

METAPHYSICS
From A Mystic's Perspective
by Swami Abhayananda

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-Table of Contents-

Preface	3
1. Nonduality	4
2. Consciousness.....	22
3. Universal Creation	43
4. Theology	63
5. Epistemology	84
6. Scientific Theory	94
7. Nonlocality.....	113
8. Teleology	123
9. God's Grace	134

PREFACE

The essays, poems, and other writings that make up this little book were not originally composed as parts of a larger work, but were independent pieces written on the spur of the moment according to unique moments of inspiration occurring over the course of several decades. Each short piece first appeared independently on my website, “The Mystic’s Vision” (www.themysticsvision.com). But, since these various writings centered around only a few metaphysical topics, I saw that these short pieces could easily be combined to form a broader treatment of each of those few important metaphysical topics. These metaphysical topics then became the nine chapter-titles of this little book, each chapter containing an expanded treatment of that specific topic. And so, rather than search through all my writings for those that speak to a specific metaphysical topic, you can now easily find those writings that reflect my best thoughts about a particular metaphysical topic simply by searching the chapter headings of this collection.

It is my sincere wish that this collection of combined metaphysical reflections will prove to be a beneficial contribution to your own spiritual understanding. Blessings on you all.

– Swami Abhayananda

1. NONDUALITY

I. Introduction To Nonduality

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' supposedly unique paternity, nor was it some wild fantasy by which Jesus was deluded; it was the realization 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.

The mystical experience, in which the perceiving subject and the Divine object of perception are experienced as one, brings with it a unique perspective on the metaphysical foundation of existence, a perspective that is not afforded to those who have not *experienced* this divine revelation. That unique perspective is one of *direct* perception, unmitigated by the rational speculation of an individual's mind. The metaphysics revealed to the mystics in that direct perception is similarly described in nearly every case of genuine mystical experience. Invariably, the Divine Reality is described by the mystic as nondual; that is, the Divine Reality is seen to be one contiguous whole, without any divisions. That Divine Reality is realized to be universal Consciousness, the invisible Spirit, or Mind, that contains and pervades everything everywhere. That Spirit, in Its "Creator" aspect, periodically produces an immense radiance, or Light, which, eventually, transforms into 'material' wave-particles that become the elemental constituents of a substantial universe of stars, planets, and conscious, living beings, including ourselves. That spreading Light produces not only

'Matter', but produces, through its very expansion, those dimensions that we call 'time' and 'space'. The invisible Spirit thereby takes on the aspect of visible substance, becoming the limitless universe. And so, we see that the all-inclusive Reality that we call 'God' has two complementary aspects: It is *both* the all-pervading Consciousness, or Spirit, *and* It is the Creative Power by which the manifest Light-forms that constitute the universe are produced from Itself.

II. Tale of The Two In One

God has always been. As an invisible Spirit, He is unborn and unending. But periodically, He manifests from Himself a universe of form in order to live multiple embodied lives within a multiformed universe. And, since He is the only Existence, if there is to be a universe of form, it must be produced from Himself. God periodically takes form by manifesting His own Energy in the form of a concentrated radiation of Light. And, as that Light spreads, it transforms into material wave-particles, which congregate into molecular forms that then become the many diverse structures that go to make up the physical universe. That majestic universe continues to exist for billions and billions of years, and then it returns to the Divine Light-Energy from which it came. Then, in a time of His own choosing, that Divine Being once again manifests His form-bearing Light as a multiform universe. ¹

But did you ever wonder how God, who is famous as the universal all-pervading Spirit, or Consciousness, also manages to create, or manifest, an immense universe of 'material' forms? It seems incongruous, doesn't it? He is Spirit, yet He produces, organizes, and reorganizes an incredible amount of Mass/Energy. These two qualitative definitions of Divinity seem to be distinctly alien to and incompatible with one another, presenting a perplexing conundrum that has baffled philosophers and theologians for many millennia. The solution to the conundrum that has surfaced in many different cultures throughout history is the recognition that God, though one, possesses two distinctly different aspects: He is the eternal Mind that serves as the absolute Ground of Consciousness in which all objects and beings are contained; *and* He is the Creative Power that produces an electromagnetic field of Energy that is capable of transforming itself into material wave-particles, which then aggregate into the elements and forces that go to make up the entire universe of objects and beings.

An eternal Being who possesses two separate and distinct aspects seems a bit fantastic, to be sure; but that is the conclusion reached by nearly everyone who has deeply pondered this question—including those, like myself, who have been graced with mystical vision. In that divine

revelation, it is clearly revealed that the one Being constitutes both one's body and one's soul, both one's mind and one's 'physical' substance. There is seen to be only one existent, one contiguous reality identified as 'I', and yet It is *both* Spirit *and* the Energy that becomes Matter, i.e., both soul and body. To give human expression to this duality-in-unity for the purpose of rendering It comprehensible, these two—the invisible Spirit and the form-producing Energy—have been given many different names over the centuries, such as *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, *Brahman* and *Maya*, *Shiva* and *Shakti*, *Jahveh* and *Chokmah*, *Haqq* and *Khalq*, *Theos* and *Logos*, *Godhead* and *Creator*, and many other names.

Here, however, we will continue to call them "Spirit" and "Energy", noting that the Energy is born of the Spirit, belongs to the Spirit, and that, therefore, the Spirit and Its Energy were never divided, were never two, but are simply two complementary aspects of the one Divine Self we call God. It is also important to note that it is that One, as Energy, who becomes our body, and it is that One, as Spirit, who becomes our soul. It is clearly evident, therefore, that we are, from head to foot, inwardly and outwardly, nothing else but God; that, in accord with His will, God is indeed living an embodied life within a multiformed universe *as us*. Isn't that awesome and marvelous!

NOTE:

1. That “concentrated radiation of Light” last occurred around fourteen billion years ago and is known today in retrospect as “The Great Radiance” or “The Big Bang”.

III. Oneness

In ancient India, the one Divine Reality was called, in a Sanskrit phrase, *Chit-Shakti Vilas*, “the play of Consciousness-Energy.” This phrase, “*Chit-Shakti*,” is an interesting one, in that it stands for the one Reality, and yet it is made up of two words: *Chit* (“Consciousness”) and *Shakti* (“Energy.”) These are the two aspects of Reality with which we have become familiar as Spirit and Creator, *Shiva* and *Shakti*, *Brahman* and *Maya*, *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, *Theos* and *Logos*, etc. *Chit*, or Consciousness, is in other contexts referred to as *Shiva*, the absolute and formless aspect, the transcendent Godhead; and *Shakti*, or Energy, is the creative aspect of that one Consciousness which manifests as the multi-formed universe. They are one, but they appear to be two. The two are but complementary aspects of the same one indivisible Truth.

These two complimentary aspects are frequently symbolized as Male and Female. He—i.e., the masculine aspect of God—is the world-transcending Absolute. He is the pure and stainless Consciousness that is the source of His own manifestory Power. He is the eternal One, beyond all dualities, beyond all predication; He is known by those to whom He reveals Himself as the Unmanifest. But this stainless Consciousness possesses a Creative Power. And with that Power It periodically produces an Energy that manifests as a universe of time, space, and material forms. That Power of manifestation could be characterized as the Breath of God, which is in turn exhaled and then inhaled back again. Between the contraction and re-expansion of this universal manifestation, there is a period of stillness, in which His manifestory Power remains in a potential state within Himself. This manifestory Power, this Matter-producing faculty, is often regarded as the Female aspect of God. It is the creative movement that arises within the Absolute Mind, and it is everything that this creative movement produces. Within this creative production, which we call the universe, these two aspects of God are given symbolic representation in the form of creatures designated as male and female.

Though a universe of form is made manifest by this (Female) Power, He (the Source) never becomes anything other than the eternally pure Consciousness. Just as the human consciousness (which is a modification of the one pure Consciousness) remains unaffected by the millions of thoughts that pass across its face, or as the pure sky remains unaffected by the myriads of clouds that drift by, that pure Consciousness produces a vast universe of Thought-forms, and yet remains in Himself unchanged, unmoved. Just as the human consciousness witnesses in full awareness the play of thoughts as they arise and disperse within it, so does He witness in full awareness the universal play in all its detailed convolutions. And as the human consciousness lives in its thoughts, being their source and witness, so does He live in His creative exuberance of universal Thought-Energy. This exuberance is His own. It has no existence apart from Him; He is its Soul and substance. Still, the One has these two aspects: It is the all-pervading Eternal Consciousness (the "Father"), and It is the creative Power of manifestation (the "Mother"), just as we human “images” of God contain the same two aspects to our being. And so, God (Reality) is both Male and Female, both God and Goddess, both *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, both *Chit* (or *Shiva*) and *Shakti*.

Jnaneshvar, the thirteenth century Indian sage, described these two as interdependent:

“The Shakti cannot live without her Lord, and without her, He (Shiva, the absolute Consciousness) cannot appear. Since He appears because of

Her, and She exists because of her Lord, the two cannot be distinguished at all. Sugar and its sweetness cannot be told apart, nor camphor and its fragrance. If we have the flame, we have the fire as well; if we catch hold of Shakti, we have Shiva also.

“... Shiva and Shakti are the same, like air and its motion, or gold and its luster. Fragrance cannot be separated from the musk, nor heat from fire; neither can Shakti be separated from Shiva.”¹

The whole world of apparent phenomena is the manifestation of the Shakti of Shiva. Shiva is our innermost consciousness, our very Self; and Shakti, therefore, is our own creative power, our power of will. Shakti, by its very existence, creates an apparent duality in That which is one. From this original duality comes the duality of seer and seen, or subject and object. It is because of this apparent duality, this imaginary division in the One, that the world-appearance continues to exist. Nonetheless, the truth of the matter is that it is one Being, and one Being alone, who is playing all the roles; He is the Director, the stage Manager, the actors, and the scenery. He is the stage, and He is the audience of this play as well. There is nothing outside of God. This is brought out in the story of the egoistic king who asked his Minister, “Who is greater, me or God?” And the wise Minister replied, “You are, O King! For you can banish anyone from your kingdom, but God can never banish anyone from His kingdom.”

It is not possible to leave God’s kingdom. The only thing that really *is* is that one Being; He is both the unchanging Absolute, the Unity, and the Creator of the world-appearance as well. He is both Shiva and Shakti. For, as we’ve seen, you can’t have one without the other; they form an inseparable unit. And so, the question, “Who am I?” is readily answered: “I am the one Reality. I am *Chit-Shakti*, and all this is my play!” It is, of course, important to experience this truth; but it’s perhaps just as important to understand it and to make this knowledge a part of one’s being. This is not just philosophy or theorizing. It is very important to fully comprehend this; otherwise, who knows what you might imagine yourself to be? Perhaps you will regard yourself as only a weak and insignificant creature!

Because the final and ultimate Truth is unity, is oneness, all talk of duality is misleading. But, in our very good intentions of making the truth understandable to others, we like to describe the dual aspects of the One in order to explain the relationship between the Transcendent and the Immanent, the Absolute and the Relative, the Unity and the Diversity. And from there we go on to delineate all the limbs and subtle layers, and so forth; and before we know what has happened, we’re immersed once again in the swamp of multiplicity.

The initial conceptual division of the One into two (*Purusha-Prakrti, Brahman-Maya, Chit-Shakti, etc.*) is the intellectually tempting pathway leading into this swamp. And almost every mystical philosopher and metaphysician finds himself beguiled by the apparent usefulness of exploring this pathway. But, since the ultimate Truth is unity, and always unity, we are much better off adhering bull-doggedly to One and only One, without allowing for the slightest admission of duality or mention of even an *apparent* division in It. For this reason, the author of the Biblical book of Second Isaiah, as a counter to those who would dissect reality into good and evil, Jehovah and Satan, Light and Darkness, put these words in the mouth of God: “I am the one Lord; there is no other beside Me. I form the light and create the darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the one Lord, do all these things.”

Let’s look for a moment, from the historical perspective, and see what happens when we begin dabbling with “two-ness.” In the *Yajurveda*, we find the statement, “The One becomes the many by Its own inherent power.” This seems innocent enough. Everyone can see that “Its own inherent power” is not an entity separate from the One; it is just an inherent quality. A little later, however, we find in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, “Brahman projects the universe through the power of His Maya. Then He becomes entangled in that universe of Maya. Know, then, that the world is Maya, and that the great God is the Lord of Maya.”

Uh oh! Now, we have established a definite pair! Here, we have the Lord *and* His Maya. From the smallest seed, duality has sprung up as a full tree of contention. We have forgotten that “Maya” simply refers to His “inherent power” of manifestation, and we have begun to see “the Lord” and “His power” as two separate and distinct entities. Do you not see how craftily and insidiously this imaginary separation has taken place? Once you have a “Lord,” you have a “servant” as well.

By the time of the *Bhagavad Gita*, this dualism has taken a firm hold on the mind. We hear Krishna saying, in the 13th chapter, to Arjuna: “He sees truly who sees that all actions are performed by *Prakrti* (i.e., *Shakti*, or *Maya*), and that the *Purusha* (Shiva or Brahman) is actionless.” Now, this is a very useful concept for understanding that one’s eternal Self remains constant, inactive, and unchanged, even while one’s body and mind engages in actions; but a split is being established which will prove to be very difficult to patch up again.

Shankaracharya, the great Nondualist Indian philosopher and sage of the seventh or eighth century C.E., though quite aware of their underlying unity,

describes “the two” in such a way as to widen the division between them. He says:

“Maya... is the power of the Lord. It is she who brings forth this universe. She is neither real nor unreal, nor partaking of both characteristics; neither the same as the Lord, nor different, nor both; neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole nor both. She is most wonderful and cannot be described in words.”²

Now, let’s look at what’s happened so far: The Lord emanates the universe by His inherent Power. And suddenly, we are saying that He is real, but the universe and the Lord’s Power by which the universe exists are both unreal! Can we say that the Sun is real, but its rays are unreal? No; of course not. But, let’s not be unfair to Shankaracharya; it should be perfectly clear that he was merely pointing out that the Godhead, the formless Absolute, is *eternally* real, while the manifestation known as “the universe” is only *temporarily* real. And, to this, we all agree. But, can we say that the Lord’s inherent “Power of manifestation” is also only temporarily real? No. His Power, His *Shakti*, His *Maya*, though it may indeed become inactive and dormant, is co-eternal with Shiva; it is inherent. It is never something separate or independent of the Lord, any more than wetness can be thought of as separate or independent of water, or any more than the power to think can be thought of as independent of the mind. He, the Lord, and She, His Power, were never divided, were never two; and only confusion can result by allowing this mistaken impression to stand.

It was with just such an objection to Shankara’s descriptive language that, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the authors of the literature of Kashmir Shaivism began to rephrase and reformulate their own philosophy of Unity. As we shall see, however, there is really no satisfactory solution to the problem of expressing in language That which exceeds the capabilities of language. In every time, in every culture, the seers of the One have attempted to explain in a satisfactory way the fact that the universe is God, and yet is not God; that He is eternal, and yet lives in the temporal; that He is forever unchanging, and yet is manifest as the ever-changing universe.

Jnaneshvar, in the 13th century, likewise felt impelled to object to the language of Shankara, and to attempt to do away with such concepts as “Maya,” and “superimposition.” In his *Amritanubhav*, he says:

“When it is always only the one pure Consciousness seeing Itself, why postulate the necessity of a superimposition? ... By His very nature, He *is* whatever He sees. Whatever form appears, appears because of Him. There is nothing else here but the Self.

“... In the current of the river or the waves of the sea, there is nothing but water. Similarly, in the universe, nothing else exists besides the Self.

“... Therefore, whether He is the seer or the seen, it doesn't matter; there is only the Self vibrating everywhere.”³

Again, in his *Changadev Pasashti*, Jnaneshvar says: “Only Oneness is real. All else is a dream!”⁴ And yet, we must ask the question, “What all else?” And the answer can only be, “the appearance of multiplicity!” And this, of course, is precisely what Shankara had said: “Only Brahman is real; the world (the appearance of multiplicity) is illusory.” So, you see, it is not possible to solve this question of how to talk about the (apparent) duality in Unity. That is why, in India, there are so many authentic schools of mystical thought. There is the *Advaita*, or Nondualism of Shankara; there is the *Dvaita*, or Dualist, school of Madhva; there is the *Vishishtadvaita*, or Qualified Nondualism of Ramanuja. All speak the truth, and yet each sees the Truth a little bit differently. But that's okay. The built-in ambiguity of language demands alternate expressions. Still, the ultimate Truth, the final Reality, known by the seers, is One without a second. All duality is apparent only. We can say that it is simply the “Play of Consciousness and Energy,” *Chit-Shakti Vilas*.

So much for correct understanding! It is necessary to pass beyond understanding if we are to *experience* the joy of Unity, the bliss of God. This Bliss is not attained by engaging the mind in trying to comprehend the nature of God—though this has its place, of course. The bliss of God is attained only through devotion. Devotion leaves the intellect far behind; in fact, devotion is possible only through the abandonment of the pride of intellect. It is more akin to the longing of a child for its mother than to the ratiocination of the adult. Devotion begins with the awareness of one's utter dependency upon God for everything, and an open upturning of one's mind and inner gaze to the Source of all mind and all vision.

We engage our minds so often in circuitous analysis and repetitious thought-patterns. Far better would it be if we could build into our minds the thought-pattern of calling on God for our succor and support. He is capable of filling the mind and body with ecstasy and light, and of setting our minds at peace in perfect understanding. All that is required is a pure and innocent heart, and a simple and steady regard to Him for all our satisfaction and reward.

As the mind becomes steady and one-pointed on God, all questions become answered automatically. A mind at peace is a mind illumined by Truth. Let there be an apparent duality between you and your Lord! But keep on trying

to close the gap through love. Talk to Him. Pray to Him. Give all your life and love to Him. And the God within you will manifest the more as you become engrossed in Him. You become what you meditate on; so, meditate on God. Regard Him as the only Reality and become as a moth dancing about His flame. Yearn to be immersed in His perfect light, His perfect love, and He will draw you into Himself and make you know your eternal oneness with Him.

Meditation

The Latin phrase, *E Pluribus Unum*, is the motto of our country. It means, “Of many, one.” But it would be closer to the truth to say, “Of One, many.” This simple formula explains everything we need to know about the Reality in which we live. For, just as the one white light is refracted to appear as the entire spectrum of colors in a rainbow, so does the one undivided Existence appear as a multitude of forms. Just as a sunflower blossom spreads out its many tender petals, so God spreads Himself out into this variously formed creation. Just as the ocean raises up from itself a tossing surface of countless waves, so the ocean of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss raises up from Itself countless individual forms of life from shore to shore.

In every single form the One alone exists; it is He alone who lives in every life. However wise, however foolish, however attractive, however repulsive—the tiger and the scorpion, the spider and the snake—all is His Life, playing in a million fantastic forms. And we, children of His mind, images projected from His light upon Himself, wander here and there upon His screen, playing out our roles, forgetful of the One in whose dance of Light we live. But when we turn within, behold! We discover as our very essence that One who lives as many, the heart and soul of all that lives, the blissful God whose life and breath we are.

NOTES:

1. *Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works of The Celebrated 13th Century Indian Mystic-Poet, Amritanubhav: I:21-24, 41, 42; Swami Abhayananda, Olympia, Wash., Atma Books, 1989, p. 116.*
2. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, III:7; Prabhavananda, & Isherwood, Vedanta Press, Hollywood, California, 1947,1978, p. 49.
3. Jnaneshvar, *Amritanubhav*, 7:165, 233, 235, 237, 244; *Ibid.*, 1989, pp. 186, 193-195.
4. Jnaneshvar, *Changadev Pasashti*, 25; *Ibid.*, 1989, p. 240.

IV. The Apparent Duality

If we think carefully and accurately, we must eventually conclude 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—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, the nondual Reality produces within Itself an apparent duality: it is a duality between the one conscious Spirit and the world of Matter. This apparent duality of Spirit and Matter is reiterated in the perceived duality of body and soul constituting our being; but we must remember that both of these dualities are apparent only. God is both soul and body, both the invisible Spirit and the 'material' universe. He exists in two different modes; He has two different aspects: He is the eternal Spirit, the absolute Ground that constitutes our conscious Self; *and* He is *also* the Originator of the 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 appearance of the material world with all its forms is indeed transient: it has a beginning and an end; but the Light-Energy of which it is constituted is nonetheless eternal. For, since the multi-formed 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: The one Spirit, the Divine Mind or Supreme Self, is to be regarded as “God I”; and the Light-Energy that constitutes the material world is to be regarded 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 Himself*, 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; for, then, all is in fact experienced as the one indivisible Self.

V. The I Between Us

When I first discovered that God was within me, and that everything in the world around me was also God, it still seemed to me that, between the God within and the God without, there was an "I" that separated me out from that unified reality. I felt as though I was a pitcher of water in an ocean of water: there was water within and water without, but *I*, the pitcher, was there as a separate thing preventing my unitive awareness of God. And I prayed that God would take away this *I* that veiled His omnipresence and let me know oneness in Him.

And suddenly, I was graced by God with the revelation that even this body, and even this *I*, is God's own. It had been my owning of this *I* that prevented my realization that there is nothing anywhere but God. He creates the forms of this world, and He constitutes our awareness of this world. It is we who make the mistake of thinking that this body and this awareness of *I* belongs exclusively to ourselves, thus wrongly separating our perception of *I* from God.

This obscured perception is a blindness within us that tends us toward self-preference; we call it the *ego*, or 'I'. It is a blindness that is built-in to provide self-protection, self-preservation, and individual responsibility. But it also tends to blind us to the vision of God's all-encompassing presence, and it can only be healed with the help of God's grace. He reveals through divine vision that the One constitutes both *I* and God, both past and future, both life and death; and that all things move together of one accord, coordinated in God. It is this vision that rids us of the blindness under which we suffered for so long.

But beware! For this blindness—this ego—will continue to rise up in its attempt to corrupt your sight once again. At every corner, it awaits the opportunity to subtly reassert itself and leave you once again in darkness and

confusion. Your only weapons against this enemy are silence and humility, and a constant diligence to remember the One in whom and by whom you are fashioned. Sing His name in your heart to remind you and rely on His help in your need. He will illumine your blindness, and restore you to sight, and eventually He will uplift you to wholeness in the sweetness of His eternal Light. There, no ego will threaten; there, you'll need not struggle to remember. His peace and yours will be the same, all duality put behind.

VI. My Foundation

There is an 'I' at a deep subconscious level in this apparent 'me' that surfaces in its own time and is capable of producing creations that are beyond the power of this apparent 'me' to produce. That 'I' is divine and eternal, and It graces 'me' with Its presence in moments of its own choosing and has the ability to reveal a reality more true and more clear than this apparent 'me' can even imagine. It is this deeper 'I' that is referred to by some as the inner soul or *atman*, the Divine, or the Christ within. That 'I' cannot be known unless He makes Himself known, but His influence may be recognized by His fruits.

Therefore, let it be known and understood by all who read the words I have posted here that whatever truth or clarity may be found herein is not of my own making, but is given by that divine Self as a favor to this supplicant soul for its eagerness to serve. No praise is due this eager soul, this apparent 'me', but all praise is due to that divine and eternal 'I' who has treated me so generously in allowing 'me' to be included among Its humble servants.

That one Self, eternal and undivided, does not truly consist of two beings: a Master and servant, an 'I' and a 'me'; rather It is an indivisible Spirit—appearing as an individualized form in this manifest world as 'me', but operating *within* 'me'—as eternal Soul, a universal 'I'. At times I address that Spirit as "Thou", but He is my ground, my foundation, not separate, but surrounding and encompassing 'me'. We are one, though, while the body persists, along with this *ego*, it seems that we are two.

VII. Who Am I?

Jesus famously said, "*Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me*"¹; and "*I and my Father are one.*"² He was answering the question of 'Who am I?' not only for himself, but for all of us. However, if I could put it more plainly, the simple truth is that there *is* no "me"; there's only God everywhere. The sense of a distinct being that is "me" is an illusion, made

credible by long habitual belief. The consciousness that I regard as belonging to "me" is really His. The body that I regard as "my" body is really His; it is made entirely of His Light—even though that Light long ago transformed into 'material' wave-particles. Therefore, this body and all bodies are His. This mind and all minds are His. Where, then, is this "me" that takes credit for the thoughts and actions herein mysteriously produced? What I experience is really the mental and physical activity of God. Who, then, is this "I" that experiences? Remember that He alone is. Whether as the subject or as the object, He alone is.³

NOTES:

1. The Gospel of John, 14:11.
2. The Gospel of John, 10:30.
3. The sense of "I", or *ego*, which constitutes our individual soul, is a God-produced illusion that assures our individual culpability for our individual acts. The peculiar characteristics that make you who you are, and me who I am, are merely the distinctive modifications each of us makes to our individual minds over time. Those modifications become habitualized as karma and pass from one lifetime into another. It is only when we are made to know our absolute and eternal identity that we are able to free ourselves from the limiting bonds of karmic habit.

VIII. 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 non-duality 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!

IX. Iraqi's Glimpses of Truth

In the search for the Divine, we all go through an initial process of reasoning. Once He reveals the truth, we become aware that all is God, and it becomes clear that there is no “me”. And we begin the process of clarifying our thinking about who we are. In the thirteenth century, there lived in Persia (modern day Iran) a man named Iraqi (1213-1289) who put his own thinking into verse in a poem called *Lama'at* (“Glimpses”). Here are a few selected verses from that celebrated work. For more about Iraqi, see my *History of Mysticism*:

Beloved, I sought You here and there,
 Asked for news of You from all I met.
 Then I saw You through myself,
 And found we were identical.
 Now I blush to think I ever searched
 For signs of You. ¹

By day I praised You, but never knew it;
 By night I slept with You without realizing it,
 Fancying myself to be myself.
 But no, I was You and never knew it. ²

“O You who are so unbearably beautiful,
 Whose beloved are You?” I asked.
 “My own,” He replied,
 “For I am one and one alone—
 Love, lover, beloved, mirror, beauty, eye!” ³

I sought solitude with my loved one,
 Yet find there is no one here but myself.
 And if there were a “someone else,”
 Then, truly, I should not have attained her. ⁴

When I clutched at His skirt,
 I found His hand in my sleeve. ⁵

I am the one I love,
 He whom I love is I.
 Two, yet residing in a single body. ⁶

If I have become the Beloved,
 Who is the lover?
 Beloved, Love and lover—three in one,
 There is no place for union here,
 So, what is this talk of “separation?” ⁷

What He takes,
 He takes with His own hand from Himself.
 What He gives,
 He gives from Himself to Himself. ⁸

Hunter, prey, bait, and trap;
 Candle, candlestick, flame, and moth;
 Beloved, lover, soul, and soul’s desire;
 Inebriation, drinker, wine, and cup—
 All is He! ⁹

Is it You or I—this reality in the eye?
 Beware, beware of the word, “two.” ¹⁰

“I” and “You” have made of man a duality.
 Without these words,
 You are I and I am You. ¹¹

He speaks.
 He listens.
 “You” and “I” are but a pretense. ¹²

When shall You and I divorce ourselves,
 So that “You” and “I” are gone,
 And only God remains? ¹³

If You are everything,
 Then, who are all these people?
 And if I am nothing,
 What’s all this noise about?
 You are the Totality.

Everything is You. Agreed!
 Then, all that is “other-than-You”—
 What is it?
 Oh, indeed I know, nothing exists but You!
 But, tell me, whence all this confusion? ¹⁴

He Himself speaks of Truth.
 He Himself listens.
 He Himself shows Himself.
 He Himself sees. ¹⁵

The world but seems to be,
 Yet it is only a blending of light and shade.
 Discern the meaning of this dream.
 Discriminate between time and Eternity.
 All is nothing, nothing.
 All is He. All is He. ¹⁶

Listen, riffraff: Do you want to be ALL?
 Then go, go and become nothing. ¹⁷

You are nothing when you wed the One.
 But, when you truly become nothing,
 You are everything. ¹⁸

Regard yourself as a cloud drifting before your Sun.
 Detach yourself from the senses,
 And behold your intimacy with the Sun. ¹⁹
 If you lose yourself on this path,
 Then you will know for sure:
 He is you, and you are He. ²⁰

NOTES:

1. Chittock, W.C. & Wilson, Peter L. (trans.), *Fakhruddin Iraqi: Divine Flashes*, N.Y., Paulist Press, 1982; p. 120.
2. *Ibid.*; p. 124
3. *Ibid.*; p. 111
4. *Ibid.*; p. 95
5. *Ibid.*; p. 117
6. *Ibid.*; p. 125
7. *Ibid.*; p. 76
8. *Ibid.*; p. 96
9. *Ibid.*; p. 110
10. *Ibid.*; p. 77

11. *Ibid.*; p. 103
12. *Ibid.*; p. 80
13. *Ibid.*; p. 127
14. *Ibid.*; p. 99
15. *Ibid.*; p. 80
16. *Ibid.*; p. 119
17. *Ibid.*; p. 10
18. *Ibid.*; p. 112
19. *Ibid.*; p. 123
20. *Ibid.*; p. 120

* * *

2. CONSCIOUSNESS

I. Idealism And Materialism

These days, one doesn't often hear the terms, *Idealism* or *Materialism* bandied about, but these two traditionally opposing philosophical worldviews were once topics of heated concern. These two starkly differing views of the nature of reality have been at odds with each other for twenty-five centuries beginning with Pythagorus, Xenophanes, Anaxagorus and Socrates on the idealist side, and Thales, Leucippus, and Democritus on the materialist side. For centuries, idealists held that *Mind* is the primary reality of which matter is an evolute; materialists held that *Matter* is the primary reality of which mind is an evolute. Science gathered its forces solidly on the materialist side, while the spiritual philosophers and Mystics stood squarely on the side of idealism. Every mystic who ever lived has declared the idealistic viewpoint, stating that the ultimate reality underlying all phenomena is unquestionably noumenal, i.e., a transcendent Mind. There are no materialists among mystics.

Idealism suggests that the universe is of the nature of an *idea*; that its substance is *thought*—the thought of the one eternal Mind. Mysticism, therefore, is an idealist point of view which also asserts the possibility of the *direct* apperception of the ultimate reality in a rare, profound, and purely introspective experience, wherein an intimate knowledge of the noumenal Source and the nature of the universe and human existence is acquired. This “mystical experience”, say those who have known it, reveals the formless noumenal Source, the groundless Ground, of all physical and mental phenomena, which is seen to constitute everyone's original and eternal identity. Such an experience seems to have been first spoken of in the West in ancient Greece among the populace taking part in the “mystery religions” such as the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries (whence mysticism gets its name); and later formed the basis of the philosophical position of such seers as Socrates and his disciple, Plato, Philo Judaeus, and Plotinus. In the East, mysticism made its appearance in the writings of Lao Tze, the Upanishads, and the early Buddhist texts, and later in the Middle East with the teachings of Hermeticism, and the rise of Christianity and Gnosticism, all of whose central figures claimed an intimate, mystical knowledge of the noumenal Source.

The materialism of the early Greeks, such as Leucippus and Democritus, on the other hand, tended to regard all of reality as consisting of small indestructible particulate entities, called *atoms*, which aggregated together to form all the varied shapes and individual beings that are perceived through the senses. While materialistic science may be said to have originated with the early Greek philosophers cited above, it had to struggle in the West for many centuries against the strictures of religious doctrine, and only began its

cultural ascendancy in the West from the sixteenth century onward, influenced by such philosophers as Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant, and the works and accomplishments of scientists such as Galileo, Isaac Newton, and Johannes Kepler. By the twentieth century, the empirical method, associated with the materialistic viewpoint, had become synonymous with science. From that time forward an emergent ‘scientism’ became the established ‘religion’ of our Western civilization. And, while there were always a few maverick idealists among the ranks of scientists, the vocal majority utterly rejected the slightest hint of mysticism or idealism and held as firm doctrine that the universe came into being and is sustained through “natural,” that is to say, purely *material*, processes.

Today, however, our understanding has changed; the materialism of the ancients no longer has a role in the modern world. The philosophical position of materialism was once regarded as diametrically opposed to the position of idealism, but today, we have come so far in revising our understanding of the nature and substance of Matter that the positions of materialism and idealism no longer seem so distant from one another. In the 1930’s, as developments in the newly formulated Quantum theory began to reveal some of the more unexpected aspects of Matter, one scientist, by the name of James Jeans, foresaw the coming changes that these developments in physics would bring to our philosophical views, and, understanding that the distinction between materialism and idealism was rapidly diminishing, he wrote in his book, *Physics And Philosophy*, the following:

“A ...revolution has occurred in physics in recent years. Its consequences extend far beyond physics, and in particular they affect our general view of the world in which our lives are cast. In a word, they affect philosophy. The philosophy of any period is always largely interwoven with the science of the period, so that any fundamental change in science must produce reactions in philosophy. This is especially so in the present case, where the changes in physics itself are of a distinctly philosophical hue; a direct questioning of nature by experiment has shown the philosophical background hitherto assumed by physics to have been faulty. The necessary emendations have naturally affected the scientific basis of philosophy and, through it, our approach to the philosophical problems of everyday life. Are we, for instance, automata or are we free agents capable of influencing the course of events by our volitions? Is the world material or mental in its ultimate nature? Or is it both? If so, is matter or mind the more fundamental? Is mind a creation of matter or matter a creation of mind? Is the world we perceive in space and time the world of ultimate reality, or is it only a curtain veiling a deeper reality beyond?¹

And in his book, *The Mysterious Universe*, Jeans suggested that recent scientific discoveries show that:

the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality. *The universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.* Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as *the creator and governor of the realm of matter*— not of course our individual minds, but the Mind in which the atoms (out of which our individual minds have grown) exist as thoughts.”²

And in his lecture to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1934, entitled, “The New World Picture of Modern Science”: he said:

The new physics obviously carries many philosophical implications, but these are not easy to describe in words. They cannot be summed up in the crisp, snappy, sentences beloved of scientific journalism, such as that materialism is dead, or, that matter is no more. The situation is rather that both materialism and matter need to be redefined in the light of our new knowledge. When this has been done, the materialist must decide for himself whether the only kind of materialism which science now permits can be suitably labeled materialism, and whether what remains of matter should be labeled as matter or as something else; it is mainly a question of terminology.

