

**ART OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT
REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS
MONTH ONE: HERITAGE**



A. FAITH TRADITION PERSPECTIVE “Our Hebrew Roots” CD, Richard Groves

1. The greatest prayer in the Hebrew tradition is the *Shema*, which means: “Listen!” The Rule of St. Benedict 7th c also begins with the word: *Ascolta*, “Listen!” Both traditions imply that this kind of holy listening must be done in community as deep discernment is rarely done alone.
Sacred Question: *Who has assisted me in hearing the whisper of the Divine in my life? Whom have I assisted?*
2. “You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were once a stranger...” *from the Torah.*
Sacred Question: *Who is the stranger within you? How do you love this stranger?*
3. Israel is the “One who wrestled with God and won.”
Sacred Question: *Have I ever ‘wrestled’ with God? Have I ever won?*
4. In Hebrew, *Kavvanah* means “right intention”.
Sacred Question: *What difference does the intention make with which I act? Name a time when I acted with the “right intention”? and when I didn’t? What were the consequences?*
5. Why does a Jew often answer a question with another question? Why not?
Sacred Question: *Am I willing to be “in the question”? How can I stand hold the tension of unknowing? Where is the sacred gap of unknowing in my life?*

B. FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION Care of Mind, Care of Spirit, Gerald May, chap. 1

1. “How much can spiritual guidance really be taught? Is it not in fact a *charism*, a gift of the Spirit?” p. 5
 - *Why are you in this Anamcara Apprenticeship Track?*
 - *What gifts to you bring to this work? What does the notion of ‘charism’ say to you?*
 - *Have people come to you asking for ‘spiritual direction’?*
2. “There are many similarities between spiritual direction and psychotherapy but they are fundamentally different undertakings... it is very tempting to blur these differences in the name of integration, but to do so is to risk psychologizing spiritual direction...” p. 14
 - *Have you personally experienced psychotherapy and spiritual direction... what kind of differences/similarities did you encounter?*
 - *How do May’s concerns about blurring the lines speak to you?*
 - *What is an example of an issue that you would bring to therapy... to spiritual direction?*
3. “This question is deceptively simple to ask and exquisitely difficult to answer: Am I truly seeking to do Thy will... or mine?” p. 20

- *May says that the relationship between personal and divine will demands fierce attention. Name a serious issue in your life that either has or currently reflects the tension between these relationships.*

C. DISCERNMENT-IN-PRACTICE “Divine Desiring in Me...” CD, Jack Kennedy

1. “The number one rule for spiritual directors... if you are talking too much, there will be no room for Spirit...”
 - *How will this ‘rule’ challenge you?*
 - *What would it be like to follow this advice: ‘When I think I know, just listen...’*
2. “Of all the stuff that’s going on in my life, how do I know what is ‘of God’ and what isn’t?”
 - How have you tried to discern this in the past?
 - How would you try to help another sort this out?
3. “My dream draws me into the mystery of God’s dream...”
 - *How do you react to the invitation to ‘trust your own affecting’?*
 - *Reflect on an example of the difference between your strongest and deepest desires?*

FINAL REFLECTION EXERCISE

Using the Stepping Stone exercise, trace back at least seven ‘steps’ that you can identify which have led you to choosing the *Art of Spiritual Discernment* track?

