



Breathing the Mystery

Metaphors as Vehicles for Living Realisation

1. Heart of the Diamond

This essay did not begin as a plan. It began as a kind of pressure—subtle, persistent, irresistible. Not a thought, exactly, but a movement beneath thought. Something wanting to come into form.

Often my writing begins this way: a glimpse of something not yet defined, but drawing me toward it. In this case, it was an impulse to understand the deeper structure hinted at across a year's worth of poems—each one emerging from the mystery, each using metaphor and image to catch the uncatchable, to point to the ineffable, to make sense of how to live in the world as the mystery embodied as me.

As I look back—especially now, having just launched a new website and a new shape for sharing—I notice a quiet coherence behind the expressions. Each poem, each essay, is a facet reflecting the same diamond core.

So today, as I wrote, I began to realize that what was appearing on the page was not just a collection of ideas about the world, but a reflection of how the world itself unfolds: not as a fixed system, but as an ongoing genesis—arising moment by moment from a source we cannot grasp but can sometimes feel.

This essay, like the universe it gestures toward, is not the result of control or design. It is something I participate in. Something I meet as it emerges. It is both an exposition and a listening: a way of noticing the matrix that threads through my writing—and a way of exploring how that personal cosmology might resonate with, or diverge from, other great cosmologies humans have created in our long effort to understand our place in the magnificent, living cosmos we call home.

II. Metaphor as World-Maker

In *Once Upon an Awakening*, I explored the role of metaphor in the process of realisation—how metaphors can act as revelatory lenses, making visible dimensions of truth that are experiential in nature and lie beyond conceptual grasp. The right image, arriving at the right moment, can pierce the veil of ordinary perception and open us to the numinous. And as much as metaphors can reveal, they can also veil. Once fixated—once mistaken for the truth they gesture toward—metaphors can become a trap. The image solidifies into doctrine; the open invitation becomes a rule to be obeyed. What once opened can begin to close.





In that earlier piece, I focused on metaphors that illuminate the moment of awakening—glimpses of our true nature beyond form. In this essay, I turn toward a different but related question:

What happens after the glimpse?

How do we live from what we've seen?

Here, too, metaphor plays a role. It begins to structure the way we relate to the world, to others, to experience itself. For to live realisation is to relate—moment by moment—to a world of form from the vantage of the formless. And we do not do that without images. We need new myths, new maps, new ways of speaking that can hold both the vastness of awareness and the intimacy of a life. This is the realm of cosmology—not in the scientific sense, but in the mythic, symbolic, deeply personal sense. A cosmology is not a conclusion. It is a pattern we live by. A metaphor, or set of metaphors, that helps us stay in relationship with the mystery we cannot name.

III. A Cosmology in Pieces

The context for this personal cosmology is not theoretical, theological, or philosophical. It is the fruit of two years of writing—essays, poems, reflections—that emerged from a continual questioning, an ongoing curiosity. A meditation and a contemplation, rooted not in doctrine but in genuine interest:

How do I live the realisation of my true nature?

Not as an idea to grasp and file away, but as a way of being alive and responsive in this precise moment.

How do I act from the glimpse I was given—of my true nature as the empty yet radiant potential inherent in the unfolding of creation in every moment?

What is being revealed to me through the intimacy of my own experience?

From the beginning, I knew the writing came from somewhere deeper than the thinking mind. It felt like a gift, a hint of possibility pointing to something both ineffable and practical. Something liveable. It carried a thread—sometimes clear, sometimes hidden—of authenticity, integrity, and availability. The blog where I shared these pieces was called *Facets of the Diamond*, because that's how it felt: each expression a surface through which the same light shone. None complete. None claiming to explain or define, but each pointing toward something beyond itself. All of them carrying a trace of the source—of my being, yes, but also the being of creation itself. The Divine. Or simply, the Mystery.

I never set out to build a system or found a teaching. The writing felt more like a living guide—offered both as a reflection of an absolute truth being lived in a relative world, and as a kind of contract. An offering that relied on trust and surrender. I trusted that there was an inherent coherence, even when the expressions appeared to contradict one another. And perhaps especially when they did. There was no sense of conflict—only the joy of sensing the paradoxes of being and becoming, of emptiness and form, of stillness and motion, playing out in new ways through the writing.

Still, something stirred more recently. A subtle pull—not to define, but to integrate. To see beneath the words and hear the deeper music—the quiet harmonies of a cosmology still unfolding. To listen again to the threads that revealed themselves through the poems, the essays, the conversations on Facebook and Instagram. Not to collapse them into a unified truth—not a personal set of ten commandments—but to sense into a living pattern. A way the universe seems to move. And a way I am called to respond to it: as a unique expression of it, and as the whole of it too.