“What remains is in any case very different from the full-blooded matter and the forbidding materialism of the Victorian scientist. His objective and material universe is proven to consist of little more than constructs of our own minds. To this extent, then, modern physics has moved in the direction of *philosophic idealism*. Mind and matter, if not proved to be of similar nature, are at least found to be ingredients of one single system. There is no longer room for the kind of dualism which has haunted philosophy since the days of Descartes.”³

What then is Matter? We can easily state what it is not: it is *not* a phenomenal substance made of solid indestructible particles; we know that! But what it *is* is not so easy to say. ‘Mind’, ‘Matter’, ‘Energy’, ‘Space’— these are names we have given to certain elements of this kaleidoscopic panorama of mental and physical perceptions that we experience; but it is no longer possible to say where one begins and the other ends, for it now appears that there is but one indivisible reality— “one system”, as Sir James Jeans describes it—of which Mind and Matter are both ingredients. Scientists today don’t know what to call it, and simply refer to it as “the

universal continuum”. Those of a mystic bent do not hesitate to call it “God”, and to say, “We live in God. He is the only one, and He contains everything. He is alive and consciously awake, and everything moves and acts in unison with His will.”

“Matter”, it turns out, is a misnomer; there is only the one indivisible system, or God—appearing as distinct objects, as quanta, as scientists, as their laboratories, as distant stars, as bursts of celestial light. There is nothing that is not God. He is both Mind and the apparent objects of the world that we once thought of as Matter. Your body too is God; but more importantly, He is the very consciousness that is aware *as you!* And it is that very awareness that is capable of *directly experiencing* through His illuminating Grace the clear and amazing truth that all this is God!

The question we now have to ask is: ‘If Matter and Mind are in fact indistinguishable ingredients in one indivisible system, then how does materialism differ from idealism?’ The long-held belief in the opposition of these two positions now appears to have been nothing but a long-held misunderstanding of the nature of Matter. The two positions, if not yet in total agreement, are at least no longer in clear opposition! But does this mean that, since materialism and idealism now seem to be compatible, science and mysticism are therefore also reconcilable?

No. Science and Mysticism are two very narrowly defined and mutually exclusive categories of knowledge. Science deals in tangibly objective sense data and does not comfortably extend to less tangible subjective mental states. The very definition of science limits its focus to only that which may be empirically verified. And that requirement assures that science will probably always tend to have a phenomenal bias and will grant little credence to noumena experienced in a subjective and unverifiable state of awareness.

Science and Mysticism represent knowledge obtained through two radically different methodologies: they can come up with common results, and, although unlikely, can agree on their implications; but they will always remain divergent methods of knowledge-gathering. Science represents the ordering of *external* observations of phenomena perceived by the senses in the normal waking state; mysticism represents the *internal* observation of noumena intuitively perceived by the mind in a highly extraordinary, but well documented, contemplative state. They are really two different *kinds* of knowledge, referred to as *science* and *gnosis*. *Science* is from the Latin *scientia* (knowledge), derived from *scire* (to know), and usually denotes the organization of objectively verifiable sense experience. *Gnosis* is a Greek

word, also meaning knowledge, but denoting an inwardly “revealed” knowledge unavailable to empirical science.

The difficulty is that advocates of phenomenally based science not only refuse to acknowledge the validity and relevance of *gnosis*, but do not even recognize the possibility of its existence. Today, Science is still so steeped in the antiquated materialistic perspective (based on a false understanding of what ‘matter’ is) that scientists and, through their influence, “educated” members of the public, routinely regard all those who hold to an idealistic view as unfortunate misguided members of the superstitious, ignorant and uneducated masses. Those who are labeled as *mystics* are held in especial disdain and are the subjects of frequent ridicule in our materialist-oriented culture. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, colleges and universities around the nation have been instilling this arrogant prejudice in the youth who flock to them for their one-sided technological educations. One has to wonder if we are not due at this time in our history for a return of the cultural pendulum to a fresh idealism, one that is informed by both science *and* gnosis.

It seems to me that we are now at a crucial period in our cultural history when the valid findings of Science need to be balanced with the equally valid findings of Gnosis. The two must be acknowledged as correctives to one another, as coequals in the endeavor to accumulate meaningful and relevant knowledge of our world and the nature of our own existence. It is necessary to make a real attempt to come to terms with these two very different ways of knowing, to bring clarity to the present differences between the worldview which each promulgates, to point out the areas of possible rapprochement, and perhaps light the way to a universally shared recognition of Science and Gnosis as *complementary* aspects of knowledge in a greatly expanded vision of the vast potentialities of human experience.

NOTES:

1. Sir James Jeans, *Physics And Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1942; a full reprint of this book may be found at:
http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/Jeans_Part_I.html
2. Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*, New York, Macmillan Co., 1931, pp. 83-84.
3. Sir James Jeans, from his address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, entitled, *The New World Picture of Modern Science*. A transcript of this talk may be found at:
http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/BA_1934_J2.html

II. Where Consciousness Comes From

For a long time now, the emphasis in Western education has been on physics—on empirical knowledge of physical reality in general and of subatomic matter in particular. This tended to diminish the attention given to the existence of non-material, non-objective aspects of reality, to the extent that such subjective realities as mind, thought, and consciousness were scarcely regarded as existing at all. Today, however, these subjective realities are not only acknowledged but studied and researched as valid subjects of interest. And since consciousness appears in humans to be primary to thought or mind, various branches of science have focused on discovering the origin of consciousness. At first glance, the circumstantial evidence for the appearance of consciousness in simple life-forms would seem to imply the existence of consciousness going back, at least, to the earliest Paleolithic times. However, some contemporary neurobiologists have reached the conclusion that consciousness only came into existence with the advanced evolution of biological forms and is a product (an epiphenomenon) of complex neural activity in the brain; and that, being a manifestation of a material process, consciousness itself is nothing more than a *material* phenomenon.

There are others, however, who assert the primacy of Consciousness as the source and substance of the universal creative energy of which the entire universe of matter (including brains) is constituted. The strong inferential evidence of an intelligent source for the origin of the cosmos would seem to imply that consciousness prefigured even the Big Bang. This position goes back thousands of years and is reflected in the various religious views that posit a conscious Creator as the originator of the cosmos. It occurs also in the Platonist philosophical tradition as well. That position was later reiterated in the philosophical view of René Descartes (1596-1650), who asserted that mind (spirit) and matter were two separate *kinds* of existents comprising man—both emanating from God (the divine Mind), but with differing characteristics. This was the basis of the well-known philosophy of Cartesian dualism, which holds that these two categories are inviolably separate and distinct entities: one, the Divine uncreated part of man (the mind or soul); the other, the divinely created form-manifesting part (the body). Though this philosophy offered no essential modification to earlier Platonist thought, it was the product of a careful rational introspection that proved appealing and persuasive to many of its time.

The overwhelming scientific materialism of the nineteenth century found no place, however, for the *soul*, and presumed to repair the conceptual mind-body split with the belief that all that exists is solely material, including mind; and that such a thing as ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ does not exist. This seems

still to be the position of contemporary materialist science. The scientific thesis (though rarely formally expressed) continues to be that there is no God, no soul, and that mind and consciousness are merely manifestations of the material activities of neurons and synapses in the brain.

In describing the origin of the cosmos, today's materialist scientists start with the assumption of the *a priori* existence of a material object called a 'singularity', in which an almost infinitely dense amount of mass/energy became somehow crammed into an infinitesimally minute speck of potentiality. Then, due to some random quantum fluctuations, that mass/energy burst its bounds, exploding outwardly to become the expanding universe of space, time, matter and invisible forces. An alternate theory holds that mass/energy spontaneously evolved from empty space, and subsequently burst into manifest existence. These are the main theoretical pictures that current science paints. Scientists of a materialist bent do not even question what produced the supposed singularity, or how and why mass/energy simply appeared from nothing. Furthermore, these materialistically inclined scientists are placed by this theory in the uncomfortable position of being required to explain how conscious life emerged or evolved from the cooled remains of this boiling soup of inanimate primal mass/energy.

Today, in the early part of this twenty-first century, despite the implausibility of their theory of the origin of the universe, scientists—Physicists, Cosmologists, and Neuroscientists—are busily pursuing the assumption that consciousness somehow arose a few million years ago as an 'epiphenomenon' of the self-organizing activity of brain cells and neurons; i.e., consciousness just popped out of biological tissue by some as yet unknown process of spontaneous manifestation, and is essentially a phenomenon that arose from the neurological activity of biological matter. Here is a statement of that theory by John Searle, a well-known contemporary professor of philosophy, who states that:

Consciousness is a biological feature of the human and certain animal brains. It is caused by neurological processes and is as much a part of the natural biological order as any other biological feature. ¹

Others, more cautious, simply say that:

Consciousness indubitably exists, and it is connected to the brain in some intelligible way, but the nature of this connection necessarily eludes us. ²

Another says:

I doubt we will ever be able to show that consciousness is a logically necessary accompaniment to any material process, however complex. The most that we can ever hope to show is that, empirically, processes of a certain kind and complexity appear to have it.³

Nonetheless, over the years leading up to the present, little progress has been made in the attempt to formulate a detailed and satisfactory theory of the material origin of consciousness. In the beginning of a recent book of memoirs (2006) by Nobel prize-winning Neurobiologist, Erich Kandel, a hopeful and promising picture of future progress is offered:

The new biology of mind ...posits that consciousness is a biological process that will eventually be explained in terms of molecular signaling pathways used by interacting populations of nerve cells. ... The new science of mind attempts to penetrate the mystery of consciousness, including the ultimate mystery: how each person's brain creates the consciousness of a unique self and the sense of free will.⁴

But then, in the latter part of the book, he admits that:

Understanding Consciousness is by far the most challenging task confronting science. ...Some scientists and philosophers of mind continue to find consciousness so inscrutable that they fear it can never be explained in physical terms.⁵

What we do *not* understand is 'the hard problem' of consciousness—the mystery of how neural activity gives rise to subjective experience.⁶

...Biological science can readily explain how the properties of a particular type of matter arise from the objective properties of the molecules of which it is made. What science lacks are rules for explaining how *subjective* properties (consciousness) arise from the properties of objects (interconnected nerve cells).⁷

As I have stated repeatedly in the past, this search of materialistic science is a misguided one, and can only lead to a dead end; for in order to understand how consciousness arises in biological forms one must put first things first: consciousness does not inexplicably arise from neural activity in the brain; Consciousness is the intrinsic nature of the Divine Mind in which this universe exists, and that very Consciousness is implicit in the entire

universal manifestation, being all-pervasive, and therefore naturally becoming evident in the evolutionary development of earth's biosphere. Once we understand that all forms in the universe are manifestations of the one universal Consciousness, we will then be able to better understand our own nature and understand our intimate relationship to the Consciousness of the universal Mind. The acknowledgement of the universality and divinity of our own conscious Self will eventually require a radical transformation in the thinking of all men and women of science which, though it may take centuries in which to unfold, will usher in a truly golden era of Enlightenment.

Today, we look back on the contemporaries of Copernicus with the advantage of hindsight and wonder how the intelligentsia of that time could possibly have failed to perceive that the earth travels about the sun, and not vice versa. Once the truth is known, the errors of the past seem so obviously unsupportable. Once the light shines, the preceding darkness is clearly recognized. One day, when it is readily recognized and acknowledged that the world of space, time, matter and energy arise from the Divine Consciousness, men will wonder how it could possibly be that once seemingly intelligent people thought that consciousness was an epiphenomenal product of biological matter.

It must one day be universally understood that Consciousness is the primary, the original, reality—beyond time and space, and all manifestation; It is the eternal Ground and Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting its essence—as a dreaming mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting their essence. Consciousness is not contained within matter, nor is it the property of any individual being. It is not produced by any material process; but rather is the underlying Source of all matter and all processes. It is the fundamental nature of Being, the foundation of the phenomenal universe, the Light of the Projector which flashes its images in the space-time dimension which we know as 'the world'. The projected human images on this screen are unable to perceive that Light, for they are in It and of It. They can only come to know that eternal Consciousness through the gift of a divinely produced revelation by which they will discover that their own consciousness, their soul, is in essence the one Divine Self, the one eternal Consciousness that is the sole Being in all existence.

In that revelation they will realize that the phenomenal universe is made of a primal energy that is radiated or projected by the one Divine Consciousness.⁸ We may find a clue to this understanding by pondering the nature of our own minds, since, as has often been said, we are images of God. Consider the nature of our dreams: the consciousness of the dream-

character is really the consciousness of the dreamer, is it not? And what of the body of the dream-character? Is it not a projected image produced by the dreamer's mind, and consisting also of consciousness? By analyzing this clear analogy, one may begin to have a notion of how this universe came to be. But, of course, in order to know it fully, one must realize it for oneself; one's mind must be illumined by the eternal Light itself and drawn into Its hidden depths. To obtain that grace, all men focus their minds on Him through prayer and contemplative longing, and He shines His Light on whom He will.

NOTES:

1. John Searle, professor of philosophy at U.C. Berkeley, quoted by Richard Restak, *Mysteries of the Mind*, Washington D.C., National Geographic, 2000; pp. 71-72.
2. Colin McGinn, *The Mysterious Flame*, quoted in R. Restak, *Ibid.*; p. 85.
3. Jeffrey Satinover, *The Quantum Brain*, N.Y., John Wiley & Sons, 2001; p. 220.
4. Eric R. Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind*, N.Y., W.W. Norton & Co., 2006; pp. 9-11.
5. Kandel, *Ibid.*; p. 377.
6. Kandel, *Ibid.*; p. 382.
7. Kandel, *Ibid.*; p. 381.
8. When God revealed Himself to me, I realized that He breathes the universe into existence and withdraws it again in a repeated cycle. In recent years, after this article was originally written in 2006, I have speculated in various writings that some fourteen billion years ago the divine breath of the Creator became manifest in time and space as a burst of high frequency electromagnetic energy, or radiation—at levels of intensity in the *gamma* range or above—which scientists currently refer to as 'the Big Bang'. This theory seems to me a likely one—much more likely than the materialist theories of contemporary science—and is explained at length and in detail in several of my later articles, including 'The Phenomenon of Light', 'How God Made The World', 'Recent Theological Developments', and 'First Light'—all of which may be found in *The Mystic's Vision*, Volume One & Two, downloadable at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

III. A Theory of Consciousness

I.

Let us discuss consciousness. Over three thousand years ago, sages of Egypt and Israel proclaimed that life and consciousness was inspired or otherwise instilled into man by God; and that this ‘breath’ or ‘spark’ of God’s Consciousness constituted one’s “soul”. Some others, like Plato and Plotinus, thought that God’s conscious “Soul” was not infused exclusively into man, but into the entire universe, guiding and regulating every aspect of it from within. To this day, these age-old concepts constitute the framework of our theology and the imagery of our religious imagination. Our minds continue even now to operate in these established patterns, utilizing these ancient conceptualizations, to which we have become habituated for so long.

But, as we have already suggested, there is another, perhaps more accurate, way of viewing the permeation of man and matter by God’s conscious Spirit: not by seeing it as an “infusion” or “inspiration”, but rather as the ‘containment’ of the phenomenal universe within the one Mind. Consider how our own individual human consciousness permeates our thoughts and dream-images. Our thoughts and mental images are permeated by our consciousness because these thoughts and images are contained *within* our minds. May we not conclude that, likewise, the Consciousness of God, the Divine Mind, permeates the universe because the universe is contained *within* God? After all, where else would a Divine Mind’s creations exist but *within* Himself? ¹

There is one Consciousness. It is the Consciousness of the One Mind. And every object in this phenomenal universe exists within that one conscious Mind, is constituted of that Mind, and partakes of that one Consciousness to the degree that it is capable. The various objects of this manifest universe move and operate, not by individual forces or laws of physics, but in and by that One.² When the individual mind becomes immersed in that one Consciousness, united with it, one is able to see that: “all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” Who, then, is doing what? In Him we live and move. In Him one Will operates throughout. And we, mere dust motes dancing in His sunbeam, are swallowed and encompassed in His light.

The Divine Mind, which is the source of Consciousness, is beyond time and space, and all manifestation; It is the eternal Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting its essence—as a dreaming mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting their essence. Consciousness is not the property of matter, or of any individual

being. It is not produced by any material process; but rather is a Divine stream of Intelligence filling the entire universe. It is the fundamental nature of Being, the foundation of the phenomenal universe, and the light of awareness filling it.

By following our own consciousness back to its Source, we are able to discover the one Self.³ That Self is God. He is the one Source of the material universe and He is the life and awareness pervading it. But, of course, we must come to know Him for ourselves. Our soul/mind must be illumined by the eternal Light itself and drawn into Its hidden depths. We do not come to know God through arguments and proofs, but by grace. And though we may associate grace with this or that religion, it is universal and originates in God. To obtain that grace, all men focus their minds on Him through prayer and contemplative longing, and He shines His Light on whom He will. Those who have received that grace, realize beyond all doubt that their bodies are His light-forms, and that they are animated and made conscious by the all-pervading presence of His living Consciousness.

The personal consciousness that we regard as our “soul” derives its existence and its inherent bliss from the Consciousness of the Divine Mind in whom it exists. But souls *do* have a semblance of individual existence. While the Divine Mind, the Self, is universal and without characteristics of Its own, It manifests as a multitude of individual psyches, or souls. Each of these individual souls possesses its own unique characteristics and evolves from birth to birth toward the knowledge and awareness of its one true eternal Identity. The individual soul is therefore a pretended, or imagined, identity of the Self, whose only actual and realizable Identity is the one indivisible Mind.

Each individual soul is confined to a body that defines the extent of its individual being in the spatio-temporal universe. We regard what is not within that limitation as “outside” of us and “other” than us. But God has no body or any limit to His extent. There is no “outside” of Him; no “other”. Even if He were to create an outside, it would be within Him. God is an infinite, eternal Mind; He transcends space and time. Space and time are His creations, and they exist within Him. *Whatever* He creates is within Him. We, and the entire universe, exist within Him. Our own minds are limited; each one has its own perspective and considers itself to be the “subject”; and what is external to it is regarded as the “object”. But in God’s divine Consciousness, subject and object are one. He is unlimited and undivided. His Consciousness pervades everything and everyone.

We must understand that the separation of body and soul, of Matter and Spirit, exists only in the temporal world of appearance. In the Eternal (the Divine Mind), this duality, this separation, does not exist. In the Divine Mind, they are indistinguishable. Like water and ice in a glass, they are separable in appearance though they are one in essence. Those who have ‘seen’ into their own eternal reality have realized that their body and soul, their consciousness and their form, are one living reality in God. The mystic, therefore, while experiencing his identification with the Divine Mind, experiences himself, not simply as Soul, but as an illimitable awareness that is *both* universal Soul *and* universal Energy/Matter. In the Divine Mind, the unmanifest Light and the manifested Light together form all that is. Ultimately, they are one, as they both derive from the same One, and are resolved in the same One.

We are made of the Consciousness and Energy of God. His Consciousness manifests as our conscious soul, and His Energy is sent forth as light to establish the material universe at the ‘Big Bang’, ‘Big Burst’, ‘Great Radiance’, or whatever you wish to call it. And the ultimately true Origin, Source, and Father of that field of Consciousness and Energy, is the One. All that exists is His. It is His projection, His exuberant radiance. Nothing else exists but that One. Our sense of ‘I’ too is Him. ‘I’ am the one and only ‘I’ that is. My consciousness is His consciousness. My body, as well as the whole universe, is His manifest form.

I and the Father are one.

If you ask a beam of sunlight, “Who are you?” it will answer, “I am the Sun.” If you ask a wave on the sea, “Who are you?” it will answer, “I am the ocean.” If you ask a soul, “Who are you?” it must answer, “I am the One in all. I am He who alone exists now and forever. I am the light of the one Sun; I am a wave on the one Sea; I am a living breath of the one Life. I am in all that is seen or unseen. I am the One in all.”

Jesus said, “I am the Light that is over all things. I am all: From me all has come forth, and to me all returns. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.”⁴

Unfortunately, there are many who believe that this is a truth that applies only to one unique historical figure; but it is a *universal truth*, a truth for all, and a truth to be realized: *I* am not merely this body, not just this spark of consciousness, nor merely the entire manifested universe; I am the Source of the universe, and the universe itself. I am both the subject and the object. There is nothing else here but I AM. Listen to what the great Shankaracharya said:

The fool thinks, 'I am the body'. The intelligent man thinks, 'I am an individual soul united with the body'. But the wise man, in the greatness of his knowledge and spiritual discrimination, sees the Self as [the only] reality, and thinks, 'I am Brahman'.⁵

I am that Brahman, one without a second, the ground of all existences. I make all things manifest. I give form to all things. I am within all things, yet nothing can taint me. I am eternal, pure, unchangeable, absolute.

I am that Brahman, one without a second. Maya, the many-seeming, is merged in me. I am beyond the grasp of thought, the essence of all things. I am the truth. I am knowledge. I am infinite. I am absolute bliss.

I am beyond action; [I am] the reality which cannot change. I have neither part nor form. I am absolute. I am eternal. Nothing sustains me, I stand alone. I am one without a second.

I am the soul of the universe. I am all things, and above all things. I am one without a second. I am pure consciousness, single and universal. I am joy. I am life everlasting.⁶

You and I—we are alive in God. Become awake and sense Him—within you, around you, constituting your body and your awareness, the earth, the heavens. This ocean of existence is His. Nothing exists outside of God. To know God is to know one's Self. It is to know the originating Mind of the Father, the One. It is to know the Source of all existence, the Source of all consciousness, and the Source of all bliss. What will you do with this knowledge? Praise Him in your thoughts, and in your words and in your actions. Find your delight in Him—seeing only Him, loving only Him, praising only 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 unwillingness
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,
 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.

II.

There is one spiritual issue on which science, secular society, and the various religious traditions all agree: the freedom and accountability of the human will. The ancient Jews were keenly aware of the fact that it was man's free will that allowed for the disobedience of God's will, as illustrated in their Biblical 'garden of Eden' story. Later, Christians declared that God sacrificed His own son on the cross to redeem 'believers' from that earlier 'Fall from grace'. Other spiritual teachers, such as the Buddha, Shankara and Plotinus, also postulate the human 'will to separateness' as the instigator of human suffering. Here, for example, is Plotinus' take on man's Fall:

What can it be that has brought the souls to forget the Father, God, and, though [they are] members of the Divine and entirely of that world, to ignore at once themselves and It? The evil that has overtaken them has its source in self-will, in the entry into the sphere of process, and in the primal differentiation with the desire for self-ownership. They conceived a pleasure in this freedom and largely indulged their own motion. Thus, they were hurried down the wrong path, and in the end, drifting further and further, they came to lose even the thought of their origin in the Divine.⁷

The Jews, Christians, the Buddha, Shankara, Plotinus—all put the blame for human suffering upon the separative will of the individual. And rightly so, no doubt; for in the Divine Itself, there is no suffering. Had the One no hand, then, in the creation of the defiant soul? Must we not wonder if anything at all comes to pass that is not of His doing? The soul's ability to will freely—had He no hand in that? May it not be that our embodied existence in this spatio-temporal world is also His doing? Is it not possible that this going forth into the school of separate existence is, as the Vedantists assert, His play or sport? And is it not possible that we are sent forth into this material school to prove and improve, to be tested and to evolve in His knowledge, in His joy? It is indeed we who create suffering through ignorance and error; but it is He who comprises the essence of this soul with its capacity for willing, and it is He who fashioned this universal school for the soul's correcting. Can we imagine that He was ignorant of the outcome?

We are but waves on His infinite ocean; and while the wave's suffering of separation from the ocean might seem real enough to the wave, it is actually based on illusion. Once the wave realizes its true nature, all suffering disappears. We are in a similar situation: unknowing, we suffer; knowing, we rejoice. It is not existence that constitutes suffering, but existence in delusion. When we awake to our Divine existence, all suffering vanishes. Is this not the message of all who have seen the truth?

All creatures, down to the smallest microbes, and up to the great apes, have the power of will; but only the creature known as man has the ability to know his Source and Ground as Spirit, and strive to overcome his merely fleshly impulses. Is that circumstance only accidental, or is there a purposeful evolution at work here? Man is the culmination of God's purposes; and only he is able to find within himself the eternal One. It's true that, in following his own appetites and cravings, man brings himself to know suffering; but even though the expanse presented before him is broad and vast and his opportunities many, experience leads him inexorably to wisdom; the Divine in him leads him eventually to Itself. The soul, being of Divine lineage, cannot long refuse the lure and fragrance of its homeland. By its own power, or rather by the power of the Divine in it, the soul stirs and awakes in its proper time, follows the trail of bliss leading it home, and at last is illumined by the inner light of God to know the One in whom it lives, and from whom it has never been separated.

The separate identity you thought was your own, the body and soul you thought was yours, is in fact God's. There is no yours. That illusory separate identity, or individual ego, common to all embodied souls, is an extremely subtle and deceptive mirage. It masks the nondual reality, and it is dispelled

only by the grace of God. This ego is a veil blinding us to and separating us from the awareness of our true Self, our Godhood; and it is a veil only He, the Divine Mind, can lift.

What *is* this ego that stands to block our view of eternity? How impossible it is to comprehend! It can't be grasped or dispelled or even held up to the light of knowledge. It seems that it is an imposed ignorance that automatically accompanies embodiment. In effect, it is our Lord who casts this dust in our eyes, blinding us to our true eternal Self; and He alone has the power to dispel it. No matter how we try to escape the ego's limiting perspective, we are steadfastly caught in its grip. It separates us out from our limitless being, squeezing us into a narrow individuality, hiding from us God's face and our own divinity in Him. We can only raise our eyes to Him in love and longing, praying that He will soon return us home once again to His all-inclusive awareness.

God's Grace cannot be earned or deserved. It is freely given and may descend upon you at any time. It is experienced as an awakening to the Divine presence in yourself and in the world, and it fills your heart with a new love and joy, stirring your mind to a new understanding of the spiritual nature of life. When God's Grace awakens you, your mind begins to turn gratefully to God, and a physical pleasure, like a chill rising up the spine, occasionally reminds you of His inward presence. In your desire to draw nearer to God in worshipful devotion, you spend long hours in contemplation and prayer. And in the moment when you become completely surrendered in silence to that Divine presence, He may lift from your mind the veil of separation and reveal that you and He are one. In that moment you will know the reality of God's immediate and all-embracing presence, the untranslatable, inconceivable, gladness of unlimited being that requires no explanation, no concepts, no theories, but clearly and self-evidently *is*. And you will live the rest of your life in the blissful awareness of the Truth.

NOTES:

1. That we exist in God is not a new idea. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (written circa 500 B.C.E.), the Lord, Krishna, says, "By Me, in my unmanifested form, are all things in this universe pervaded. All beings exist in Me; I do not exist in them." (*Bhagavad Gita*: 9:4); and in the Christian scriptures, the apostle Paul says, "In Him we live and move and have our being." (*Acts* 17:28). The entire universe exists within God. He produces the appearance of universal matter from Himself, within Himself. And while it appears that the Spirit and matter are two substances intermingled, it is all only Himself, and so He remains one Being forever. He empowers the universal

appearance within Himself, and the dynamic universe continually evolves to more fully express the glory of His Being.

2. The classical ‘mechanistic’ way of conceiving the universe regarded all the things, particles, and individual beings as separate independent objects and creatures that interacted in accordance with physical ‘laws’. The illumined way of conceiving of the universe regards every particle, object, and living being as inseparably united in an integral conscious continuum of which all particles, things, and beings are constituted. Everything that once appeared to be random (the propitious outcomes of merely blind forces)—including the *quanta* that seemed to be governed by laws of probability—is now seen to be acting in mutually harmonious accord within an interdependent whole conceived and contained within the one Mind. “All things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.”

3. The most amazing and most wonderful aspect of this new way of seeing the universe is the recognition that every individual mind is a limited version of the one Mind and is capable not only of establishing an open connection to the one Divine Mind, but of actually experiencing its identity with/as that one all-pervasive Mind.

4. Saying of Jesus, from *The Gospel of Thomas*, 77.

5. Shankaracharya, *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda & Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 58.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

7. Plotinus, *Enneads*, V.I.I: “*The Three Initial Hypostases*”.

IV. 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. 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 usually refrain from considering. But for those of us who have been privileged to *experience* Eternity directly, 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. The cosmos emanates from the divine Mind just 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, who, once awakened, returns to the awareness of its true source and Self.

This projected 'real' universe of time and 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 knowing, by the creator's grace, our everlasting Self beyond time, while happily 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.

* * *

3. UNIVERSAL CREATION

I. I Have But Breathed—Part One

*I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged
and set in order once again.
A million worlds begin and end in every breath,
and in this breathing, all things are sustained.¹*

"There are many ancient stories by men of early civilizations which tell of the creation of the universe by a great God, who fashioned it by His hands as a human potter might fashion a pot. But these are just the old stories of ancient men that stubbornly persist in today's world. There are contemporary intelligent people, known as 'scientists', who theorize that the matter that makes up this universe somehow existed as the original Source, prior to anything else, and which naturally evolved over time into the far-flung suns, planets, and eventual life-forms. But these learned theorists have got it all backwards: I am first; I have always existed. I am the great Mind whom you call "God". And it is my breath of Energy that makes up this material universe. By "Energy", I mean Light energy. My breath is Light. It is what you call "Gamma radiation", the most powerful force in the electromagnetic spectrum. That high-frequency Light is my own, and it is by that Light that I have created your world.

"For a long time now, the belief that the universe is simply a random formation of disparate material wave-particles, arising spontaneously in the void of space-time, is a belief that has captured the imagination of the reasoned men who practice science. But they are mistaken. The Energy that appears as the material wave-particles that constitute this world is neither random nor spontaneous, nor is it produced by natural processes; the world of matter—in fact, everything in the universe—has come from my conscious breath of Light-energy. Periodically, I release an abundance of Light energy, which rapidly transforms into this multiform universe. The last occurrence of this Energy release was around fourteen billion earth-years ago, in what you refer to as 'the great Radiance', or 'the Big Bang'. That Light-Energy which was released contains my living will, which forms and guides the entire evolutionary process of material existence, from the initial gamma radiation to the subsequent production of billions of wave-particles that congregate to become the structured worlds and living forms that are manifested to express my multifaceted being."²

NOTES:

1. This verse is from 'The Song of The Self' which appears in Swami Abhayananda, *The Supreme Self*, Atma Books, South Fallsburg, N.Y., 1984.
2. It must be noted that not everyone believes that the universe was 'created' either by a divine Light or any other means. There are those like Shankaracharya, the 9th century Indian philosopher, and his present-day counterparts, such as Sri Nisargadatta and Ramesh Balsekar, who deny that an objective universe exists; i.e., they deny that there is really a universe that is created by God and perceived by everyone. They believe, rather, that the one Consciousness-Bliss produces in each and every mind the illusion of a universe that does not actually exist anywhere but in the mind. Most of the traditional Upanishadic rishis, as well as the author of *The Bhagavad Gita*, have a different theory: they hold the opinion that God has created an objective universe through His Power of Creation (variously called Shakti, Maya, Ishvara). And so, the question is: 'Do we create in our minds an illusory universe of objects that does not really exist, OR has God, the one divine Consciousness, created a universe out of an insubstantial 'stuff' that simply *appears* to us to be substantial?' Which of these theories of an illusory universe seems to be supported by the observations of science? Scientists, like philosophers, are divided, since it is not possible to know which of these theories is correct, or if either one is correct.

However, while neither the theory of a God-produced 'objective' universe made of God's own substance, or the theory of a God-given human faculty by which a 'subjective' universe is produced in our imagination is empirically demonstrable, the fact remains that both of these theories lead ultimately to the same overall conclusion: Both theories assert that the universal appearance is produced by the power of the one Consciousness-Bliss; and that whether we live in an objective universe or a subjective universe, that universe is essentially illusory and that the one and only permanent reality is the one eternal Consciousness-Bliss, which is our own eternal Identity.

Similarly, there are those who believe in the temporal existence and evolution of individual souls; and there are those who believe that there are no such individual souls, but that it is always only the undivided nondual Consciousness-Bliss alone that we are and misinterpret as a soul. And here again, whether or not individual souls actually exist in the temporal universe is ultimately irrelevant; for in both theories, our only permanent and everlasting reality and Identity is the nondual Consciousness-Bliss, and the existence and evolution of transient individual souls or the non-existence of such individual souls does not alter that ultimate fact.

Nonetheless, the controversy continues: One of the contending advocates, Stanley Sobottka, the late university physicist, was highly enamored of the philosophy espoused by Shankara and more recently by Sri Nisargadatta and his disciple, Ramesh Balsekar, and he embodied that philosophy in his

online book, called *A Course In Consciousness* (www.courseinconsciousness.org).

II. I Have But Breathed—Part Two

*I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged
and set in order once again.
A million worlds begin and end in every breath,
and in this breathing, all things are sustained.*

You may not believe that the (italicized) words above are the words of God; you may not believe that the testimonies of the mystics are true; you may not even believe that there are such things as *spiritual* or *mystical* experiences; but you must admit that the idea that the universe originated through the ‘Divine Manifestation’ of Light is still a tremendously appealing theory.

The theory of Divine Manifestation—which can never be accepted as ‘science’—holds that the Originator of our universe is a single eternal Mind—conscious, omniscient, and omnipotent—that has the power to emanate a powerful burst of electromagnetic radiation (Light), which It does periodically over the course of billions of years in a manner similar to the alternation of one’s breath—at first expelled, and then withdrawn—in an unending cycle. That Light, a Divine Energy, manifests as electromagnetic radiation of a very high frequency—well into the gamma range ¹—the expansion of which initiates the direction and sequential nature of time, as well as the formation of matter and antimatter wave-particles. As the Light expands and cools, it begins its almost magical transformation from Energy to Matter. The explanation of how and when the particular elements of the universe were formed from that point onward is a matter reserved for the qualified practitioners of empirical physical science.

