

SCIENCE AND GNOSIS
(from *The Mystic's Vision* by Swami Abhayananda.
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I.

Both the word, *science*—from the Latin *scientia*, and the word, *gnosis*—from the ancient Greek, mean “to know”, but the knowledge is of two kinds. Each kind of knowledge has a long and well documented history: Science has developed over the centuries through the positing of rational theories and the rigorous accumulation of physical data, modifying its position as reason, observation and data dictate. Gnosis is also based on experience, but it is experience that is extra-sensual, supra-rational, and wholly subjective, or personal. Science is confirmed by evidence derived from empirical observation; gnosis is confirmed by evidence derived from introspective revelation. Science pertains to knowledge of the gross, material world; gnosis pertains to knowledge of the subtle, spiritual foundation of the world.

Scientists, for example, have determined, through theory, reason, and observation, that the universe of time and space began as an immense burst of high-frequency energy, referred to as “the Big Bang”. Scientists have determined over the past century or so that at some point, about 14 billion years ago, an enormous amount of energy suddenly appeared, expanding and transforming into mass-bearing particles that collectively formed our phenomenal universe. Those scientists have even determined the temperatures and rate of acceleration of this energy in the first few seconds and minutes of its release, and they have cataloged the material particles which were created as this energy cooled and solidified. They are also convinced that, prior to this “big bang”, nothing else existed—not space, not time, not matter; but only this concentrated (electromagnetic) energy in a potential and pre-material state. It was only as these highly-energized wave/particles of light interacted and collided, that they were transformed into material wave/particles, which then became the fundamental components of the universe.

Physicists and cosmologists have further determined that, approximately ten billion years after the ‘Big Bang’ (four and a half billion years ago), remnants of an exploding star, or supernova, within this expanding universe, condensed into our solar system; and that sometime during the next few hundred million years, single-celled organisms bearing a molecule called DNA emerged on planet Earth; that these microbes then evolved, resulting in

a prodigious display of living creatures, including *Homo sapiens*, who emerged fairly recently, that is to say, in the last 200,000 to 150,000 years. To this broad scientific theory gnostics (mystics) have no objection, as it is consistent with the knowledge obtained through gnosis. But it doesn't go far enough if we are interested in knowing the true beginning; i.e., where did this initial energy come from? Science is forever barred from providing an answer to this question, as science, by definition, is limited to empirically demonstrable (material) phenomena only. But gnosis is able to provide the answer to this question; for gnostics have "seen" that the Source of all energy is noumenal—that is to say, 'of Mind'. "Noumenon" is derived from the Greek word, *Nous*, "the divine Mind" of Platonist philosophy, and was later defined in Kantian terms as "a thing in itself, unable to be known through perception but postulated as the intelligible ground of a phenomenon." That intelligible ground is unknowable by science, but knowable by gnosis. Gnosis alone is capable of determining the reality of the divine Mind (*Nous*) from which all noumena and phenomena arise.

Gnosis is possible only with the elimination of the ego-mechanism by which a person's awareness is limited to that of a separate individual identity. This ego-mechanism is a subtle mental obscuration that structures a false identification with the biological and psychological processes of individuation. Thus, instead of being aware of the real I-identity that is universal Consciousness, one is restricted to a false artificial identification with the individual's biological and psychological processes. The eternal Consciousness which is essentially one thereby becomes perceived in the awareness of the individual as a separate 'me-identity' integrally associated with a specific material body. However, this ego-mechanism, present in all beings, may be dispelled in humans by an interior revelation that we can only regard as 'divine Grace'. It is a sudden interior illumination that reveals to the human awareness that it is part and parcel of the one eternal Consciousness, which is the origin and substratum of all individuated consciousness.

This 'mystical' experience of expanded awareness has occurred in numerous individuals throughout history. Some of the best known in the Western world are Jesus, the Buddha, Plotinus, Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross; but there are many more. They have described this experience of the revelation of the one eternal Consciousness variously as "the union with God", "the extinction of the ego (*nirvana*, *samadhi*)", "enlightenment", "entering the kingdom of God", or the "mystic marriage of the soul and

God.” However, all these experiences are synonymous and identical. The accumulated evidence for the occurrence of such a transcendence of the ego and the subsequent emergence into the awareness of and universal identity with the eternal Consciousness is overwhelming. It seems to me it is time for science to acknowledge the existence of such “revealed” knowledge, and to accord it the status of *gnosis*, while attempting to reconcile its own findings with the view of reality put forward by the gnostics.

