

FUNDAMENTALS OF MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

(Consisting of Articles from *The Mystic's Vision*
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Fundamentals of Existence

It seems to me that, with the current worldwide emphasis on education aimed at scientific and technological progress, there has been a corresponding decline in education focused on obtaining a broad philosophical understanding of the fundamentals of the reality in which we live. Religion was once the major source for our understanding of these fundamentals, but it is much less reliably so in our current age. Let us look back, then, to a pre-scientific age, in search of what were considered to be the fundamentals of existence as taught by the ancients:

I.

In India's most ancient scripture, the *Vedas*, one of the words for God, the Divine Consciousness, was *Purusha*, a masculine noun, meaning "the Person," or "the universal Self". That Divine Consciousness (*Purusha*) was said to have produced the universe of time and space through the power of Its Creative Energy, or *Prakrti*, a feminine noun. Later, in the 8th or 9th century B.C.E., a sage named Kapila adopted this terminology exclusively, and his theology of *Purusha* and *Prakrti* became known as *Samkhya*, which, like *Veda*, simply means "knowledge". Then, sometime around the 5th century B.C.E., another sage, by the name of Vyasa, wrote an epic story called the *Mahabharata*, within which was embedded a dialogue between the Avatar, Krishna, and his charioteer, Arjuna, that took place on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. That dialogue is famously known as the *Bhagavad Gita*, or "the Song of God". In this spiritual parable, Vyasa, adopting Kapila's by now well-known *Samkhya* terminology, explains, through Krishna, that *Purusha* is the Divine Lord, and *Prakrti* is His Creative Energy.

Prakrti is sometimes defined as "Nature" or "Matter", but *Prakrti* is more precisely God's Creative Energy, from which, at the beginning of a universal cycle, the material universe, or nature, originates and evolves, and to which, at the end of each universal cycle, the universe returns. *Prakrti*, therefore, is essentially the totality of the Divine Light that constitutes 'the Great Radiance' of which and by which the universe is formed, and into which it is once again subsumed. So,

according to the *Bhagavad Gita*, these two, *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, the Divine Consciousness and Its Creative Energy, are the fundamentals of the reality in which we live. Initially, and ultimately as well, there is only *Purusha*; there is only God, since *Prakrti* is produced by, exists in, and belongs to *Purusha*. It is *His* Creative Energy! *Prakrti* is never really distinct from *Purusha*; it only appears to be—as it provides the apparent distinction between Matter (*Prakrti*) and Spirit (*Purusha*), constituting respectively one's body and soul, each of which possesses a distinct destiny—one briefly in time, the other in eternity.

Prakrti is eternally within *Purusha* and is thereby suffused with the Divine Consciousness of *Purusha*. *Prakrti* is enveloped in and pervaded by the Divine Consciousness, and is never distinct from or isolated from *Purusha*, but is always contained within It. So, while the material universe, produced by and consisting of *Prakrti*, is a transient phenomenon, of merely temporary duration, *Prakrti*, the Creative Energy of *Purusha*, is itself eternal.

II.

These two fundamentals, the Divine Consciousness and Its Creative Energy, appear in other cultures as well, such as the Chinese Taoist culture, where the Divine Consciousness and Its Creative Energy, known in India as *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, are referred to as *Tao* and *Teh* by the great originator of the Taoist tradition, Lao Tze, who lived in the 6th century B.C.E.:

"Before heaven and earth existed, there was something unformed, silent, alone, unchanging, constant and eternal; It could be called 'the Source of the Universe.' I do not know Its name and simply call It "Tao." ... That Nameless (*Tao*) is the Father of heaven and earth; that which is named (*Teh*) is the Mother of all things."¹

Lao's compatriot and fellow Taoist, Chuang Tze, who lived in the 3rd century B.C.E., elaborated on Lao Tze's words:

"In the beginning, even nothing did not exist. There was only the *Tao*. Then something unnamed which did not yet have form came into existence from the *Tao*. This is *Teh* (the Creative Energy), from which all the world came into being. ... It is in this way that *Teh* created all forms."²

"The *Tao* is the source of the activity of universal manifestation, but It is not this activity. It is the Author of causes and effects, but It is not

the causes and effects. It is the Author of universal manifestation and dissolution, but It is not the manifestation or dissolution. Everything proceeds from It and is governed by It; It is in all things, but is not identical with things, for It is neither divided nor limited. ³

"*Tao* is invisible, hard to hold, and difficult to describe. However, I will outline It for you: The visible world is born of the Invisible; the world of forms is born of the Formless. The creative Energy (*Teh*) is born from *Tao*, and all life forms are born of this creative Energy; thus, all creation evolves into various forms.