Light (EM radiation) is the medium by which Spirit becomes Matter. It is the transformative “substance” that bridges the gap between the Divine Mind and the phenomenal universe. Light is Energy, and Energy (at its highest frequencies) is transformable into material wave-particles. In its initial abundant profusion, that Light expanded as countless colliding photons that literally transformed into quarks and electrons, which then combined to form protons and neutrons, the atoms that are the building-blocks of the stars and planets which comprise our universe. And yet, despite all our advances in scientific knowledge about electromagnetic energy over the centuries, there is still much about light that remains a great

mystery to us. On the other hand, the Source of that Light—the Spirit, the Divine Mind—is wholly unknown; It is not an entity or agency that is even recognized by science to exist.

Science is a method of human enquiry that recognizes only empirical—that is to say, demonstrable—evidence, and Spirit is *not* demonstrable by any means that register as sense data. Spirit is wholly noumenon; It is not a phenomenon that can be physically demonstrated. This is why science, to be science, is unable to investigate the theory of Divine Manifestation as an explanation for the existence of our world, even though it is clearly the most obvious, the most reasonable, explanation for the origin of matter that has been proposed. Those who practice ‘science’ are precluded by their method of enquiry from acknowledging the role of the Divine Mind in the creation of the universe; and that is why science in the twenty-first century is mired in the embarrassing quandary of having to nominate only *material* causal agents for the role of “originator” of the Big Bang. What a shame!

For many, however, the theory of Divine Manifestation is a theory of the origin of the universe that provides not only an explanation of the origin of matter, but also the only reasonable explanation for the existence of life and consciousness as universal qualities inherent in the Divine Mind. This theory also accounts for the many apparently fine-tuned conditions in the early universe that provided so presciently for the possibility of the existence of living creatures, and it serves, above all, as a much-needed cultural narrative of foundational understanding, replacing the old well-worn, but long discounted, Creation myths handed down through the ancient scriptural texts. Happily, this theory of the Divine Manifestation of Light is not only a believable explanation of the origin of the universe but is *the only* reasonable and plausible explanation of how the universe and all life began. It is the one explanation that is able to strengthen the people’s confidence in God’s presence and providence in their lives today.

NOTES:

1. The highest frequency radiation, Gamma radiation, is radiation that reaches a frequency of 10 exahertz, or 10^{19} Hz, with a wavelength less than 10 picometers, and energies from 400 GeV (billion electron volts) to 10 TeV (trillion electron Volts).

III. First Light

We earthlings tend to associate light with our Sun, but what of the *First Light*, the light which in the beginning produced all of the suns and planets within the entire universe? That original Light was an energy whose source transcended our present phenomenal universe, since this universe did not yet exist. It was an energy sufficient to produce by its self-conversion to particulate matter the phenomenal appearance of an immense and dynamic universe, a universe made solely of that First Light.

That sudden burst of First Light that signaled ‘the beginning’ nearly fourteen billion years ago was no mere run of the mill light-show; it was a teeming, roiling rush of the most intensely furious maelstrom of concentrated energy imaginable. The light of a billion hydrogen bombs could not begin to compare with it. Indeed, all of the mass-energy that goes to make up our current universe was contained within that burst of light. It permeates our universe as that original energy, and also as every one of the aggregated material wave-particles into which it converted. That *First Light* is Itself this vast illusion we call ‘the universe’ and can only be described and explained as the Creative Power of the Divine Being.

Who else could have produced such a powerful and potent force? Does He not deserve to be regarded as the one Divinity, the Creator of the cosmos and all that exists within it? And yet *how* could it possibly have been done? Only He knows, and it is doubtful that we shall ever be able to comprehend the nature of His abilities and powers. Suffice it to say that a vibratory energy was produced from within Himself that spread as waves which human creatures refer to as ‘electromagnetic (EM) radiation’. This radiation covers a broad spectrum, from the highest measured frequencies to the lowest. The highest frequency radiation is called ‘gamma radiation’, and it is at this highest frequency that EM radiation is capable of converting from radiant energy to mass, i.e., to matter.

The light that spreads as waves of energy can also appear to us as particles (photons), strangely enough. We can measure the frequency of these waves, but we don’t know exactly what it is that’s waving or vibrating. The medium through which these waves of light propagate is also unknown, though we know its constant rate of movement. And yet physicists talk about Light as though they know what it is, pretending that it is explicable according to commonly understood physical principles; but, of course, it is an absolute mystery. And since this light—this electromagnetic radiation—

is the foundational reality underlying all phenomena, the fountainhead of all that is manifest as this universe, we are led to acknowledge that our being and the being of the phenomenal universe is also an absolute mystery, despite all our pretenses to the contrary.

And what of life and consciousness? These are undoubtedly the very qualities of God! The infinite expression of life, consciousness, and bliss: that is what God is! And we, His Mind-born creatures, live within Him, and partake of His Being. No need to know much more than that. In Him we live and move; one Mind alone, self-replicated in myriad forms, comprises all. In Him this Light-born show evolves and runs its course, each fragile bubble of awareness the one inseparable Self entire.

And as each fragile bubble of awareness evolves, the desire to know its source and reality increases, until at last each delicate bubble bursts its confines and comes to know its unlimited and deathless Self. No longer contained or separate, but merged into the unlimited Being of the One, it knows itself as the eternally undivided Self of all— the Giver, the recipient, and the gift; Beloved, lover, love; the candle, flame, and eye; the Seer, seen, and sight.

IV. The Phenomenon of Light

According to the standard scientific ‘Big Bang’ model of the origin of the universe, the Big Bang was the explosive expansion of a ‘singularity’, a pre-existent primary state consisting of an ultra-dense concentration of mass-energy in an infinitesimal space.¹ Yet those scientists who accept this model have refused to speculate on where, why, and how such an infinitely dense concentration of mass-energy came to be in the first place. That, they say, is beyond the purview of ‘empirical science’; and, of course, it is.

A *singularity*, I am told, is a mathematical function of the theory of Relativity, and the possibility of its actual existence only derives from its mathematical existence. I have to wonder, however, why physicists have been so ready to accept the idea of a *singularity* as the prelude to ‘the Big Bang’, but have been so unwilling to give consideration to the theory of the “creation” or “emanation” by a transcendent Mind of a sudden initial burst of Energy that subsequently resulted in the formation of expanding matter by a process of energy-matter conversion. The answer is that science, by definition, simply does not allow for the possibility of a supernaturally initiated cosmogony! One cannot help but wonder, therefore, if the Big

Bang cosmology of contemporary physics is merely an ideational framework constructed to avoid acknowledging the possibility of a supernatural Origin for our universe and ourselves.

Regardless of whether or not it was constructed for that purpose, the *singularity* theory provides an ideational framework that is currently in disarray, and greatly in doubt even by its originators, with no legitimate alternative to take its place. But, let us now depart from science's flimsy materialistic model, and make a bold and adventurous inquiry into the possibility that it might have been (Divine) Energy that started it all, and let's see where this theory takes us. If we hypothesize that it was the appearance of a sudden flash of Divine Energy that precipitated this expanding universe, we must ask, "What kind of Energy could result in a material universe?" There is an ancient, pre-scientific, tradition in India according to which, the material universe was produced from sound: the *pranava*, said to be audible as the sound, "Aum", or "Om". No one, however, has succeeded in producing matter from this or any other sound, or even formulating a process by which this might be accomplished. Indeed, it appears that *sound* itself is in all cases produced by matter, not the other way around. However, it is a proven fact that *light-energy* is transformable to material particles—energy and matter being interchangeable states of the same thing.

We must ask, then, "Mightn't it have been an immense burst of what we have come to call 'electromagnetic radiation' —in other words, *Light*—that produced this vast universe of forms?" Light certainly would fit the requirements! And such a beginning would not only provide a confirmation of the account found in many religious documents; it would clearly account for the initial heat and expansion known to have been produced in the earliest stages of the universe's origin.

Scientists of our contemporary world have not seriously considered this theory, however. The suggestion that the physical cosmos had a 'supernatural' origin places that origin outside the confines of 'nature' and therefore firmly outside the consideration of empirical science. Rather than positing a spiritual source, or even a radiant energy source, the immediate instinct of scientists is to suppose that there was an original physical entity that somehow 'blew up', scattering matter throughout the length and breadth of space-time. But, just for the purpose of following out the supernaturally produced Light theory to its logical ends, let us imagine for a moment that in the beginning there *was* a supernaturally produced burst of high-energy light, and examine whether or not the existence of space-time and this

material universe could possibly have formed and evolved from that initial Energy burst:

Anyone familiar with the peculiar nature and behavior of light must be profoundly struck by the stubborn incomprehensibility of this unique and elusive ‘stuff’. Many scientists and philosophers over the ages have sought to comprehend the nature of light without success, among them Albert Einstein. Though Einstein made extraordinary discoveries involving light’s invariable speed, its relation to the measurement of time and space, and its corpuscular nature, he was never able to fathom just what this ‘stuff’ called “light” *is*. In 1917, long after the publication of his Special and General Theories of Relativity, he wrote: “For the rest of my life I will reflect on what light is!”; ² and thirty-four years later, in 1951, he admitted: “All the fifty years of conscious brooding have brought me no closer to the answer to the question, ‘What are light quanta [photons]?’ Of course, today every rascal thinks he knows the answer, but he is deluding himself.” ³

Why is light so difficult to comprehend? Einstein’s perplexity over the nature of light was based on the recognition that, at the submicroscopic quantum level, the properties of light are inconceivable and incomprehensible. A photon of light is neither wave nor particle, though it can appear in either guise. It is not a substance, but an intangible and indefinable *essence* that some have likened to a mental rather than a physical reality; and yet all that we perceive as the physical, ‘material’ world is made of it. This ‘stuff’ called *light*, at its highest frequencies, is miraculously endowed with the ability to transform itself into what we call ‘material’ particles. And, even though we can describe and predict this transformation, it is clearly an *a priori* capability that can only be described as “miraculous”. In addition, light, by its very nature, expands from its source at a constant and absolute 300,000 metres per second. Space-time is measurable only in relation to this absolute speed of light radiation. So, if the initial appearance of light created space-time, those space-time parameters would have expanded at the rate of 300,000 metres/sec. Space-time, it seems, is merely an *effect* of light, and as it expanded, that light cooled and transformed itself into material (mass-bearing) particles, and the expansion rate of the material universe decreased accordingly.

Light, or electromagnetic radiation, does not consist of matter; that is, it has no mass, but is an insubstantial, though ubiquitous, form of energy. Nonetheless, in its most energetic states, it is convertible into ‘matter’; and *vice versa*. This is due to the now well-known interconvertibility of mass and energy, according to Einstein’s formula: $E=mc^2$. For example, when an electron bound to a nucleus makes a

“quantum jump” from a higher energy level (orbital) to a lower one, it gives off that same amount of energy in the form of a photon of light. When an electron and a positron (its antiparticle opposite) collide, they both annihilate in a flash of light (photons). When a proton and an antiproton collide, they are both annihilated in a flash of light (photons). Why are mass and energy interconvertible? No one knows. Apparently, these particles and antiparticles are merely returning to their ‘ground’ state. From light they came, and to light they must return.

“Visible light”, as we all know, forms but a small segment of the electrical and magnetic field that extends outwardly from its source in wavy undulations of varying frequencies and wavelengths, called the electromagnetic (EM) spectrum. In the vacuum of space, EM radiation travels nearly 300 million meters (186,000 miles) per second, or 670 million miles per hour; and can be variously described and labeled according to its different wavelengths. But, as Albert Einstein has shown, it is also measurable as tiny packets or *quanta* of energy called *photons*, measured according to their energy in electron volts (eV). Light can be described either as a wave or a particle, depending on the method used to measure it. And though no one seems able to rationally describe or account for this wave-particle duality, in order to make some verbal sense of it, we say that EM waves are *associated with*, or *complementary to*, the light quanta known as photons. Naturally, *matter* also possesses this characteristic of wave-particle duality, since *matter* is nothing more than light-energy appearing as (converted to) form and substance.

The entire EM spectrum includes cosmic gamma rays, x-rays, ultraviolet light, the visible spectrum, infrared, microwaves, radar, FM radio, AM radio, and Direct electrical current, ranging in wavelength from 10^{-15} (.000000000000001 meter) to indefinitely long. At one end of the EM spectrum, this charged field vibrates as short transverse waves of very high frequency; these are the gamma-rays and x-rays. At the other end of the spectrum, wave lengths can be indefinitely long and the frequencies very low; these are the radio and long-wave radio waves. In between the high and low-frequency waves of this spectrum are varying EM wavelengths such as those of visible light. Visible light is but a small portion of the EM spectrum, consisting of wavelengths from 0.4 to 0.7 micrometers (one millionth of a meter)—i.e., about half the length of a bacterium.

As in all wavy phenomena, the shorter the wavelength, the higher is the wave’s frequency; and the longer the wavelength, the lower is the wave’s

frequency. Frequency is measured in units called hertz (abbreviated Hz.), after the nineteenth century German physicist, Heinrich Hertz. One hertz means one oscillation per second. For example, radio waves in AM broadcasting have a wavelength of 300 meters and vibrate at a frequency ranging from 530 kilohertz (530,000 hertz) to 1.6 megahertz (1,600,000 hertz). By contrast, gamma rays, with the extremely short wavelength of 10^{-15} meter, may have the incredible frequency of 300 Ehz (one exahertz=one quintillion [10^{18}] hertz).

Though light is energy, and massless, it can be converted, or transformed, into mass-bearing material particles (according to the formula: $E=mc^2$). In fact, high energy, short-wavelength light (such as gamma radiation) routinely decays spontaneously into particle-antiparticle pairs—and vice versa. When we speak of high-energy light as an EM *wave*, we speak of it as high-frequency (300 Ehz), short wavelength (10^{-15} m) radiation; when we speak of it as *particulate*, or *corpuscular*, we must regard it as consisting of photons, each photon with an energy in the realm of 1.24 MeV (million electron volts).

Gamma rays, then, are the highest frequency EM waves known, consisting of the highest energy photons, so far discovered. These waves can originate in the nuclei of atoms and may be released by nuclear explosions. They can also be produced in certain laboratory experiments, for example, by certain radioactive materials, or when a particle and an antiparticle annihilate each other. Conversely, gamma rays are capable of decaying spontaneously into particle/antiparticle pairs, such as an electron and a positron. Gamma rays also exist naturally throughout the cosmos, even showing up in the formation of terrestrial lightning bolts. In 1997, astronomers using the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory (GRO) satellite, found evidence for a gigantic, diffuse halo of gamma rays around our own Milky Way galaxy that they are currently endeavoring to know more about; and distant cosmic gamma ray bursts appear almost daily to astronomer's telescopes.

Cosmic gamma ray bursts are brief bursts of high-energy light that come to us from up to 12 billion light-years away (in other words, light that was emanated 12 billion years ago). Astronomers have speculated that they are from distant supernovae, giant collapsing stars in the midst of their death-throes; although researchers could find no supernova associated with a 2006 burst observed by NASA's Swift satellite. In March of 2008, the same NASA satellite recorded "the brightest explosion ever seen" when a massive star, 7.5 billion light-years away, collapsed to form a black hole, driving

powerful gamma ray jets outward. In September of 2009, another gamma ray burst (designated GRB090902B) produced even higher energies—up to 33.4 billion electron volts or about 13 billion times the energy of visible light.⁴ Such cosmic gamma ray bursts are so energetic that their brightness is equal to the brightness of all the stars of the entire universe combined. One burst of 10 seconds duration can release more energy than the light emitted by our sun in its entire 10 billion-year lifetime.

As we earlier suggested, it is possible that all the matter in this universe originated from a spectacularly large burst of high-energy light, or electromagnetic radiation; but is such an evolution, from light to matter, possible? Yes, as we have seen, it is. It *is* possible and highly probable that, in the very earliest moments of the Big Bang, in that unimaginably hot, spreading radiation field, the densely packed, intensely active, high-energy photons, in the process of colliding with one another, transformed into mass-bearing particles and antiparticles. And, while nearly all of the resulting particle/antiparticle pairs created by these collisions would have been annihilated upon contact with each other, as it happens, there was produced an as yet unexplainable disparity or “asymmetry”⁵ in the total number of particles over antiparticles; and for that reason, there would still have been one-in-every ten billion particles remaining—in the form of electrons, protons, and neutrons—to constitute the building blocks of the entire material universe.

This fact lends credence to the theory that a sudden burst of (Divine) Energy in the form of an intense field of electromagnetic radiation, *and not the explosion of a pre-existent super-dense speck of condensed mass-energy*, constituted the origin of our universe. But, of course, such a “Big Burst” theory could be regarded as a scientifically viable alternative to the ‘Big Bang’ theory only as a non-falsifiable speculation, one not subject to experimental confirmation. Both possibilities are equally plausible, and equally unconfirmable. Even the Cosmic Background Microwave Energy that was detected by Penzias and Wilson might be cited as evidence for either the ‘Big Burst’ scenario *or* the ‘Big Bang’ scenario equally. However, scientists are, and will no doubt remain for the foreseeable future, extremely reluctant to even consider the possibility of a supernatural source and origin to our universe, simply because it is beyond our ability to measure or demonstrate empirically.

We may suppose, further, that what we call *spacetime* is a correlate of light and its innate proclivity for very rapidly spreading itself in all

directions. Where there is extension, there is *space*; where there is a sequence of events, there is *time*. And while time and space are relative to the speed of light, light itself, the primary ‘stuff’ of the universe, is the sole constant by which time and space are measured. Like Einstein, we can describe and measure it, but we struggle unsuccessfully to know and understand just what it is.

Now, if it was a sudden pulse of Divinely produced Energy that created the universe, it would have to have been a tremendous amount of Energy. We know this because of Einstein’s formula which declares that the amount of initiating Energy that would account for all the mass in the universe would have to have been the product of all the mass in the universe times the speed of light squared. I don’t know how much mass the universe contains, but you would have to multiply that figure by 448, 900, 000,000,000, 000 (the speed of light squared in mph) to get the amount of Energy required to produce it. It is easy to see that it would have to have been quite a burst of Energy!

If a thousand suns appeared simultaneously in the sky, their light might dimly resemble the [radiant] splendor of that Omnific Being! ⁶

Such an immense burst of electromagnetic energy would no doubt follow the same progressive development as that suggested by the physicists who advocate a ‘natural’ (i.e., material) origin of the universe: In the first moments, the Energy-Matter and Matter-Energy transformations would alternate in rapid flux. Expanding at the speed of light, some of that Energy would be converted to particle-antiparticle pairs, most of which would annihilate, and some of the remaining matter in the form of quarks, along with their interacting gluons (what is called a *quark-gluon plasma*),⁷ would eventually combine to form protons and neutrons; other particles, the free electrons, would inevitably bond to the protons, forming the element, hydrogen.

These hydrogen atoms would collect in the form of a gas; and this gas, reaching a large enough volume, would be affected by a gravitational force (that Einstein says is a function of the geometry of spacetime), which, in turn, would draw such gas nebulae into a density great enough to initiate nuclear fusion; and thus stars, and whole galaxies of stars would be born. In the interior furnaces of these stars, heavier elements would be created; and when the cores of the stars would collapse, they would explode into space; and their remnants would form into a second generation of stars, like our sun

and its satellite planets. And, of course, it would all have begun with a great burst of light!

Is such a scenario possible? Or plausible? Does this explanation fit all the available physical and mathematical data? I don't know. I leave it for those scientifically trained experts familiar with the properties and possibilities of high-energy radiation and the intricacies of nucleosynthesis to determine. For my part, I only know for a certainty that this universe is a product of the Divine Energy of God breathed into existence by His loving grace and imbued with His Divine Consciousness.

We must ask ourselves: 'How could such a thing as an immense and awesomely productive burst of light come to be where before there was nothing? Can a burst of light occur without a physical source?' This same question of origination presents itself, whether it is the pure energy of light we speak of, or a super-dense entity (singularity) about to explode, or a fluctuating quantum vacuum that spontaneously sprouts universes.

There could have been no *natural* cause, for there was no "nature" as yet. There could have been no material cause; for there was no "material" anything as yet. There could have been no "place" for such an event to "occur", for there was no space as yet. There was no "when" for it to happen, for there was no time as yet. Only now we are able to place it at the beginning of time by counting back in earth years to that beginning. In attempting to speak of the origin of time, space, and mass-energy, our very language, our calculations, become meaningless, having no reference or basis. Can something appear without a cause? Why no, of course not. But can something appear without a 'natural' —that is, *material*— cause? Well, it had to have, didn't it?

The materialists hold that all forms of matter, including biological (living) matter, is the product of 'natural' causes, 'natural' processes. But what do they mean by 'natural'? They explain that there is no need to postulate a 'supernatural' agency in the creation and evolution of the universe, for, they say, "It is simply the nature of light-Energy to "decay" into material particles; and it is simply the nature of those particles, such as quarks and electrons, to act under the attraction of the electromagnetic and 'color' charges inherent in those particles." Further, they say, "It is simply 'natural' processes that account for the fact that the aggregates of particles that we call "atoms," collect together to form the molecules that make up the various 'elements' of chemical, material and biological substances; and these molecules have a 'natural' propensity to mutate into biological tissue and to evolve by 'natural' means into the various life forms that populate the

earth.” “In short,” they say, “the entire universe is a product of ‘natural’ material processes.”

One even hesitates to point out to such naive people that the ‘Big Bang’ or ‘Great Radiation’ from which the entire universe was produced did not spontaneously arise from *nothing* and from *nowhere*, as they so intently wish to believe. By seeing such Energy as a ‘given’ condition, as a ‘natural’ phenomenon, we are able to regard all its subsequent transformations also as ‘natural’. How easily we take it for granted that we live in a universe where Energy and Matter are interconvertible! And by seeing that condition as ‘natural’, we fail to see how extraordinary and *supernatural* it truly is.

It is by labeling the manifestation of that initial supernatural Energy as ‘natural’, that the rationalizers of materialism justify their simplistic and utterly false view of all existence. The manifestation of that initial Energy is indeed ‘natural’—for a supernatural creative Power. The transformation of that initial light-Energy into material particles is indeed ‘natural’—for a supernatural Essence imbued with a universal Intelligence. The attractive and repulsive forces inherent in the particles causing them to cluster into atoms is indeed ‘natural’—for a supernatural Essence imbued with a universal Intelligence. The spontaneous congregation and organization of clusters of atoms into molecules is indeed ‘natural’—for a supernatural Essence imbued with universal Intelligence. Given the properties of light and of matter, all these developments are indeed ‘natural’, but mustn’t we ask, “Given by what or by whom?”⁸

The Light-Energy that emanated from God [the Divine Mind] at the moment of Creation around 14 billion years ago was, and is, a *spiritual* substance. The *material* universe which developed from it is still a *spiritual* substance, though we call it “material” due to its form, mass, and apparent substance. The differentiation between *spiritual* and *material* is imaginary, is non-existent; matter is Light-Energy, and Light-Energy is God’s breath. Nothing exists but God, whether manifest or unmanifest. All matter—all that we experience as the world about us, including ourselves—is born of God’s Divine Light. Our bodies are formed of the ‘matter’ that was produced from that Divine Light, and therefore consist of a Divine substance. Our bodies are God’s Energy manifest in form. In the soul’s experience of union, it is clearly seen that all that exists in this world is the manifestation of one Spirit, and the soul cries out:

O my God, even this body is Thine own!
 Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,
 Even I, who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters,
 Even I am Thine own.⁹

From the initial ‘Great Radiance’ comes all that exists as material objects and all that exists as active forces in the universe today and for all time. Every exploding star, every movement of gaseous nebulae far-off in space, every object and every motion—including the blinking of your eye, has its source and origin in that initial burst of light. According to the Law of the conservation of mass-energy, the First Law of Thermodynamics, it is an undeviating quantity of Energy. According to this Law: ‘the sum of the mass-energy within a closed system (like the universe) remains constant’. In other words, the total initial Energy of which all material forms and all manifestations of energy in the universe are constituted, remains always the same total. It means that all that we do and perceive, including our own bodies and its movement, is made of that initial Light, and is nothing else but that original Light produced by and consisting of the Divine breath of God.

It is of paramount importance that you understand that this body in which you exist is made of God's Light. Every atom of your body originated as a photon of His eternal Light. The body's form will not last, of course; it will decompose and turn to ash or dust, but it will always remain God's Light, regardless of the form it takes. Eventually, that Light that forms this universe will return to its original state in God; but even while it continues to form an element of this ever-changing world, it is still God's Light. The vast array of stars and galaxies and clusters of galaxies—all are His. And don't forget that the Light of conscious awareness within you—that too is His, all His.

At every moment of your existence—from birth to final breath—you are in God, composed of God, enveloped in God. How could you ever be apart from Him? How could you ever be anywhere but safe in His infinitely blissful bosom? Praise God!

NOTES:

1. Today, however, there are serious doubts among some in the scientific community that a singularity is even a possibility. See “Researchers Show That Black Holes Do Not Exist”, by Thania Benios; in PhysOrg Newsletter for September 24, 2014: <http://phys.org/news/2014-09-black-holes.html>.
2. Arthur Zajonc, *Catching The Light*, N.Y., Bantam Books, 1993; p. 256.
3. *Ibid.*, p. ix.

4. from JPL/NASA (news:web, reported in *Physorg Newsletter* at www.physorg.com/news175961092 appearing on 10/28/09.
5. The concept in physics that every particle has an antiparticle with an opposite charge is called “particle symmetry”; and there are also several speculative theories to account for the breaking of this symmetry in the early universe. It is interesting to note that this idea of opposite but symmetrical pairs is reminiscent of (and possibly related to) the duality experienced in mystical vision whereby all relative states of consciousness are composed of opposites, such as love/hate, ahead/behind, life/death, joy/sorrow, I/Thou, etc. All relative states of consciousness are seen to be composed of these opposites; yet in the mystical experience of Unity, there is a conjunction, or ‘marriage’ of all opposites in the unity of the absolute Consciousness, which transcends (though it is the source of) all relative conscious states.
6. *Bhagavad Gita*, XI.12; Paramahansa Yogananda, *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*, Los Angeles, Self-Realization Fellowship, 1995; vol. II, p. 818.
7. This quark-gluon plasma (QGP), theorized to have been produced in the first few microseconds of the ‘Big Bang’, was recently reproduced at the Brookhaven National Laboratory by colliding gold ions at nearly the speed of light in their Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider, a 2.4 mile-circumference “atom smasher”, thereby creating a “liquid matter” (QGP) at a temperature of “about 4 trillion degrees Celsius”—about 250,000 times hotter than the center of the Sun. (from Brookhaven National Laboratory, reported by *Physorg Newsletter*, February 15, 2010; www.physorg.com).
8. All this universe, the "scientists" say, is just the result of natural laws. And I would ask them, 'Who instituted those natural laws at the moment "nature" was created?' In return, these scientists ask, 'How could a Mind—even a divine Mind—produce the amount of gamma radiation required to transform into a universe of material wave-particles? How, for that matter, could It produce Light at all?' I do not have the answer to that, but I would ask in return, 'How does your own limited mind produce thoughts and images within itself? Do you think you know? How does your mind produce the actions of your body simply by the power of will? Do you know? Your mind and your body are products of that universal Mind. Who can know *how* It does all that It does?'
9. From Swami Abhayananda, “The Song of The Self”, in *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984.

V. From Light To Universe

Cosmologists and astrophysicists tell us that the temperature of the Cosmic Background Radiation (CBR) throughout the universe is currently 2.7 degrees Kelvin. Extrapolating from that current temperature allows scientists to roll back the clock to surmise the temperature of the universe at the moment it originated—what we refer to as the Big Bang, or Great Radiance. No one was there to see the moment the universe originated, but, from the evidence provided by the Cosmic Background Radiation that remains today, it is surmised that the universe began as a great burst of Light, sometimes referred to as “the primeval fireball” for lack of a better term. No one knows just what this primeval fireball was like—except that it consisted primarily of photons (particles of high-frequency electromagnetic radiation), that it was very hot (more than 10^{12} degrees Kelvin), and that it was rapidly expanding and cooling to become the universe we know today.

Now, putting aside for a moment, the question of where such a great burst of Light may have come from, most people are easily able to imagine that the origin of the universe appeared as a great Light in the form of a “primeval fireball”. Such a “fireball” is quite easy to imagine; but few, it seems to me, understand the process by which that Light, that high-frequency radiation, *became* the material objects of our world. This process, though understood by so few, is really easy to understand once it is explained. And once it is understood, you will have the key to comprehending the formation of our entire universe of forms.

Here is how it is explained by distinguished professor of Astronomy, Michael Zeilik, in his widely used college textbook, *Astronomy: The Evolving Universe*:

At some time in the primeval fireball, the energy of photons was so high that their collisions produced particles. This process occurs when the energy in the colliding photons equals or exceeds the mass of the particles produced. Sounds bizarre?

The result comes directly from Einstein’s relation between matter and energy ($E=mc^2$). It does not restrict the *direction* of the transformation: matter can become energy, or energy can become matter.¹

So, given a couple of colliding photons with enough energy, they can easily produce a particle of matter or antimatter.² It is not magic; but it is nevertheless amazing: Photons (packets of Light), by colliding with one another, spontaneously transform into particles of matter or antimatter.³

Photons of electromagnetic radiation at a frequency in the gamma range such as existed universally at the Big Bang had sufficient energy to transform into matter or antimatter particles simply by running into each other. In countless such collisions, the photons were mutually annihilated, and, in their place, was a proton, or neutron, or electron, depending on the volume of energy they contained. In the early maelstrom of high-frequency radiation at the time of the universe's creation, there was a continual transformation back and forth, from energy (photons) to matter (elementary particles) and from matter back again to energy, as the photonic collisions continued. But as the universe expanded, and the temperature of its contents cooled, the radiation and the matter became stabilized and compartmentalized as separate and continuous states: matter and energy—disguising the fact that matter and energy consist of but one common and identical Light.

The universe wasn't made in a day, or even seven days; but there were several distinct stages in the production of the material of our phenomenal universe: Professor Zeilik divides the production of matter/antimatter in the early universe into four eras: a **heavy-particle era**, a **light-particle era**, a **radiation era**, and a **matter era**. The earliest period, the **heavy-particle era**, is that period when the temperature of the universe was greater than 10^{12} degrees Kelvin, and the production of massive particles and antiparticles dominated. The **light-particle era** was when the temperature had reduced to right around 10^{12} degrees Kelvin, and particles of lighter mass (such as electrons, and neutrinos) were produced. The **radiation era** occurred when the temperature dropped to the point where the photons no longer had the energy to create new particles. Radiation was then the main form of energy. The **matter era** is the era in which we now live, when the energy of matter (as the amount of mass, in a cubic meter of space) is about a thousand times greater than that of radiation.

So, all matter (and antimatter as well) that forms our current universe came from that original high-frequency light—is, in fact, that light itself in a transformed state! And this brings us back to the consideration of the question, “Where did that originating light come from?” But you already know the answer to that question. And you probably also know that that Light is a conscious self-directing Light, containing the animating power and life-giving Consciousness of its all-powerful Source, to whom belongs all praise now and forevermore.

NOTES:

1. Michael Zeilik, *Astronomy: The Evolving Universe*, 9th edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; p.471.

2. Antimatter has the same properties as regular matter except that it has the opposite electrical charge. When a particle of matter and a particle of antimatter collide, they annihilate, and, in their place, is an equivalent amount of energy in the form of a photon. From light to matter; from matter to light.

3. If there is magic, it is in the originating Light that can appear now as energy, now as matter. This is the secret of creation; this is how everything in the universe, including our own bodies, was created from the great Light.

VI. Born of His Light

Don't you know that we are born of His light—that every elementary particle of matter began as a photon of light?

Every electron, every quark in the interior of every proton or neutron came into being and acquired its properties

In the transformation of those high-energy photons of light

Streaming out from the Creator's breath.

This world and all worlds sparkling throughout the cosmos are made of the radiance of God's power,

A dancing array of His light's many ephemeral forms.

And we, evolved from His light, are endowed with the presence of His eternal Self, and live by His life,

And love with His love and know with His wisdom.

We are conscious by His marvelous all-pervading awareness.

We see by His loving grace, and we sing His praise by His gift of song.

Then sing, ye God-born angels of light!

Raise up your voices to Him whose fabric forms your being and appearance,
Whose life-pulse fires your heart and breath.

Remember Him whose goodness molded you, whose love enfolds you,
Whose existence is the life-stream of your being, and whose
out-flowing Bliss provides the everlasting joy of your soul.

Until we wend our way back into His eternal light, sing forth His praise.

* * *

4. THEOLOGY

I. Theological Conclusions

Any conclusions that we may draw regarding the Divine reality must necessarily be nothing more than mere theories made of word-symbols, bearing only a vague resemblance to the reality Itself. With that in mind, let me share with you my theological conclusions, my theories:

The Universe

We have seen that the Judaic tradition, and by extension the Christian tradition, asserts that the Spirit, or Soul, was infused in man by the enlivening breath of God.¹ Early philosophers, including Plato and Plotinus, held that the One “emanated” or “radiated” the Divine Mind as its organizational functionary, which in turn “emanated” an all-pervading Soul. They described that divine Soul as permeating the material universe as light or smoke permeates the atmosphere. To this day, these age-old concepts constitute the framework of our theology and the imagery of our religious imagination. Our minds continue even now to operate in these established patterns, utilizing these ancient conceptualizations, to which we have become habituated for so long.

