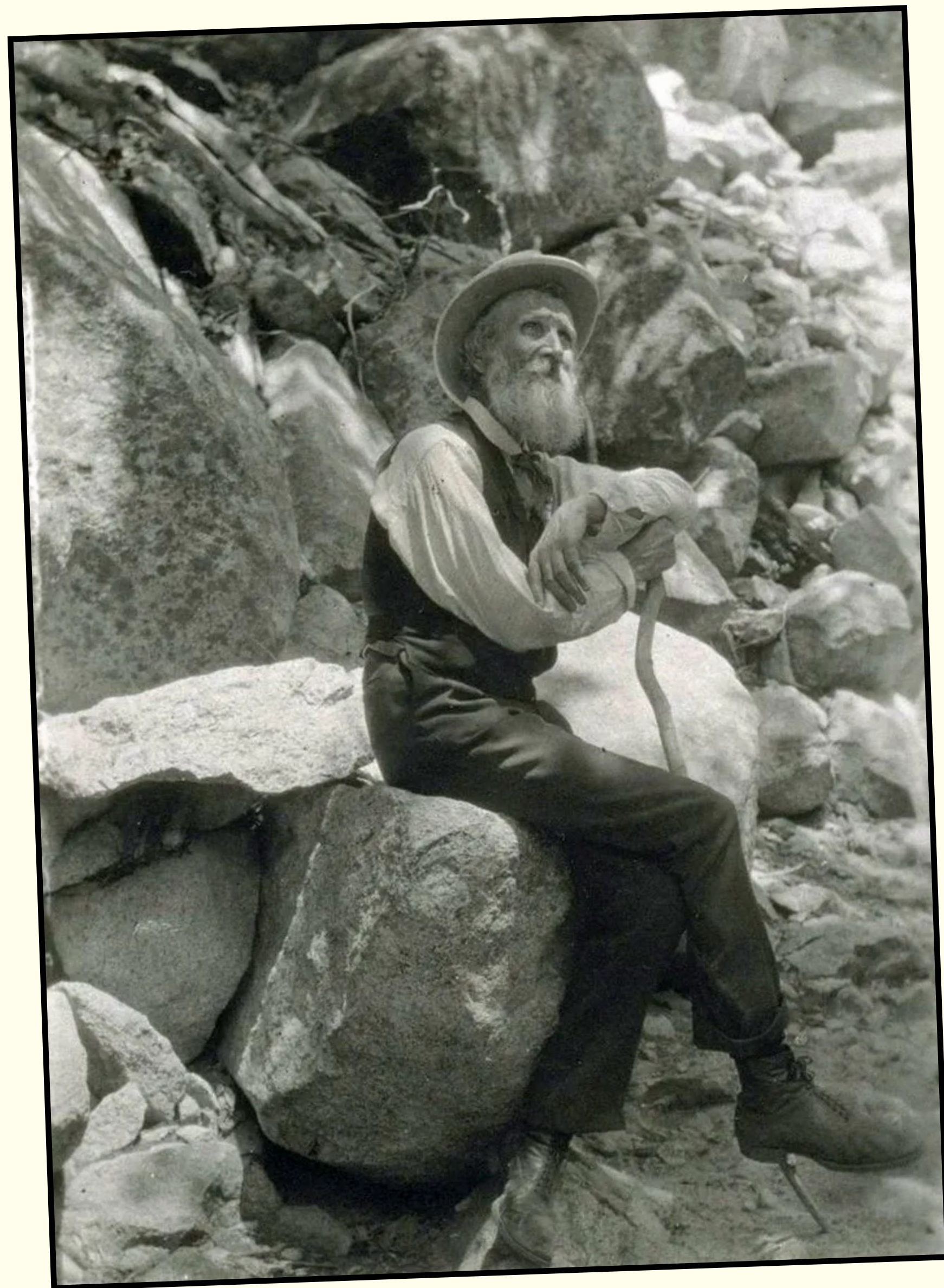


# Constant Divine Interaction



In God we live and move and have our being





As soon as we take one  
thing by itself, we find  
it hitched to everything  
else in the universe

John Muir





Everything in the  
universe is...