"...Life springs into existence without a visible source and [at the end of a cycle] is reabsorbed into that Infinite. The world exists in and on the infinite Void; how it comes into being, is sustained and once again is dissolved, cannot be seen. It is fathomless, like the Sea. Wondrously, the cycle of world-manifestation begins again after every completion. The *Tao* sustains all creation, but It is never exhausted. ..." ⁴

So, as we can see, the great mystics of previous centuries have described the fundamentals of existence in ways very similar to our current view. This is because, throughout the centuries, the (mystical) experience wherein these fundamentals of reality are revealed in interior vision is consistently the same for all who experience it.

What the author of the *Bhagavad Gita* saw, the Buddha and Jesus saw, and I also have seen. What Lao Tze and Chuang Tze saw, Heraclitus, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart also saw, and I have also seen. In fact, the knowledge of the fundamentals of existence remains the same for all who have experienced this revealed vision. There is one Divine Consciousness who manifests this universe by the emanation of a Creative Energy produced from Itself. This magnificent world of ours, including our own conscious selves, is made of that one Divine Consciousness and Its Divine Energy; and each of us, by searching within ourselves, is capable of knowing that Divine Source who constitutes our fundamental reality, and is truly our own eternally blissful and undying Self.

III.

In today's world, however, *Purusha* and *Prakrti* are seldom mentioned; these two are more likely to be referred to as "God, the Father" and "Mother Nature". But

these two complementary aspects of Divinity—an eternal Mind and Its Creative Power—are not recognized by the scientific community. The world of science *does* recognize the existence of an Energy that manifested as "the Big Bang" some fourteen billion years ago, and which constitutes our current physical universe, but that Energy is not referred to as *Prakrti*, nor is it seen as having its source in the Divine Mind, or *Purusha*. The Fundamentals of Existence, as experienced in the mystical vision of a few individuals scattered throughout time, carries little weight in the science-oriented world of today.

Today, science holds the floor, and contemporary scientific thought does not allow for the existence of an eternal (ever-existent) Consciousness that precedes, emanates, and pervades the natural (phenomenal) universe. Such a scenario is precluded by the very nature of "science," which, by definition, is confined solely to empirically demonstrable evidence. An eternal supernatural Mind that breathes forth the mass/energy that constitutes the natural universe clearly has no place in such an empirical discipline. In their earnest desire to know with certainty, scientists have seen fit to outlaw empirically undemonstrable truth, even though that truth has been experienced in mystical vision for thousands of years. It appears that, instead of being led by the vision of our seers, today we are led by the vision of our technicians. Is it any wonder that our civilization seems to be descending into the darkness of ignorance?

But hold the phone! The great majority of the people of our civilization care little for the speculations of science; even today, the majority of the people continue to rely strongly upon the teachings of their spiritual seers and hold intuitively to confidence in the truth that this world in which we live is created and permeated by God. The strength that each person draws upon in life is invariably the strength of his or her inner Spirit; it is the strength of our divine souls, placed in our hearts by God. And though, in our darkest hours, the world seems just as terrible as it is painted by its most cynical detractors, we discover again and again that the divine Lord who placed us here in this verdant garden lives always in our hearts and reveals His great goodness and compassion in those very moments that He seems most absent. Without fail, He rises from our own hearts to save the day, to right the wrong, to prove the truth of His undying presence. So, never fear. All is well. His mercy still rules. His majesty still reigns. His love still shines within our hearts and throughout the land. And, as always, the lowering darkness will be averted; the Sun will shine again. Praise God.

NOTES:

1. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 25.
2. Chuang Tze, Ch. 12
3. Chuang Tze, Ch. 8
4. Chuang Tze, 22.