But I would submit, there is another, perhaps more accurate, way of viewing the permeation of matter by God's Spirit, not as an “inspiration” or “emanation”, but rather as a ‘containment’: Consider how our own individual consciousness permeates our thoughts and dream-images. Our thoughts and mental images are permeated by our consciousness because these thoughts and dreams are contained *within* our minds. May we not conclude that, likewise, the Spirit, the all-pervading Consciousness, permeates the universe because the universe is contained *within It*? After all, where else could the creations of a divine Spirit exist but *within* Itself?

Every mystical theology holds that the individual self is in fact identical to the universal Self; that the Spirit within is synonymous with the transcendent Spirit and can be realized as such. We must ask ourselves how that is possible unless we—and in fact, the whole universe—are *within* the divine Spirit. But we are inclined rather to think that God, the divine Spirit, is *within* us, as though He were a trillion separate homunculi hiding in each individual heart. No, He pervades all because all is *within* Him. This universe, including all within it, is a figment of *His* imagination. He is the only one who is. All these forms and all these “I’s” exist within that one infinite Mind.²

If the Divine Spirit, or Soul, was *infused* into the material universe as Plotinus asserts, permeating, pervading, and guiding every wave-particle, what kind of entity would that be? We cannot even conceive of anything that might have the properties that would allow it to enter into, permeate, vivify and awaken to consciousness a material body. But, if the entire universe consisted of the Thought-images of a Divine Mind, then that universe must exist only within that Divine Mind and be permeated by that conscious Divine Mind—just as our own thought-forms are permeated by our own conscious minds in which they are created and in which they are contained.

‘But how,’ we must wonder, ‘could so physically substantial a universe be a mere imagination, a Mind-born projection of Thought?’ An answer might be found in the recent results of science’s investigation into the nature of matter. The science of physics, for all its denial of the supernatural reality, has done more in the last one hundred years to dispel the notion of the substantiality of the material world than all the theologians throughout history. During that time, the discoveries of physicists have reminded us of the declarations of the Upanishads that the appearance of matter, i.e., the phenomenal universe, is an illusion, a product of Maya, the creative power of the One (*Brahman*). Contemporary science has shown that the universe does indeed consist of an Energy that transforms into material particles; but these material particles are really nothing more than submicroscopic electromagnetic impulses, mere ‘points of Energy’, interacting in such a way that the appearance of substance is produced—forming, in other words, an illusory world.

How do these “points” of Energy, these so-called ‘wave-particles’ that began as “photons” of light, manage to produce the illusion of form and substance? These photons were produced in such quantity and intensive activity that the energetic collisions of these photons produced particles such as electrons, and quarks—which combine to form protons and neutrons—which combine to form atoms; and the atoms combine to form molecules, which combine in vast numbers to form perceptible gases, liquids, and solids in a variety of sizes and configurations. The elementary ‘particles’ themselves are unimaginably tiny: according to the physicists of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, “protons are 100,000 times smaller than the simplest atom, hydrogen; and quarks are 10,000 times smaller than protons. For comparison, if a hydrogen atom were six miles across, a quark would still measure less than four-thousandths of an inch.”³

Clearly, the atoms of which these perceivable solids consist are mostly empty space in their interior. In fact, physicists tell us that all of what we call *Matter* is 99.99999999999999 percent empty space; the other infinitesimal part seems to be nothing more than energy wavelets and intangible forces. Subatomic wave-particles consist of intangible electromagnetically charged impulses held in proximate “orbits” about one another by invisible forces, so as to form the appearance of much grander substantial entities. And these appearances are multiplied in infinite profusion and variety as if by some magician’s hand, to appear before our eyes as a multitudinous world of objects. And so, this material world, this phenomenal reality of ours, is a marvelous magic show of truly immense proportions!

This Light—these particles and forces—what a marvelous universe they make! How real and substantial it all seems! A burst of Light, and all congeals into a universe of form and color, intelligence and emotion, *sturm und drang*. Time drags the whole process out, making it all seem quite natural, making it seem, from the perspectives of our individual lives, a long and gradual evolution. But, if we were to see the fourteen billion years of evolutionary history reduced to just a few seconds, it would become clear that it is a Mind-born creation, an instantaneous imagination from beginning to end. From God’s eternal perspective, all is accomplished in an instant.

The Light-energy by which God forms the universe is simply the substance of His Thought—or what is analogous to Thought in a Divine Mind. Simply because we have identified a whole array of different ‘wave-particles’ that make up the material world does not mean that these constituent entities are really separate substantial ‘things’ in themselves. We have simply given names to the impulses and forces inherent in God’s Light-illusion, as one might examine and give names to the cohesive thought-constituents within a dream. This world-appearance does indeed seem substantial; but it is God’s illusion—as the circle produced by a whirling flame is an illusion. And in the aggregate of trillions of these illusory wave-particles, a larger, more complex, visual illusion is produced—which, by reflecting billions of photons onto our retinas, produces an electrical impulse in our brains, which in turn produces an image to our conscious minds; while the gentle forces produced by the motion of electrons presents a tactile sensation in another section of our brains, and is interpreted in our minds as the sensation of touch, confirming our impression of substantial form. But it is only a marvelous masquerade of light—God’s light; and it is all His grand illusion.

There is one Consciousness. It is the Consciousness of the One Being. And all the manifested universe exists within that one Consciousness. The various objects of this manifested universe move and operate, not by individual forces or laws of physics, but in and by the intentional Will of that One. Immersed in that one Consciousness, united with it, one sees that: “all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” Who, then, is doing what? In Him we live and move. In Him one Will operates throughout. And we, mere dust motes dancing in His sunbeam, are swallowed and encompassed in His light. Look within and see the Truth.

The One

We may conceive of the Divine Mind, producer of the universe of light; but we cannot imagine It without stipulating that it draws Its own conscious power from the unlimited Consciousness in which It exists. For the Divine Mind is not an entity separate from the One Absolute; it is the functioning Creative Power of the One Consciousness, operating within that One, and lending being, consciousness and bliss to all that arises from it. However, of the One, the Absolute—also designated as the Void, Brahman, the Tao, the Godhead—we cannot speak. It is beyond even our ability to frame in our imagination. We certainly may not ascribe to the One any descriptive characteristics, since the One transcends whatever characteristics we may attribute to It; and yet the Vedantic characterization of the One (*Brahman*) as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, “Existence-Consciousness-Bliss”, seems unavoidable and undeniable. That infinite sky must certainly be regarded as the ultimate Source of all existence, all consciousness, and all bliss. Those who have experienced It directly speak of It as ‘the Father’. It is the Fountainhead and Witness of all that is, the unwavering Foundation-stone upon which we stand. It never rests or sleeps, but is an ever-wakeful, unblinking Eye that remains eternally vigilant, watching over all.

That unborn source of consciousness is beyond time and space, and all manifestation; yet It is the eternal Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting its essence—as a dreaming mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting their essence. Consciousness is not the property of matter, or of any individual being. It is not produced by any material process; but rather is a Divine stream of Intelligence filling the entire universe. It is the fundamental nature of Being, the foundation of the phenomenal universe, and the light of awareness filling it. We are able to know it by following our own consciousness back to its Source, where we are able to discover our original Self. That Self is the One Consciousness. He is the one Source of the material universe and He is also

the life and awareness pervading it. But, of course, we must see Him for ourselves. Our soul/mind must be illumined by the eternal Light itself and drawn into Its hidden depths. To obtain that grace, all men focus their minds on Him through prayer and contemplative longing, and He shines His Light on whom He will.

The Soul

What we regard as our “soul” derives its existence, its consciousness, and its inherent bliss from the Divine Mind in whom it exists. When the soul comes to realize its Divine identity, it knows with absolute certainty that its physical existence is rooted in the creative Power of the One; it knows that its consciousness is grounded in the Consciousness of the One; it experiences bliss only insofar as it is drawn by Grace into likeness with the One, and it is imbued with bliss as a result of the influx of that divine consciousness.

Each individual soul is confined to a body that defines the extent of its individual being in the spatio-temporal universe. We regard what is not within that limitation as “outside” of us. But God has no body or any limit to His extent. There is no “outside” of Him; even if He were to create an outside, it would be within Him. God is an infinite, eternal Mind. He transcends space and time. Space and time are His creations, and they exist within Him. *Whatever* He creates is within Him. We, and the entire universe, exist within Him. Our own minds are limited; each one has its own perspective and considers itself to be the “subject”; and what is external to it is regarded as the “object”. But in the eternal Consciousness, subject and object are one. That One is unlimited and undivided; It pervades everything and everyone.

We must understand that the separation of body and soul, of Matter and Spirit, exists only in the temporal world of appearance. In the Eternal, this duality, this separation, does not exist. In the One, they are indistinguishable. Like water and ice in a glass, they are separable in appearance though they are one in essence. Those who have ‘seen’ into their own eternal reality have realized that both the subtle Soul, containing life and consciousness, and the Energy constituting gross Matter, are together contained within the one Divinity. This is why the mystic, experiencing his identification with the Divine, experiences his all-pervading Self, not simply as Soul, but as an illimitable awareness that is *both* universal Soul *and* universal Matter. Matter and Soul are both contained within the Divine Being. The unmanifest Light and the manifested Light together form all that is. Ultimately, they are one eternal Reality.

We are made of the Consciousness and Energy of the Eternal. His Consciousness manifests as Soul, and His Energy is sent forth to establish the material universe at the 'Big Bang', 'Big Burst', 'Great Radiance', or whatever you wish to call it. And the ultimately true Origin, Source, and *initiator* of that field of Consciousness and Energy, is the One. All that exists is His. It is His projection, His exuberant radiance. Nothing else exists but that One. Our sense of 'I' too is Him. 'I' am the one and only 'I' that is. My consciousness is His consciousness. My body, as well as the whole universe, is His manifest form. I and the Father are one. A personage in a dream is not only permeated with the consciousness of the dreamer, he is *made of* the consciousness of the dreamer. He is essentially *identical* with the consciousness of the dreamer. In just the same way, we are not only permeated by God's Consciousness, we are *made of* His essence; we are projections of His light. And our consciousness is essentially identical with the Consciousness of God.

Our bodies are His light-forms, and we are animated and made conscious by the all-pervading presence of His living Consciousness. When we look within ourselves, we discover that we are that one Consciousness-Energy. For, just as a dream-person looking within to inquire who he is would discover that he is in fact the dreamer, so do we, inquiring within, discover that we are the limitless One in whom all things and all beings exist. If you ask a beam of sunlight, "Who are you?" it will answer, "I am the Sun." If you ask a wave on the sea, "Who are you?" it will answer, "I am the ocean." If you ask a soul, "Who are you?" it must answer, "I am the One in all. I am He who alone exists now and forever. I am the light of the one Sun; I am a wave on the one Sea; I am a living breath of the one Life. I am in all that is seen or unseen. I am the One in all."

Jesus said, "I am the Light that is over all things. I am all: From me all has come forth, and to me all returns. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there."⁴

Unfortunately, many believe that this is a truth that applies only to the one unique historical figure of Jesus; but it is a *universal truth*, a truth for all, and a truth to be realized: *I* am not merely this body, not just this spark of consciousness, nor merely the entire manifested universe; I am the Source of the universe, and the universe itself. I am both the subject and the object. There is nothing else here but I AM. This is realized in the mystic's vision. Listen to what the great Shankaracharya said:

The fool thinks, 'I am the body'. The intelligent man thinks, 'I am an individual soul united with the body'. But the wise man, in the greatness of his knowledge and spiritual discrimination, sees the Self as [the only] reality, and thinks, 'I am Brahman'.⁵

I am that Brahman, one without a second, the ground of all existences. I make all things manifest. I give form to all things. I am within all things, yet nothing can taint me. I am eternal, pure, unchangeable, absolute. I am that Brahman, one without a second. Maya, the many-seeming, is merged in me. I am beyond the grasp of thought, the essence of all things. I am the truth. I am knowledge. I am infinite. I am absolute bliss.

I am beyond action; [I am] the reality which cannot change. I have neither part nor form. I am absolute. I am eternal. Nothing sustains me, I stand alone. I am one without a second. I am the soul of the universe. I am all things, and above all things. I am one without a second. I am pure consciousness, single and universal. I am joy. I am life everlasting.⁶

You and I—we are alive in God. Become awake and sense Him—within you, around you, constituting your body and your awareness, the earth, the heavens. This ocean of existence is His. Nothing exists outside of God. To know God is to know one's Self. It is to know the originating Mind of the Father, the One. It is to know the Source of all existence, the Source of all consciousness, and the Source of all bliss. What will you do with this knowledge? Praise Him in your thoughts, and in your words and in your actions. Find your delight in Him—seeing only Him, loving only Him, praising only Him. But we cannot even use the word "Him". We cannot speak of God in the third person, for who would be the third? Even the two—"I" and "Thou"—is an illusion, a false duality that will be dissolved when the one eternal Identity is revealed.

These are my conclusions, based on my own experience; but you must come to your own conclusions, from your own experience. The truth is confirmable only by direct experience—not by a majority consensus, not by rational deliberation, not by reliance on scriptures, not by scientific proofs. The truth of your eternal Source and Identity is known for certain only when His grace reveals it to you. Therefore, gather all the strength of your mind and heart and focus it on Him without interruption for as long and as often as possible. Others have succeeded in this endeavor; and so can you.

Postscript

On the evening of November 18, 1966, I prayed to God: “Let me be one with Thee; not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children.” Immediately, this soul became irradiated with His Light, making it one with Him; and these words came forth from that unutterable Height as a gracious gift that, I believe, was meant to be shared with everyone:

“O my God, even this body is Thine own!
 Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,
 Even I who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters —
 Even I am Thine own.

Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?
 Do the mountains and the gulfs cease to be of the earth?
 Or does a pebble cease to be stone?
 How can I escape Thee?
 Thou art even That which thinks of escape!

Even now, I speak the word, “Thou”, and create duality.
 I love and create hatred.
 I am in peace and am fashioning chaos.
 Standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.

But now, weeping and laughing are gone.
 Night is become day.
 Music and silence are heard as one.
 My ears are all the universe.

All motion has ceased; everything continues.
 Life and death no longer stand apart.
 No I, no Thou; no now, or then.
 Unless I move, there is no stillness.

Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish,
 Nothing to pride oneself on.
 All is accomplished in an instant.
 All may now be told without effort.
 Where is there a question?
 Where is the temple?
 Which the Imperishable, which the abode? ⁷

I am the pulse of the turtle.

I am the clanging bells of joy.
 I bring the dust of blindness.
 I am the fire of song.
 I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil.
 In pools of clear water my image is found.

I am the dust on the feet of the wretched,
 The toothless beggars of every land.
 I have given sweets that decay to those that crave them.
 I have given my wealth unto the poor and lonely.
 My hands are open— nothing is concealed.

All things move together of one accord.
 Assent is given throughout the universe to every
 falling grain.
 The Sun stirs the waters of my heart,
 And the vapor of my love flies to the four corners
 of the world.
 The moon stills me, and the cold darkness is my bed.

I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged and set in order once again.
 A million worlds begin and end in every breath,
 And in this breathing, all things are sustained.”⁸

These words were written *during* the time that I was drawn into union with the Mind of the Creator, and they reflect the sudden radical transformation of my mind’s perspective from a dualistic to an utterly unitive one. For these many years thereafter, I have enjoyed an enhanced sense of the Divinity within me and surrounding me; but I have not fully ascended to that unitive state again since that time. Often, I have attempted to express the knowledge I had received, and found, as many others have found, that to describe the knowledge acquired is not so easy as it might at first appear. It seems that, no matter what approach one takes, the experience not only refuses to fit into words, but refuses even to be accurately formulated in the mind. What was clear in that rare awareness is less clear in retrospect.

Nevertheless, over these many years, I have undertaken to share the certain knowledge given to me since the day I made that bargain with God. He fulfilled His part of the bargain, and I have endeavored since that time to carry out my promise. I have written many books telling of His presence as the eternal Self of all, and of His greatness and goodness, in the hopes that others might be benefited thereby. Whether or not I have succeeded, I leave to His judgment. I believe that, with this last book, I’ve reached the

culmination of my attempts over the years to express this knowledge; I am advancing in age, and besides, there is little more to add. And while it has become evident to me that, in this current Dark Age, there is little interest in what I have to tell, I feel a duty to publish this revealed knowledge in the faith that God will preserve it and bring it to the aid and comfort of the handful of evolved seekers who are to come in a brighter age.

NOTES:

1. Book of Genesis 2:7, Old Testament of the Bible.
2. That the universe is in God is hardly a new idea. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (written circa 500 B.C.E.), the Lord, Krishna, says, “By Me, in my unmanifested form, are all things in this universe pervaded. All beings exist in Me; I do not exist in them.” (*Bhagavad Gita*: 9:4); and in the Christian scriptures, the apostle Paul says, “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (*Acts 17:28*). The entire universe exists within God. He produces the appearance of universal matter from Himself, within Himself. And while it appears that the Spirit and matter are two substances intermingled, it is all only Himself, and so He remains one Being forever. He empowers the universal appearance within Himself, and the dynamic universe continually evolves to more fully express the glory of His Being.
3. “Large Hadron Collider could reveal our origins”, April 19, 2010 by Roger S. Boyd, copyright 2010 McClatchy-Tribune Information Services; appeared April 19, 2010 in PhysOrg Newsletter, www.physorg.com/news190869267.html.
4. Saying of Jesus, in *The Gospel of Thomas*, 77.
5. Shankaracharya, *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda & Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 58.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 118.1.
7. This truth is attested to by Dattatreya in the *Avadhut Gita*, Ch. 6:14: “If there’s only the limitless One, all is Shiva. How, then, can one distinguish between the perishable and the Imperishable?”
8. This Song of The Self appears in Swami Abhayananda, *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984.

II. The Dual Aspects of God As Male And Female

In many religious traditions, the One, the absolute Ground, is regarded as the masculine component, and Its Creative Power (the Divine Mind) is regarded as the feminine aspect. This genderization of God and His Power is certainly not to be taken literally but is merely a metaphorical device to emphasize their apparent duality within a subsuming Unity. It is a metaphor that is most evident in the Hindu and Buddhist Tantric traditions, as well as in the ancient Mesopotamian and Canaanite religious traditions; but it exists also in many other unrelated traditions, such as in the Taoist tradition, where *Tao* is the One, the Father; and *Teh*, Its feminine aspect, is Its manifestory Power:

Lao Tze:

... The Tao that can be spoken of is not the absolute Tao. That Nameless [*Tao*] is the Father of heaven and earth; That which is named [*Teh*] is the Mother of all things. ¹

These two are the same; they are given different names in order to distinguish between them. Together, they constitute the Supreme Mystery.²

The *Tao* is an empty cup, yet It is inexhaustible; It is the fathomless Fountainhead of all things. ³ That which gave birth to the universe [*Teh*] may be regarded as the Mother of the universe. ⁴ The Womb of creation is called the Mysterious Female; it is the root of heaven and earth. ⁵

The myriad objects of the world take form and rise to activity, but I have seen THAT to which they return, like the luxuriant growth of plants that return to the soil from which they spring. ⁶

That ONE called *Tao* is subtle, beyond vision, yet latent in It are all forms. It is subtle, beyond vision, yet latent in It are all objects. It is dark and obscure, yet latent in It is the creative Power of life [*Teh*]. ⁷

From the ancient days till now Its manifestation has never ceased; it is because of this [*Teh*] that we perceive the Father of all. It is the manifestation of forms that reveals to us the Father [*Tao*]. ⁸ The *Tao* is never the doer, yet through It everything is done.⁹ The *Tao* fathers, and the *Teh* brings everything forth as the world of form, time, and space. ¹⁰

The later Taoist sage, **Chuang Tze** [3rd century B.C.E.], explains these two: The One and Its manifestory Power, in a straightforward manner, without the symbolism of gender:

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*, from which all the world came into being. ...It is in this way that *Teh* created all forms. ¹¹

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. ¹²

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 Power [*Teh*] is born from *Tao*, and all life forms are born of this creative Power, whereby all creation evolves into various forms.

...Life springs into existence without a visible source and 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. ... That which gives life to all creation, yet which is, Itself, never drawn upon—that is the *Tao*.¹³

And here is how **Plotinus** describes the Eternal and Its Power:

Time was not yet; ... it lay ... merged in the eternally Existent and motionless with It. But an active principle there ... stirred from its rest; ... for the One contained an unquiet faculty, ... and it could not bear to retain within itself all the dense fullness of its possession. [Like] a seed at rest, the nature-principle within, unfolding outwards, makes its way towards what appears a multiple life. It was Unity self-contained, but now, in going forth from Itself, It fritters Its unity away; It advances to a lesser greatness.¹⁴

Philo Judaeus (1st century C.E.) refers to these two as ‘God’ and His ‘Logos’:

God is high above place and time ... He is contained by nothing but transcends all. *But though transcending what He has made, nonetheless, He filled the universe with Himself.* [My italics] ¹⁵ The supremely generic is God, the next is the Logos of God; ¹⁶ ... That which comes after God, even if it were the most venerable of all other things, holds second place, and was called feminine in contrast to the Creator of the universe, who is masculine.¹⁷

Here is another surprisingly perceptive treatment of the One and Its Creative Power represented as masculine and feminine, by the 1st century Gnostic, **Simon Magus**, who refers to the One as “the Divine Mind”, and Its Energy-producing Power as ‘the Thought’:

There are two aspects of the One. The first of these is the Higher, the Divine Mind of the universe, which governs all things, and is masculine. The other is the lower, the Thought (*epinoia*) which produces all things, and is feminine. As a pair united, they comprise all that exists. The Divine Mind is the Father who sustains all things and nourishes all that begins and ends. He is the One who eternally stands, without beginning or end. He exists entirely alone; for, while the Thought arising from Unity, and coming forth from the Divine Mind, creates [the appearance of] duality, the Father remains a Unity. The Thought is in Himself, and so He is alone. Made manifest to Himself from Himself, He appears to be two. He becomes “Father” by virtue of being called so by His own Thought.

Since He, Himself, brought forward Himself, by means of Himself, manifesting to Himself His own Thought, it is not correct to attribute creation to the Thought alone. For She (the Thought) conceals the Father within Herself; the Divine Mind and the Thought are intertwined. Thus, though [they appear] to be a pair, one opposite the other, the Divine Mind is in no way different from the Thought, inasmuch as they are one.

Though there appears to be a Higher, the Mind, and a lower, the Thought, truly, It is a Unity, just as what is manifested from these two [the world] is a unity, while appearing to be a duality. The Divine Mind and the Thought are discernible, one from the other, but they are one, though they appear to be two. [Thus,] ... there is one Divine Reality, [conceptually] divided as Higher and lower; generating Itself, nourishing Itself, seeking Itself, finding Itself, being mother of Itself, father of Itself, sister of Itself, spouse of Itself, daughter of Itself, son of Itself. It is both Mother and Father, a Unity, being the Root of the entire circle of existence.¹⁸

The Divine Mind possesses Its own light of Consciousness which we name ‘Soul’; but Soul, being invisible Spirit, requires a substantial and relatively stable world of forms to inhabit; and so, the Divine Mind periodically sends forth a burst of Energy that transforms into the Matter of which the physical universe is constituted. He sends forth this Energy in cycles, first projecting His Light Energy, which transforms into the universe of matter in its four dimensions; and then, at the end of a cycle, withdrawing that universe of matter, time and space back to its source in Him. To us,

perceiving this drama from the temporal side, these cycles appear to last for billions and billions of years; but for the soul united in consciousness with the Eternal, the Divine Mind, they are seen to last but the space of a breath.

The Divine Consciousness, or Soul, both contains and inhabits this material universe formed by the Divinely manifested Energy, becoming its indwelling evolutionary force, its living vitality, and its conscious intelligence. By inhabiting or permeating the distinctly manifested forms, Soul becomes associated with those individually distinct forms, and thus takes on the individual characteristics of each one; thus, It appears as separate and multiple souls, while yet retaining its inseparability and singularity. Soul, by virtue of its inhabiting of body, takes on an individuality, thus becoming distinct souls; and yet, because it is identical with the Divine Mind, it retains its Divine unity as Soul, being in essence the Divine Mind.

Philo Judaeus:

That aspect of Him which transcends His powers cannot be conceived of at all in terms of place, but only as pure Being; but that power of His by which He made and ordered all things ... pervades the whole and passes through all the parts of the universe. ¹⁹

Heraclitus (5th century B.C.E.):

Of all the wise philosophers whose discourses I have heard, I have not found any who have realized the one Intelligence, which is distinct from all things ²⁰ and yet pervades all things.²¹ That Intelligence is One; to know It is to know the Purpose, which guides all things and is in all things.²² Nature has no inherent power of intelligence; Intelligence is the Divine. ²³ Without It [the one Intelligence], the fairest universe is but a randomly scattered dust-heap. ²⁴

Plotinus:

There is one identical Soul, every separate manifestation being that Soul complete. The differentiated souls issue from the Unity and strike out here and there but are united at the Source much as light is a divided thing on earth, shining in this house and that, and yet remains one. One Soul [is] the source of all souls; It is at once divided and undivided. ²⁵

... Diversity within the ONE depends not upon spatial separation, but sheerly upon differentiation; all Being, despite this plurality, is a Unity still.²⁶ ...The souls are apart without partition; they are no more hedged off by boundaries than are the multiple items of knowledge in one mind. The one Soul so exists as to include all souls. ²⁷

Soul, permeating and inhabiting the universe of Matter, lends its Intelligence and Vitality to the material forms, thus bringing life and an evolutionary force to the material universe. As Heraclitus rightly states, the universe of Matter, without the Intelligence of Soul, would be nothing but ‘a randomly scattered dust-heap’.

As for the material universe, which dwells within, and is permeated by, the *anima mundi*, or world soul, we have shown that it is the product of a periodic burst of (electromagnetic) Energy cast forth by the Divine Mind. This light-energy has the ability to transmute into material forms (wave-particles), which in turn aggregate into the larger forms that make up the universe.²⁷ Plotinus, of course, knew nothing of this, and so he could never grasp the nature of Matter.

Plotinus was also tripped up in his attempt to understand the nature of Matter by his Platonist concepts. He could only conceive of the world of things as eternal Idea-forms, and so he had to regard Matter as an eternal existent; and yet, in other instances, he saw the material universe as the very outer limits of the radiance of the Divine Mind, where, extending beyond Soul, it fades into utter darkness. Plotinus often equated this darkness, this extremity of the reach of the Divine, with the world of Matter. Brilliant and insightful as he was, he simply did not have all the facts, and so could not piece together all the elements of manifest existence into a comprehensive and consistent whole.

The eighth century Indian Nondualist philosopher, Shankara, declared that the appearance of the universe is an illusion, a product of Maya, the creative power of Brahman. And, as contemporary science has shown, the universe does indeed consist of (a Divinely produced) Energy that transforms into material particles; but these material particles are really nothing more than submicroscopic electromagnetic impulses, mere ‘points of Energy’, interacting in such a way that the appearance of substance is produced—forming, in other words, an illusory world.

How do these “points” of Energy, these wave-particles that began as “photons”, manage to produce the illusion of form and substance? In their original abundance, they collide, transforming into particles such as electrons, and quarks—which combine to form protons and neutrons, which combine to form atoms; and the atoms combine to form molecules, which combine in vast numbers to form perceptible gases, liquids, and solids in a variety of sizes and configurations. And yet the atoms of which these perceivable solids consist are mostly empty space in their interior. In fact, all of what we call *Matter* is 99.999999999999 percent empty space; the other infinitesimal part seems to be nothing more than energy wavelets and intangible forces. Subatomic wave-particles consist of intangible

electrically charged impulses held in proximate “orbits” about one another by invisible forces, so as to form the appearance of much grander substantial entities. And these appearances are multiplied in infinite profusion and variety as if by some magician’s hand, to appear before our eyes as a multitudinous world of objects. And so, this material world, this phenomenal reality of ours, is a marvelous magic show of truly immense proportions!

Soul is Spirit, and the Divine Energy that becomes Matter is also Spirit; they are both from the Divine Mind, but the two are distinctly different: Soul is noumenon, and Matter/Energy is phenomenon. Obviously, they require distinctly different means of production. Soul, possessing Intelligence, is inherently Divine, emanating from and partaking of the Divine Intelligence. It is an extension or radiance of the Divine Itself. Whereas Matter, woven of Light Energy, had to have been produced deliberately as an illusion-producing force expressly to produce the appearance of form and substance—it is, as Shankara tells us, *Maya*, or illusion. Intelligence, or Soul, is a direct extension of the Divine, an emanate of conscious Intelligence identical with its source; and the Energy constituting Matter is of an entirely different kind, transient and lifeless, lacking Intelligence, whose only function is to house the Soul or Spirit. We call this universe-manifesting Energy ‘electromagnetic radiation’ but it may just as rightly be regarded as ‘the power of *Maya*’.

Shankara (8th century C.E.):

Maya, ...also called the Undifferentiated, is the power (*shakti*) of the Lord. She is without beginning, ...being the Cause of all. One who has a clear intelligence infers Her existence from the effects She produces. It is She who brings forth this entire universe. *Maya* is neither real nor unreal, nor both together; She is neither identical with Brahman nor different from Him, nor both; She is neither differentiated nor undifferentiated, nor both. She is most wonderful and cannot be described in words.²⁹ ...Everything, from the intellect down to the gross physical body, is the effect of *Maya*. Understand that all these and *Maya* itself are not the [absolute] Self, and are therefore unreal, like a mirage in the desert.³⁰

Clearly, the Divine Energy-producing Power, also referred to as *Prakrti*, *Maya*, *Logos*, etc., must be differentiated from the Soul-emanation that is essentially identical with the Consciousness of the Divine Mind (*Purusha*). Soul, being identical with the Divine, is eternal; the world-producing Energy is temporal, and transient, and therefore, by Shankara’s definition, ‘unreal’. It is produced by the Divine Mind periodically, in a cyclic manner, similar to the production of a recurrent respiration. This has been repeatedly ‘seen’, experienced, in the unitive vision, and described by

numerous seers. Here is how this cyclic “creation” and “destruction” is described by some others who have seen it:

Svetasvatara Upanishad (4th to 1st century B.C.E.):

He [the Lord] spreads his net [of appearance] and then withdraws it again into His *Prakriti* [His creative Power].³¹

And here, from the ***Maitri Upanishad*** (5th century B.C.E.):

The supreme Spirit is immeasurable, inapprehensible, beyond conception, never-born, beyond reasoning, beyond thought. He is vaster than the infinity of space. At the end of the worlds, all things sleep; and He alone is awake in eternity. Then from his infinite space new worlds arise and awake, a universe which is a vastness of thought. In the Consciousness of Brahman, the universe exists, and into Him it returns.³²

In the 5th century B.C.E., the author of the ***Bhagavad Gita*** has Krishna explaining to Arjuna the process of manifestation-demanifestation in the following passages:

They who know that the vast ‘day’ of Brahma (the personified creative Power), ever lasts a thousand ages; and that his ‘night’ lasts also a thousand ages—they know in truth day and night.

When that day comes, all the visible creation arises from the Eternal; and all creation disappears into the Eternal when the night of darkness comes. Thus, the infinity of beings which live again and again all powerlessly disappear when the night of darkness comes; and they all return again at the rising of the day. But beyond this creation, visible and invisible, there is a higher, Eternal; and when all things pass away, this remains for ever and ever.³³

Krishna, who is identified with *Purusha*, the Eternal, continues, referring to His Creative Power by the Sankhya term, *Prakrti*:

At the end of the night of time all things return to my [creative Power, called] *Prakrti*; and when the new day of time begins, I bring them into light. Thus, through my *Prakrti* I bring forth all creation, and these worlds revolve in the revolutions of time. But I am not bound by this vast work of creation. I exist alone, watching the drama of this play. I watch and in its work of creation *Prakrti* brings forth all that moves and moves not: and thus, the worlds go on revolving.³⁴

What do the mystics of other traditions have to say? **Lao Tze**, of the Taoist tradition of China, who lived in the 6th century B.C.E., also spoke of the universal creation/dissolution cycle:

The myriad objects of the world take form and rise to activity, but I have seen THAT to which they return, like the luxuriant growth of plants that return to the soil from which they spring. ³⁵

And **Chuang Tze**, who lived in the 3rd century B.C.E., wrote:

The visible world is born of the Invisible; the world of forms is born of the Formless. The creative Energy [*Teh*] is born from the Eternal [*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 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 Eternal [*Tao*] sustains all creation, but It is never exhausted. ... That which gives life to all creation, yet which is, Itself, never drawn upon— that is the Eternal [*Tao*]. ³⁶

Heraclitus adds his voice to the consensus:

What is within us remains the same eternally; It is the same in life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age; for, It has become this world, and the world must return to It. ³⁷ This ordered universe ...always was, is, and shall be, [like] an ever-living Flame that is first kindled and then quenched in turn. ³⁸

(This last, by the way, led unilluminated commentators to say that Heraclitus believed the universe was made of fire.)

By all accounts, the creative expansion and “eternal return” of the universe to a state of potentiality in the Divine Mind was also recognized by Pythagoras (570-490 B.C.E.), Empedocles (495-435 B.C.E.), and the early Stoics, and was an established major tenet of Stoic metaphysics by the time of Plotinus. Yet both Plato and Plotinus assumed that the material universe was eternal and unchanging. Plotinus emphatically stated this opinion in his *Enneads*. How could he have begun to imagine the countless wonders that would eventually be discovered in the heavens with the aid of the telescope, including the revelation that the universe is expanding, and that it had its beginning around fourteen billion years ago? No doubt, we in this current

time are also woefully deficient in both spiritual and material knowledge, the future addition of which will one day more perfectly complete our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our place in it.