Little can be learned objectively about the obscurative and limiting ego-mechanism under which we all suffer, for its proper means of study is subjective. The elimination of the obscurative and limiting effects of the ego-mechanism can only be accomplished by an introspective focus – whether by means of a dualistic devotional practice or by intense self-examination. Examples abound of representatives of both introspective methods having obtained the ego-transcending results, revealing to them the divine Mind, or God, through divine Grace.

But science, to its detriment, does not acknowledge this fact; indeed, science does not even acknowledge the possibility of gnosis. Whatever is outside the purview of empirical science is regarded by its representatives as either nonexistent or simply unworthy of study. This is where the difficulty of reconciling science and gnosis begins. It is much like the position of some Middle Eastern countries who hold that reconciliation with the country of Israel cannot occur since they do not recognize the right of Israel to exist. If there is to be reconciliation between science and gnosis, gnosis must be acknowledged as a specific and valid means of human knowledge.

One has difficulty imagining that scientists will ever accept the declarations of mystics as science; and they needn't. But, as human beings interested in comprehending the whole of reality, they would do well to accept them as gnosis, as providing information through an alternate and complementary mode of knowledge that is essential along with science to a complete understanding of reality. The alternative is to remain forever locked in the mystery of a partially known and wholly incomprehensible universe. Both of these two areas of knowledge, science and gnosis, must be acknowledged as valid means if we are to have a comprehensive overview of reality. As Albert Einstein once noted, “Science without religion [gnosis] is lame; religion [gnosis] without science is blind.” This is more than merely a vague platitude; it is an insightful recognition that there are two distinct modes of knowledge, each of which, without the other, is incomplete, and both of

which are required in order to comprehensively describe all aspects of the total reality.

The question then arises, “who speaks for gnosis?” or “what statements constitute true gnosis from among those statements by the many pretenders to gnosis?” And this is, perhaps, where the true difficulty lies. The answer is that it is the true mystics who speak for gnosis; it is the statements by those who have truly “seen” into the noumenal reality that constitute gnosis. And how do we separate out the true visionaries from the pretenders and from the many vastly diverse belief systems which presently circulate? Unfortunately, there is no easy or foolproof answer to that question. But, in gnosis as in science, there is a consensus among recognized authorities (mystics) on which we may rely. In my book, *History of Mysticism*, I have discussed the views of many such recognized mystics and shown that, despite the differences of language and culture, mystics throughout history have unanimously agreed on the elements of the noumenal reality.

For so many centuries science and gnosis have remained exclusive of one another, and have tread separate paths, scarcely acknowledging one another. And yet there must be an end to this divisive isolationism. How long shall scientists pretend that the subtler mode of knowledge simply does not exist? In the past, religious faiths have often been in doctrinal opposition to the conclusions of science and have had to adapt over time to the scientific view. The Copernican revolution, Galileo’s observations, the Darwinian revelations, and many other scientific pronouncements, were resisted by the establishments of religious faith, and were many long years in being accepted and assimilated by them; but gnosis has never had a quarrel with science. It has simply not been acknowledged as a means of knowledge existing apart from religious faith.

How can the revelations of Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross, and others in the Western mystical tradition simply be ignored? These few have been greatly multiplied and fortified by the addition to our knowledge of the lives and teachings of the great mystics of the Eastern traditions. Have they not all taught of the noumenal Source? And have not all, after their linguistic differences were accounted for, presented identical accounts?

These two camps, science and gnosis, have vied with one another over the centuries for the mind of the populace. And, for the past several centuries, science has been in the ascendancy in this war of ideals and has dominated the attention of all of Western civilization. While I acknowledge the necessity

of both of these two modes of knowledge, and have a deep love for science, I am a gnostic, not merely by conviction, but by experiential familiarity; and so, I have long felt it necessary to clearly present the knowledge I have obtained through gnosis in a way that is beneficial to everyone dedicated to the discovery of the true nature of existence.

II.

The basic elements of the Eastern world-view are also those of the world-view emerging from modern physics. ...Eastern thought—and, more generally, mystical thought—provides a consistent and relevant philosophical background to the theories of contemporary science; a conception of the world in which man's scientific discoveries can be in perfect harmony with his spiritual aims and religious beliefs.