The Metaphysics of Duality

If we think carefully and accurately, we must come to the conclusion that God constitutes everything that exists. That being understood, it must also be understood that *He exists in two different modes or aspects*: He is the ultimate reality, the divine Mind, the one conscious Spirit containing all—formless, invisible, and eternal, who exists as the conscious Self within all of us; *and* He is *also* the Creator who periodically projects His own Light-Energy that becomes the material particles that form the substance of the phenomenal universe in which we live.

So, we have an apparent duality within the nondual Reality: it is a duality between the one Spirit and Its Creative Power, between God and the world-substance, between Spirit and Matter. This apparent duality of Spirit and Matter is reiterated in the perceived duality of our own body and soul; but we must remember that both of these dualities are *apparent* only. God is both the eternal Soul and the transient body, both the invisible Spirit and the 'material' universe. He exists in two different modes; He has two different aspects: He is the transcendent and eternal Spirit, the absolute Ground that constitutes our conscious Self; *and* He is *also* the projected Light-Energy projected fourteen billion years ago that gives form and 'material' substance to our world. So, while these two modes or aspects exist separately and independently, they are *both* God, they are both eternal. The material world with all its illusory forms is indeed transient: it has a beginning and an end; but the Light-Energy of which it is constituted is nonetheless eternal. For, while the multiformed appearance that is the material universe is eventually dissolved back into the pure Light of God of which it was made, that Light-Energy itself, by virtue of its divine nature, lives eternally in God.

I would like to propose a simple remedy to the confusion that often arises when discussing the nonduality that underlies the apparent duality: If you don't care to use the terms "Purusha" and "Prakrti" to represent the two aspects of Divinity, then regard the one Spirit, the Divine Mind or Supreme Self, as "God I"; and regard the

Light-Energy that constitutes the material world as “God II”. I feel that, with the implementation of this terminology, confusion will not arise, and it will become clear that there is only God I and God II, and that it is to be recognized hereafter that God, in His dual aspects, constitutes everything that exists.¹

NOTE:

1. I can't help thinking that, had Descartes truly understood that Mind and Body are both constituted of God, he would have found a solution to his Cartesian duality in the realization that the nondual One, while appearing to us to be a duality, is *in Itself* a single unified and integrated reality. This fact is not known through reason but is realized and subjectively confirmed in the mystical vision, for, as a soul experiences itself as the all-inclusive Divinity, it knows no distinction between its form and its essence, its body and its mind; all is in fact experienced as the one indivisible Self.

Where Is God?

In the days before the modern revolution in astronomy and cosmology, back when the heavens were conceived in the old Aristotelian/Ptolemaic manner as concentric spheres within spheres, we knew where heaven was and where God dwelt. It was up there! All was one great multi-layered reality, enclosing both the terrestrial world and the heavenly world above. A stationary sphere, surrounding the fifty-five concentric transparent spheres rotating at different velocities, was the domain of the “Prime Mover”, God's heaven. But today, the heavens are no longer beyond our ken: our telescopes reveal that the clusters of galaxies go on and on for billions of light-years; and heaven—the eternal abode of God—has been evicted from the upper regions of our universe. Today, we understand that the eternal abode of God upon which the universe of time and space is projected is a timeless, dimensionless realm of Consciousness coexisting with and underlying the physical world as its substratum. And while we can accurately determine particular locations in the physical universe, there is no method of determining the location of God's place in His eternal realm. For God, and heaven itself, are *noumena*¹, spirit entities, having no physical location in time and space.

How, then, can we answer the question of ‘*Where* does God live? From whence did He fling forth this vast universe of space and time, and from

where does He watch and govern the doings of creatures here on earth?’ One answer is, ‘Why, from right here, of course!’ God’s invisible Spirit-realm transcends our own time-bound spaces, to be sure; but these two, the noumenal and the phenomenal realms, the spiritual and the material, are nonetheless parallel, synchronous, and inseparable. All the heavenly bodies, and earth, and every human being is formed of, permeated and inhabited by the Divine; therefore, God is not in some distant heaven, but is here, co-habiting this universe, co-existing in and constituting this very present here and now.

God, the Divine Mind, is the causal agent for the production of the Energy of which universal matter consists, and so it is natural for us to regard Him as separate from, and other than, the material universe. But this universe—with you and I in it—is co-present with the Divine Mind. Though we use language suggestive of temporal and spatial relations, such as ‘emanated from’, or ‘dwelling within’, we must understand that the material world has no spatio-temporal relationship to the Divine Mind, its noumenal substratum, but is *co-existent* and *co-present* with It. The Divine Mind is the Ground of which the universe is the figure. The universe is not somewhere outside It, or even “within” It; but is made of It, permeated by It and co-extensive with It.