NOTES:

1. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 1
2. *Ibid.*, 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 4
4. *Ibid.*, 52
5. *Ibid.*, 6
6. *Ibid.*, 16
7. *Ibid.*, 21
8. *Ibid.*, 21
9. *Ibid.*, 37
10. *Ibid.*, 51
11. *Chuang Tze*, Ch. 12
12. *Ibid.*, Ch. 8
13. *Chuang Tze*, 22
14. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 45:3:11; *Op.cit.*, p. 106
15. Philo, *De posteritate Caini*, 14-16; Winston, David (trans.), *Philo Of Alexandria—The Contemplative Life, Giants, And Selections*, Ramsey, N.J., Paulist Press, 1981.
16. Philo, *Legum Allegoriorum*, 2:86; *Ibid.*, p. 93
17. Philo, *De uga et inventione*, 50-52, *Ibid.*, p. 93
18. Simon Magus, *Apophasis Megale* (“The Great Exposition”), quoted by Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutatio Omnium Heresium*, VI.8; adapted from Roberts, Rev. A. & Donaldson, J. (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1892; Vol. VI, pp. 208-210.
19. Philo, *De confusione linguarum*, 136-137; Winston, 1981; p. 90.
20. Heraclitus, based on Freeman, K., *Ancilla To The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983; pp. 24-34. Fragment nbr. 108.
21. *Ibid.*, 113
22. *Ibid.*, 41
23. *Ibid.*, 78
24. *Ibid.*, 124
25. *Enneads*, 27:4:2-5; *Ibid.*, p. 118.
26. *Enneads*, 22:6:4; *Ibid.*, p. 184.
27. *Enneads*, 22:6:4; *Ibid.*, p. 184.
28. For details regarding the transformation of electromagnetic radiation into material particles, in this book, see the chapter on “Body”.
29. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*; Prabhavananda, Swami (trans.), *The Crest-Jewel Of Discrimination*, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 59.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 62
 31. Svetasvatara Upanishad, V.3.
 32. Maitri Upanishad, 6.17.
 33. *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapters VIII.17-20.
 34. *Ibid.*, Chapter IX, 7-10.
 35. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 16.
 36. Chuang Tze, Chapter 22.
 37. Heraclitus, fragment 88; based on Freeman, K., *Ancilla To The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983.
 38. Heraclitus, fragment 30; *Ibid.*

III. Blessedness

It is evident to everyone that God is adept at concealing Himself.
 But few people know that He also reveals Himself—and yet He does!
 He reveals Himself in those who love Him and whose hearts are pure.
 Since He is in all creatures, He is easily able to reveal His inner presence
 In those whom He finds worthy. Those to whom He reveals Himself
 Awaken to the knowledge that they and all things are made of God,
 That He alone constitutes the being of all things in the universe.

Prior to that awakening, these people had no idea that they were God's
 Manifestations.

They thought they were individual beings
 Alone in the Universe. They didn't understand that one omnipotent Power
 Fills all creatures and all things; that He alone exists in every form.
 If He has not yet revealed Himself in you, pray to Him for His merciful Grace.
 Let Him know your loneliness without Him. For truly, without the
 Knowledge of His eternal presence, you are lost, even if you know it not.
 To know Him as your essence, to know Him as your very identity
 And breath, will so fill your heart with joy and wisdom
 That you will think of Him every moment
 And see Him in every thing and event on earth.
 You will sing His praise in your heart and delight in the divine beauty
 All around you in His world. This blessing is the true Kingdom of God
 In which the blessed live forevermore. May He grant this blessing to you.

* * *

5. EPISTEMOLOGY

I. Speaking of God

Since human language was first invented, its purpose has been to facilitate the description of things and events in a world of sense, that is to say, within a spatio-temporal environment. Language is structured, therefore, on the perceived relationship between a subject (the seer) and an object (the seen). That subject-object based language, is inapplicable, however, when we attempt to speak of God, our spiritual Source. Man—whose individual soul is within and inclusive to God, and whose body is within and inclusive to God’s Creative Power—may not appropriately designate the Creator as ‘other’ since the two are essentially one, beyond the designation of either ‘subject’ or ‘object’. In this case, the subject *is* the object, and the object is the subject. And, for this reason, we humans have such great difficulty in thinking and speaking meaningfully about God.

In fact, it is that very subject-predicate-noun structure of language that precludes the possibility of meaningfully expressing the relationship of creature to Creator, of man to God. For, since God, the Spirit, is the substratum in which we ourselves are contained, He is never something ‘other’ to which we can relate as a subject to an objective noun. And though we may occasionally speak of God as an objective reality, in fact, the subject, “I”, and the object, “Thou”, are eternally one—even though, in the common usage of our subject/object-based language, that fact is seldom noted. Yet, despite this great inadequacy of language, we have no alternative but to speak of God however we may, as He is omnipresent and is invariably involved in every occurrence in the universe and beyond.

Human language is inappropriate for speaking of God for another reason as well, as our language requires gender-specific pronouns to represent sentient beings, and God, the source of all sentience, is neither male nor female, but contains, or rather is the source of, both genders. That all-inclusive One cannot therefore be realistically designated as either “He” or “She”. The alternate pronoun, “It”, is ordinarily reserved as a designate of inanimate things, and God, the source of all animate life, cannot be relegated to that narrow linguistic category either. Our language simply does not accommodate the possibility of accurately referring to God. And so, we have no choice but to use whatever pronoun best appeals to us at the time, even while knowing that there is, in our language, no possible means of referring to [Him] that is truly appropriate.

And so, I ask you to please excuse my unavoidable linguistic blunders, while I do my best to tell what I know of [Him]: He is not known by the intellect, and He is not captured in our human words; He may be known only through love and the bestowal of His merciful Grace.

II. How Do We Know?

One of the recurring problems of metaphysical philosophy involves the question ‘What is knowledge—and how do we define it?’ The various answers to this question constitute the branch of philosophy known as *epistemology*, a subject that has been much discussed and argued throughout history. It was a question frequently discussed among the early Greek philosophers, such as Plato and his teacher, Socrates, who held that the highest and most worthy kind of knowledge was the knowledge of the Divine Mind, the *Nous*. However, over time, the idea that such a knowledge was at all possible of attainment fell out of favor. Also, the subjective (undemonstrable) nature of such knowledge made it suspiciously untrustworthy to some minds, and it became popular to regard only that knowledge whose evidence was sensory as valid, because it was experientially apparent and demonstrable. Sensory knowledge, i.e., the confirmation of sight, hearing, smell, touch, etc., came to be regarded, therefore, as the only acceptable criteria of “knowledge”. Knowledge obtained in this way was considered to be *empirical* knowledge. Webster’s New World Dictionary defines “empiricism” as “(1) relying or based solely on experiment and observation [the empirical method] rather than theory; (2) relying or based on practical experience without reference to scientific principles.” In these sentences the *sensory* nature of “experiment,” “observation”, and “practical experience” is implied and understood.

But such a limited definition of “knowledge” leaves little room for a subjective, non-sensory knowing, such as the self-evident knowledge *I am*; i.e., the knowledge of being conscious. It also does not account for the knowledge of the thoughts and images existing only in the psyche; nor does it account for what we call “spiritual” knowledge. After all, we use the words “I know” to represent an inner certainty based on the various kinds of evidence to which we have access.; and this may pertain not only to sensory phenomena perceived as objects, but also to mentally perceived phenomena as well as spiritually perceived noumena. “Knowing”, we must admit, is ultimately a subjective and intangible thing, difficult to put one’s finger on. All forms of knowledge—even that we refer to as “empirical knowledge”—exist only as ephemeral conditions within the subjective field of awareness of each individual. And all these kinds of knowledge—empirical, mental, and spiritual—are informed by the kinds of evidence appropriate to each.

Evidence, in the scientific, empirical sense, consists of sense data. This refers, usually, to that data which reaches us through the faculty of vision via the *physical eye*. Even when there is mathematical proof of a scientific theory, empirical proof demands the confirmation of visual measurement,

whether performed by the physical eye or by technological instrumentation. But there are other kinds of *knowledge*, and other faculties of vision which provide the evidence for those other kinds of knowledge. There is not only the physical vision, but also psychic vision and spiritual vision, corresponding to the physical (phenomenal) field of experience, the mental (psychological) field of experience, and the spiritual (noumenal) field of experience; and the instruments of these various kinds of vision are the physical eye, the psychic eye, and the eye of spirit. The contemporary author and mystic, Ken Wilber, has written extensively about these different faculties and instruments of vision in his book, *The Eye of Spirit*,¹ where he points out that without acknowledging these different ways of seeing and *knowing*, we are limited to a very incomplete and woefully deficient theory of knowledge; with them, we are able to account for the entire spectrum of knowable experience—physical, mental, *and* spiritual.

Now, while the criterion of *empirical* proof is objective evidence limited to sensory experience, the criterion for the ‘proof’ of dreams, imaginations, and other subjective mental phenomena is, not physical vision, but *psychic vision*. This ‘vision’ does not occur through a faculty of sense, but through a faculty of the mind, or psyche, inherent in all, and is subjectively accessible by everyone: this faculty is frequently referred to as ‘the mind’s eye’, a term we use to represent that psychic instrument of vision whereby we “see” the images which we willfully or unwillingly project upon our inner ‘screen’ as “imaginations”. It is by this inner projection that we are able to create, in an instant, whatever images we desire to enjoy within our own private screenings. In dreams, also, we see subconsciously produced images that our dreaming selves believe to be real while they are being presented to us. Some also claim to experience images in the waking state that are clairvoyant or prescient, or projected from other human sources, living or dead. All these kinds of visual experience are ‘seen’ in the mind’s eye. (*Conceptual thought* seems to be audial, however, rather than visual; bringing up the likelihood of the existence of a physical, mental, and spiritual “ear” as well.)

Spiritual vision is not obtained by means of the physical eyes, or any of the other senses, nor through the imaginative or psychic faculty referred to as “the mind’s eye”; but rather through a yet subtler faculty arising only in the higher reaches of contemplative concentration, which is usually referred to as “the spiritual eye” or “the eye of contemplation”. The spiritual eye “sees”, but without the physical sense of eyesight or the deliberate projection of mindsight. The individual’s interior awareness is lifted beyond his/her mental field of awareness, as well as beyond the awareness of worldly

perceptions, as that awareness is transformed into a timeless, spaceless awareness of identity with the limitless and eternal Consciousness from which the universe emanates. In a uniting of the separative individual consciousness with the absolute and eternal Consciousness, one's awareness transcends, not only the senses and the imaginative faculty, but the sense of self, the egocentric identity, as well, relieving the individual of the sense of a separate identity, as he becomes aware of the all-inclusive One. The individual knows this eternal Consciousness as his own, since there is no longer a separate individual identity by which he can perceive this Consciousness as other.

It is this unitive mystical experience that we must consider the only valid knowledge, proof and confirmation of the existence of God or Spirit. No other kind of vision is appropriate to this kind of knowledge. It has long been accepted as axiomatic that reason, in the form of philosophy or metaphysics, is powerless to provide a credible (demonstrable) proof of the existence of God, since it is limited to mental conceptions only; but God has been "seen" repeatedly in the unitive vision by the eye of Spirit. It should therefore be widely understood and accepted that the only self-evident knowledge and indubitable proof of God, the eternal Self, is the direct unitive vision. For those who fail of that, there is faith, a trust in the validity of the experience of others.

The unitive 'vision' bears with it a unique kind of clarity, possessing an unmistakable and indelible stamp of truth, that does not accompany the mere physical or psychic kinds of vision. If it fails of the established standard for "knowing", then it must itself replace that standard, for it is the very essence of *knowing*. However, insofar as I know, it is a knowledge that is non-transmittable, and therefore undemonstrable. It may (with difficulty) be verbally described, but that scarcely constitutes the actual 'knowledge' itself. The direct knowledge is obtainable only via the eye of Spirit. It should immediately be added that the unitive vision must never be regarded by its recipient as a matter of pride, for it is not a deed to which the individual may lay claim. Such experience is brought about entirely by the One in whom the individual exists. The individual is not meritorious in experiencing the unitive vision; rather, he is illumined despite himself. He is drawn as if by a magnet to the experience by the power of the greater Self, and, as a dream-character in a dream is dissolved in the waking consciousness of the dreamer, his sense of a separate selfhood (ego) is likewise dissolved in the eternally wakeful Consciousness of the One in whom he lives and moves and has his being. The One alone has absolute being, and alone has the power of self-revelation. It is that One who is seen,

and it is that One who sees Himself in that unitive vision. Ultimately, no other may truly be said to exist but that One who exists absolutely and forever.

Many have experienced the unitive vision who have never sought it. It comes, at times, when least expected, during moments of introspective reflection, or when viewing a restful scene, or while feeling especially content or joyful. If the individual so illumined is fortunate, that unitive vision will take up perhaps twenty minutes of his life. But, for the rest of his life, his mind will hover about that vision, as a moth about a flame, in search of a continual clarification of the illuminative understanding obtained in that fleeting vision. It is in this way that he revisits the unitive vision, basking in the contemplation of the One who illumined his heart. There he finds the adoration, the bliss, and the sweet wisdom which that Self revealed to him, ever living and ever new. It is not just a memory, but it is a lasting presence in his life, benefiting him every moment, and also shedding some benefit to others whom he touches with his words. That vision is a lifelong treasure, filling his mind with a never-failing fountain of love and happiness and the brightest consolations of wisdom. Though to the world he appears empty and alone, he possesses within himself the fullness of the universe, and his solitude is the blissful aloneness of the only One.

NOTE:

1. Ken Wilber, *The Eye of Spirit*, Boulder, Colorado, Shambhala, 2001.

III. Can We Ever Really Know For Certain?

Imagine you have experienced the sudden transformation of your self-awareness to that of an all-embracing universal awareness. You have become united somehow with the universal Consciousness usually referred to as 'God'. In that transformed awareness, you make note of the radical changes in perspective that have occurred within you in the belief that these notes will be useful as a referential record of that transcendent universal awareness. And, of course, they would be useful—that is, if even for a second anyone believed you! And that's the trouble with subjective psychological events—even divine ones: they are unverifiable. And that is why only *empirical*, i.e., sensually perceptible and demonstrable, facts are acceptable as *science*. Assertions based on subjective *gnosis*, however factually valid they may be for the one who experienced that *gnosis*, must

remain, for everyone else, indeterminate at best. Declarations based on subjective experience will always be subject to doubt.

Mystical realizations, however frequent and however similar throughout human history, can never be successfully determined by others to be either fact or fiction; reported experiences of a mystical nature are therefore generally regarded as unsubstantiated. Even a person well-known for their veracity and integrity will be suspected of mental delusion at best, and deliberate prevarication at worst. Even close friends and family of the mystic will regard the account of his experiences as unbelievable. To those who have never experienced such a radical transformation of their consciousness, the mystic's claims must seem totally incredible. Every mystical account must be judged individually, of course; but in the end, it is only those who have had some experience of the divine in their own lives who will be capable of recognizing the validity or invalidity of a mystic's declarations.

The truth is that you will never really know for certain until you know by your *own* experience, through your own self-inquiry; through your own devotion to the search for truth, and the revelations you experience within yourself. If the recorded revelations of the mystic have any relevant value to others, it is only as a means of fostering that introspection in others which can lead to the possibility of their own experience of divine Truth within themselves. Only when that revelation occurs to *you* will you *really* know for yourself. And that knowledge will be certain and undeniable—even if not another single soul believes you! And if, despite the widespread disbelief of family, friends and peers, you nonetheless love to tell of it, to shout it from the rooftops, you may be sure that this too is your divinely appointed prerogative.

IV. The Wonderful Enigma of Being

Everyone knows the old conundrum: “If a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound if there is no one to hear it?” The question is really about whether or not there is an objective reality that exists independent and regardless of our sense experience of it. This is precisely what Einstein and Neils Bohr argued about: Einstein asserting that there *is* an existent reality independent of its knowability, and Bohr arguing that the only reality is what we are able to know (i.e., observe), and that, therefore, reality exists only in the consciousness of the knower. And while that argument is far from settled, the consensus of contemporary quantum physicists currently falls solidly on the side of Bohr.

To physicists studying the submicroscopic quantum reality in the early part of the twentieth century, it became apparent that one cannot separate existence (ontology) from knowing (epistemology), for the only means by which we are able to agree among ourselves as to what exists is our sense experience of it. So, for physicists, existence is integrally tied up with knowing—i.e., observing. Likewise, there is no criterion by which to say: ‘the tree fell’, without someone having experienced it through their senses. From the scientific point of view, sensory knowledge, i.e., the confirmation of sight, hearing, smell, touch, etc., is regarded as the only acceptable criterion of “knowledge”. Knowledge obtained in this way is accepted as *empirical* knowledge. “Empiricism” is defined by Webster’s New World Dictionary as “(1) relying or based solely on experiment and observation [the empirical method] rather than theory; (2) relying or based on practical experience without reference to scientific principles.” In these sentences the sensory nature of “experiment,” “observation”, and “practical experience” is implied and understood.

The electron cannot be seen—even with a microscope. And even if it could be seen, we could not calculate its speed, because, according to Heisenberg’s Principle of Indeterminacy, it is impossible to determine with accuracy both the position and momentum of an electron, as our means of observation inevitably alters either one or the other. And if it is impossible to know accurately where it is, where it’s heading, and at what speed, then that’s the end of science—or so it seemed in the early part of the twentieth century. This barrier to the determination of the exact whereabouts and activity of subatomic particles seemed to toll the death knoll for scientific investigation into the nature of matter and causality. It appeared that we had reached the end of the story!

But some scientists were not satisfied to let that be the end. Using a mathematical formula devised by Erwin Schroedinger, scientists were able to calculate the *probable* location of an electron, using an algorithm called a ‘wave-function’. With this calculation tool, the location of the electron could be generalized, and eventually accurately determined, but only by assuming, in the process, that the electron, prior to the determination of its actual location, is in a ‘superposed’ state in which it both exists and does not exist at any given point. This is simply the result of the probabilistic formula as it approaches the determination of the one actual location of the electron, or the so-called ‘collapse of the wave-function’. Prior to the collapse of the wave-function, the wave-particle under consideration does not technically *exist*, except as a *possible* (or superposed) state. Only when it is observed by a conscious observer may it be said to actually exist.¹

We must understand that the ‘superposed’ state is only a procedural necessity of the calculation formula and does not represent an actual (real) condition. We can either accept that we *cannot* know with certainty the location and momentum of an electron, and give up the search, *or* we can go through Schroedinger’s actuarial formula to determine its *probable* location—which turns out to be amazingly accurate in the end. The formula’s procedure does not actually place the electron in many places at once but places it *everywhere* only theoretically as a formulaic requirement. Also, we do not, by observing the actual location of the electron, *cause* it to be at that location, though the procedure makes it appear that our conscious observation is a causal factor. It is only as a process of eliminating its being everywhere at once that we ‘collapse’ the wave-function and, by perceiving it, ‘cause’ a wave-particle to be where it really is. And since we cannot know what is actually going on with the particle, but only what we predict and observe, what we observe is therefore our only ‘reality’.

Quantum physics has effectively replaced the notion of *being* or *existing* (ontology) by that of *knowing* (epistemology). We can no longer discuss what is; we can only speak of what we are able to know. Now, the first thing we must know about waves and particles and the wave-particle duality is that waves and particles are not complementary realities; they are merely complementary *perspectives*—human *perspectives*—on the one indivisible Reality. Each is a valid perspective from one or another vantage point. It is only in that sense that they are complements, both perspectives contributing to the total information about—not Reality—but what is *knowable*.

In the early part of the twentieth century, the shift to a probabilistic quantum mechanics was wholly acceptable to physicists like Bohr and Heisenberg; others, like Einstein and Schrödinger, who despite having been so instrumental in the birth of quantum mechanics, were of the old school, and wanted to find another way—one that implied a reality that existed regardless of what was observed or not observed. Nonetheless, in the area of science, a blurring of the line between *being* and *knowing* imperceptibly crept into our thinking. Because of that blurring, Heisenberg’s ‘principle of uncertainty’, having to do with what we can *know*— in other words, epistemology— is nowadays taken to refer to what is; i.e., an ontological condition. The same is true of Schroedinger’s ‘wave-function’: what had been intended as a tool for *knowing*, became a criterion for *being*. So that, instead of saying that a wave-particle’s condition could not be *known* until it is measured, physicists today commonly declare that a wave-particle does not *exist* until it is measured (observed), since observation is the only recognized criterion for being.

For quite a long time now, the question of whether or not there is a universal reality independent of conscious observation has been seriously asked, not only by physicists, but by philosophers and metaphysicians as well. Is there really a world out there or does it exist only in our consciousness of it? Empirical science admits only the evidence of the senses, and so we must, if we side with the scientists, grant reality only to what is observable by the senses, or, like the theologians, we must put our faith in the existence of an absolute metaphysical reality that is intangible and undemonstrable.

This begs the question of whether the ‘spiritual’ reality that has been experienced extrasensually by so many mystics and sages is therefore unreal simply because it does not meet the empirical criteria of science. And the answer is ‘No, it is not unreal.’ It is merely scientifically undemonstrable! Science regards as *real* only those objects that can be experienced through the physical senses, and psychic realities as well as spiritual realities do not meet that artificial criteria. Psychic realities and spiritual realities *are* real, and they *are* perceived. But they are perceived at their own level of existence, in the psyche and in the soul by those who are capable of perceiving them.

Happily, God has also made *Himself* known to a few of us as the formless reality within us that is eternal and all-pervasive. It is the one conscious Source and substance of everything and lives as the divine Self of everyone. It is not experienced by the senses and is therefore unknowable by *science*; but it is knowable through an interior revelation in consciousness, or *gnosis*, revealed by divine Grace. God grants that revelation, that knowledge, that Grace, to those whom He finds worthy of it. May He grant it to you!

NOTES:

1. The paradoxical nature of this circumstance is illustrated in the story of ‘Schroedinger’s Cat’, in which a cat is encased in a closed box with a bit of radioactive matter that *may* decay and poison the cat in the next few minutes. The paradox is that, after that time has passed, prior to the opening of the box, the cat is in a superposed state, neither alive nor dead. The cat’s *real* condition is known only when the box is opened, and the cat’s state is witnessed by a conscious observer. But how can a cat be neither alive nor dead? Well, in reality, it can’t, of course. But, in a word-game, in which *being observed* means *being*, it can.

6. SCIENTIFIC THEORY

I. The Inseparability of Mind And Body (Consciousness And Matter)

I find it interesting that the mystical realizations that occurred to me in 1966 are now showing up in Western civilization's developing scientific view of the universal reality! Here are a few of the revelations in that mystical experience that are presently being formulated as emerging elements of the scientific paradigm:

When I was a young man, I was accustomed to thinking of the body and the soul as two wholly separate and different realities: I considered the soul to be the imperishable Spirit in the body, and the body to be the perishable "temple" or "abode" of the soul. But then, God granted me His vision, allowing me to see from His divine perspective. And when I searched within the divine Spirit for the division between the body and the soul, I could see no division, and I wondered about it: "Where is the temple?" I asked; "Which the Imperishable, which the abode?" But, in the One, there was no such distinction to be seen. Everything in the universe—including my own body—was seen to be made of God. There was no "temple", no "abode of the Spirit"; there was only the one Spirit, comprising all. He alone is everywhere, existing in and *as* everything. What I had considered to be 'my' body, was made entirely of His creative Light, and was therefore really God's body. "O my God", I exclaimed; "even this body is Thine own!"¹

In the clarity of that mystical revelation which I experienced, *I* (the one Consciousness) was aware that *I* pervade all existence: "I am in the clouds, and in the gritty soil." In addition to this, I was unable to discern any categorical separation of my mind and my body. It is a common convention that the body is 'the temple' in which the spirit (mind or soul) resides. But, from the vantage of that integral Consciousness, I could see no separate encasement. There was no duality. It was clear that body-mind was not two things, but one—like a figure in a dream, or a mentally projected character in a fantasy, consisting of a unified mental and physical reality. This is not only counter-intuitional, going against our religiously inculcated bias concerning the separation of soul and body at the moment of death; it also contradicts the conventional Cartesian duality that constitutes the Western philosophical rationale for our conceptual separation of mind and body—and, by implication, our separation of consciousness and matter on a cosmic scale. But the mystical experience reveals that these two are inseparable, one. How is this possible?

It has long been assumed by the scientific community that consciousness is simply an epiphenomenon of the evolving complexity of matter; but eventually the illogic of that assumption became apparent. And today, precedence is being given to the consideration of the supposition that

Consciousness is the primary Essence in which and from which the entire universe of Matter evolved. Many theoretical physicists are now convinced that these two long-divided categories of consciousness and matter are in fact integral. And, though there is as yet no empirical proof (aside from mystical experience) to warrant scientific certainty, there is growing inferential evidence to support this supposition.

I think most of us tend to regard only our incorporeal souls as divine, as imperishable, for our bodies clearly are not imperishable. When someone dies, do we not witness the decay of their lifeless bodies? But *consider*: though our bodies perish, *that* of which our bodies are made *is* imperishable. In the final analysis, all bodies are made of God's Light, and at the world's end, when the earth along with the whole universe dissolves, everything (including the physical particles remaining from all interred or cremated bodies) will transform back into that divine Light from whence it came. Just as God, the transcendent Spirit, is imperishable, His Light of which all the universe is comprised is also imperishable.² God and His creative Light are one and the same.

And so, though we tend to identify our individual selves with the bodies we inhabit, we must know for certain that our individual 'I' is but a temporary illusion. Bodies come, and bodies go; and with each incarnation, we as souls grow experientially, intellectually, and morally. Nevertheless, it is certain that eventually we must come to know the one true 'I', the one divine Spirit who is our eternal Self—containing all bodies and all souls. That One is our sole identity. So, put away all concern or fear: realize that you are the one all-inclusive, all-pervasive Self of the universe. Know that you are eternally blissful and imperishable and be free.

NOTES:

1. For a complete account of the mystical experience referred to here, please see my book, *The Supreme Self*, available as a free download at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
2. The imperishability of the Divine Light is formulated in the first law of thermodynamics (otherwise known as the law of the conservation of energy) which states that the total energy of a closed or isolated system (such as the whole universe) is constant; energy can be transformed from one form to another but cannot be created or destroyed. In other words, it is eternal, imperishable.

II. The Cyclic Universe

There has been much speculation and inference in recent years concerning the origin of the cosmos, but little in the way of scientific evidence, or certainty. In recent years, Cosmologists have proposed a theory sometimes known as the ‘Cyclic’ or ‘Oscillating’ Universe Theory. A number of scientists, including Albert Einstein, were enamored of this theory, but it was eventually shown to be flawed. This was because the theory posited by physicists was a purely physical system, governed by purely physical laws required to restart the ‘Big Bang’ after each ‘Big Crunch’. But, of course, the Source of the universe is not a physical entity.

The Divine Mind is not limited to relying on the laws of physics to recreate the universe; It creates in accord with Its own will. That Divine Mind is alive and conscious throughout the universe, and beyond the universe; and It remains so when the universe is withdrawn. It is not some insentient mechanical force. It is the Inventor of mechanical force; and It is the Intelligence of which our own meager intelligence is but a limited facsimile, possessing but a hint of the power, living clarity, alertness, and efficacy of the universal Mind. It is He who, of His own will, breathes forth the conscious universe in the form of a brilliant transformable light.

This vision of the repetitive nature of universal creation in a cyclic, breath-like manner was first depicted in the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita (Song of God) was written ca. 500 B.C.E., as part of a larger work, the Mahabharata, (reputedly by the legendary sage, Vyasa), as a dialogue between Krishna (an incarnation of God) and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. And it is Krishna who, speaking as the Divinity itself, teaches to Arjuna the perennial philosophy, explaining that in His Divine unmanifest state He manifests the entire universe, which he describes as his ‘lower’ nature;² and He manifests this ‘lower nature’, the material universe, in a cyclic fashion, periodically creating, then dissolving it:

At the end of a cycle, all beings, ... enter into My *Prakriti* [His Creative Power], and at the beginning of a cycle, I generate them all again. Controlling My own *Prakriti*, I send forth, again and again, all this multitude of beings, helpless under the sway of Maya [the illusion of multiplicity].³

My own acceptance of this cosmic scenario did not come about from the theories of physicists, nor from the Hindu scriptures, but from my own indubitable vision, a vision granted me by the Divine Self in the transformed state of consciousness during which I experienced the integral Consciousness as my own. In that state, I (The Divine Mind) exhaled the universe in the manner of an outgoing breath alternating with an inhalation

in which the universe is then withdrawn back into its source. While immersed in this clear awareness, I wrote: “I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged and set in order once again. A million worlds begin and end in every breath, and in this breathing, all things are sustained.” Since this was said while my individual self was merged with and transparent to the eternal Self, I regard this as the very Word of God.

III. David Bohm’s Implicate Order

I.

For many of us, *reality* is synonymous with the appearance of the physical universe that we perceive through our senses. And yet, in numerous spiritual traditions from antiquity to the present, reality is said to contain at least *three* consecutive layers or levels of subtlety: The subtlest and most primary level is the divine Source—the Absolute, the One, which is eternal, transcendent and undifferentiated; followed by the divine Mind—the noumenal realm of thought forms produced from the One; and lastly, the Material World—the sensually perceived phenomenal realm of space, time, and matter that manifests the thought-forms of the divine Mind. These three levels are similarly described in Platonist, Vedic, and Buddhist literature going back many centuries,¹ and in each of these traditions, it is insisted that these three levels of subtlety do not constitute three different separate realities but are simply progressive elements of the one conscious Being who is the sole reality. It is also said that our human make-up is a reiteration of that triune cosmic reality; that as conscious beings within the divine reality, we consist of a Divine essence, a mind/soul, and lastly, a physical body. When we draw on our intellect, we are drawing from the level of mind/soul; and when we draw on our inherent strength and eternal wisdom, we draw from the Divine in us, the ultimate source and core of our being.

In more recent times, the twentieth century theoretical physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992), has similarly described the one reality as consisting of these three levels of subtlety, referring to the primary source level as ‘the superimplicate order’ (though he neglects to explicitly define it), the secondary ideational level as ‘the implicate order’, and the last, physical level, as ‘the explicate order’. Bohm approaches this analysis of the physical reality from the perspective of a scientist, though traditionally, the description of reality as consisting of these three levels of subtlety exists only in the mystically derived *metaphysical* systems. Conventional empirical *science* does not ordinarily describe reality in terms of these three causal levels. To do so would entail the acknowledgment of a Divine Source, a supernatural causal agent, which would fly in the face of science’s professed empirical bias. Physics, as an area of scientific study, delves into

the microphysical in Quantum physics, but it never allows for the positing of a source of physical reality from outside of the natural (physical) realm; nor does it ever assume an intermediate subtle, ideational, realm. The suggestion of any such invisible causal realm underlying the Material World would contradict the empirical requirements of science.

Science is bereft of a clear conception of the source and origin of the universe, and yet it does provide a means for the objective confirmation of its materialist theories through empirical proofs. The metaphysical systems, however, with their three-leveled causal progression, *do* provide a plausible Source for the manifest universe, but they do not provide any objective confirmation through empirical demonstrations, but only a subjectively convincing confirmation through what is known as “mystical experience”.

I, for one, having directly experienced that interior subjective (mystical) confirmation, must side with the metaphysical systems (and with David Bohm) in asserting that there is indeed a subtle ideational level of reality² underlying and forming the Material World, an integral but non-physical continuum, the origin of which is a yet subtler noumenal dimension, a “super-implicate order” which we may designate as ‘the transcendent Absolute’, or ‘the supreme Cause’.³

If we accept that these three levels of subtlety do indeed exist as causal constituents of our Material World, we have to ask, ‘How is that three-leveled material consistency compatible or incompatible with the cosmological theory of the origin of the universe by means of the Great Radiance (the Big Bang)?’⁴

It is a question that reminds us of the unfathomably complex mystery faced by anyone attempting to comprehend the Divine creation. In the sudden universal manifestation known as ‘the Big Bang’ or ‘Great Radiance’, God’s creative ‘breath’ did not simply contain matter-bearing Light but was suffused with divine Consciousness. The wave-particles that constituted the material constructs of that budding universe, had to contain in themselves a subtle-level dimension, not particularized, but wavelular, continuous, and conscious. And yet, how can we comprehend it? Who indeed can begin to imagine the complex wizardry of the Divine Mind in forming and inhabiting this amazing extravaganza that is our universe? The poor human mind is helpless to conceive it.

It is well known that words do not adequately represent these subtle levels of reality; rather, these realms are to be *experienced* as real conscious states of being, not simply labeled and defined for purposes of philosophical speculation. Whether the subtle ideational reality underlying the physical

reality is called “the Divine Mind”, “*Ishvara*”, “the implicate order”, or anything else, matters but little from the mystic’s perspective. What is of importance is to *experience* that subtle reality, and to experience firsthand the Absolute reality, that unknowable One, who is the ultimate Self of all existence. It is only His gracious gift of that liberating experience that is capable of revealing to us the glorious truth of our ultimate divinity, and of freeing us from the limitations and sorrows attendant upon the false illusory ego.

Having seen into the hidden realm where all is one conscious continuum, and the only identity is that one awareness, I have to declare that underlying this many-formed world of separate distinct entities and personalities is a divine reality in which there is no separateness, but only the one ‘I’ manifest in and as everything everywhere. How can we know It? How can we experience It? This indivisible continuum can be known by the human intelligence when it is brought by God’s Grace to a higher subtler level of consciousness. Only then is it possible to perceive It. There is no other way to know of It or to track Its location. It has no time-space coordinates but is revealed only in the unfathomably clear depths of the divine Mind.

II.

“Relativity and, even more important, quantum mechanics have strongly suggested (though not proved) that the world cannot be analyzed into separate and independently existing parts. Moreover, each part somehow involves all the others: contains them or enfolds them.... This fact suggests that the sphere of ordinary material life and the sphere of mystical experience have a certain shared order and that this will allow a fruitful relationship between them.”

