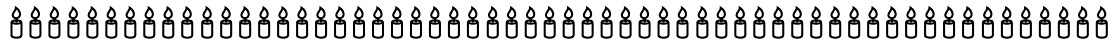




# NAMASTE



SANGHA OF THE SPIRIT ~ MAY 2009



## ANIMISM AND SENTIENT LIFE

By Brother Thomas Faulkenbury



By emitting chemical distress signals, some corn, cotton, and tobacco plants can summon tiny parasitic wasps to rescue them from hungry caterpillars like the tobacco budworm and corn earworm, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The premise of M. Night Shyamalan's movie, "The Happening", is that plants can communicate with each other by emitting chemical signals carried by the wind.

Such observations and presuppositions are no surprise nor unfamiliar to Native Americans, other aboriginal peoples, and devotees of Eastern Religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Shintoism. All have held views that Life is more elemental than mammalian.

Some anthropologists, including E.B. Tylor (the founder of modern anthro-

pology), posit that religion has its origin in animism, the belief that all reality is pervaded or inhabited by spirits or souls and that all of reality is, in some sense, animate.

The Sangha Precepts instruct us to "hold a right view of the true nature of reality." Advances in science, especially biology and quantum physics, compel us to reexamine our individual beliefs about what constitutes sentient being, that which is capable of perception, feeling, and response.



## RECOMMENDED READINGS

Universalism and Religions, Williams, Patricia A. (Editor), 2007, Quaker Universalist Fellowship, Columbia, MD, ISBN 978-1-878906-81-6

Jacob the Baker: Gentle Wisdom for a Complicated World, benShea, Noah, 1989, Villard Books, New York, NY, ISBN 0-394-57925-9



## EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Zazen/  
Centering Prayer, White River Dharma Center, 250 Lilly, Batesville, Arkansas



Mortal: What is a million years like to you?

God: Like one second.

Mortal: What is a million dollars like to you?

God: Like one penny.

Mortal: Can I have a penny?

God: Just a second.

*✉ Articles, news, letters to the editor, or comments may be sent to: [tfaulkenbury@earthlink.net](mailto:tfaulkenbury@earthlink.net).*