All is indeed permeated by, encompassed by, and contained “in” the One. The Divine Mind acts as the bridge between eternity and time by sending forth Its Energy to become a substantial material world of spatio-temporal form superimposed “upon” Itself—the one eternal Consciousness. We err when we think of God as being in some distant realm apart from the universe He created. The two are not separate in place; they overlap, one superimposed, or “intraposed on”² the other. The eternal One is the Spirit-Ground of all appearance. He is equally present everywhere. There is no place where He is not in His fullness. Truly, “in Him we live and move and have our being.”

The One is the *only* one. He is without a second. Strictly speaking, He has no ‘inside’ or ‘outside’; so, while we may say, figuratively, that all is ‘contained within’ Him, there is really no spatial relationship such as “within” for the noumenal. The Divine Mind is the creative faculty of the One, but we cannot say that it is “within” Him either. Terms of spatial relationship, such as “within” or “outside of”, are applicable to phenomena, but not to noumena. Nevertheless, the Divine Mind cannot be separated from the One. Can you separate the creative power of your own mind from your consciousness? I

don't think so. Your mind's creative power is integral to your consciousness. Likewise, the attempt to separate the Creative Power (the Divine Mind, God) from the transcendent Absolute (the One, the Godhead,) is futile. His power of creating is inherent and integral to Him. They are not two. Recall the Biblical dictum: "I am the one Lord. There is no other beside Me."³

Plotinus spoke of the 'emanation' of Soul *from* the Divine Mind, but we mustn't be deluded into thinking that this connotes an exterior out-flowing, similar to the case of photons of light streaming from the Sun in the material universe. Nothing is *outside of* or *other than* the Divine Mind. The relation of Soul to the Divine Mind is not a spatial one; they are not two. As the various thoughts in one man's mind exist together in that mind, so do all souls exist together in the Divine Mind. In short, we are merged in God; everything is merged in God. How could it be otherwise? Where else could we be?

We are able to see God 'reflected' in and as the phenomenal world around us, but it is only within our own souls that we are able to *know* Him directly. This is because it is the conscious Soul in us that is, in fact, the Divine Mind, the all-pervading Spirit. That self into which we look is truly none other than Him. His Consciousness is our consciousness. We are comprised of His awareness and His Light-energy. He is both our conscious awareness and our form, comprising both the fabric and the sentience of our existence. If we could see into our nature clearly, we would realize that we ourselves are entirely Divine. Nothing else but God exists; every form is His own. No other 'you' exists but Him.

God, being so close, is easily accessible to us;
 He is always within the reach of our call,
 Always ready to provide succor in our need,
 And the light of wisdom in our times of darkness.
 Our own soul is the conduit of this accessibility,
 This communication, this succor and this wisdom.
 In our own soul, when the chattering of the mind is silenced,
 And all our attention is focused on His presence,
 There He is found in the very qualities of the soul;
 For we are rays from His brilliance,
 Diminished only by our hesitance
 To manifest His light.

He is the air in our nostrils and the earth under our feet.
 He is the light of our eyes and the music in our breast.
 He is the bright awareness that lives as you,
 And He is the storied tale your living tells.
 You dance in His firelight; you float on His sea.
 You breathe by His breathing; you move by His joy.

No matter how far you may gaze into the rolling
 Galaxies cascading above;
 No matter what dark or clownish scenes you dream,
 Or terrestrial landscapes you cross;
 Whether in the depths of the ocean, or on the chilly
 Snow-peaked mountains,
 And even in the abyss of death and darkness,
 You are ever within His close embrace.
 You cannot leave Him, nor scamper from His sight.
 For you are in Him as a fish is in the ocean
 Or a bird is in the sky.
 His love surrounds and holds you,
 And He sees all through your eyes.