-- David Bohm

According to the mystics who have seen into the nature of reality, the one absolute Consciousness—whom we usually refer to as ‘God’—is the Source and Cause of all phenomena, manifesting the universe by His Creative Power in a manner similar to the way by which an individual person projects a thought. This Divine Thought contains implicit within it the conscious Intelligence of the Source; and implicit in it also is the entire design and evolution of the universe, from its initial coming into being to all the refinements and transformations necessary in the process of its ultimate evolutionary development. Science does not recognize such a scenario as tenable and relegates the visionary knowledge of the mystics to the category of speculative metaphysics. However, one brave scientist stepped forward to

acknowledge the possibility that the mystic's vision could provide a basis for a true and consistent scientific worldview; his name is David Bohm.

David Bohm (1917-1992) was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on December 20, 1917. His father was a Jewish furniture dealer, but David went to college, receiving his B.Sc. degree from Pennsylvania State College in 1939 and his Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1943. At U.C. Berkeley, he studied with Robert Oppenheimer; and when Oppenheimer went to Los Alamos to work on the "Manhattan Project", Bohm remained at Berkeley as a research physicist. There, he worked on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotrons and Synrocyclotrons until 1947, when he took a position as an Assistant Professor at Princeton University, working on Plasmas, Theory of Metals, Quantum Mechanics and Elementary Particles. It was there he met and had regular meetings with Albert Einstein.

In 1949, during the repressive McCarthy era, Bohm was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee and asked to testify against Robert Oppenheimer who was being accused of Communist sympathies. Bohm refused to testify and was thereafter tried and acquitted. But the damage had been done; he was fired from his position at Princeton and was unable to find work in this country. He then moved to Brazil where he taught briefly at the University of Sao Paulo. He also taught for a brief time in Israel before moving to Bristol, England in 1957. In 1961, he became professor of physics at the Birkbeck College of the University of London, and remained there for the next 30 years, writing and publishing his several books: *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics* (1957), *The Special Theory of Relativity* (1966), *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980), and *Science, Order and Creativity* (1987). David Bohm died in 1992.

In the 1950's David Bohm was widely considered one of the most talented and promising physicists of his generation. But his primary work from the 1950's to the 1990's—the ongoing development of his "causal interpretation" (which he later referred to as an "ontological interpretation") of quantum mechanics as an alternative to the standard 'Copenhagen Interpretation'—was met with dismissive hostility by the majority of the world physics community. In an attempt to provide a scientific formulation of quantum physics consistent with the mystic's vision of a Divine source and manifestation of our world, Bohm presented in his book, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, his fully developed theories.

The first part of his book's title, "*Wholeness*", was a theme that grew out of his long familiarity with Quantum Physics. Ordinarily, when we seek for causes of isolated events or things, we settle arbitrarily on a preceding local event or state which we designate as the *cause* of the present event or state. But, as scientific investigations tend to show, the internal web of relationships between events and between things is endless. From the point of view expressed by the mystics, and by David Bohm, isolated things and events are not caused by other things and events but are rather linked in a complex web of relationships within a larger common Whole whose nature in turn determines the nature of those constituent things and events. In other words, the material reality is no longer thought to be the independent bits of which the Whole is constituted, but rather the other way around: the overall condition of the universal Whole governs the functions and interrelations of all constituent parts within the Whole.

Here is how Bohm and his co-author, Basil Hiley, explained, in a 1975 article, this understanding:

The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the 'parts' are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent 'elementary parts' of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole. ⁶

The second part of his book's title, "*The Implicate Order*," referred to his suggestion, inspired by the mystic's vision, that the phenomenal world "unfolded from an "enfolded order" in a noumenal Source, referring to these two as "the implicate order" and "the explicate order".

According to his theory, *the implicate order* is an invisible substratum containing the archetypal template for the emergence and dynamic unfoldment of both matter and consciousness, much the way an individual's mind is the archetypal template of conscious thoughts produced from it. And in his wonderfully lucid writings Bohm endeavored to explain how the *explicate order* (this perceived phenomenal universe) has its source in and unfolds from an (invisible) implicate, or enfolded order. The implicate order implicitly contains the explicate order, and the explicate order explicitly manifests the implicate order.

Bohm theorized that, in the implicate order, all things—matter as well as consciousness, body as well as mind—are integrally interconnected in a way that transcends space and time. This is because the implicate order is a noumenal substratum resembling a transcendent Thought-matrix which generates, forms, and organizes the constituents of the explicate order. Quanta appear wavelike until they are observed; that is, witnessed by a conscious observer. Then they appear to those observers as particles; i.e., individualized *things*. Bohm suggests that this wave/particle complementarity can be explained by the implicate-explicate order duality: The implicate order is one indivisible continuum consisting of waves; the explicate order is perceived by the human consciousness as particulate, individualized.

Together, the implicate order and the explicate order comprise what Bohm regards as *the holomovement*, which he describes as “the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”.⁷ In the mystic's vision, the origin of the Whole (the ultimate Cause), is found to reside in the divine Mind (the implicate order), and in principle in its causal precedent, the transcendent Absolute Being. But in David Bohm's ontological theory, nowhere is there any indication of a primary origin for this “undivided flowing movement”. However, he does suggest that the ultimate source of the *holomovement* might include a “super-implicate order”, which in turn may result from a “super-super-implicate order”, and so on indefinitely. In his theory, he does not explicitly define these possible primary causal orders, but, ultimately, underlying all noumenal implicate orders, there must presumably be an Origin, an eternal Intelligence, or Divine Ground, something along the lines of the Absolute, or “One”, of Neoplatonism. But Bohm, as a scientist dedicated to the empirical method, seems to prefer to remain wholly noncommittal regarding the nature of any primary supernatural cause.

For the mystic, informed by direct visionary experience, the perceivable phenomenal world is the manifestation of the creative Energy of God. At

the root of that creative Energy is the divine Source (what Plotinus called *Nous*, “the Divine Mind”), whose ultimate root is the “One”, the ineffable Absolute that is the Godhead. It is the Divine Mind that extends Itself by way of Its Creative Energy to the entire universe. The Divine Mind is inherent and implicit in Its own Creative Energy, and so It fills all animate and inanimate beings, to varying degrees according to their evolution, with Its own Consciousness and Joy. Thus, the manifested beings, who are the evolutes of Its Energy, are able to know within themselves Its being, Its freedom, Its Consciousness, Its Joy. They are able to transcend in mind the limitations of the egocentricity imposed on them in the process of manifestation and ascend in consciousness to the very being of God, knowing Him as their own original and authentic Self.

In that mystical ascension to the Divine Mind (which Bohm refers to as *the implicate order*), the manifest beings become able to perceive the perfection of the universal manifestation in which all created things are linked in a wonderful unity of being and becoming.⁸ Like the atoms in a cresting wave, or in the flowering of a rose, they are welded together in a synchronous dance of movement toward their intended evolutionary culmination. How vast and perfect in every way is their dance! It is indescribably wonderful! In the mystic’s vision, the unfolding of the universe and all that unfoldment entails is seen to be a coordinated and integrated presentation wherein “all things move together of one accord;” and “assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.”

If David Bohm experienced at some time in his career such a mystical revelation, I have not been able to find any mention of it. Nonetheless, his exposition of “The Implicate Order” evinces many similarities to the direct perceptions frequently reported by numerous mystics. In David Bohm’s broad suppositional proposition, causality is seen to reside in the ideational substratum (the implicate order), and then becomes manifest in all its effusive multiplicity as a universe of time and space (the explicate order). Small-scale causes in the explicate order are deemed irrelevant, as they are merely expressions of an implicit order. And, while this ‘ontological interpretation’ of David Bohm’s is a marvelous restatement of the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of science, merely another speculative philosophy, unprovable (unfalsifiable) by science’s criterion of proof. Bohm’s work remains ground-breaking proof, however, that gnosis is a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. Perhaps other scientists will follow the path he has shown, expanding on his vision, and bringing us closer to a science that

corresponds with the declarations of revelation proffered by the gnostics of every generation.⁹

NOTES:

1. For Plato and Plotinus, the three levels of reality were *the One*, *the Divine Mind (Nous)*, and *the physical cosmos*. For the authors of the Upanishads, it was *Brahman/Atman*, *Ishvara/Maya*, and *jagat*. For the Buddhists, it was *Tatatha/Dharmakaya*, *ekachittakshan*, and *samsara*.
2. I use the term, 'ideational' to describe the secondary subtle level of reality only because I don't have a better or more fitting term... It is 'ideational' in the sense that it is non-physical, and non-individualized; the separate forms of this ideational reality are perceived (by the divine eye), but they are constituents of a single continuum. That continuum is subtler than physical reality, but we have no acceptable term to describe it, except for 'spirit' or 'idea'. It does not consist of a humanly produced 'idea', but a divinely produced 'idea'. It might be construed as Plato's 'Forms' or David Bohm's 'implicate' order of reality, without individuation or material substance.
3. 'The transcendent Absolute' or 'Supreme Cause' is the uncreated Source, beyond time and space, the Godhead, the imperceptible and inconceivable Self of all.
4. For references to 'the Great Radiance', please see my article, "How God Made The World (6-07-2013)", or "The Phenomenon of Light (10-15-2014), or "First Light (4-12-2013)" all available at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
5. Bohm, David; quoted in Friedman, Norman, *Bridging Science And Spirit*, St. Louis, Missouri, Living Lake Books, 1994; p. 95.
6. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, "On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory", London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.
7. (David Bohm, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 172).
8. The mystical experience is frequently referred to as "the unitive experience" because it reveals the identity of the experiencer to be identical with the one all-pervasive reality, i.e., it reveals that 'I and the Father are one.' This nondual experience occurs because the mystical experience is a revelation of the subtle level of reality, what Plotinus called *Nous*, (the Divine Mind), or what David Bohm calls 'the implicate order'. Previous to the "unitive experience", the 'explicate order', which had been the experiencer's former "reality", appeared to consist of separate individual things and beings in a world of incredible diversity and multiplicity of identities. But now, suddenly awakened to this subtle level of reality, there

is but one identity spreading everywhere; ‘I’ am in the clouds and in the gritty soil; ‘I’ am the pulse of the turtle; ‘I’ am the clanging bells of joy. In that implicate order, one ‘I’ is all-pervasive, constituting the one and only identity everywhere.

9. For a first-person account of ‘the mystical’ or ‘unitive’ experience, see my book, *The Supreme Self*, Atma Books, 1984, available as a free PDF document downloadable from: www.themysticsvision.com.

IV. The Coincidence of Science and Mysticism

I.

We have all become somewhat accustomed to the picture of the world presented to us by modern physics which asks us to accept that the world consists of either particles or of waves—depending on how we decide to analyze it. Suffice it to say that, in some experiments the world of both light and matter prove to be particulate; and in some experiments the world of both light and matter prove to be wavular. This empirical ambiguity is so prevalent in the field of physics that we now refer to the constituents of both light and matter as “wave-particles”, acknowledging their complementarity, while ignoring the clearly contradictory nature of the term and its meaning.

Reality, as we all know, is one; and yet it can appear to be divisible into individually distinct and separate perceivable entities or appear as waves on a single continuum in which there is no separation between subject and object. Back in the 1930’s, many were pondering these two ‘versions’ of reality which physics had discovered were complementary but irreconcilable descriptions of the reality we experience—among them the highly respected mathematician and dabbler in physics, James Jeans (1877-1946). Jeans couldn’t help noting that these two complementary versions of reality were radically dissimilar:

“When geography cannot combine all the qualities we want in a single map, it provides us with more than one map. Theoretical physics has done the same, providing us with two maps which are commonly known as the particle-picture and the wave-picture. It is perhaps better to speak of these two pictures as the particle-parable and the wave-parable.

“The particle-parable, which was first in the field, told us that the material universe consists of particles existing in space and time. “...The wave-parable ... does not describe the universe as a collection of particles but as a system of waves. ... [In this parable,] the universe is no longer a deluge of shot from a battery

of machine-guns, but a stormy sea with the sea taken away and only the abstract quality of storminess left...”¹

“The old particle-picture which lay within the limits of space and time, broke matter up into a crowd of distinct particles, and radiation into a shower of distinct photons. The newer and more accurate wave-picture, which transcends the framework of space and time, recombines the photons into a single beam of light, and the shower of parallel-moving electrons into a continuous electric current. Atomicity and division into individual existences are fundamental in the restricted space-time picture, but disappear in the wider, and as far as we know more truthful, picture which transcends space and time. In this, atomicity is replaced by ... ‘holism’: the photons are no longer distinct individuals each going its own way, but members of a single organization or whole—a beam of light.

“...And is it not conceivable that what is true of the objects perceived may be true also of the perceiving minds? When we view ourselves in time and space we are quite obviously distinct individuals; when we pass beyond space and time we may perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life.”²

It suddenly struck me, in reading this description of the Wavular version of reality, that this is a description of ‘the mystical experience’ that occurred to me in my cabin in the woods in 1966.³ I had experienced a shift in consciousness from what I regarded as the ‘normal’ version of reality into another, unfamiliar, version of reality. But what does that even mean? What is ‘another version of reality’? Is there more than one reality? You see, there has been no vocabulary other than that of religion with which to describe the Nondual reality in which one finds oneself in this so-called ‘mystical’ experience—until now. Perhaps we must look to the vocabulary of the physicists to comprehend and explain it!

In order to understand these two complementary ways of viewing the universe from the perspective of the scientists, let’s look at the characteristics, the qualities, of these two ‘versions’ of reality and see in what ways they differ. First, the Particulate, or ‘corpuscular’ version:

The Particulate (Dualist) Version of Reality

1. Here, each perceiving subject and each perceived object possesses a unique identity, each individual subject or object being distinct from any other.

2. Here, every perceiving subject and perceived object consists of smaller units, referred to, in sequence, as molecules, atoms, and sub-atomic particles.
3. Here, the consciousness of each subject perceives, in addition to the subject-object duality, a self-created duality of values, emotions, qualities, consisting of pairs, such as like-dislike, happy-sad, pleased-displeased, etc.
4. Here, both subjective and objective events occur within the parameters of time and space. Within these parameters, each perceiving subject (soul?) is born, matures, and eventually dies (perhaps to reincarnate at a later time).
5. Here, the struggle for individual existence sets creature against creature according to the diversity of self-interest and motive.

That is the Particle Version of Reality. And now, the 'version' of reality into which I shifted during my 'mystical' experience:

The Wavular (Nondual) Version of Reality

1. Here, only one limitless continuum of Consciousness exists, containing within It all phenomena, including one's own body, consisting of waves in the continuum.
2. Here, all wavular phenomena consist of and are manifestations of the one continuum, having no distinct identity of their own.
3. Here, consciousness experiences itself as the one continuum. There is only the One, with no division anywhere.
4. Here, what is experienced is one's eternal Self. Time and space do not exist. All that occurs is the correlation and natural evolution of the waves of the one integrated (spiritual) continuum.
5. Here, all the wavular phenomena move together of one accord, one harmony, one purpose.

In 1966, when I was sitting in my cabin before the fire in the stove, I was experiencing 'reality', as all of us normally do, from the perspective of a distinct individual existing *within* the phenomenal universe of time and space. But, following my prayer, I entered into a 'mystical' experience. When my mind entered into that unfamiliar realm of awareness, I was suddenly seeing from the perspective of the one eternal consciousness from whom the world of time and space is projected and sustained. There was no difference between that one eternal consciousness and WHO I. And there was no difference between the world and who I am. One consciousness pervaded and constituted all. It was clear to me then, and remains clear to me now, that the ability to make that shift in awareness does not lie within my control. And for that reason, I am compelled to regard its occurrence as a matter of Grace. Nonetheless, I believe that we are endowed with the ability to either cooperate with that grace or to turn our backs on it.

On the historic level, such ‘mystical experience’ has been occurring to individuals since the beginning. Though they are “few” in relation to the “many”, nonetheless, thousands, perhaps millions, have known that eternal reality underlying the temporal one. Though it is usually a fleeting experience, it is the experiential foundation of religion, and the bedrock of idealist philosophy, for these many centuries. The wave-theory of the scientists has been around since the late nineteenth century. Mystical experience and Wave Theory have just never been associated together before. But today marks a momentous occasion. The recognition that the mystical experience provides experiential confirmation of the scientific theory of an underlying wave-based reality signals the long-awaited and undeniable *coincidence of science and mysticism* in our time. Halleluia!

Not only is wave-particle duality a recognized property of light (electromagnetic radiation), quantum theory implies that “wave-particle duality is also a property of all matter. The electron, which we think of as a particle, is really a quantum bundle of an ‘electron-field’ which acts with wave-like properties.”⁴ However, we humans regularly perceive our macroscopic world (which is made up of the microscopic world) not as Wavular (Nondual), but as Particulate (Dualistic). Yet these two perspectives (or ‘parables’) are vastly dissimilar.

As anyone can see, neither of these two quite different ‘versions’ of the one Reality are remotely similar to the other, though they are complementary versions of the same reality. How can this be? Most of us experience the Particulate (Dualist) version of reality every day. It is our ‘normal’ view of the world. But, few of us, it seems, actually experience the “Spiritual” or Wavular (Nondual) version even for a few minutes of a lifetime. Nevertheless, it appears that these two ‘versions’ of reality are not entirely independent, though one exists in time and space, and the other in eternity. Amazingly, they exist together, overlapping, as it were, one projected upon the other.

The Wavular (Nondual) version of reality is absolute; it exists noumenally, but not phenomenally; that is, it can be seen in inner vision by the higher mind but does not appear as a physical reality. “Physical” requires time and space; and that’s where the Particle-version of reality exists. The two versions of reality exist as exclusive, yet complementary realms, or perspectives. The Wave-version of reality can be discovered as operative in the Particle-version; but the Particle-version of reality is ultimately illusory, being identical to the Vedantic concept of ‘Maya’, an appearance.

Some mystics, including myself, have experienced for themselves, in inner vision, that the true nature of Reality is wavular, and that one eternal

continuum of Consciousness and Bliss is all that is. How, then, do we get from there to the ‘particulate’ reality that we all normally experience in the framework of time and space? Is it possible that this Particulate reality is a construct of the perspectives of our individual minds? What *is* this indescribable continuum of Consciousness— this wavy ocean of reality? It is the universal Mind that encompasses and includes everything, including each of ‘our’ individual minds. We are in it and part of it; we, and everything in the universe, flow along in its tides and evolve according to its whims. It is the manifest Divinity. It is God’s *lila*, His play!

But the *real* unanswerable question is ‘whence comes this Particulate world that we experience?’ If the Nondual, Wavular, vision of reality is the *correct* one, whence comes this Dualistic, Particulate, vision of reality that is ubiquitously present to each of us throughout our lives? Is it a result of human perception only? And if it is a product of our own perception, is it ego-generated? In other words, is the Nondual ‘ocean’ of Reality overlaid by a projected ‘reality’ produced by the sense of ‘I’—which then necessitates ‘not-I’ (or ‘the other’), and hence a multitude of pairs of subjects and objects? Or is our delusion a universal one, created and impressed upon us by the divine Creator, by God?

In my own experience, these two ‘frames of reality’, the Particulate and the Wavular, the Dualist and the Nondualist, are wholly differentiated perspectives that seem to be distinctly separate realms: One, the Particulate, is our normal, personal, three-dimensional, ‘Technicolor’ world of subject-object perception and interior mind-born qualities and values. The second, the Wavular, is a non-personal, transcendent awareness from a perspective beyond time and space, which is identical with an eternal and undivided Consciousness that spreads as waves to include all existence.⁵ The Wavular, Nondual, Reality is absolute; but the Particulate, Dualistic, reality is a product of the individual mind. It is initiated, I believe, by the arising of the sense of ‘I’: that subtle ‘veil’ which we refer to as “the ego”.

Let us examine the evidence: the creation of all the pairs of opposites (dualities) occurs in the individual mind and is personally unique for each individual. Each mentally constructed value is created from the unique perspective of each ‘I’: I-other, here-there, now-then, night-day, pleasant-unpleasant, like-dislike, good-bad, beautiful-ugly, etc. One thing is essential to the creation of each of these dualities: the ego, the I. Without the ‘I’, they have no footing in this world.

But, as we all know, that ego is a *false* sense of identity. It vanishes when the real *I*, the one Consciousness, the absolute Self, is revealed. That absolute Self is *experienced* in the awareness of the Wavular (Nondual)

reality when, by Divine Grace, one is lifted above the individually created Particulate perspective to that of the Divine Mind. There, all is one Self. But how can we reach that ethereal vision? First, know that your current Dualistic perspective is false, and begin behaving in such a way to bring about the transformation of your perspective from that of your individual self to that of the One. I know well that it is not an easy task, and one that will require long effort; but we can begin simply by seeing and treating everyone equally, with love and respect.

NOTES:

1. from James Jeans, Aberdeen Address to the British Association For The Advancement of Science, 1934, “The New World-Picture of Modern Physics”. The full text of James Jeans’ 1934 Aberdeen Address may be found at: [history.mcs.st-http://www-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html](http://www.and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html)
2. *Ibid.*
3. See the description of that experience in my book, *The Supreme Self*, available on my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
4. from Frank Close (Oxford professor of Physics), *The Void*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 107.
5. The brilliant physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992) regarded these two ‘realms’—the Wavular and the Particulate—as the “Implicate Order” and the “Explicate Order” respectively. Here is an explication of Bohm’s vision by Michael Talbot:

“Bohm ...posits that we can look at reality as if it consists of two levels. He calls the level we inhabit—where things like electrons, toaster ovens, and human beings appear to be separate from one another—the *explicate* order. The level of subatomic reality—where things cease to have separate location, quantum interconnectedness reigns, and all things become a seamless and unbroken whole—he calls the *implicate* order.

As we have seen, because everything in the universe is ultimately constituted out of things that exist at this unbroken level, the apparent separateness of objects at our own level of existence is also an illusion. ...Because we are constituted out of the nonlocal level, Bohm feels it is ultimately meaningless to speak about consciousness as having a specific location. It may manifest inside our heads while we function in life, but the true home of consciousness is in the implicate, says Bohm. Thus, consciousness, the great ocean of

consciousness that has divided itself up into all human beings, also exists in all things. Despite its apparent inanimate nature, in its own way a rock is also permeated with consciousness. So are grains of sand, ocean waves, and stars.” (from Michael Talbot, *Mysticism And The New Physics*, New York, Penguin Group, 1993; p. 158 [originally published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981].)

* * *

7. NONLOCALITY

I. The Principle of Nonlocality

The common-sense view of the world accepts the principle of *Locality*: that objects are only directly influenced by their immediate (local) surroundings. This includes the possibility that an action at one point may have an influence at another point, if something in the space between the points, such as a field or force, mediates the action. To exert an influence, something, such as a wave or particle, must travel through the space between the two points, to carry the influence. But there is currently empirical evidence that we live in a universe of Non-Locality. *Non-Locality* is a developing scientific view that all causation results from the network of coordinated inter-relationships occurring within the Whole. The recognition of Nonlocal causality, or what Einstein called “spooky action at a distance”, has come about through the hard-won conceptual battles between the great intellects of the twentieth century, Bohr, Einstein, Heisenberg, Born, Schrödinger, etc. and it asserts that there is an immediate causal connectivity that extends throughout the universe to all objects within it.

My ‘mystical’ realizations do reinforce the scientific findings of Nonlocality, but they are not the result of empirical investigations; rather, they are the result of a direct clarified *perception* of reality itself. In that direct clarified perception, it was perfectly clear to me that “all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” I saw, in other words, that all that is in the universe is integrally coordinated by a single all-pervading will, so that ‘all things move together of one accord’. This view of physical reality, translated into the terminology acceptable to the scientific community, states that there are no independent causes or effects occurring solely in a local setting, but everything is interconnected, coordinated universally—that is to say, nonlocally. Here is a particularly well-expressed version of that understanding presented by David Bohm and his co-author, Basil Hiley, in a 1975 article:

The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the ‘parts’ are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent ‘elementary parts’ of the world are the

fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum inter-connectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole. ¹

...Ultimately, the entire universe (with all its particles, including those constituting human beings, their laboratories, observing instruments, etc.) has to be understood as a single undivided Whole, in which analysis into separately and independently existent parts has no fundamental status. ²

While the question of Nonlocality originally arose from the thought-experiment outlined in the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paper which Einstein submitted to Neils Bohr in 1935 in the attempt to prove Quantum Theory incomplete, the technological means to actually perform the empirical tests needed to determine the scientific basis for Nonlocality, proving Bohr correct and Einstein incorrect, did not present themselves until long after Einstein had passed away. In 1964, the theoretical physicist, John Bell, and experimenters Alain Aspect, in 1982, and Nicolus Gisin, in 1997, conclusively proved both by theorem and by empirical methods that “Nonlocality” is a scientific fact, and this fact has been universally accepted by the community of physicists throughout the world.

Nonetheless, there remains a wide gulf between the direct ‘mystical’ knowledge of reality (which I experienced) and a conceptual scientific knowledge based on empirical proofs. The mystical experience is a direct revelation of the One who is the Source and Director of the universal array. It is not a linguistically framed theory of universal mechanics, but rather a living confirmation of the one divine Mind who both contains and *is* everything that exists, including the experiencing self. No amount of familiarity with or proficiency in the understanding of the theorems of quantum physics is capable of producing that direct knowledge.

The scientific principle of *Nonlocality* simply expresses in an oddly roundabout way the fact that has been known for millennia by the faithful of all religions that we exist within a ‘reality’ imaged forth by the one Divine Mind, and in which everything that occurs is His doing and occurs within Him according to His omnipotent Providence. This being so, the activities taking place within the universe are not dependent upon ‘local’ causes; for there are seen to be no local causes or effects. The source of causation is hidden; it begins with the one Divine Mind and extends in an infinite network of effects throughout the universe to bring His purposes to fruition.

We are simply His eyes and ears, His instruments of knowing and exultation, His singers and worshippers, His imagined others. We too are non-local, rooted in the infinite and eternal Cause, and extending throughout the expansive universe as wave-particles of the one living Being. Halleluia!

NOTES:

1. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, "On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory", London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.
2. Bohm, David, *Wholeness And Implicate Order*, London, Routledge, 1980.

II. Complementarity

Since the first half of the twentieth century, physicists have regarded both Light and Matter as possessing the contradictory but complementary properties of both waves and of particles. This has become well known as the Wave-Particle Duality (WPD), observable in physics experiments at the Quantum level. Equally well known is Werner Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty (or Indeterminacy), which states the impossibility of simultaneously measuring both the position and momentum of a wave-particle. It now turns out that these two limitations on our ability to know and understand Matter are really one and the same! This astonishing discovery appears in detail in the December 19, 2014 edition of *Nature Communications*. International researchers Patrick Coles, Jędrzej Kaniewski, and Stephanie Wehner made the breakthrough while at the Centre for Quantum Technologies at the National University of Singapore. They found that 'Wave-Particle Duality' is simply the quantum 'Uncertainty Principle' in disguise.

An article describing this new understanding appears also in the PhysOrg Newsletter for December 19, 2014, and is entitled "Quantum Physics Just Got Less Complicated".² It states:

The quantum uncertainty principle is the idea that it's impossible to know certain pairs of things about a quantum particle at once. For example, the more precisely you know the position of an atom, the less precisely you can know the speed with which it's moving. It's a limit on the fundamental knowability of nature, not a statement on measurement skill. The new work shows that how much you can learn about the wave versus the particle behavior of a system is constrained in exactly the same way.

What's really surprising about this discovery is that, for three quarters of a century, the entire scientific community has been widely discussing and utilizing in their experimental researches these two limitations on our ability to know, and yet no one before now even suspected that they were related, let alone that the Wave-Particle Duality was simply another manifestation of the principle of Indeterminacy. In fact, there was a great deal of speculation over the years by well-respected physicists that the Wave-Particle Duality referred, not to a merely *apparent* duality, but to an *actual* duality in the objective nature of light and material substance.

In the case of the experimental determination of whether an elemental constituent of matter behaves as a particle or a wave, as well as in the case of determining its position or its momentum, the very act of observing that constituent of Matter has the power to alter the experimental result. Whether the outcome of an experiment results in a wave or a particle, and/or whether its position or its momentum is measured, each outcome is wholly dependent upon the experimenter's intent, since in both cases, one kind of experiment will give one result, another kind of experiment will give another result.

In other words: If we perform an experiment that allows us to know the *position* of a wave-particle with some certainty, that experiment precludes the accurate knowledge of its *momentum* (velocity times mass); and if we perform an experiment that allows us to have accurate knowledge of the *momentum* of a wave-particle, that experiment precludes the accurate knowledge of its *position*. Similarly, if we perform an experiment that allows us to know the *particulate* nature of a wave-particle, that experiment precludes our knowing (observing) its *wavular* nature; and conversely, if we perform an experiment that allows us to know the wavular nature of a wave-particle, that experiment precludes our knowing (observing) its particulate nature. All of these limitations on our ability to know are described by Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy, or Uncertainty. The question is 'what, if anything, does the unification of these two phenomena, previously thought to be separate and uniquely distinct, say about the nature of Matter that was not previously known?' To physicists, this new understanding places both of these limiting phenomena under the common umbrella of one mathematical formula; but that hardly tells us anything *new* about the nature of material reality. Despite all the words and the mathematical formulas, we remain as ignorant concerning the mysterious nature of Matter as we were before this mathematical unification.

All that we really know is that Matter, in its very tiniest forms, appears to us as either waves or particles. If we ask the question, 'Waves or particles of what?', we are back to the original electromagnetic impulses—elusively invisible forces created, governed, and coordinated by a transcendent

Intelligence. That Intelligence that projects the Energy by which the material universe is formed is the same Intelligence, the one divine Consciousness, in which our individual consciousness exists. That one conscious Self, that Lord of the universe, is the ultimate Source of the progression of all causes—both mental and physical. He is the uncaused Cause, existing in Himself alone, remaining unaffected by all this busy world and all our mind-born creativity. And so, all enquiry comes to an end: we, with our material form and our conscious awareness, are projections of the one divine Mind. We consist of Him and live in Him; He is the one reality, our own eternal Self. And He is doing everything.

NOTES:

1. See the account of my mystical experience in *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984. Or download the book at my website at: www.themysticsvision.com.
2. See the article at: <http://phys.org/news/2014-12-quantum-physics-complicated.html>

III. Freedom Or Determinism?

In the field of physics, the dispute over whether light is particulate or wavular played out over several centuries. Isaac Newton (1642-1727) asserted that light was particulate; Michael Faraday (1791-1867) and James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) showed that it was wavular. In the twentieth century, Max Plank and Albert Einstein showed that it was particulate, while Louis DeBroglie and Erwin Schrödinger showed that both light and matter (electrons) were wavular. Eventually Neils Bohr broke new ground in attempting to settle the matter by declaring that light and matter are *both* wavular *and* particulate, depending on how you go about measuring them; and he declared them to be “complementary” phenomena, each contributing to the total information about light and matter.¹ As a result, today we speak of “wave-particles” or “wavicles”, and the phrase “wave-particle duality” is a commonplace one.

To physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992), this wave-particle duality indicated that there were two different planes or levels of reality: one invisible and beyond time and space, consisting of a field of spreading waves; and a second derivative plane manifesting in the physical time-and-space universe of particulate matter. The first, the subtle-level plane, he called “the implicate order”; and the second, the physical plane, arising from the former, he called “the explicate order”. He explained the wave-particle duality in

terms of these two “orders”, both of which contribute to the appearance of our phenomenal world.²

In the realm of metaphysics, another dispute similar to the wave-particle debate had been going on for centuries: it was between the advocates of causal determinism and the advocates of free will or choice. The question is “Are we entirely governed by the will of the One, or do we have an independent free will to choose and act? Do we move in accordance with the will of one all-inclusive causal tide, or do we each have the ability to determine our own fate according to our individual choices?” Through the centuries, this dispute went back and forth in a manner reminiscent of the wave-particle dispute, with no resolution. And no one seems to have noticed that this metaphysical dispute was *directly linked* to the wave-particle dispute of physics!

As David Bohm points out, the one contiguous field or continuum (*the implicate order*) spreads its ripples, and everything consists of those ripples or waves—there are no distinct individual entities; everything is interconnected in the One, and consists of that One, as waves spreading on the ocean consist of the ocean. (*It is this implicate order that is experienced as one’s identity in what is referred to as “the unitive, or mystical experience”.*) But in the (phenomenally manifest) *explicate order*, occurring in time/space, things are individualized, particularized, each thing or being having its own separate identity or soul. If David Bohm is correct in his interpretation of the wave-particle duality, then, in a way similar to, and directly related to, the wave-particle complementarity, there is a complementarity in our identification: we are both the one universal (implicate order) Self and the particularized (explicate order) self. Similarly, there is a complementarity of causal determinism (in the implicate order) and independence of will (in the explicate order). Just as we are both wavular and particulate, both identical to the universal Consciousness and distinct as individual souls, we are also both determined and free!

Just as light and matter, photons and electrons, viewed from different perspectives, appear to be either wavular or particulate, our identities, viewed from different perspectives, may appear to be either contained in and identical with the universal Consciousness or manifest as distinct individual souls. Likewise, viewed from those different perspectives, we may appear to be either totally determined by universally interconnected causal factors or independently free to choose our own actions.

The notion that we, and everything else in the universe, are either wave or particle depending on our perspective, has not yet sunk into the collective psyche; imagine how difficult it will be for humanity to come to terms with

the understanding that, on one plane of reality, we are entirely at the mercy of the universal causal fiat, and on another plane of reality, we are entirely self-determined and solely responsible for our actions—in other words, that we are *both* the wavular manifestations of the one nondual continuum in the implicate order *and* that we are particulate as individual souls in the explicate order; that our wills are *both* determined *and* free! ³

Mystical experience such as that of my own and others, along with the experimental findings of respected physicists, leads us to acknowledge that the wave-particle duality is not just a curious paradox; it represents a new paradigm whose implications haven't quite yet dawned on the scientists and psychologists—let alone on the public. The fact that light and matter reveal themselves to be particulate in some experiments and wavular in others suggests to some physicists, like David Bohm, that there are two separate (levels/kinds of) realities overlapping—a wavular one and a particulate one—even if the particulate reality turns out to be merely an induced subjective illusion.

