

# Transcending the Ego through Higher Consciousness

Dr. Terri L. Storseth  
American University of Sharjah  
University City, Sharjah UAE

## ABSTRACT

In the modern era, one would think that the quality of communication would have helped to ease prejudice and misunderstanding amongst followers of prominent world religions. Sadly, however, current events reflect a reality that is a far cry from this idealistic vision. Whether it be destroying churches in Egypt or burning Christian mosques in Europe, we are presented a world of religious turmoil. However, amongst these world religions, visionary mystics have transcended the dogmatic disputes. These souls possess a deeper awareness in relation to the human ego. Their essential point is that our ordinary mental faculties, managed by our egos, are an obstinate aspect of our ignorance of God—of the Divine Consciousness inherent in us but obscured by our sense-of-self. Despite differences in time, geography, and theology, there are several key philosophies and practices agreed upon by the mystics in response to the burden of the ego. Through the elements of forgiveness, love, higher consciousness, austerity, and meditation the mystics have illuminated a path out of the state of separation from Divine Consciousness, helping us to escape our existential anguish. To conclude, this paper envisions that individuals of any faith might further develop their spiritual enlightenment by positioning these principles in the forefront of their daily consciousness. As a result, the continuous misunderstanding, egotism, and intolerance of today's world might be replaced instead with empathy, transcendence, and inclusion.

consciousness; egotism; mystics; transcendence; enlightenment; ignorance

## Terri Storseth:

Terri Storseth received a B.A. in Psychology and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington in Seattle, USA. Currently, she is an assistant professor of rhetoric and composition, and Head of the Department of Writing Studies at the American University of Sharjah. Her career as a professor has allowed her to live and work in Korea, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. She feels fortunate to teach in a multi-cultural environment, and particularly values interactions with her colleagues and students. Her research interests include innovative composition pedagogy, fostering audience-awareness in student writers, and comparative religion.