NOTES:

1. The word, *noumenon*, or *noumena* (pl.) is intended in the sense in which it was understood in classical Greece, as a derivative of *nous*, or 'mind', and signifies those things that exist solely as mind or thoughts of the mind. According to Sextus Empiricus, *'What is thought [noumena] is opposed to what appears or is perceived [phenomena]*. (See *Pyrrhonism*, Book I, Chapter 13). This division is specifically applicable when we are speaking of the thought-production of the Divine Mind (e.g., *Nous* in Platonist philosophy): *noumena* are immaterial entities, such as the Divine Mind itself, 'souls', or 'heaven', whose existence can only be apprehended by a special, non-sensory, faculty that some have called 'intellectual intuition', and others refer to as 'spiritual perception' or 'mystical vision'.

The eighteenth-century philosopher, Immanuel Kant, attempted to alter our modern usage of the word, *noumena*, through his book, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant believed that, even if such immaterial entities as *noumena* existed, there was no reliable sensory or non-sensory human faculty by which

they could be apprehended and known. He therefore reassigned the word, *noumenon*, which had long meant a mind or mind-born reality, to mean the signification of a thing—not as it appears to our senses and understanding, but as that thing is *in itself*—thus intending to render the word inapplicable as a useful human term or concept. In fact, Kant only succeeded in proving the sad fact that he himself had not been graced with spiritual vision and was therefore unable to speak knowledgeably on the subject of *noumena*.

2. You will have noticed that I used the words “in”, “on”, and “upon” to suggest the relationship of the universe and God. That’s because it is almost impossible to avoid words that suggest a physical relationship between them. As illustration of how ill-suited phenomenally-based language is to describe noumenal realities—such as the relationship of the eternal to the temporal—try to come up with a word in the English language that indicates the simultaneous presence of a noumenal and a phenomenal reality existing in the same place. Shankara called it a “superimposition”; but even that word does not fit the reality perfectly.

3. “I am the one Lord. There is no other beside Me,” from the Old Testament, *Second Isaiah*: 45:4; probably borrowed from the Egyptian “Papyrus of Ani”, dating from the 30th century B.C.E. (Budge, Wallis, *Egyptian Religion*, N.Y., University Books, 1959; pp. 37-40), wherein is found the following text:

“God is one and alone, and none other exists with Him; God is the One, the one who has made all things. ...He has endured for countless ages, and He shall endure to all eternity. God is a spirit, ... the Divine Spirit. He is a mystery to His creatures, and no man knows how to know Him. ... He has made the universe, and He has created all that is in it; He has stretched out the heavens and founded the earth. What His heart conceived came to pass straightway, ... and it shall endure forever.

God, Himself, is existence. He lives in all things and lives over all things. ...He multiplies Himself millions of times, and He possesses multitudes of forms and multitudes of members. God is life, and it is only through Him that man lives. ... God is merciful unto those who reverence Him, and He hears those who call upon Him. He protects the weak against the strong, and He hears the cry of him that is bound in fetters. ...God knows those who know Him; He rewards those who serve Him, and He protects those who follow Him.”

Time And Eternity

Newton believed in an absolute time; one which is always the same for everyone in every situation. Einstein demolished that view by showing that the measure of the passage of time is relative to motion—differing by the variation in motion between two perceivers. Cosmologist, Stephen Hawking, further clarified time’s non-absolute status by noting that “time is just a coordinate that labels events in the universe; it does not have any meaning outside the space-time manifold.”¹ Indeed, space and time (space-time) only come into existence along with the birth of the universe. Modern Cosmologists assert that around fourteen billion years ago, an incredibly large amount of energy unaccountably burst on the scene and explosively expanded to produce the mass-energy that constitutes this entire universe. In that instant when that energy let loose as the “Big Bang” and began to expand as the plasma that would become particulate matter, space and time also came into existence. Before that, space-time did not exist. To the question, “What was when space-time was not?”, the answer is, “Eternity”.

Now, from a purely theoretical point of view, Eternity can be a very daunting concept, one which Cosmologists as a rule refrain from considering. But for those of us who have been privileged to *experience* Eternity directly through what is called Mystical Vision, it is neither a theory nor a concept. We know, with absolute certainty, that it is the underlying foundation, support, and projecting power upon which this universe of time and space exists. We know that time exists only in the universal manifestation, with a recurrent beginning and end, and that in Eternity there is no such thing as time – no past, no present, no future, no projected universe at all. For Eternity is just another name for the absolute Consciousness that is the Ground and support of the universal projection; and it is the source of the (limited) consciousness which sentient beings experience within themselves. Eternity is the upper reach of Existence, to which the mind may be drawn, if God so wills; and there it is seen that time has no absolute existence but exists only as an elemental byproduct of the universal expansion of space projected upon the one eternal Mind. It is a measure, as spatial location is, of the progression of universal manifestation.