-- Fritjof Capra, 1975

When Fritjof Capra's book, *The Tao of Physics*, was first published in 1975, many found the above statement an amazingly encouraging and promising insight. Conservative scientists, however, found it hogwash. The idea that mystical vision (gnosis) bore any resemblance to the findings of empirical scientific investigation, or that the two could in any way be reconciled was, to these scientists, a laughable proposition. I think that position needs to be reexamined. Science needs gnosis, and gnosis needs science.

Gnosis is generally regarded as belonging to the province of religion. But it is important to distinguish between 'religion' and 'religious faith'.

"Religion" is a word derived from the Latin *religare*. *Ligare* means "to tie or bind"; its meaning is reflected in such derivatives as "ligament" and "ligature". *Religare* means to "re-tie, re-bind." It is interesting to note that the word, *yoga*, "to yoke", has a similar meaning. The word, *religion*, which refers to 'the re-connecting or re-uniting of the soul to God', is in fact the inner realization or experience of the inseparable unity of the soul and God, the knowledge (*gnosis*) of the truth that "I and the Father are one."

Religious faith, on the other hand, is nothing more than a belief possessed by a group of individuals that certain premises are true regarding God, His human historical representatives, and His purposes. Religious faith may be possessed by anyone, but religion—in the sense of the realization of unity—is something that is attained by only a few spiritually gifted souls. True "religion", therefore, is a spiritual revelation that comes only to those few

who earnestly seek union with God; it is a gift of Grace. It may be called “enlightenment,” “the mystic marriage,” “the vision of God,” or any number of other words or phrases. It is recognized by all religious faiths as a supernatural revelation of Truth that goes far beyond any and all doctrines or beliefs of religious faith.

Religious faiths are many; they are based for the most part on ideational interpretations of historical events. Religion, in the sense of *gnosis*, is neither ideational nor historical; it is beyond both time and the vagaries of the mind. Religion, by definition, seeks only the realization of one’s unity with God, the revelation of the Eternal. Religious faith seeks intellectual certainty and temporal satisfaction, and always falls short of both. *Religion* brings certainty of the Truth; religious faiths are fallible, each one contrary to another. See how the various religious faiths hold disparate views, each holding its own founders as well as its followers to be uniquely endowed with a cosmic and historical significance. Jews consider themselves to be “the chosen of God”; Christians regard their founder to be “the Son of God,” and themselves to be “saved” by that belief. Muslims regard Muhammed to be “the Messenger of God,” and his written words to be unerring and sacrosanct; Hindus regard Krishna to be an incarnation of God, and honor as sacred the rituals handed down in the Vedas; Buddhists worship the Buddha and his teachings as the preeminent and exclusive guide to enlightenment.

These are all examples of religious faith. Each is contrary to the other, and each regards its own followers as the only “true believers.” However, among the followers of each of these religious faiths, there are a few who have known “religion” or *gnosis*; i.e., who have experienced the unitive reality, and known their identity with the One. Such seers have existed and exist today among each of these religious faiths, attesting to a true “religion” that transcends as well as includes all religious faiths. Religion always fosters compassion, forbearance, and the recognition of the interconnected unity of all life. Religious faith is capable of promulgating absurdities; it is susceptible to ignorance and is capable of fostering activities directly contrary to the teachings of religion. In these recent days we have seen just how far afield such activities and absurdities can lead the followers of the religious faiths.

Scientists generally do not acknowledge that the noumenal Source of all manifestation is knowable; but there have been gnostics, myself among them, who have testified to their direct experiential knowledge of the noumenal Source, which they declare to be eternal. When the Eternal is

revealed, they say, it is as though a grain of sand had shed its “grain-ness” and become aware of its “sand-ness”. “I am sand,” such a grain might proclaim; “I cover all the shores of the world.” Or, it is as though a speck of foam, thrown up by a crashing wave, suddenly shed its identity with its tiny form and became aware “I am the vast ocean. I am the fathomless deep!” When a man searches deeply enough within himself, his identity with a single form dissolves away, and he realizes a universal identity: “I am all life; I am all that comprises this universe!” And then, focused intently upon this new vision, he sees even more deeply into himself, and he realizes that he is the formless and eternally living Consciousness which, while remaining unmoved and unchanged, continuously whole and unaltering, spews forth all this moving, changing panoply of universal form, as a man’s mind creates a fantasy dream-world within itself.