And so, I listened, not just to the writings themselves, but to what they were pointing to: not a scientific paper for peer review, but a living and lived understanding. A way of seeing and being that doesn't belong to me but moves through



me. Not a fixed structure, but a felt rhythm—an unfolding that arrives in pieces yet expresses a whole. What follows is not a doctrine or a map, but a sketch drawn from the intimacy of experience. A cosmology in motion.

IV. A Cosmology in Motion

I live inside a mystery that creates itself, moment by moment.

At the heart of everything is awareness—not something I do, but what makes all doing and being possible. It has no edges, no beginning, no end. It is not in space or time; rather, space and time appear within it.

Sometimes in meditation, I return to that ground. The great stillness. The great silence. A deep intimacy with the reservoir of everything. Here, infinity and eternity don't overwhelm—they reveal the essence of simplicity. Boundlessness doesn't mean vastness, but dimension-lessness. What arises is not abstraction, but the radiant presence of *just this*—singing with the preciousness of mystery. Here, unknowability is not a problem to be solved but a welcome embrace.

And from this stillness arises the play of form. A world, a body, a mind—waves rising from the ocean of awareness. These forms are fleeting, ever-changing, without fixed substance. And yet, within their impermanence, something utterly real shines through.

I experience myself as one such wave: a body with senses, a mind with thoughts, a soul with longing. My soul, if that word means anything, is the felt trace of that unnameable source moving uniquely through me. It is the echo of the whole in this particular, the place where limit and limitlessness touch.

This world is not made of things, but of relations—each moment a meeting, each form a co-arising, each thought a gesture of the whole to itself. What seems solid is only slow motion; what seems separate is only surface.

And yet I live here, inside this dance. I feel. I choose. I forget and remember. I suffer and awaken. The mystery doesn't bypass the human—it includes it, breathes it, even learns through it.

This return to the source is not apart from the world, but simultaneous with its flowering. The ten thousand things arise in glory. My breath is the breath of the universe. My heartbeat echoes the pulse of the universal heart. Breathing in clarity and wisdom, breathing out compassion and love.

So, I live with the paradox: I am awareness itself, and I am also this person, this voice, these hands. The ocean moves as this wave. The wave plays its part, not in defiance of its nature, but as its expression.

I do not claim to understand it. But I continue to listen. I can let the intelligence of the whole gently shape how I move. I can respond, not from separation, but from intimacy with all that is.

This is not a map, but a way of walking—open-eyed, heart-broken, quietly astonished.

V. The Function of Cosmology

Orientation

This essay emerged as a surprise – it wasn't planned or expected, yet it seemed to want to find its substance following on from the previous essay on the metaphors of awakening. I set out to live a question and that morphed into my



sense of a cosmology that has been quietly present beneath the emergence of my writing — a shape, a way of seeing and responding. A way of continually relating to what cannot be named.

In a time when much feels fragmented—language, meaning, even selfhood—it matters the stories that we tell ourselves, that we orient by. Cosmology, in this sense, is not a theory about the stars. It is the atmosphere we breathe, the texture through which we meet experience, the silent architecture behind our sense of coherence.

Most of us live by a cosmology, even if we've never named it as such. It's often invisible—absorbed through culture, family, or personal experience. But whether inherited, assembled, or discovered, it quietly shapes how we move through the world: what we trust, what we fear, what we think is possible.

A living cosmology shouldn't promise certainty but reveal the mystery. It doesn't tell us what to do but tempts us forward to see what might be round the next corner. It is not a map that claims to chart the territory, but one that illuminates the next step and helps us walk with more grace, more awareness of where we are placing our feet.

It helps us relate to the unfolding—both the immensity of it, and the intimacy. It reminds us that we are always in dialogue with something greater than ourselves, even when we don't know what to call it.

What I've written here, and in my poems and essays, is not a belief system. It allows the questing mind to rest, freeing the curious mind to explore the ever-new territory. From that place of receptivity, I don't need answers. I can move from trust. I can listen. I can respond.

Practice

If cosmology is the shape of how I experience the world, then practice is how I move within it. Not an exercise to be done once or twice a day, but a living, conscious engagement with life itself.

This is where the real work happens—not in crafting metaphysical statements, but in the quiet decisions of attention. Where do I place it? What do I listen to? How do I respond, moment by moment, in a world that is both fleeting and sacred?