This universal manifestation is superimposed upon Eternity, as a dream is superimposed upon the consciousness of a dreamer. One could say that the temporal universe and Eternity exist in separate dimensions – as the dreamer and his dream-world exist in separate dimensions, levels, or realms of consciousness. Eternity is the highest level of Consciousness; It is experienced by a mind that is

intensely and utterly focused and intent upon the Divine. It completely supplants one's limited individuality, raising one's awareness to Its own place, and revealing one's ultimate identity with Itself. This experience of Eternity is very pleasant. It is single, perfect aloneness, blissfully content. It sends forth a new universe in every breath, while in the same alternating breath annihilating the old. It is so simple and unencumbered that it cannot be conveyed in speech. It is the ancient, unnamed God. It occupies its own place, its own dimension, quite sovereign and alone. The temporal array spewed out in each breath offers no distraction or interruption to the sweetness of Its homogeneous peace. It is its own perpetual delight and satisfaction.

The cosmos, quite a different thing, originates from Him, and dissolves in Him; and time derives from Him, though He is utterly beyond time's reach. It is as a dream, emanating from the mind of a dreamer, exists in its own place, depicting a drama, originating, then reaching a culmination, but in no way affecting the dreamer; even though each of the dream characters is, in reality, the dreamer, and once awakened, returns to the awareness of its true source and Self.

This projected 'real' universe of time and spatial extension is nothing more than a dream. We who live within it are all none other than the one Eternal Mind, and on awaking shall once again know our blissfully eternal Self. And even now, in this temporal moment, in this spatial unfoldment of the cosmic dream superimposed upon the eternal Consciousness, we are in truth that one eternal Self, blissfully content, fully awake, in our solitary, timeless, spaceless place on high. And while this imaged time, begun in that first instant of cosmic appearance along with space, marches on, we momentary creatures move to its rhythms without knowing why or whence, yet happily knowing, by the Creator's grace, our everlasting Self beyond time, and singing praise and glory to His name.

NOTE:

1. Stephen Hawking & W. Israel (eds.), *300 Years of Gravitation*, Cambridge University Press, 1989; p. 651; quoted in P. Coveney and R. Highfield, *The Arrow of Time*, N.Y., Ballantine Books, 1991; p. 99.

The Greatest Secret

Only the One, the Godhead, is *eternally* real. The universe, made of His form-producing Energy, appears to be real, but it is only a transient mirage, a colorful illusion. And yet this illusory universe is filled with and enlivened by His all-

pervading Consciousness. He is its Soul, its animating power, and is thereby the life and soul of every being in it. All the forms appearing in this universe are made of His Divine Energy, but, alas, the briefly appearing forms in this phenomenal universe quickly change and vanish; in fact, the entire universe is only an illusory appearance, a fleeting mirage; while *He*, and the Energy He contains, lives forever, undivided, unchanged. He alone, the one eternal Consciousness, is eternally real. And *that* is who you must one day realize you are. For that eternal One is the origin and substance of your being, the Soul of your soul, and your only true Identity. It is the one Self you have always been and will always be.

The Maker of The Game

How is it even possible to talk about God when we have so little real knowledge about Him? We are aware that He transcends the universe as pure Spirit, or Mind, or Consciousness, and yet we are also aware that He constitutes the universe itself. He is both our inner conscious Self and the form and substance of everything that we experience. At times we are aware that He is within us, for we are able to come in contact with Him only through our conscious minds; but, upon reflection, it seems more reasonable to assume that the entire phenomenal universe, including ourselves, is contained in Him; and that our intimate conscious contact with Him is therefore a result of our integral presence *within* Him.

In our philosophy, we hold that the material universe is His creation, made of Himself in some way, perhaps as an emanated substance such as Energy in the form of light transformed into matter. We have ascertained only recently that the latest burst of that emanated divine Light occurred around fourteen billion years ago as 'the Big Bang' or 'Great Radiance'; and we know that ever since then the material universe has been expanding. Our mystical perceptions as well as scientific reasoning leads us to believe that, eventually, this expansion will turn to contraction, and the whole thing will collapse in upon itself, only to begin once again in a similar deliberate outrushing of light turned into mass and energy.