Throughout history there have been a few who have declared that they have obtained mystical vision. Their testaments have been remarkably similar and explicit regarding the ultimate Source of the manifested universe. Among these few the most authoritative on the subject of cosmogony (the origin of the universe) are the authors of a number of Upanishads, the author of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Shankara, Plotinus, and Meister Eckhart; although there are many others who may be considered authoritative regarding other specific aspects of the mystical vision.

The mystic is gifted with a visionary experience that comes to him without his knowing how. His consciousness is elevated during a rare moment of contemplation whereby his awareness reaches to a noumenal level beyond his normal experience, and at once he is privy to an egoless state in which the transcendent reality becomes evident. There are a couple of levels to this mystical experience: at first, he is aware of the absence of ownership of his body. The previous sense of an individual identity is gone, and he sees that his body is not the possession of an individuality but belongs to the one current of existence which is universal, an ocean of conscious energy in which all things and beings exist. He sees his body as a wave on that ocean, as a configuration of energy within a sea of energy, related to the universe as a pebble is to stone; as the mountains and valleys are to the earth.

He feels that, in being divested of an ego— that is, of an individual identity, he is now seeing himself and the world correctly; as though the veil of an illusory ego had been lifted, and now he is seeing truly and without the obfuscation of an erroneous orientation. He is like a wave on an infinite ocean, or like a golden trinket melted in a vat of gold. For a wave, the

subsuming reality is the ocean; for a golden trinket, the subsuming reality is gold; for the individual consciousness, the subsuming reality is the one all-pervading Consciousness. No longer separate, his identity is merged into the larger substratum. If he entered this state from a state of prayer, there is no longer a deity, no longer an “I”; for, without the duality of “I” and “Thou”, neither exists. He sees that former dualistic relationship as a product of the ego-mind’s duality-producing habit. But now, all dualities are vanished. Not only is there no “I” or “Thou”, there is no now or then, for time is also transcended in this eternal state.

Dualities are judgments from a distinct individual reference point, and without that egocentric reference point, dualities do not exist. Without the ego, there is only the timeless universal sea of existence, a vast ocean of conscious energy. Without the ego, where is love and hate? Where are peace and unrest, the heights and the depths, weeping and laughing? Without an ego, there is no life and death, no night or day, no music or silence, no motion or stillness. These all require a point of identity, and without that illusory perspective, there is only the one universal existence. When what *is* is the one divine energy doing everything, where is pride or regret? Furthermore, where is the distinction between body and soul? There is no division in this one conscious energy; it is homogeneous. There is only one. And this one existence is conscious, autonomous, and integrally coordinated.

This is the first stage in the mystical experience. When the ego-sense falls away, one is aware only of the creative energy that manifests as the phenomenal universe and all its constituent parts. The mystic witnesses this revealed universal energy, not as a subject perceiving an object, a second; he perceives it as himself. There is only One, and It is I. And as this awareness increases, a new clarity dawns as he reaches the second and ultimate stage of this introspective journey and realizes: ‘I am not just this creative flux; I am the Source of this creative power. I am the eternal Consciousness from which this outflow of energy is born.’ This eternal Consciousness is primary to the creative energy, lying just above it, and is its Source. There is no higher. And It is known as one’s true Self, the one transcendent and noumenal Reality behind all universal manifestation.

That Self is Eternity. It is perfectly alone. It is perfect Consciousness and Bliss. There is nothing one can predicate of It. Yet, from that eternal Self a creative Energy fountains forth; from It time and space and the endless universe pours forth and returns in the same manner as breath flows out and

returns in the case of a human being. It is a cyclic ebbing and flowing of the creative energy of the One which bursts into being like an exhaled breath, expanding and spreading, only to be reversed as in an inhalation, extinguishing what had previously been produced. The mystic experiences this as occurring from himself, since he is united, at one, with the one Self.