So far, humanity has been stumped concerning the question of whether we are determined or free in our willing; but perhaps through a comprehension of the principles of contemporary physics we will arrive at and accept the understanding that the determinism-freedom duality, like the wave-particle duality, is in fact a complementarity. This would require the recognition that we consist of waves on the one ocean of Consciousness, and are, at the same time, individualized entities, independent souls in the temporal manifestation—that we are *both* causally determined *and* free to choose at the same time. Such an understanding, acknowledging that these two apparently opposing notions are in fact complementary to one another—however challenging that may be to our current world-view and to everyone's sanity—would go a long way to resolving the long-standing metaphysical dispute concerning who we are—the Divine One or the mundane many—and whether we are determined or free. The answer is, of course, we are both individual soul and all-pervading Divinity. We are governed by the one Divine Will, and our freedom is unlimited.

NOTES:

1. Neils Bohr: “Evidence obtained under different experimental conditions cannot be comprehended within a single picture but must be regarded as *complementary* in the sense that only the totality of the phenomena exhausts the possible information about the objects.” This quote is from: “Discussions with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics”. In P. Schilpp. *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*; New York, Open Court Publishing, 1949.

2. In the “mystical” experience that occurred to me in November of 1966 (see my book, *The Supreme Self*), I did indeed feel as though I had entered a different dimension, a different reality, from the one experienced ordinarily in which my identity was uniquely my own, separate and distinct from all others. It was as though these two dimensions, or realities, existed alongside each other, but at uniquely different levels of consciousness, whereas in the one I played my accustomed role in the physical world of distinct individual beings, and in the other I was omnipresent as a non-physical continuum extending within and throughout all things.

From my individual perspective, the transition from the consciousness of myself as a distinct individual to that of an all-embracing and pervasive presence was not in my power to accomplish. By some power other than my own, it had just happened. Yet, in that transition, I had become eternal, all-pervading and perfectly whole and complete. For that few minutes, I had become God—or, as David Bohm might say, ‘my consciousness had become one with the Consciousness that manifests and upholds both the implicate and the explicate orders.’ And so, I know, as few others do, that these two intersecting realities—by whatever names they are called—do indeed exist and constitute the foundation and fabric of all existence.

3. Ultimately, of course, the one ‘I’ is the sole reality. It is both Determiner and determined. The question of who is determined by whom thus becomes moot.

IV. 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 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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8. TELEOLOGY

I. Why Does God Create The Universe?

That is the question. But is there an answer to this question? Well, there has been no dearth of suggestions throughout history intended to answer the question of ‘What is God’s purpose in creating the universe?’ Such questions and suggested answers fall into the category of “Teleology” in the realm of Metaphysics. *Teleology* is about purpose, or intention.

A number of early philosophers have offered their opinions regarding the question of ‘Why did God create a universe?’ And here are a few: The author of the **Rig Veda** (ca. 2000 B.C.E.) suggests that the Power to manifest a universe arose within the One Being as ‘Desire’:

In the beginning, darkness lay wrapped in darkness; all was one undifferentiated (*apraketa*) sea (*salila*). Then, within that one undifferentiated Existence, [something] arose by the heat of concentrated energy (*tapas*). What arose in That in the beginning was Desire (*kama*), [which is] the primal seed of mind (*manas*)...¹

Plotinus (3rd century A.D.) suggests that God’s Power to create was not the result of a willful act, but was a natural, spontaneous “Circumradiation”:

Given this immobility in the Supreme, It can neither have yielded assent nor uttered decree nor stirred in any way towards the existence of a secondary. What happened, then? What are we to conceive as rising in the innards of that immobility? It must be a circumradiation—produced from the Supreme but from the Supreme unaltering—and may be compared to the brilliant light encircling the sun and ceaselessly generated from that unchanging substance. ...There [in the One] is the Unity which is the potentiality of all existence. ...The perfection entails the offspring; [for] a power so vast could not remain unfruitful.²

The author of the **Taittiriya Upanishad** (ca. 1000 B.C.E.) believed that it was simply God’s wish to be many, rather than one and alone, that caused Him to create a universe:

He [the One] desired: ‘May I be many, may I procreate. He performed *tapas* (created heat); and, having performed *tapas*, He created all this—whatever there is. Having created all this, He entered into it. Having entered into it, He became both the manifest

and the unmanifest, both the defined and the undefined, both the supported and the unsupported, both the intelligent and the non-intelligent, both the real and the unreal. ³

And here is the Gnostic, **Valentinus** [2nd century C.E.] who had a similar opinion:

The Father existed alone, unbegotten, without place, without time, without counselor, and without any conceivable qualities ..., solitary and reposing alone in Himself. But as He possessed a generative Power, it pleased Him to generate and produce the most beautiful and perfect that He had in Himself, for He did not love solitude. He was all love, but love is not love if there is no object of love. So, the Father, alone as He was, projected and generated [the world].⁴

Each of these speculations provides a plausible scenario; but do we really think that we can determine, by any amount of speculation, just how and why the one Divine Father, the absolute Consciousness, happened to possess a creative Power by which the Spiritual and material universe was produced? Really! If, as the Gnostic, Valentinus, and others have suggested, He abandoned His Oneness and entered into all this apparent multiplicity and tumult out of a desire to escape Aloneness, to be many, it may be that He is happily enjoying being all these worlds and creatures; or it may be that, underneath it all, He is still quite aware that it's all only Himself, and still feels Alone. Or, perhaps there is another motive in the heart of the Divine for the production of a universe peopled with sentient beings who share in His conscious being.

NOTES:

1. *Rig Veda*, x.129.2-5
2. Enneads, V.1.4-8: The Three Initial Hypostases
3. Taittiriya Upanishad, II.6.1, Swami Nikhilananda, *The Principal Upanishads*, N.Y., Dover Publications, 1963, 2003; p. 269.
4. Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Heresium* VI.29.5ff. Roberts, Rev. A. & Donaldson, J. (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1892; Vol. VI.

II. Why We Are Here

Do you believe that we are each responsible for our own decisions, and therefore responsible for the course of our own lives, with no one to blame but ourselves? Or is the good Lord who dreams up all these souls, and places us into this world with our individual proclivities, the ultimately responsible one? Well, I think you can see the answer to this question at once: Both of us are responsible. God is the ultimate cause, and we are the effective causes, being instrumental in bringing about the resultant effects. But of course, we and God are not separate; we souls being mere figments of His imagination, entirely governed by Him.

And, since ultimately there is only God, why do you suppose He continues to produce these apparent worlds and souls and all this hubbub? What does it really matter how each manifested soul passes the time in this essentially unreal tapestry of space and time? It matters to each of us, of course; but why does it matter to Him? Is He keeping score? Does He have some stake in the game? Perhaps He's simply making the most of His lonely omnipotence! He has certainly produced a magnificent show! No one would suggest that it would be better if He did nothing. Still, we can't help wondering what justifies putting on this extravagant pageant? Perhaps, like us, He's simply susceptible to the appeal and satisfaction of artistic creation.

But, if you ask me, from a mystic's point of view, there's really nothing in it for Him. He remains blissfully the same, no matter what. So, what's His motivation? Could it be He's simply demonstrating by example the epitome of a perfectly selfless act? Is He giving tirelessly of His blessings, radiating mercy to every creature, in order to show us the path of blessedness and joy? His own glory is mirrored in millions of Suns throughout the cosmos, and we, in imitation, reflect His intrinsic love in our lives; and we pray: Mercy, Mother, on all Thy children. Mercy, Mother, give mercy to all.

Of course, our Father/Mother loves His mind-born children and wishes them well; for, after all, they're truly not *other* than Himself. But more than that, His very nature is love. And that love is expressed within us, His Mind-born creations, *compelling* us to His service. We have no other course; no one is able to escape Him. His love binds us in its tender grip, and we desire no other love. It is this love that leads us to selflessness, to the dissolution of the petty ego. This is His purpose and His motivation: to transform us into Himself, to return us to our original purity. Who knows why? It's simply what He does. And, therefore, I also know my *own* purpose, my journey's end: I live to do His will, to tell all I know of Him, to sing His praise. Clearly, I'm at His mercy. Like you, I receive only what He gives.

The Hindus call this creation, this repeated universal manifestation, “God’s *lila*, His play”. From the invisible *Unum*, a tangible *Pluribus* bursts forth. And each new manifestation culminates at last in the unification of opposites; repeatedly, the illusion of chaotic multiplicity is happily burst! Suddenly, He and I are one—the same One! And then, after some inactivity, the game begins once again! Those who haven’t seen it cannot appreciate the incredible wonder of it. And those who have seen it cannot tell of it, for, once seen, there’s no one left to hear or tell. Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish, nothing to pride oneself on; all is accomplished in an instant.

III. The Purpose of God's Creation

God’s purpose has suddenly dawned on me! Since I am He, and He is me, my joy is His joy, and His joy is mine. Isn’t it obvious then 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 in billions of 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?’ It is for this long prepared and multiply 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!

Now, if we accept the possibility that we have truly discovered His purpose, what, then, is *our* purpose in this short life allotted to us? Is it simply to await His revelation? Or is there something more?

IV. Why We Were Born

The Jews are praising Thee, Lord.
 The Christians and Muslims are busy praising Thee as well.
 The Hindus and the Sikhs, the Platonists and the Taoists
 also sing Thy praise.
 The farmers tilling the land have no other goal but to give
 praise to Thee.

Even the men and women of science, who hope to ferret out
 Thy secrets,
 Are engaged unwittingly in praising Thee.
 For no one on this earth of Thine can find satisfaction
 In anything other than Thy praise.
 What other purpose might we have, O Lord?
 Why else were we born? Why else would we live
 But to joy in giving praise and glory to Thee?

V. Praise God

I'm here to sing the praise of God, and so I shall.
 And let no one think belief's the basis of my song,
 Or words I've read in high-flown works.
 The subject of my song is what I've seen,
 What He's revealed to my most meager sight
 In holy quiet night's retreat.

Though many have praised His creation —
 Its beauties, and its grandeur,
 I would praise Him in His unborn formless Essence
 Where He lives unmoved, and happily serene.

Though He breathes forth the immense and tumultuous cosmos,
 Enjoying the drama of its unfolding activity,
 He remains clearly indivisible
 And perfectly unmoved within Himself,
 Continually aware that He alone exists.
 There is no other; so, all's contained in Him.

Serene, yet keenly awake, He spreads
 His outflowing radiance in every direction.
 Delight, unbounded and uninterrupted,
 Permeates Him and all that He proffers.
 In one breath, He flashes forth the universal array,
 And then withdraws it all again,
 Only to breathe once more and fling the stars
 And galaxies wheeling on their rounds again.

For creatures, it's an almost endless parade
 Of eon upon eon, unfathomably deep in time's recess.
 But for him, who knows no change or movement,
 It's but a moment's breath.

And yet the greatest wonder is that every soul breathed forth
 Is but a time-wrought image of Himself.
 And each one, being His by virtue of its life in Him,
 Is capable of finding at its core that One who fashioned it to life.

As a figure in a dream awakes to know he is the dreamer,
 Each soul, when it awakes, discovers it is none but Him.
 He appears as though in a house of many mirrors,
 Fragmented into a million images, yet all are Him.
 It's but a masquerade.

And when the soul awakes to know its deathless Self,
 Beyond imagined dreams of personhood,
 It knows that forever it has lived serene and blissful,
 Just beyond the dream.

It learns that all the devilish battles and tortuous travails
 Were but a thought-parade in which, for the briefest time
 It marched, all unawares, to finally break away
 And find its way to freedom from time's tumultuous play.

To find such freedom one must look within,
 And, gaining clarity of mind, discover who one really is.
 Who one really *is* is Him! For none exists but Him alone.
 It's true! He lives alone in high eternity.
 But He lives as well as you and me.

It's you and me who lives in that eternal sky
 While playing out our destined roles below.
 Two selves, one vigilant while tossing out the stars,

The other strutting on this stage of dreams,
Oblivious to the other, her subtler Self and Source.

The all-encompassing, all-sustaining Self of all
Is quite alone, and quite contained
Without a drama to behold,
Until He beams Himself in outward radiance
As particles and galaxies and separate living things
In bright array,
To people all these worlds with beings
Conscious of their knowing selves.
His game: to lead them all within themselves
In stage by stage to knowledge of the ways of things,
And, finally, to awareness of that deeper Self
Who flung them forth to journey home,
To know the ultimate Truth that they are Him.

Awaking to that joyful knowledge,
The spell of separation falls away
Along with fear and worry, woes and cares.
And, lifted up in mind and spirit,
The knower lives in peace and joy beyond this world
Alone, eternal, as all in all.
He knows the universal design to be his own.
He walks in freedom. His soul is blest.
Praise God!

VI. In Praise of God

Let us now, for our own heart's joy, give praise to God. He is the Refuge of the troubled mind and the Bringer of peace to the troubled heart. As a cold drink of water to a thirsty man, so is the name of God to the wearied soul. He is the cool Cave of the heart, wherein the soul finds quiet sanctuary from the darting demons of egotistical thought. He makes the passionate will to be stilled in silence and dispels all the incriminations of the wounded heart. O let us rest in that silent, bliss-filled Cave, hidden away from the clamor of the world, and drink from the fountain of the nectar of His name.

O mind scratch His name on the cave-wall of your heart, and never let your eyes be without the sight of His name. Sing His name softly in that heart-sanctuary, that your ears may never be without the sound. And give praise to Him who alone is worthy of praise; for all that is done is done by Him, and every gift that comes is a gift from His hand.

O my heart, praise Him with words, and praise Him in acts of love. No sin has ever touched so much as a hair on the head of one who is busied with the praise and remembrance of God. If you wish to do some good in this world, O my soul, never stray from His dwelling-place in the heart. For, as the moon sheds the light of the Sun only when its face is turned to the Sun, we also are bathed in and reflect His gentle Love only when we're turned in love to Him.

We gather to give praise to God, not that we might please Him with our devotion, nor to make a show to others of our holy ways. Why, then, should we find pleasure in singing His praise? Is it not out of a pure love that springs from God Himself and wells up to overflow within us? Is it not His own heart's Love that made us, and that fills our every fiber with a sweet desire? And is it not His inward flame of Love 'round which we, moth-like, dance, yearning to be extinguished in His unifying light?

He is the Love and He is the Light that draws us to Himself. From His gentle Light we have emerged, and to Him we shall return. May we learn, in this fragile life, to walk always in His Love, and to keenly sense in every moment His all-pervading Light. May we breathe His joy, and taste His sweetness, and shed His mercy on everyone we meet.

It is this for which we gather, for which we give Him praise. For, as the summer flowers blossom forth the exuberant joy and beauty of God on earth, so do our hearts blossom forth His Love in songs of praise; and mercifully shower on ourselves the sweet fragrance of delight.

Lord, when I look within me, I see Thy light and I know Thy peace, and I am guided by Thy sweet words of wisdom. And when I look about me, I see only Thee in all Thy splendorous forms. It has been said that man is like an empty bottle floating in the sea of God; water flows within and water flows without; everywhere there is only the vast ocean of God. Thus, Lord, I am immersed in Thy ocean of Consciousness and Light, and I know Thee both within and without.

But, O God, what of this "bottle," this "me," which separates the within from the without? What is this "I" that stands apart and speaks to Thee of within and without? O my Lord, even this body is Thine own! It is a form composed of Consciousness and Light, composed of Thyself; it is a shimmering mass of Energy projected from Thee, and can never be separate from Thee.

Who, then, is this “I” that speaks of “I and Thou,” and thus sets up a division between my soul and Thee? Truly, there is no one else but Thee; there is none but the one Life that is manifest as all this vast cosmos in all its variety of color and form. And, though I sometimes imagine I am far from Thee, and I seek Thee in the darkness and turbulence of my mind, truly I can never be separate from Thee.

Therefore, let me ever remember my oneness, my identity, with Thee. For the lover, the Beloved, and the love itself, all are one. And I know: “I am the Soul of all; I am the Light that illumines the world. I am as pure and vast as the infinite blue sky. I am the Self of all. I am the Self of all.”

VII. Song of Thanksgiving

Hari, my love, I wish to sing to Thee a song of Thanksgiving.
 Yet, O how I dread the futile search for meaningful words to offer Thee!
 My heart is full of thanks and praise for each breath that is granted me,
 But to speak reveals the lie of pretended two-ness that I must tell.
 For Thou art my breath, my voice, the Real; and I am but the image.
 I live by Thy uncommon Life, imaged in Thy dream of me.
 And yet my gratitude to Thee upwells, as an image in a mirror
 Might admire its own source, its real and original Face.
 Or as a dream character might call out praise to its dreaming Self.

Though we are one, not two, I’ll speak as though we’re separate and apart.
 For how else might I truly speak to Thee?
 O Hari, Thou art alone, undiminished by the clatter and glitter
 Of a billion billion images, mere reflections in a house of mirrors.
 For Thou art alike the house, the mirrors, and the flitting images as well.
 This speaking too is like the barking of a dog in an empty field.
 For, though it may be heard, the silence of the cosmos remains unbroken.
 Yet I, this imagined form, am present—at least in appearance.
 And because I’m here, please let me speak to Thee in loving thanks.

O Hari look how wonderful is this story Thou dost tell!
 Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.
 Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is Thine
 And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and breath of life.
 Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing,
 Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light and love
 That bubbles up from Thy unfathomable depths
 Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful thanks.

O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable Repose,

Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and beast
 With purpose known only to Thy own delight.
 And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us from within
 Through adventures great and small to bring us
 Happily to our end in Thy boundlessly blissful Self.
 O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama
 Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,
 Frightful predicaments, and uproarious denouements!

Yet, in the end, we all awake to know one Self,
 The Dreamer of this dream, our ever-undisturbed Reality.
 Always unperturbed, Thou art forever untouched by time,
 As the patient sky is ever untouched by overpassing clouds.
 We are where we have always been in truth, never separated
 From our constantly enfolding, ever undivided Self.
 Where all the fervent lives o'erpassed, like dreams,
 Once left behind in waking, hastily retreat from view,
 Revealed as the flimsiest of transient illusions.

In waking, we are one in Thee, O Hari!
 And in Thee, *as* Thee, we have always been.
 Never imprisoned as we thought in separate forms,
 Once reawakened from our dreams, we know our
 Ever undivided and eternal Identity as Thee.
 In blissful folds of snow-white radiant Eternity
 We rest as Thee in peaceful oneness and joy.
 But while I live in pretended separation from Thyself,
 Let me now offer my song of grateful thanks to Thee,
 Who art the Life that lives me, my secret pride and joy.
 For it is Thou who hast made Thyself as me.

Dear Father, all that Thou hast made is good,
 And all Thy beauteous forms sing praise and thanks to Thee.
 Then, let me uplift my voice in song as well
 To glorify in praise my gracious Lord:
 O Hari, all praise be to Thee in Thy heavenly glory!
 All praise be to Thee in Thy universal pageantry of form!
 My head is bowed in loving thanks and worship,
 Knowing Thou art all and more than all.
 Thy grace to me is beyond what my voice can tell.
 I can but offer thanks, with hands held high, to Thee,
 My ever kind and gracious Lord.

9. GOD'S GRACE

I. Amazing Grace

God comes into our lives of His own accord and wakens us to His ever-presence. For each of us, it is a unique experience, an experience that leaves its lasting imprint on our souls, providing inspiration for courage in our lives and solace in our troubles by reminding us of God's mercy and of our true home in His heart. Every instance of God's Grace is a great and valuable gift to the soul who receives it, but I would ask you to consider the special merits of a very special Grace with which only a relatively few fortunate souls are familiar, and yet which I feel is uncommonly worthy to be regarded as *amazing grace*:

It is the gracious revelation of one's divine Identity, the soul's sudden realization that it is in God, is made of God, and is nothing else but God. It is this revelatory Grace which was visited on Heraclitus and Lao Tze; and it is the experience of that Grace that enlightened the Buddha, causing him to exclaim "I am Father of myself". It is that interior Grace that revealed to the Upanishadic *rishis* the truth that "Thou art That!" And it is the experience of that Grace that illumined Jesus when he was baptized by the Spirit in the river Jordan, leading him to declare, "I and the Father are one!" It is the Grace that awakened Plotinus to the unitive vision of God, and also revealed to Meister Eckhart his oneness with God; it was also that "amazing" Grace that revealed to the Sufi mystic, Ibn Arabi, his own eternal Self; and there are those of us who experience this very special Grace even in these present days.

Here, please listen for yourself to the words of these various representatives of diverse religious and philosophical traditions as they tell of their own experience of that 'amazing Grace':

VEDANTA/HINDUISM: *Here are some words about that Divine revelation from various authors of the Upanishads* (ca. 1200 B.C.E.):

"He cannot be seen by the eye, and words cannot reveal Him. He cannot be reached by the senses, or by austerity or sacred actions. By the Grace of wisdom and purity of mind, He can be seen indivisible in the silence of contemplation." ¹

"What cannot be thought with the mind, but That whereby the mind thinks: know That alone to be Brahman. ... It is not what is thought that we should wish to know; we should know the thinker. 'He is my Self!' This one should know. 'He is my Self!' This one should know." ²

“When a sage sees this great Unity, and realizes that his Self has become all beings, what delusion and what sorrow could ever approach him?”³

“When awake to the vision of one’s own Self, when a man in truth can say: “I am He,” what desires could lead him to grieve in fever for the body? ... When a man sees the *Atman*, his own Self, the one God, the Lord of what was and of what shall be, then he fears no more.”⁴

“When a man has seen the truth of the Spirit, he is one with Him; the aim of his life is fulfilled, and he is ever beyond sorrow. ...When a man knows God, he is free; his sorrows have an end, and birth and death are no more. When in inner union he is beyond the world of the body, then the third world, the world of the Spirit, is found, where man possesses all—for he is one with the ONE.”⁵

And from the author of the *Bhagavad Gita* (ca. 500 B.C.E.):

“When the mind of the yogi is in peace, focused on the Self within, and beyond all restless desires, then he experiences Unity. His mind becomes still, like the flame of a lamp sheltered from the winds. When the mind rests in the prayerful stillness of yoga, by the grace of the One, he knows the One, and attains fulfillment. Then he knows the joy of Eternity; he sees beyond the intellect and the senses. He becomes the Unmoving, the Eternal.”⁶

“... In this experience of Unity, the yogi is liberated, delivered from all suffering forever. ...The yogi whose heart is still, whose passions are dissolved, and who is pure of sin, experiences this supreme bliss and knows his oneness with Brahman.”⁷

BUDDHISM: *Here is the way that revelation was spoken of by the Buddha* (ca. 500 B.C.):

“Monks, there is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Unmade and Unconditioned. Were there not the Unborn, Unoriginated, Unmade and Unconditioned, there would be no escape from the born, originated, made and conditioned. Since there is the Unborn, Unoriginated, Unmade and Unconditioned, there *is* escape from the born, originated, made and conditioned.”⁸

“...There is, O monks, a state where there is neither this world nor any other world, nor is there any Sun or moon. There is neither a coming

nor going, nor remaining, nor passing away, nor arising. Without support, without movement, It is the Foundation of everything.”⁹

And this from a later Chinese Buddhist:

“In learning to be a Buddha, ...man should purify his mind and allow his spirit to penetrate the depths. Thus, he will be able to wander silently within himself during contemplation, and he will see the Origin of all things, obscured by nothing. ...His mind becomes boundless and formless, ... all-illuminating and bright, like moonlight pervading the darkness. During that absolute moment, the mind experiences illumination without darkness, clarity without stain. It becomes what it really is, absolutely tranquil, absolutely illuminating. Though this all-pervading Mind is tranquil, the world of cause and effect does not cease; though It illumines the world, the world is but Its reflection. It is pure Light and perfect Quiescence, which continues through endless time. It is motionless, and free from all activity; It is silent, and self-aware. ...That brilliant Light permeates every corner of the world. It is This we should become aware of and know.”¹⁰

CHRISTIANITY: *Here are some words attributed to Jesus* (ca. 30 C.E.) regarding the realization of his unity with God:

“Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”¹¹

“Jesus said, ‘I am the Light; I am above all that is manifest. Everything came forth from me, and everything returns to me. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift a stone, and you will find me there.’”¹²

Meister Eckhart (1260-1328), a Christian prelate, said this about his own unitive experience:

“As the soul becomes more pure and bare and poor, and possesses less of created things, and is emptied of all things that are not God, it receives God more purely, and is more completely in Him; and it truly becomes one with God, and it looks into God and God into it, face to face as it were; two images transformed into one.”¹³

“I am converted into Him in such a way that He makes me one being with Himself—not a *similar* being. By the living God, it is true that there is no distinction.”¹⁴

“In this breaking through [of consciousness], I find that God and I are both the same. Then I am what I [always] was; I neither wax nor wane, for I am the motionless Cause that is moving all things.”¹⁵

“I found in me all things forgotten, my own self forgotten and awareness of Thee, alone, O God. ... I found myself with Thee, being Thy being and speaking the Word and breathing the spirit.”¹⁶

“Here, one cannot speak of the soul anymore, for she has lost her nature yonder in the oneness of divine essence. There, she is no longer called soul, but is called *immeasurable Being*.”¹⁷

“...Some people think that they will see God as if He were standing there and they here. It is not so. God and I, we are one.”¹⁸

“The eye by which I see God is the same as the eye by which God sees me. My eye and God’s eye are one and the same—one in seeing, one in knowing, and one in loving.”¹⁹

NEOPLATONISM: *Here’s a little of what the great Egyptian sage, Plotinus (205-270 C.E.), said about the experience of unity:*

“The soul naturally loves God and yearns to be one with Him, just as a noble daughter naturally loves her noble father... And suddenly, [she] is uplifted and sees, without ever knowing how; ... the Supreme has come to her, or rather has revealed Its presence. She has turned away from everything around her and has readied herself, having made herself as beautiful as possible and fashioned herself in likeness with the Divine by those preparations and adornments which come unsought to those who grow ready for the vision. And she has seen that Divine presence suddenly manifesting within herself, for now there is nothing between herself and the Divine. There is now no longer a duality, but a two-in-one; for, so long as that presence continues, all distinction between them is dissolved. The longing of a lover to unite with his [human] beloved is a longing for a mere imitation of that Divine and perfect union.

“...In this state of absorbed contemplation, there is no longer a relationship between a subject and an object; the vision itself is the one continuous Being, so that seeing and seen are one thing; the object and the act of vision have become identical.

“...It is a knowing of the [eternal] Self restored to its original purity. No doubt we should not speak of *seeing*; but we cannot help speaking

in terms of duality, such as “the seer” and “the seen,” instead of asserting boldly that it is the attainment of absolute Unity. In this *seeing*, we neither regard an object nor perceive distinctions; for there are not two. The man is altered, no longer himself nor belonging to himself; he is merged with the Supreme, sunken into It, one with It. ...Duality exists only in separation; by our holding ourselves apart from It, the Supreme is set outside of us. This is why the vision cannot be described; we cannot separate the Supreme from ourselves to speak of It, for if we have seen something separate and distinct, we have fallen short of the Supreme, which can be known only as one with oneself.

“... [In this vision] there are not two; beholder is one with the beheld ... The man who has experienced this mingling with the Supreme must—if he but recalls It —carry the memory of Divinity impressed upon his soul. He is become the Unity, and nothing within him or without can create any diversity. Nor is there any movement now, or passion, or outreaching desire, once this ascent is attained. Reasoning is suspended and all intellection as well, and even—to dare the word—the very *self* is gone. Filled with God, he has in perfect stillness attained isolation, aloneness.

“... This is the life of the gods and of the godlike and blessed among men, ...the passing of the alone to the Alone.”²⁰

ISLAM: *And here are some words from the Sufi sage, Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), on the unitive experience:*

“When the mystery of the oneness of the soul and the Divine is revealed to you, you will understand that you are no other than God. ... Then you will see all your actions to be His actions and all your attributes to be His attributes and your essence to be His essence. ...Thus, instead of [your own] essence, there is the essence of God and in place of [your own] attributes, there are the attributes of God. He who knows himself sees his whole existence to be the Divine existence but does not experience that any change has taken place in his own nature or qualities. For when you know yourself, your sense of a limited identity vanishes, and you know that you and God are one and the same.”²¹

“...There is no existence save His existence. ...This means that the existence of the beggar is His existence and the existence of the sick is His existence. Now, when this is admitted, it is acknowledged that all

existence is His existence; and that the existence of all created things, both accidents and substances, is His existence; and when the secret of one particle of the atoms is clear, the secret of all created things, both outward and inward, is clear; and you do not see in this world or the next, anything except God.”²²

“On Him alone we depend for everything; our dependence on other things is in reality dependence on Him, for they are nothing but His appearances.”²³

“The eye perceives nothing but Him; only He is to be known. We are His; by Him we exist, and by Him we are governed; and we are, at all times and in all states, in His presence.”²⁴

“Nothing but the Reality is; there is no separate being, no arriving and no being far away. This is seen in true vision; when I experienced it, I saw nothing but Him. When my Beloved appears, with what eye do I see Him? With His eye, not with mine; for no one sees Him except Himself.”²⁵

“It is none other than He who progresses or journeys as you. There is nothing to be known but He; and since He is Being itself, He is therefore also the journeyer. There is no knower but He; so, who are you? Know your true Reality. ... He is the essential Self of all. But He conceals it by [the appearance of] otherness, which is “you.”²⁶

“If you hold to multiplicity, you are with the world; and if you hold to the Unity, you are with the Truth. ...Our names are but names for God; at the same time our individual selves are His shadow. He is at once our identity and not our identity... Consider!”²⁷ In one sense the Reality is creatures; in another sense, It is not. ...Whether you assert that It is undivided or divided, the Self is alone. The manifold [universe] exists and yet it does not exist.”²⁸ “Therefore, know your Self, who you are, what is your identity...”²⁹ “He who knows himself knows his Lord; ...indeed, He is his very identity and reality.”³⁰

“If men knew themselves, they would know God; and if they really knew God, they would be satisfied with Him and would think of Him alone.”³¹

These are the testaments of a few of those to whom God has revealed Himself; perhaps He'll reveal Himself to you as well. It's all about your heart, you know: He's no fool; you must truly come to know that without Him you are nothing, and wholeheartedly offer Him your life and work. If

all conditions are just right—if it is your time and place, and He has brought you to His love and Grace, perhaps He'll draw you into His heart and give you a taste of eternal bliss. It's worth a try! Have a talk with Him tonight.

NOTES:

1. *Mundaka Upanishad*, III.1; Juan Mascaro, *The Upanishads*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1965.
2. *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, III.8; Juan Mascaro, *The Upanishads*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1965.
3. *Isha Upanishad*, I.7; *Ibid.*
4. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, IV.4.25; *Ibid.*
5. *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, II.1; *Ibid.*
6. *Bhagavad Gita*, 6:18-21; Mascaro, Juan, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1962.
7. *Bhagavad Gita*, 6:23-27; *Ibid.*
8. The Buddha, *Udana*, *Patalgam* 8.3., from G.M. Strong, *The Udana: The Solemn Utterances of The Buddha*, trans. by Dawsonne Melancthon Strong, 1902; p. 115. Reprinted 2010 by Forgotten Books.
9. The Buddha, *Udana*, *Patalgam*, 8.3., from G.M. Strong, *The Udana: The Solemn Utterances of The Buddha*, trans. by Dawsonne Melancthon Strong, 1902; p. 115. Reprinted 2010 by Forgotten Books.
10. Stryck, L. & Ikemoto, T., *Zen Poems, Prayers, Sermons, Anecdotes, Interviews*, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965.
11. *New Testament of The Bible, Gospel Of John*, 14:11.
12. Robinson, James M., *Gospel of Thomas*, 77, (trans. by Thomas O. Lambdin), 1977; p. 135.
13. Meister Eckhart, Treatise A.2, Colledge E. & McGinn, B. (trans.), *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, Ramsey, N.J., Paulist Press, 1982; p. 222.
14. Blackney, R.B., *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*.
15. de B. Evans, C., *Eckhart*, Vol. I., p. 221.
16. de B. Evans, C., *op. cit.*, *Sermon XXI*.
17. Huxley, Aldous, *The Perennial Philosophy*, 1944; p. 12. *Ibid.*, *Sermon 6*; p. 188.
18. Meister Eckhart, *Sermon 18*, Blackney, Raymond B., *Meister Eckhart, A Modern Translation*, N.Y., Harper Torchbooks, 1941; p. 181.

19. Meister Eckhart, Sermon 23, *Ibid.*, p. 206.
20. Plotinus, *Enneads*: VI:7.34, 36; VI: 9.5-11.
21. Landau, Rom, *The Philosophy of Ibn Arabi*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1959; pp. 83-84.
22. *Ibid.*; p. 83.
23. Austin, R.W.J. (trans.), *Ibn Al-Arabi: The Bezels Of Wisdom*, N.Y., Paulist Press, 1980; p. 98.
24. *Ibid.*; p. 137.
25. *Ibid.*; p. 108.
26. *Ibid.*; p. 136.
27. *Ibid.*; pp. 126-127.
28. *Ibid.*; p. 88.
29. *Ibid.*; p. 126.
30. *Ibid.*; p. 153.
31. Landau, Rom, *The Philosophy of Ibn Arabi*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1959; p. 79.

II. Seeing Is Believing

Our souls are rays of the one Sun, droplets of the one ocean of Joy, images of God's own Self; and when we are ripe for seeing, He opens our eyes: He reveals our true nature, showing us that we are His own Beauty, His own unlimited Vastness, His own sweet Joy. He shows us who we have always been. It is this experience that prompted the authors of the Upanishads to proclaim, "That thou art"; it is this experience that prompted Jesus to declare "I and the Father are one", and Mansur al-Hallaj to declare, *an al Haqq*, "I am the transcendent Reality". It is this experience that provides the self-evident proof of our Divine Ground and ultimate Identity. It is an experience that is accessible, by the Grace of God, to the purified soul, through contemplative introspection.