We humans relate familiarly with the phenomenal/material world, but the world of Spirit, or the universal Mind, is much more unfamiliar and remote. The nature of the relationship between our own individual soul/mind and the transcendent Mind that is God is not at all clear. We feel that there *is* such an intimate relationship, and mystical experience suggests that each of us is integrally connected with that transcendent Consciousness, and, at some level, synonymous with It; but how all this is possible is not even remotely understood. To make matters more difficult,

the awareness of His immanent presence is, for many of us, notoriously inconstant and tenuous at best.

We must believe that one day our understanding of His nature will become substantially greater, and we shall become more consciously aware of His immanent presence. At present, we must acknowledge our utter lack of true spiritual knowledge, and our nearly complete reliance on faith and the occasional ‘mystical’ glimpses to guide us. Either our present state is simply a prolonged evolutionary stage of ignorance which will eventually pass in time, or it is exactly the way He intends it always to be. Presently, we do not know with certainty what is the objective of our participation in this adventure—or even whether or not there *is* a definite objective.

It may well be that our collective ignorance regarding God's purposes is a necessary requirement to assure the trust and faith on which our individual judgment and responsibility must rely. To be absolutely certain of His will and overly confident of His presence and Grace might in fact diminish our individual merit and detract from the adventure of life as He intends it. But, of course, speculating on God’s purposes or motives is a very uncertain and unverifiable business. His intentions are what they are, and, despite the presence of hints occasionally granted, and the occasional glimpses of our divine Identity, we are each clearly responsible for our own judgment in this three-dimensional adventure called “life”, and responsible also for the quality of our own individual relationship to the Master and Maker of the game. I feel certain, however, that, over the course of time’s evolution, each of us shall eventually reach the finish line and attain lasting certainty of our eternal Identity in Him. Therefore, to all a heartfelt God bless and Godspeed!

The Purpose of God's Creation

It seems to me that the summit of divine evolution comes when God, living and experiencing *as* a human soul in a human body, awakens to the truth that all this is Himself, that He is and has always been the one all-pervading Existence. God gets to experience the joy of this revelation not once, but billions of times in countless different forms over an immense span of time and space. That, I believe, is the hidden purpose of His universal manifestation: to slowly evolve as human souls over lifetimes in utter blindness of ignorance, and then, in a time of His own choosing, to suddenly awaken each of these beings from within themselves to the greatness and beauty and joyfulness of His own limitless and unfathomable being.

The thrill of enlightenment multiplied billions of times, the sudden unveiling of His perfection in billions of souls that turn out to be Himself—this is His evolutionary game! This is the answer to the question, 'Why does He do it? What is the purpose of His Creation? I believe it is for this long prepared and frequently experienced Joy! It is an awesomely involved adventure, a prolonged drama, played out on countless far-flung stages, in countless unsuspecting hearts. each one culminating in Joy—the ever-new and unimaginable Joy of the discovery of one's own unbounded Self. What an exquisitely marvelous and satisfying game He has devised! Praise God!

The Only One

The false 'I'—the individual person we think we are—doesn't really exist! It's merely a mental phenomenon, an imaginary being. The true 'I'—the only one who really exists—is the all-pervading Spirit. That is your only true identity. You are That. I am That. We imagine that we have a separate and distinct identity, but it is the one Spirit alone who is living as you and as me. So—can you grasp it? When the sage asks you to inquire “Who am I?” he's asking you to become aware of the divine Reality who is the true and everlasting identity of everyone.

Though you are unable at this time to know your Self as all-pervading, the truth is that you are in the clouds, and you are in the gritty soil. You are the pulse of the turtle; you are the clanging bells of joy that thrill the hearts of all who know joy. It is you that stirs in the heart as a rising song; it is your love that flows throughout the world. Here, there, everywhere, it is you alone who exists.

Whether you objectify that all-pervading Divinity as other—as 'He'—or know that divine Self as 'I' within, the divine Reality is all there is in this world and beyond. 'He' and 'I' are the same. It's true: 'I' and 'the Father' are one. Say it in your heart, and know it is true. Whatever name stirs you to remembrance of the one divine Spirit—sing that name in your heart and let the blissful awareness of His endless presence continually fill your soul.

