

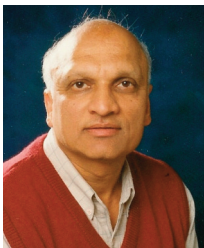
# Tantra Conference

“Crossing the bar; beyond taboo and shame”

conducted by **Mela Interfaith Group at the Janssen Spirituality Centre**

## “Crossing the bar; beyond taboo and shame”

We are so often constricted by taboos that have no real substance to them, by the need to conform, by the need to 'look right' and say the right things that we suppress the best elements in our character, the finest contribution that we can really make. We live in a world of categories - little boxes. We conform for fear of being rejected. So we experience shame and distress. The tantric path seeks to free people from such inhibitions and to let them become what they really are.



**Dr. Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat**, comes from Maharashtra State in India and migrated to Australia in 1965. He holds doctorate degrees in Organic Chemistry (Monash University and in Indology (La Trobe University). Dr. Bapat retired as a Senior Lecturer in Organic Chemistry from the School of Chemistry, Monash University, Melbourne, in 1998. Since then, has been an 'Adjunct Research Fellow' at the Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. His current research interests are Indology, Hinduism, Goddess Cults and Tantrism, Jainism, Koli fisher community of Mumbai and Sociology of Religion. He has published several research papers on temple priests, the Koli Fisher community and goddess cults in India. He has also contributed to encyclopaedias of anthropology, sociology and culture. He is co-editor of book, **The Iconic Female: Goddesses of India, Nepal and Tibet** (Monash University Press, 2008 ) and co-author of a recent book, **The Indian Diaspora: 150 Years of Hindus and Sikhs in Australia** (D.K. Printworld, 2015). Another edited book, 'Conceiving the Goddess', is currently in print (Monash Printing Press) and is expected to be published in December 2016. Dr. Bapat started working as a Hindu community priest in 1978 and has since performed over 100 official weddings and 900 rituals. For his work in education and for the Indian community, Dr. Bapat was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2011.



**Herman Roborgh** spent many years as a Christian missionary in Indonesia and Pakistan engaged in pastoral work among the Christian community. While living in these two Muslim countries, he witnessed at first hand the deep relationship that Muslims have with God and with the Prophet Muhammad. He realised that Christians and Muslims needed to develop a more respectful attitude towards one another's faith tradition. So he began to deepen his understanding of Islam by studying the languages of Urdu and Arabic. After writing a thesis on a Pakistani scholar who had published an original approach to the interpretation of the Qur'an, Herman completed a PhD in Islamic studies at Aligarh Muslim University in India. Subsequently, Herman returned to Australia where he has been doing further research into ways of interpreting the Qur'an. His interest is to find ways of understanding Islam that can be understood and accepted by people living in a secular society like Australia.

# Janssen Spirituality Centre

## One Day Tantra Conference - conducted by Mela Interfaith Group

Due to many requests after a very successful Tantra Conference last November, we are conducting some one-day conferences leading up to a full Conference on 10-11 December 2016. The theme of our next one-day conference on 13 August 2016 is:

### “Crossing the bar; beyond taboo and shame”

It is part of a continuing exploration of Tantra and it's relevance to spiritual freedom.

**Date:** 13 August 2016

**Venue:** Janssen Spirituality Centre, 22 Woodvale Road Boronia Vic, 3155

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08.30am registration

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09.00am opening and welcome

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09.15am presentation by **Dr. Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat** Not So Easy to Cross the Bar. Some Elements of Brahminic Control in Hindu Society. Guilt, honour, shame and taboo are used as four major constraints a society places on its members in order to maintain its own structure and control the behaviour of the populace. Religion plays a major part in this control mechanism. In this paper, I shall discuss some elements of the above constraints as they appear in Hindu thought and the methods used by society leaders and Brahmins in particular to ascertain that societal norms are observed. In the end, I argue that it is only by crossing these formidable barriers that some have achieved freedom and personal growth.

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10.15am morning tea.

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10.45am workshop on material supplied by **Dr. Jayant**

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11.45am discussion on workshop outcome

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12.30pm lunch (vegetarian)

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1.30pm presentation by **Dr. Herman Roborgh**. Every religion can become a control mechanism if misinterpreted. Islam intends to help Muslims “cross the bar” from taboo and shame to truth and integrity. Muslims accomplish this by moving beyond false images of God and the self through a profound spiritual transformation. A person can recover his or her primordial nature (fitrah) by following the straight path indicated by the Qur’an and the Sunna of the Prophet. This paper describes the way the Qur’an, the Hadith and the Shari’ah bring a person to such a spiritual transformation. In short, the three ways to “cross the bar” from taboo and shame towards truth and integrity are the following:

1. Moving beyond false images of God through the practice of remembrance (dhikr);
  2. Annihilation of the false self (fana) by following the teaching of the Prophet (hadith);
  3. Acquiring true knowledge (ma’rifah) by moving beyond the ascetic observance of Shari’ah.
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2.30pm workshop on material supplied by **Herman**

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3.30pm afternoon tea

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4.00pm discussion on workshop outcome

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4.45pm summary

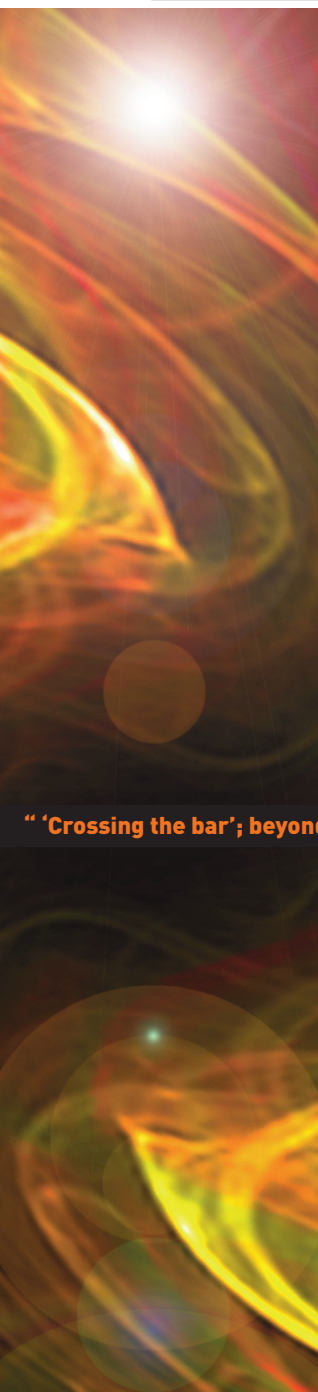
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5.00pm close.

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Cost: \$45.

RSVP: jeandupuche@gmail.com by **31 July 2016** Phone: 0417 560 087 please inform dietary requirements



“ ‘Crossing the bar’; beyond taboo and shame.”