Living from this cosmology is not about adopting a code. It's about aligning with the source of being as it shows up in this body, this mind, this breath. It's about trusting that awareness is not elsewhere, but right here as my essential self—and letting that trust shape how I speak, how I walk, how I meet the other. Not in a mechanical way, but from freedom and sensitivity.

In this light, ethics is not rule-following but attunement. What would clarity do here? What does compassion ask now? When I act from the mystery rather than the controlling self, something shifts—not always easily, but with integrity. It's not about getting it right, but about moving in resonance with the deeper music.

Speech, too, becomes a practice—not just what I say, but where I speak from. Am I echoing patterns of fear, or performing certainty? Or am I letting silence shape my words—allowing deep listening to open unforeseen possibilities, and letting creativity and even humour at times, permeate the language of response?

And embodiment—perhaps the most mysterious of all. To live as awareness in form is to honour the body not as a limitation, but as a portal, a threshold, a place of exchange and interaction. Its boundaries and needs, its rhythms and vulnerabilities, are not obstacles but invitations. The body doesn't block the light—it receives and transmits it.



There is a quiet clarity that comes with recognising that we cannot escape this life—there is no on-off switch for awareness. We are in the stream, and we do not leave until the end (and maybe not even then—but that is conjecture). Wherever we go, we go along too. It's tempting to imagine transcendence as an exit, but more often, it is a deeper entry—a fuller commitment to presence, to form, to love. The soul doesn't seek escape. It seeks intimacy. The body doesn't block the path. It *is* the path.

Practice, then, becomes less about getting somewhere, and more about showing up completely for what's already here.

The Soul in Relation

If soul is the interface between the unnameable and the named, then it is by nature relational. It is not a separate entity tucked inside a person, but a field of responsiveness—where the whole meets itself in the particular. Soul is the medium of exchange—it speaks both the language of the divine and the language of the soil

In this cosmology, the soul is not a possession but a movement. A shape taken by the infinite as it enters form. It carries the texture of uniqueness without breaking the thread of unity. And it allows us to meet each other—not as roles, ideas, or projections, but as luminous thresholds. Each soul a doorway into the mystery, refracted in its own way.

This understanding gives rise to a natural ethic of compassion—not as a moral obligation, but as a response to the felt reality that each being is a face of the same source. When I remember this, love becomes less sentimental and more natural. I care because we are made of the same breath. I listen because your presence calls something forward in me that I cannot reach alone.

Relationality becomes the medium through which the formless continues to form itself. My awakening doesn't separate me from the world—it entangles me more deeply with it. It roots me in the recognition that everything I touch is also touching me. That intimacy is the felt expression of integral connectedness

In this light, the soul is not a static identity but an ever-changing interface through which the universe remembers itself in motion. It is how the mystery makes contact with the world—not through abstraction, but through relationship. Through presence. Through response.

In this light, unclaimed experience becomes a pure gesture—the ineffable and the manifest meeting in motion, for no purpose but presence itself.

Emanations

Though my cosmology begins in formless awareness, it does not exclude form—it embraces it. I see the cosmos as a living entity—a wholeness in constant, subtle dialogue with my smallness, responding to my longing with its own invitation back to belonging. In this living conversation, certain forms become more than metaphor. They become relational presences. I meet them as gods—not as supreme beings above the world, but as emanations of the mystery, thresholds of encounter.

Ganesh, for instance, is not a belief for me, but a felt companion. He is a recognisable face of the ineffable, a catalyst for dialogue with the divine. He embodies a kind of intelligence—earthly, humorous, compassionate yet challenging—



that speaks directly to something in me. I do not need to justify his presence metaphysically. I meet him in the field of relationship, and that is enough.

These gods carry archetypal qualities that often correspond to particular stages of inner unfolding—obstacle-breaking, dissolution, transformation, union. They are not static figures to be worshipped, but dynamic invitations to engage more deeply. They remind me that the formless mystery can take form—not just once, but again and again, in ways that are intimate, embodied, and real.

The Paradox That Frees

We often treat paradox as a philosophical dilemma—something to untangle, resolve, or bypass. But in this cosmology, paradox is the very texture of reality. It is the echo of the infinite sounding through finite form. *Mystery lives in paradox.*

To live this paradox is to hold both truths at once: that I am the pristine awareness itself, without boundary, and I am this fleeting, fallible body with a name and a history. That the world is empty of inherent substance, and yet it is radiant with presence. That I am a wave, rising and falling—and I am also the ocean from which I rise.