My own mystical experience came suddenly, and opened to me the initial awareness that I, my bodily self, was integral to the universal ocean of energy which is this cosmos. (For a description of the circumstances leading to this experience, please see my book, *The Supreme Self*.) I realized that I was not a separate being in the world, but a wave on that ocean of God's activity, and belonged to Him (the one Existence) and existed in Him. My sense of an individual identity (the ego) had vanished, and I was seeing my existence from the true perspective of one without a separate and distinct vantage point amidst the vast creative flux. As my vision expanded, I became aware of my deeper identity as the unmanifest Source of all manifestation, the one Consciousness, the sole Origin of all being. Whatever separate identity I entered that experience with had become transparent and vanished in the dawning awareness of myself as the eternal Consciousness Itself. I knew my true identity as the original One from whom all is derived; I was the unchanging and eternal Consciousness. Yet I was also aware of the cyclical outflow from Me of the universal array, in a motion similar to the exhalation and inhalation of a breath. From the vantage of Eternity, it seemed that the creation and dissolution of the universe took place in the space of a leisurely breath. And its expansion and contraction could be seen in its entirety, as one might watch a balloon repeatedly expand and contract as one breathed into it.

Reflecting on this experience, it was clear that while the Eternal, the transcendent Absolute, which we will hereafter refer to as "the Godhead", is, in Himself, beyond all activity, His Creative Power (the Divine Mind, or *Ishvara*) produces a universe of form and activity. The Creative Power of God (called in other traditions *Nous*, *Logos*, *Prakriti*, *Maya*, *Shakti*) is not different from God. It is His Power of creation and is in no way separate from Him. While He remains entirely alone in His transcendent purity and unchangeability, He projects the cosmic drama by His own inherent Power.

When we try to imagine such a dual state of being, we cannot, because, for us, such a paradoxical state is unimaginable. But, for the divine Self, the absolute Ground, or "Godhead", such a paradoxical condition exists. In Himself, He is empty of thought or activity, pure Consciousness unmarred;

and yet, He effortlessly “projects”, “emanates”, or “breathes forth” an *Energy* which transforms itself into an inconceivably complex universal drama in which stars explode, civilizations rise and fall, and human beings evolve to know within themselves the Source and Creator. And then, the entire expanding cosmos reverses its expansion and is drawn back into its unmanifest state, once again residing as pure potential in the pure Energy of the Creative Power of God. This cycle of creation/dissolution repeats itself endlessly. Yet, throughout this cosmic evolution and involution, He remains One, eternal, in His own Bliss.

While I have seen most clearly that the universe is “breathed out” by the great Consciousness, I have not seen into the particulars of it, but have seen only the wholeness of it from the perspective of Eternity. In that vision, the expansion and contraction of the universe occurs in the space of a breath. All those billions of earth-years required for the genesis, expansion, and subsequent reabsorption of the universe are crammed into an eternal overview which does not observe the tiny interactions of small particles, but rather sees the entirety only as a momentary universal expansion and contraction. Individual lives are not seen; the rising and falling of civilizations is not seen; the nativity and death of stars is not seen. From the vantage point of Eternity, it is like watching the spraying out of a breath, and its subsequent withdrawal. The details of its enactment are not seen, but only its broad-scale occurrence.

So, clearly, I cannot explain in anything remotely similar to scientific language the details of that appearance and disappearance of the universe. Its Source is, of course, the one eternal Consciousness (which we call “God”). He is eternal (He does not live in Eternity; He *is* Eternity), which means He is beyond time and space; and yet, He produces a universe of time and space, which, though it is not Himself, is a product of Himself, as our own breath is a product of each of us. It is a universe produced from Himself, since there is nothing else besides that One from which it could be composed. This universe, of which we are a part, appears to us as substance, but, as science has shown, it is a tenuous substance at best, made as it is of God-stuff, of divine Light. It is produced from the one Eternal, unmanifest, absolute Consciousness, and has but a transitory existence. After it is reabsorbed back into the Eternal, it is sent forth once again in what is apparently an interminably repeated cycle of becoming and dis-becoming, expanding and contracting.

My ultimate vision was one of identity with the Eternal, the original transcendent Source and ultimate being. I was able to see also, as mentioned above, the outflow and influx of the universal cosmos, but nothing of its manner of evolution. Some others may have direct knowledge of the subtle realms proceeding from the Creative Power of God, which in turn produces the material universe; but I do not. I wish very much that I could provide some insight into the process of this activity, but I cannot. His secret method will have, for the time being, to remain His secret. I can shed no light on the transformation from God-energy to formative “matter”, and so I am unable to definitively deflate the pride of the present-day physicists, with their hadrons and leptons and quarks of many colors.¹ Suffice it to say that, ultimately, all must be traced back to Him. Is it His play? His compulsion? His involuntary reflex? I cannot shed any light on His motivation or his purpose; except to say it seemed to me to be an expansion of His love or joy. I only know that I am His appearance, made of His light, and, for one brief space of time/eternity, He revealed Himself to me, and made me know that my existence is His existence. That is all I know, and probably all I shall ever need to know.