This Is The Truth

This is the truth: Nowhere is there anything other than God.
This world is a drama performed by one actor in a multitude of roles.
We, His distinctly variant roles, are nothing but Him!

What can we do but dance to His tune?
 He has made Himself into all these worlds and all these beings,
 And we are but His manifold forms.
 Though we appear to be independent entities,
 Our characteristics and our inclinations are all programmed by Him,
 And enacted by Him.
 Everything being done is being done by God!

Whatever is to be done in the future will also be done by Him;
 And so, glory be to God—in the highest and in the lowest!
 Glory be to the One who lives as you and who lives as me!
 Waves on His ocean, we think we're distinctly our own,
 Unaware that we're forever inseparable from Him.
 Calling Himself "I", He lives us, He breathes us.
 Only in the depths of His Grace are we able to know Him.

We do not see the transcendent God, and yet we see His handiwork. It is only natural, therefore, that we think of God as being somewhere else, far above us, as a king is above his subjects. Since ancient times, when primitive men roamed the earth, God has been regarded as a transcendent overlord, separate from this world and its creatures, who dwells in some distant yet ever-present heavenly realm. But what marvelous news! When He finally lifts the veil and reveals Himself to His devotee, God is seen to be all-pervasive! He is seen to be the very fabric of one's being, the sole Identity of everyone. It is this knowledge that illumined Jesus, prompting him to declare 'I and the Father are one!' This was not the result of Jesus' unique paternity, nor was it some wild fantasy by which Jesus was deluded; it was the revelation of the hidden truth by which Jesus became enlightened!

To a devoted person who calls out lovingly to His God, it is not immediately apparent that he himself is a manifestation of God; but when God reveals Himself within, that person knows his own deathless Self, his own oneness with God, and knows that nothing else exists in this world but that One. God has spread Himself out as this vast universe, and He is immediately present as our own selves, accessible through our own conscious minds. God is the life that lives you; He flows through that life in every breath. He is the joy that thrills your soul, and He is the sweet awareness of being that fills you. Remember Him and praise Him in every thought and word and know every moment that He is manifest as you, that you are nothing else but His own divine Self.

Look Around You!

Without any doubts, this world, this vast universe, is made *by* God, *of* God, and resides *in* God. For there is no other Reality but Him. God is the one all-inclusive Spirit, or Mind, in whom everything and everyone has its being. This truth has been clearly revealed through Grace to countless individual souls in an enlightening inner vision. If there was something else—something other than Him, it is in that divine inner vision that we would learn of it. But it is there, in that divine revelation, that we learn that we are made of God-stuff, that there is nothing else! We learn that it is the One Great Mind who brings all to light, and that it is He in whom everything resides and of whom everything consists. There, by His Grace, we learn our oneness with Him. There, two-ness cannot even arise as an imagination. You will be happy to know that, by searching for Him within, you too can experience His Grace. You too can know Him as the one and only Reality and solve this great riddle of Nonduality conclusively for yourself.

Look around you! Do you not see that every blade of grass is bursting with Consciousness? Do you not see that every chunk of gravel is alive with Consciousness? Do you not see how perfectly timed the planets move, how the Sun and moon tell the unveiling of the moments in your life?

O what good fortune is this—to see with the eyes of the Divine, to bathe in the bliss of His living presence, to delight in the heavenly breezes wafting in the summer light! Look around you!

All Things Move Together of One Accord

*All things move together of one accord.
Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.¹*

Sometimes we forget that all that exists in this world is created and controlled by God. All things do indeed move together in accord with His divine Will, and His assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. This is an unmistakable truth experienced by the mystic, but I understand that for all others, it is not at all evident, and must remain merely a matter of faith. It is so easy to be misled and to forget the infallibility of the Divine Will, because oftentimes the affairs of the world appear to our limited vision to be in error, or random, and ungoverned by His just and perfect Will. But time will prove all things right. His evolutionary plan and His vision will be vindicated in the end. Therefore, hold

this faith above all: that everything is connected to His purpose, and all is ordered and occurs according to His will. Praise God!

NOTE:

1. from “Song of The Self” by Swami Abhayananda, in *The Supreme Self*, South Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984.

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