The soul experiences its "union" with God when He reveals His eternal presence in the soul. This vision is the greatest attainment possible to man, and yet it is not an attainment that can be taught. The reason is that it is not something that can be accomplished by man. A man can only make himself receptive to it, but it is accomplished by God Himself. It is a gift. I am not speaking of the mere intellectual recognition of the fact that the one all-pervading Spirit is the only one who exists; the *experience* of union entails the actual upliftment of the soul to its divine Source, so that it is no longer aware of its separate existence on this earth, but knows itself, for as long as that experience lasts, as God—transcendent to the cosmos and yet the life and conscious Spirit pervading the cosmos. It is a going-out of the limited

soul-identity and an awakening to the consciousness of an unlimited, eternal and all-inclusive Identity. All questions are answered in this altered awareness—or rather, they are dissolved away in the sweetness of eternity, an eternity that is realized to be one’s own indubitable Self. Truly, there are no words to describe this ‘awakening’; but it is the foundation of all religion and all philosophy, and the bedrock of all certainty and satisfaction.

Those who have experienced that 'awakening' tend to espouse the metaphysical view, the mystical theology, that is commonly referred to as ‘the Perennial Philosophy’. It is the perennial expression of the revealed knowledge of the one eternal Spirit. Yet such reasoned arguments for the Divine creation of our world and the existence of our Divine soul are oftentimes utterly impotent to convince the determined advocates of a Godless and materialistic worldview. The materialist worldview is based entirely on the material sciences, and does not even give consideration to a metaphysics, insofar as “metaphysics” implies a non-physical reality creating, underlying and controlling the physical reality. The materialist worldview acknowledges the insubstantiality of matter at the quantum level, but it does not recognize a supernatural cause, a noumenal Source and Ruler of the phenomenal world of matter.

The proponents of materialism say that, ‘when the body dies, the consciousness associated with it dies as well; there is no second entity such as an enduring soul.’ ‘Life and consciousness’, they say, ‘are merely transient properties of matter, and have no existence apart from individual material bodies.’ And without some inner experience of God, they remain skeptical of the spiritual view, and rely solely on what they perceive through sense experience.

Also, those who *have* known God have found no objectively rational way of convincing such people of the existence of the Spirit, though throughout history many have tried to do so. The Spirit must be experienced subjectively, and then only by God’s self-revelation. He has retained control of this knowledge among humans by causing it to be unknowable to the senses or through rational thought, and realizable only through His Grace. Once He reveals Himself within our soul, we realize that we are His creations, made of His substance, and that we are utterly dependent upon Him. Then we learn to surrender our own will to His will; and this, in turn, alleviates us of all our errors, and brings about our own highest good and happiness. Without that self-revelation, we remain blind to Him in ourselves and in the world. This, too, is His doing; as He says: “I bring the dust of blindness”. But He is also the remover of that blindness. He is not only the Light of the phenomenal world; He is also the inner Light that reveals His presence as our own Soul, our own divine Self.

This being the case, how can we enjoin others to awaken to the knowledge of God when such knowledge is only obtained through the Grace of God? Even the desire to know God arises through the workings of His Grace! What, then, can we do? It has been said that ‘The breeze of His grace is always blowing; but it is we who must set our sails to receive that breeze’. I reply that it is only by His Grace that we are inspired to set our sails to receive Him. The truth is that He is doing everything, whether we are aware of it or not. “We” are *His* manifestations, and we live and move within His omnipresent Spirit.

However, as His manifestations, we possess the abilities that He has granted us; and one of those abilities is the power to exercise our individual wills. We are able to choose, and we are responsible for our choices; and it is we, as individual souls, who receive the consequences of those choices. Every moment, He offers us the choice of turning our intention to Him or to the illusory world:

*I have given sweets that decay to those that crave them;
I have given my wealth unto the poor and lonely.
My hands are open—nothing is concealed.*¹

We choose, ultimately, not from reason’s arguments or empirical proofs, but from the yearning that arises from the loving kinship of the soul to God. And the rationale for expounding rational arguments that tell of His presence and the possibility of knowing Him is that such reasonings are on rare occasions capable of prompting a recognition and a yearning in those who are readied for it, leading them to seek His revelation in their own hearts. And that too is His doing, as His presence in our hearts inspires both the expounding and the recognition.

Nonetheless, I fear that the great majority of souls living on earth today have yet to see beyond immediate appearances, have yet to experience God in their lives, have yet to experience the joy of the soul upon being uplifted to union with the Creator. They cannot therefore be expected to give credence to such a mystical worldview. They are bewitched by a fascination with and desire for the things of creation, and fail to recognize their Creator, or even their own souls. I have not the slightest doubt that these people will eventually come to recognize the Divine in themselves and in the world; but for the time being, they are blind, and therefore suffer many miseries. It is certain, however, that the Lord, in His justice and mercy, will bring them, in the course of time, to awaken from their slumbers, and will make Himself known to them, leading them to comfort and joy in His bosom.

NOTE:

1. From Swami Abhayananda, "The Song of The Self" in *The Supreme Self*, Atma Books, Fallsburg, New York, 1984.

III. The Mystery of God's Grace

It should be clear to everyone that we are not all equally capable of 'knowing' what has been known by uniquely extraordinary beings. Everything depends on our innate inclination, our specialized training, and of course the Grace of God. By "innate inclination" I mean the soul-driven proclivities and talents constituting the karmic tendencies possessed by each soul. These 'innate inclinations' are wholly dependent upon the evolutionary development of our souls, which are, in turn, dependent, not only upon our own wills, but on the Grace of God. And so, we must acknowledge that the subtle spiritual knowledge that has been obtained by a few extraordinary men and women is not necessarily available to everyone; there must be a congruence of inclination, training, and God's Grace, along with the practice of meditation or contemplation.

The assertion by many spiritual teachers that the realization of God, the knowledge of the Source and Goal of all existence, is available to everyone simply by following certain precepts and injunctions, is not at all an accurate assessment. One's soul, which is itself a product of God's grace, must contain an innate inclination to the acquisition of such knowledge, through the practice of introspection, and, by the grace of God, be placed in the most timely and appropriate cosmic circumstances to receive such knowledge. Then, and only then, will it be able to 'know' God. Is God-realization available to everyone? Sorry, no. I think that, not only spiritual knowledge, but every kind of knowledge—sensory, mental, or spiritual—is available only to those whom God has made distinctly fit for it; it is misleadingly inaccurate to say that such knowledge is available to everyone.

The injunctions given by Jesus, "Seek and ye shall find," "Knock, and the door shall be opened to you", has inspired many followers to seek and to knock, and yet we must wonder, how many of those millions of followers were enlightened with the unitive vision of God after seeking and knocking? I can think of only a handful of Christians who seem to have obtained this vision over the past twenty centuries. The injunctions given by the Buddha, "Meditation brings wisdom; therefore, choose the path of wisdom", has drawn many to meditation; and some have become illumined—but only a small percent. My point is that there is no guaranteed means or methodology for obtaining the unitive vision. It seems to me to depend on many factors, not all of which are within the purview of one's own will.

It would certainly be wonderful if one could truthfully and confidently say ‘Do this, and you will experience the unitive vision’, but in spiritual matters there is no direct causal relationship between voluntary acts and revelation such as there is between empirical injunctions, spelling out the conditions of the experiment, and the produced results. ‘Do this, and that will result’ is sound and dependable advice when we are advising “release the ball, and you will see that it falls to earth”; but not necessarily as truthfully predictive when we are advising “practice meditation, and you will become enlightened”. If it was an easily reproducible experience, it is likely that enlightenment would have been widely accepted as a readily obtainable and commonly repeatable experience by now—which is certainly not the case.

It is no doubt true that one living in an environment conducive to meditation has an advantage over one who is immersed in a turbulent and disturbing environment, but we must not leap to the conclusion that all the monks in the temple, monastery or ashram are therefore enlightened. The one thing we can say for certain is that they are exposing themselves to the lifestyle and practices conducive to the unitive vision. It is not because the Buddha sat down under a Bo tree to meditate that he became enlightened; it is not because Jesus went alone into the wilderness to pray and contemplate God that he became illumined; it is not because John of the Cross gave himself to introspection and prayer within his Toledo cell that he was united with God. All of these mystical seers found themselves drawn to conditions that were amenable to that experience, but the underlying Cause was the Grace of the all-governing Spirit, which called each soul from within to evolve toward the egoless reception of that non-dual revelation; in other words, it was God’s singular Grace which was the ultimate causative factor in that revelation. I am aware that this is an unpopular stance; but experience has taught me that the revelation of the unitive vision cannot be reduced to a causal act initiated by the individual.

Indeed, we need to ask ourselves, “Who is this ‘I’ who thinks it can bring about the realization of the transcendent God by its own efforts?” It is well known that only when this false and limited ‘I’ vanishes is the revelation of God at all possible! And by whose grace do you suppose the death of that false ‘I’ is accomplished? Whose love wells up in the soul and draws it to that immolation? And whose ‘I’ is revealed in the unitive vision as the Ground and essence of all ‘I’s’? If you think you can bring this about by your own efforts, go right ahead. As Saint Nanak has said, ‘eventually suffering will teach you wisdom’.

The ‘causes’ of Grace cannot be discussed, of course; because only the One is privy to the factors that go into its bestowal. However, I am of the

opinion, based on my visionary experience, that, in His universe, “all things move together of one accord”, and that many elements come together in the production of the revelation of the soul’s higher Identity. There is a coordinated unfoldment in the manifested world of one’s mental, emotional, and karmic conditions along with the conditions of the physical environment, and the positions of the planets in the cosmic environment—all under the watchful and governing eye of the Spirit—to bring about that unitive vision. In other words, ‘man purposes, but God disposes.’ None may deliberately, willfully transcend and supercede His unerring Will. When it is that soul’s time for enlightenment, he will be drawn from within to seek it; he will be drawn to the conducive location; he will be drawn into spiritual communion, and he will be illumined in his soul by the Light of the one Spirit.

Innumerable saints and seers have declared their utter dependence upon God’s grace in obtaining spiritual vision; here are just a couple: Saint Nanak, the *Adi* (original) *Guru* of the Sikh tradition (1469-1539 C.E.), who said, “By God’s Grace alone may God be grasped. All else is false, all else is vanity.” In one of his songs, addressing God, he reiterates this conviction:

He whom Thou makest to know Thee, he knows Thee.
 And his mouth shall forever be full of thy praises.
 ... Liberation and bondage depend upon Thy will.
 There is no one to gainsay it.
 Should a fool wish to, suffering will teach him wisdom. ¹

Another seer, named Dadu (1544-1603 C.E.), was also eloquently unambiguous in declaring this truth:

Omniscient God, it is by Thy grace alone that I have been
 blessed with vision of Thee.
 Thou knowest all; what can I say?
 All-knowing God, I can conceal nothing from Thee.
 I have nothing that deserves Thy grace.
 No one can reach Thee by his own efforts; Thou showest
 Thyself by Thine own grace.
 How could I approach Thy presence?
 By what means could I gain Thy favor?
 And by what powers of mind or body could I attain to Thee?
 It hath pleased Thee in Thy mercy to take me under Thy wing.
 Thou alone art the Beginning and the End; Thou art the Creator of the
 three worlds.
 Dadu says: I am nothing and can do nothing.
 Truly, even a fool may reach Thee by Thy Grace. ²

These examples could be multiplied extensively, and I would add my own declaration to the list. However, I think one could compile a much longer list of those who, having practiced meditation for many years, did *not* experience an enlightening revelation, who, after their best efforts, did *not* obtain the unitive vision. So, I feel that the suggestion that enlightenment follows a cause-effect sequence that anyone may experientially prove to his or her own satisfaction simply by the practice of meditation is a useful tool for encouraging the search for enlightenment (which is no doubt its function), and it may indeed prove fruitful in specific instances. But it is also unrealistic and unreliable as an unqualified injunctive rule—unless, of course, we leave the time frame open-ended. I know of one spiritual teacher who used to tell his followers that, if they continued to practice meditation, they would be enlightened in eight, ten, or twelve lifetimes, depending on their effort. Looked at from that time frame, the guarantee appears much more plausible. The fact is, we are all, in our spiritual essence, identical with the one Spirit, the transcendent Lord of the universe; and one day all, by the Grace of God, must come to know it. On that you may rely. Meanwhile, we remain as consciously aware of His presence within us as we are able and strive with every breath to become ever nearer to the clear realization of that one indivisible Self.

NOTES:

1. Singh, Trilochan, et al. [eds.], *Selections from The Sacred Writings Of The Sikhs*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1960; *Rag Asa*, pp. 57, 42 (or see Abhayananda, S., *History of Mysticism*, London, Watkins, 2002; pp. 335-344).
2. Orr, W.G., *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystic*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1947; p. 142 (or see Abhayananda, Swami, *History of Mysticism*, London, Watkins, 2002; pp. 345-356).

IV. My Experience of God's Grace ¹

My little cabin in the redwoods was cool in the summer, but damp in the winter, as I discovered that first winter in '66. The little babbling brook swelled to a cascading Colorado river in my backyard, and I had to catch water coming down the slope from the road in little waterfalls to get clear water for drinking or cooking. Each night I sat close to the cast-iron cooking stove, with the little side door open so I could watch the dancing blue and gold flames sizzle the oak logs and turn them to glowing ash.

Day and night, during the California winter, the rain drizzled outside the window in a steady, gray, time-dissolving continuum. In the mornings, I'd prepare oatmeal and a bath by the stove; I'd pour hot water from a pitcher over my body onto the concrete floor, and then sweep it outside. The rain would stop sometimes during the day, and then I would go out and walk the once dusty logging roads through the woods and up through the meadows in the high ground. "Hari! Hari! Hari!" was my continual call.

The dark skies kept my energies subdued, and my mind indrawn. My days passed uneventfully. It was in the night that the embers of my heart began to glow keenly as I sat in the dark, watching the fire contained in the stove. A stillness—sharp-edged and intense—filled my cabin and I spoke very closely, very intimately, with the God who had drawn me there. And He would sometimes speak to me in the stillness of the night, while I wrote down His words.

Hari became my only thought, my only love. And while the days and nights became endless stretches of grayness, wetness, my mind became brighter and brighter with an intense light that displayed every wandering thought that arose as a compelling drama in bold Technicolor and Panavision; and then I would pull my mind back with "Hari!" I had realized that I could have or become whatever I settled for in my mind; and I was determined to refuse every inspiration that was not God Himself. I was steadfastly resolved to refuse all visualizations, all mental wanderings, holding my mind in continual remembrance and longing for Hari alone.

In the evening twilight, I'd sing to Him, to the tune of *Danny Boy*:

O Adonai, at last the day is dying.
 My heart is stilled as darkness floods the land.
 I've tried and tried, but now I'm through with tryin'.
 It's You, it's You, must take me by the hand,
 And lead me home where all my tears and laughter
 Fade into bliss on Freedom's boundless shore.
 And I'll be dead and gone forever after.
 O Adonai, just You, just You alone, forevermore.

Or, sometimes, I'd sing this song, to the tune of *Shanendoah*:

O Adonai, I long to see you!
 All the day my heart is achin'.
 O Adonai, my heart is achin'.
 O where, O where are you?
 Don't leave me here forsaken.

O Adonai, the day is over.
 Adonai, I'm tired and lonely.
 My tears have dried, and I'm awaitin'
 You; O Adonai,
 You know I love you only.

Sometimes, to focus my mind on Him, to bring devotion to my sometimes dry and empty heart, I'd read from Thomas á Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*—a version which I had pared down from the original; and this had the invariable effect of lifting my heart to love of God, and brought me, as though by sympathetic resonance, to the same sweet simple devotion and purity of heart evidenced by that sweet monk of the 15th century. I felt so much kinship with him, so much identification with him, that I came to love his little book above all other works for its sweet effect on me.

Then, deep into the night, I'd sit in silent prayer; my wakefulness burning like a laser of intensely focused yearning, a penetrating, searching light-house of hope in the black interior of the cabin, as I witnessed the play of the flickering flames dying out in the stove's interior. On one such night, filled with Divine love, the understanding came to me that it was just this Love that was drawing me to Itself within me. It was this Love that was the Soul of my soul, calling me to live in Its constant light. I lit a candle; a song was being written in my notebook, and I was understanding very clearly, very vividly, just what it was that I loved, what it was that I was pledging my life to:

Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.
 I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.
 I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless.
 Nor shall I frighten any, for Love comes sweetly and meek.
 I shall keep no violence within me,
 Neither in thought nor in deed, for Love comes peacefully.
 I shall bear no shield or sword,
 For the defense of Love is love.
 I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men,
 For love seeks Thee always.
 I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,
 And lift to them Thy countenance,
 For all are powerless before Thee.
 I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,
 Lest Thy light be extinguished by the winds.
 For without Thy light, I am in darkness.
 I shall go free in the world with Thee—
 Free of all bondage to anything but Thee—

For Thou art my God, the sole Father of my being,
 The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart,
 And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,
 And lean on Thee till the end of my days.

November 18, 1966:

This was the night I was to experience God. This was the night I learned who I am eternally. All day long the rain had been dripping outside my cabin window. And now the silent night hovered around me. I sat motionless, watching the dying coals in the stove. “Hari!” my mind called in the wakeful silence of my interior. During the whole day, I had felt my piteous plight so sorrowfully, so maddeningly; “Dear Lord, all I want is to die in Thee,” I cried within myself. “I have nothing, no desire, no pleasure in this life—but in Thee. Won’t you come and take this worthless scrap, this feeble worm of a soul, back into Thyself!”

“O Father,” I cried, “listen to my prayer! I am Thine alone. Do come and take me into Thy heart. I have no other goal, but Thee and Thee alone.”

Then I became very quiet. I sat emptied, but very awake, listening to God’s silence. I balanced gingerly, quakingly, on the still clarity of nothingness. I became aware that I was scarcely breathing. My breath was very shallow, nearly imperceptible—close to the balance point, where it would become non-existent. And my eyes peered into the darkness with a wide-eyed intensity that amazed me. I knew my pupils must be very large. I felt on the brink of a meeting with absolute clearness of mind. I hovered there, waiting. And then, from somewhere in me, from a place deeper than I even knew existed, a prayer came forth that, I sensed, must have been installed in my heart at the moment of my soul-birth in the mind of God: “Dear God, let me be one with Thee, not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children.”

It was then, in that very moment, that the veil fell away. Something in me changed. Suddenly I *knew*; I experienced infinite Unity. And I thought, “Of course; it’s been me all the time! Who else could I possibly be!” I lit a candle, and by the light of the flickering flame, while seated at the card table in my little cabin, I transmitted to paper what I was experiencing in eternity. Here is the “Song” that was written during that experience (the commentaries in parentheses which follow each verse were added much later):

O my God, even this body is Thine own!

(Suddenly I knew that this entity which I call my body was God's own, was not separate from God, but was part of the continuous ocean of Consciousness; and I exclaimed in my heart, "O my God, even this body is Thine own!" There was no longer any me distinct from that one Consciousness; for that illusion was now dispelled.)

Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,
Even I who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters—
Even I am Thine own.

(Heretofore, I had called to God in the chaos of a multitude of thoughts, a multitude of voices and motions of mind—the very chaos of hell. And in my calling, I was as though standing apart from God; I felt myself to be an unclean pitcher immersed in the ocean of God, dividing the waters within from the water without. Though God was in me and God was without, there had still remained this illusion of 'me'. But now the idea of a separating 'ego' was gone. And I was aware that I—this whole conglomerate of body, mind, consciousness, which I call "I"—am none else but that One, and belong to that One, besides whom there is nothing.)

Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?

(A wave is only a form that arises out of the ocean and is nothing but ocean. In the same way, my form was as a wave of pure Consciousness, of pure God. How had I imagined it to be something else? And yet it was that very ignorance that had previously prevented me from seeing the truth.)

Do the mountains and the gulfs cease to be of the earth?

(Mountains and valleys in relation to the earth, like waves in relation to the ocean, seem to have an independent existence, an independent identity; yet they are only irregularities, diverse forms, of the earth itself.)

Or does a pebble cease to be stone?

(A pebble is, of course, nothing but stone—just as I now realized in growing clarity that I was none else but the one 'stuff' of Existence. Even though I seemed to be a unique entity separate from the rest of the universe, I was really a piece of the universal Reality, as a pebble is really a piece of stone.)

How can I escape Thee?
 Thou art even That which thinks of escape!

(Thought too is a wave on the ocean of God. The thought of separation—can that be anything but God? The very tiniest motion of the mind is like the leaping of the waves on the ocean of Consciousness, and the fear of leaping clear of the ocean is a vain one for the wave. That which thinks of separation is that very Consciousness from which there can never ever be any separation. That One contains everything within It. So, what else could I, the thinker, be?)

Even now, I speak the word, “Thou,” and create duality.

(Here, now, as I write, as I think of God and speak to Him as “Thou,” I am creating a duality between myself and God where no duality exists in truth. It is the creation of the mind. Having habituated itself to separation, the mind creates an “I” and a “Thou,” and thus experiences duality.)

I love and create hatred.

(Just as for every peak there’s a valley, so the thought of love that arises in the mind has, as its valley, as its opposite, hatred. The impulse of the one creates the other, as the creation of a north pole automatically creates a south pole, or as “beauty” necessitates “ugliness,” or as “up” brings along with it “down,” or as “ahead” gives birth to “behind.” The nature of the mind is such that it creates a world of duality where only the One actually is.)

I am in peace and am fashioning chaos.

(The very nature of God’s phenomenal creation is also dual; His cosmic creation alternates from dormant to dynamic, while He, Himself, remains forever unchanging. In the same way, while our consciousness remains unmoved, the mind is in constant alternation. For example, when it is stilled, it is like a spring compressed, representing potential dynamic release. The mind’s peace, therefore, is itself the very mother of its activity.)

Standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.

(Just as the peak of the wave necessitates the trough of the wave [since you can't have one without the other], wakefulness necessitates sleep, good necessitates its opposite. Exultation in joy is paid for with despair; they are an inseparable pair.)

But now, weeping and laughing are gone.
Night is become day.

(But now I am experiencing the transcendent "stillness" of the One, where this alternation, this duality, of which creation is made, is no more. It is a clear awareness that all opposites are derived from the same ONE and are therefore dissolved. Laughing and its opposite, weeping, are the peak and the trough which have become leveled in the stillness of the calmed ocean, the rippleless surface of the waters of Consciousness. Night and day have no meaning here: All is eternity.)

Music and silence are heard as one.

(Sound, silence—both are contained in the eternal Consciousness which cannot be called silent, which cannot be called sound; It produces all sounds, yet, as their source, It is silence. Both are united in the One of which they consist.)

My ears are all the universe.

(There is only Me. Even the listening is Me.)

All motion has ceased.
Everything continues.

(The activity of the universe does not exist for Me, yet everything is still in motion as before. It is only that I am beyond both motion and non-motion. For I am the Whole; all motion is contained in Me, yet I Myself am unmoving.)

Life and death no longer stand apart.

(From where I am, the life and death of individual beings is less than a dream—so swiftly generations rise and fall, rise and fall! Whole eons of creation pass like a dream in an instant. Where then are life and death? How do they differ? They too are but an artificial duality that is resolved in the One timeless Self.)

No I, no Thou;
No now, or then.

(There is no longer a reference “I” that refers to a separate individual entity; there is no longer anything separate to refer to as “Thou.” This one knowing Consciousness, which is I, is all that exists or ever existed. Likewise, there is no “now” or “then”, for time pertains only to the dream and has no meaning here beyond all manifestation.)

Unless I move, there is no stillness.

(Stillness, too, is but a part of duality, bringing into existence motion. Motion and stillness, the ever-recurring change, are the dream constituents in the dream of duality! Stillness without motion cannot be. Where I am, neither of these exists.)

Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish.

(Lament? In the pure sky of infinity, who is there to lament? What is there to doubt? Where there is no other, but only this One, what error or obstacle could there be? What is there to stand in the way of infinity? What is there other than Me?)

Nothing to pride oneself on—
All is accomplished in an instant.

(Pride belongs only to man, that tiny doll, that figment of imagination who, engrossed in the challenge of conflict with other men, prides himself on his petty accomplishments. Here, whole universes are created in an instant and destroyed, and everything that is accomplished is accomplished by the One. Where, then, is pride?)

All may now be told without effort.

(Here am I, with a view to the Eternal, and my hand writing in the world of creation, in the world of men. What a wonderful opportunity to tell all to eager humanity! Everything is known without the least effort. Let me tell it, let me share it, let me reveal it!)

Where is there a question?

(But see! Where everything is very simply and obviously Myself, what question could there be? Here, the possibility of a question cannot arise. Who could imagine a more humorous situation?)

Where is the temple?

(What about explaining the secrets of the soul, and how it is encased in that temple of God called 'the body?' That secret does not exist; for, when all is seen and experienced as one Being, where is that which may be regarded as the receptacle, the temple?)

Which the Imperishable?

Which the abode?

(Which may I call the imperishable God, the Eternal? And which may I call the vessel in which God exists and lives? Consciousness does not perish. The Energy of which this body consists does not perish. All is eternal; there is no differentiation here.)

I am the pulse of the turtle.

I am the clanging bells of joy.

(I am everywhere! I am life! I am the very heartbeat of even the lowliest of creatures. It is I who surge in the heart as joy, as surging joy like the ecstatic abandonment of clanging bells.)

I bring the dust of blindness.

I am the fire of song.

(I am the cause of man's ignorance of Me, yet it is I who leap in his breast as the exultation of song.)

I am in the clouds and I am in the gritty soil.

In pools of clear water my image is found.

(I am that billowing beauty in the sky; I play in all these forms! And the gritty soil which produces the verdure of the earth—I am that soil, that black dirt. I am every tiny pebble of grit, cool and moist. And when, as man, I lean over the water, I discover My image, and see Myself shining in My own eyes.)

I am the dust on the feet of the wretched,

The toothless beggars of every land.

(I live in the dust that covers the calloused feet of those thin, ragged holy men who grin happily at you as you pass them by.)

I have given sweets that decay to those who crave them.
I have given my wealth unto the poor and lonely.

(Each of my manifestations, according to their understanding, receives whatever they wish of the transitory pleasures of the world; but the wealth of My peace, My freedom, My joy, I give to those who seek no other wealth, who seek no other joy, but Me.)

My hands are open—nothing is concealed.

(I have displayed all My wealth; according to his evolution, his wisdom, each chooses what he will have in this life.)

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

(All is one concerted whole; everything works together, down to the tiniest detail, in the flower-like unfoldment of this world. All is the doing of the One.)

The Sun stirs the waters of My heart,
And the vapor of My love flies to the four corners of the world.

(Like a thousand-rayed sunburst of joy, My love showers forth as the universe of stars and planets and men. And then, this day of manifestation gives way to the night of dissolution ...)

The Moon stills Me, and the cold darkness is My bed.

(And the universe withdraws into My utter darkness of stillness and rest.)

I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged
And set in order once again.

(The expansion and contraction of this entire universe is merely an out-breath and an in-breath; a mere sigh.)

A million worlds begin and end in every breath,

(And, flung out into the endless reaches of infinity, worlds upon worlds evolve, enact their tumultuous dramas, and then withdraw from the stage once more. This cycle repeats itself again and again; the universe explodes from a single mass, expands as gas, and elements form. Eventually they become living organisms, which evolve into intelligent creatures, culminating in man. And one by one each learns the secret that puts an end to their game. And again, the stars reach the fullness of their course; again, everything is drawn back to its source....)

And, in this breathing, all things are sustained.

After this, I collapsed in bed, exhausted by the sheer strain of holding my mind on so keen an edge. When I awoke, it was morning. Immediately, I recalled the experience of the night before, and arose. I went outside to the sunlight, dazed and disoriented. I bent, and took up a handful of gravel, letting it slip slowly through my fingers. "I am in this?" I asked dumbfoundedly.

I felt as though I had been thrust back into a dream from which I had no power to awaken. My only thought was to return to that state I had known the night before. I rushed up the twisted road and scrambled up the hill to the cliff on top of the world, above the forest and ocean, where I had often conversed with God; and I sat there, out of breath, praying, with tears running down my cheeks, for Him to take me back into Himself. Before long, a chill blanket of gray fog, which had risen up from the ocean below, swept over me, engulfing me in a misty cloud. And after a few moments, I reluctantly went back, down the mountain.

NOTES:

1. This brief account is excerpted from Swami Abhayananda, *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984. I encourage all to read this book in its entirety. This book is freely downloadable along with many of my more recent books and articles at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

V. The Gift of Spiritual Vision

For the *bhakta*, the soul in the throes of love for God, there arises a love-longing for the union with God. And prior to the dawning of that unitive experience, there is much singing and prayers, and copious tears. But then, at the inception of the experience of revelation, there is an end to the emotion, and the soul falls into a calm that is also intensely awake. The pupils of her eyes become extraordinarily open wide, and her breathing slows and subsides to a very shallow rise and fall, as though it were approaching the balance point, where breathing would be entirely stilled. The relationship of soul to God is nearly vanished, and there is only the fine awareness focused upon its own incredible clarity, its own being; and then the prayer that bursts forth from the finally naked and surrendered soul: “O God, let me be one with Thee—not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children”. And then comes the sudden awakening, as though from a dream, and this soul suddenly sees with the eyes of the eternal One, who is the Self it has always been—the Self *you* have always been.

You, who have been crying for His embrace; you, who have been awaiting the arrival of the King; you, *yourself*, are the only Existence, the Lord, the Father; and all along you have been living in an illusory separation from yourself, in a dream-world of your own making. But now, there are no longer two. *Even now, I speak the word, ‘Thou’, and create duality.* There is no one else, and never had been. You are the omnipresent Mind—you! The personification you had adopted was but a fantasy; and now you see the truth. You live eternally, showering forth this huge universal display. You are the life in every creature: *I am the pulse of the turtle; I am the clanging bells of joy. I bring the dust of blindness; I am the fire of song. I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil; in pools of clear water my image is found. ...I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged and set in order once again. A million worlds begin and end in every breath, and in this breathing, all things are sustained.*

The prayer that precipitated this vision was the prayer of a soul, still caught in the illusion of a separate identity; yet the desire to praise God was God’s desire speaking through the soul, and, in this life, she has no other purpose but to honor that prayerful desire. It permeates this soul, and constitutes her task in this life, her only joy. It may be that she was given no mandate from God to teach; and it was she who asked to be united with Him in order that she might speak out truly in His praise and to His glory. And yet, that desire sprang from the deepest place in that soul, a soul which is itself fountained forth from God. And so that desire was truly His desire in her. His granting of that desire for intimacy constituted His mandate. When she looks at the

lives and missions of others before her, like the Egyptian author of the Hermetic teachings, like the Buddha, Jesus, Plotinus, Eckhart, etc., she associates strongly with the sense of mission each possessed, having been graciously lifted up to intimacy with God, and filled with the desire to praise Him. What a singular grace, and what responsibility it confers! Yet, despite the gift of this advantageous vision, all who received it were mere mortals, with the limitations that implies. All had to endure the earthly life of bodily provision, sickness and death; and all had to endure the doubt and malevolence of the community of other men and women. Yet still they communicated their vision as best they could. Their lifelong desire to see and to give expression to the truth of God is God's enduring gift to us, His wondrous, thrillingly beautiful, gift of overwhelming joy to all of us.

And once the larger, subtler, eternal reality is known, the soul, returned to awareness of this world, can scarcely see the phenomenal reality in the same way as before. During the visionary experience of the Eternal, she is identical with the Eternal, and blissfully content to remain in that state. However, that state wanes and gives way to the return in consciousness to this temporal and phenomenal reality. This is truly an unwelcome eviction. Having known the bliss of her all-pervading Self, she is at first greatly shocked and dismayed at finding herself back in this little world of separable images in time and space. But after her initial dismay, she reflects on her current state, and quickly realizes that she is still the eternal Self, and that the world to which she has returned consists solely of the bright Energy breathed forth from her Divinely transcendent Self. She recognizes that now she is in a dream-movie, but it is the dream-movie of God, who is indeed her very Self; and even this body in which she moves about is woven of that Divine fabric.

She realizes that, even in this projected image which God puts forth, she remains enveloped in His blissful Being, and realizes that she could never be anything but safe at home in Him. That is the great gift of Spiritual vision: that now she sees this transient world of images as suffused with ethereal light and splayed with dazzling beauty. Joyful contentment fills the air she breathes, and adoration fills her heart. This is the translation of divine vision into the world of phenomenal awareness. This is the carryover from the transcendent vision to the sensory vision here on earth.

She carries over from that higher realm no intellectual understanding of how a photon operates as both a particle and a wave, or how the force of gravity interacts with the moving earth. Let physicists puzzle over these dusty details; she is content to see her beauteous God in evidence all about her and within her. To abandon that untold treasure of joy to pick and peck amidst the crumbs of reason's paltry scrapings would be but the conduct of a fool.

You can have it, you mathematicians and quantum mechanics! You biochemists and cosmo-theoreticians! It's all been settled and displayed to her utmost satisfaction: Beauty beauty beauty everywhere, and the wine of intoxicating nectar in her cup! What needs she more?

And yet, having seen so clearly that all the beings who exist on earth are truly embodiments of the one Divine Self, the desire to share this wondrous knowledge remains an insistent urge deep within her soul. But, also, she is aware that each soul follows an evolutionary path unique to itself and is able to comprehend the omnipresence of God only in the proper time, and only by the gracious gift of God. And so, her words have relevance now, and in the future, only to those whose eyes are already opened, to those on whom God's Grace has already shone. Then rejoice with her, all ye fortunate souls! And be merciful to those whose temporary blindness is also His gift. He will lift that blindness in His time, and release all from the darkness in which they now live. He will open to their eyes, as He did to hers, the light and warmth, the wonder and delight, the beauty and the joy, of His immeasurable life-giving Love. Praise God!

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