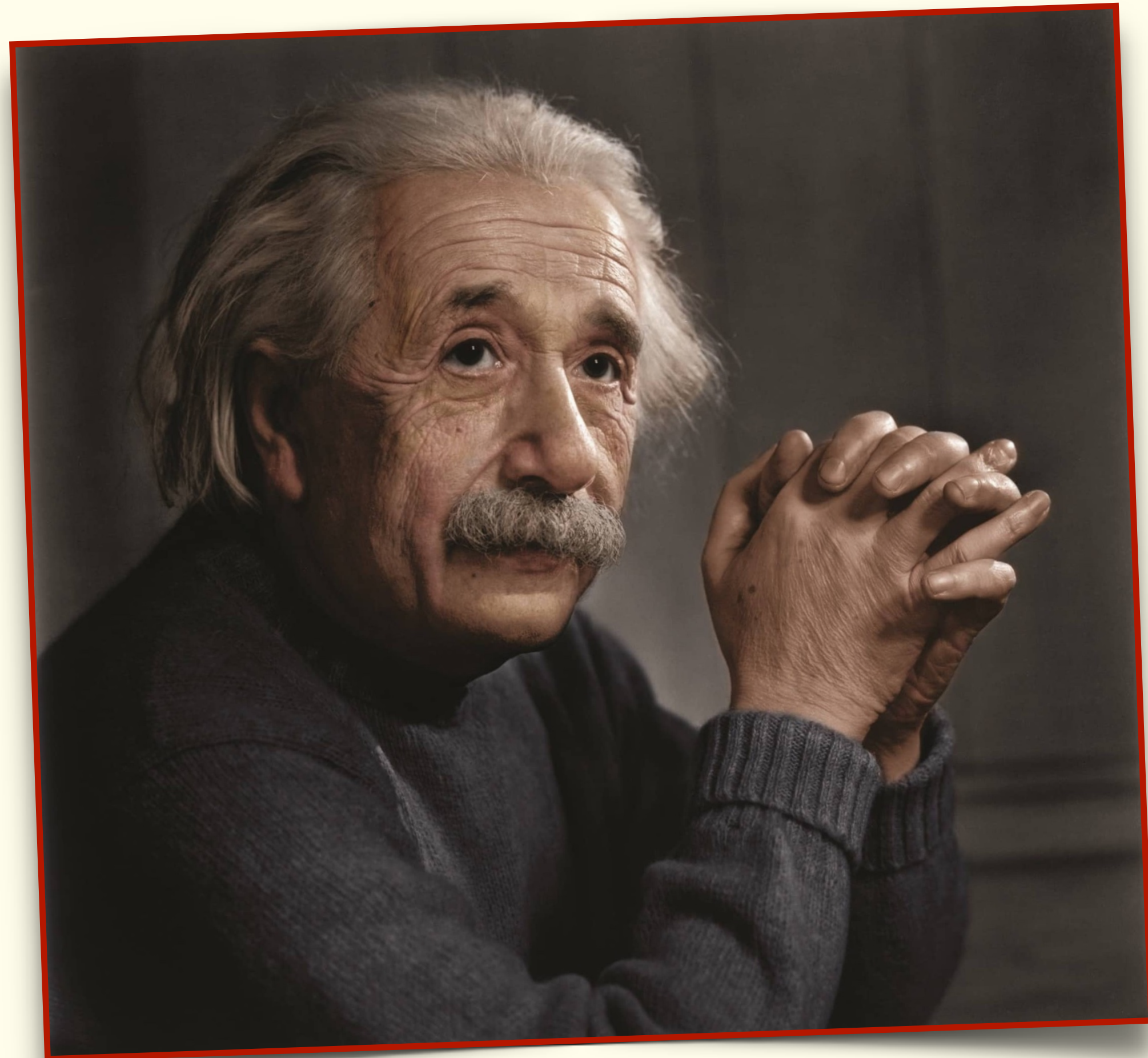
**ENTANGLED**

hitched

implicated

interconnected





The greatest illusion in  
this world is the illusion  
of separation.

Albert Einstein



# What is Your Real Name, God



Are you really bothered about  
being 'omni' this or 'omni' that, God?  
I doubt it.

You are surely far too busy  
checking on the turtle doves  
and tree sparrows,  
the nightingales, which have flagged  
by 90% since England won the World Cup.

Your name isn't really 'God',  
that's just a tag we gave you  
long before the Bible was a thing.

Your name is the sound of a baby breathing,  
the last gasp of Sandra  
who departed life too soon but  
managed to meet Rae,  
her only grandchild,  
before leaving,

You are the rustling in the cherry trees,  
the wind whistling around the eaves  
when we lie in bed feeling mortal.

You are the twinkle in the eye of  
the beggar who always says  
'Thank you' even when no one  
puts anything in the hat.

You are the freedom we sense  
on top of a hill looking over the fields,  
the bulb lighting up in our brain  
when a good idea dawns,  
the satisfaction of a job well done.

I don't care how many omnis  
you have to your name,  
how many creeds to celebrate  
your almightiness,

I prefer to know you,  
God of small things,  
in the seeming insignificant  
bits of life where I think  
you often hide,  
holding the world in  
your everlasting arms..



A large, glowing sphere composed of numerous thin, blue, interconnected lines and dots, resembling a complex network or a celestial body. The sphere is centered on the left side of the image. The background is a dark, deep blue space filled with many small, distant stars and a web of faint, light blue lines connecting various points, creating a sense of vastness and interconnectedness.

# PRAYER

Opening  
to divine possibility

Aligning  
with divine purpose

Channelling  
divine light & energy



# A Footnote to All Prayers

by C.S. Lewis



He whom I bow to only knows to whom I bow  
when I attempt the ineffable Name, murmuring Thou,  
and dream of Pheidian fancies and embrace in heart  
symbols (I know) which cannot be the thing Thou art.  
Thus always, taken at their word, all prayers blaspheme  
worshiping with frail images a folk-lore dream,  
and all men in their praying, self-deceived, address  
the coinage of their own unquiet thoughts, unless  
Thou in magnetic mercy to Thyself divert  
our arrows, aimed unskillfully, beyond desert;  
and all men are idolaters, crying unheard  
to a deaf idol, if Thou take them at their word.  
Take not, O Lord, our literal sense. Lord, in thy great  
unbroken speech our limping metaphor translate.



# SAY YES TO LIFE

I long to learn the healing practice  
of pausing and noticing,  
of turning aside,  
of not hurrying by on the other side  
but paying attention to the countless  
miracles of ordinariness.

I don't know what to believe about angels,  
but I do know the world is overflowing with  
presence, with numinous dispatches of  
hope and empowerment  
urging us again and again  
to say 'YES! YES!  
to this one  
beautiful,  
irrepressible life  
of which we are a part.