It is not comfortable. It is not neat. Nothing is clear-cut but reveals itself as one takes the next step. Yet it is inherently freeing. Because once I stop trying to resolve paradox, I can begin to participate in it. I can move as it moves: flexibly, humbly, quietly alive.

This is the paradox that frees—not by offering escape, but by removing the need for one. It invites me to live in trust, to act without needing certainty, to speak without closing the question.

And perhaps this is what a cosmology is, at its most essential: not a belief or a blueprint, but a posture. A way of bowing to the unknown, not as something to conquer, but as something to love.

Patterns

Having followed the threads of this cosmology as they wove themselves through practice, relationship, and paradox, I began to sense that this is a journey many others have undertaken—part of humanity's eternal quest to find its place within the mystery of creation, awake to both the numinous and the manifest.

Perhaps every genuine cosmology, no matter how culturally shaped or symbolically distinct, begins from the same human ache: to make sense of this strange marriage of infinity and form.

This isn't a comparative study. It is a listening. A gentle sensing of how the mystery has spoken in many voices, and how the ache to belong—cosmically, intimately—has found its way into symbols, stories, and silences.

VI. Touchpoints with Other Cosmologies

On Resonance and Respect

Most of us live within a cosmology, even if we don't name it that way. It may not be inherited from a formal religion or articulated through philosophy, but it's there—quietly shaping how we move through the world. It determines what we trust, what we fear, what we believe to be real.



Sometimes our cosmology is passed down through family or culture—embedded in language, values, even the stories we tell ourselves about who we are. Sometimes it arises from direct experience: a moment of grief, a sense of wonder, a quiet intuition that changes everything. Often, it's a patchwork—a personal weave of what we've been told, what we've discarded, and what we've come to know in our bones.

This essay has traced a cosmology that emerged through my own lived questioning. And yet, I know I am not alone. Across time and culture, humans have been weaving cosmologies—frames through which to encounter the mystery, the world, and our place within it.

At this point in the writing, I thought it might be helpful to look for resonances between my emerging cosmology and other systems of thought—those that have endured across time as living frameworks for orienting the human being in relation to mystery, meaning, and integrity.

But it didn't take long to realise that this would do them a disservice. These are not abstract systems to be mined for insights or reduced to poetic sound bites. They are deep streams of practice and perception, developed through centuries of devotion, contemplation, and lived transmission.

To try and distil their essence into a paragraph or two—as a way of saying “look, this part matches what I've seen”—would risk boxing the infinite into something conceptual, and give the illusion of understanding where only immersion and surrender can really open the door.

To honour them, I won't attempt to summarise or extract. I'll simply name them—as streams of wisdom that have at times touched my path and sparked my interest. If this essay has stirred something in you, these traditions might offer deeper entry points of their own. They are not mirrors of my view, but they speak from the same mystery, each in their own profound and particular way.

Traditions and voices that have most resonated with me include:

- Dzogchen (Tibetan Buddhism)
- Advaita Vedanta
- Shaivism (especially Kashmir nondualism)
- Kabbalah
- Sufism
- Christian mysticism
- Contemporary integrative thinkers such as Iain McGilchrist

VII. A New Beginning

This essay emerges at a moment of new beginnings. Not just in the shape of what I write, but in the way I offer it to the world, through this new website. Until now, much of my expression has taken the form of distilled, concentrated pieces posted on a blog—poetic interjections that arrive like shots of clarity or wonder, momentary glimpses behind the veil.

This new website offers something different. Slower. More spacious. A deepening into the long-form, contemplative voice that has been quietly moving beneath my work for some time. It's a voice that doesn't rush to conclusion, but



lingers—curious, alert, receptive. And there will always be space for those momentary bursts of insight that require the poetic voice to pierce the conceptual mind and touch the heart and the soul.

And this shift is not just creative, but personal. As I step away from the structures of formal work and into a life shaped less by a structured diary than by availability, a new landscape opens. One of unhurried attention. Of listening without needing to grasp. Of walking with the mystery, not toward a destination, but in ongoing relation.

If this essay has spoken to something in you, I hope you'll accompany me as the path unfolds wherever it decides to explore.

To borrow a final metaphor, in the spirit of this essay: the river that once coursed through a narrow canyon has now reached the delta—spreading into wide, meandering channels, with no single track to follow. It moves toward the sea not with urgency, but with surrender.

There is no finality—only the quiet dissolving into the ocean of being.

Back to <https://www.petermitchell.life/the-heart-of-the-diamond>