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NOTES:

1. In recent years, after this article was originally written in 2006, I have speculated in various writings that the divine breath of the Creator became manifest in time and space as a ‘Great Radiation’, a sudden powerful burst of high frequency electromagnetic radiation—at frequency levels in the *gamma* range or above—an occurrence which scientists refer to as ‘the Big Bang’. That high-frequency electromagnetic radiation, or light, then spontaneously transformed into wave-particles that in turn aggregated to produce all the material forms that constitute our universe. This theory seems to me much more likely than the theories of a material origin of the universe put forward by contemporary science. It is explained at length and in detail in several of my later articles and book publications, including ‘The Phenomenon of Light’, ‘How God Made The World’, ‘Recent Theological Developments’, and ‘First Light’—all of which may be found in my collection of articles entitled “The Mystic’s Vision” at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

How Science Got It All Wrong

Though it may be surprising to some, there is no scientific theory of the ultimate source of the universe. Science, and in particular, that branch called ‘physics’, takes an ‘I don’t know’ attitude to questions about an ‘ultimate source’, and holds that nothing is known about what happened prior to ‘the Big Bang’ of fourteen billion years ago heralding the ‘beginning’ of time, space and the material universe. As to what sparked (caused) ‘the Big Bang’, there is no consensus theory among scientists; but there is a tacit assumption by the scientific and academic community that, whatever it was, it was solely ‘material’; and that from that material source all else spontaneously evolved. ‘All else’ includes all life, human consciousness and intelligence, and all things mental—though no one has suggested any possible manner in which any of these could have spontaneously evolved from matter. Despite the many inconsistencies and overall implausibility of Science’s assumptions, its materialistic bias has permeated our secular society, and greatly molds and influences the ideology and temper of our times.

Theology, in opposition to Science, holds that the fundamental origin of this universe is the universal Consciousness, or God. In fact, theologians say, it is not possible to conceive of a universal beginning without there being first that beginningless Consciousness. Nothing could exist or come into existence, they say, without a Source that is capable of creating and containing all matter and all energy, while transcending these in Itself. Nothing in this universe could exist or come into existence, they say, without a Source that is capable of creating and encompassing both time and space, and yet is itself neither. And while Science’s materialistic account of the universe’s origin does not provide for the sudden spontaneous production of life and human consciousness, Theology’s account does:

Before ‘the beginning’ was The Beginningless. That eternal Consciousness produced from Itself a sufficient amount of form-producing energy (at the Big Bang) to fashion an expanding and evolving universe containing many worlds; and all were made of and contained in that one Consciousness. Life, human consciousness and intelligence arose quite naturally within this living, conscious, universe. And, since all is made of Consciousness and is coordinated in one conscious Whole, all things move together of one accord; and assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. The quantum interconnectedness evidenced throughout the universe is clearly explained in the account of Theology, and though this phenomenon is

recognized by the representatives of materialistic Science, there is no plausible explanation of it in their account of reality.

Let us hope that, in future years, the current advocates of materialistic Science begin to consider the possibility that the more plausible Theological paradigm is the correct one, and no doubt, some of their current mysteries and conundrums will be immediately solved, and the universe as it truly is will begin to make sense to them.

Mystical Experience As Future Science

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:

I. Complementarity Of Identity

The term, *complementarity*, as coined by Niels Bohr, refers to the wave-particle duality of quantum physics: that light/matter may appear as either wave or particle, depending on the experiment designed to measure it. It appears now as a wave, now as a particle—but not both at the same time. And yet, to frame a *complete* definition of the structure of light or matter, both wave and particle are required. Thus, they are considered *complementary*. This characterization is carried over in the definition of consciousness, as It contains a similarly dual nature. It is revealed in mystical experience that, in a manner very similar to the complementarity of wave and particle, the universal undifferentiated Consciousness (God) and the individual mind/body (Soul) are complementary states of the same indivisible reality. In other words, we—you and I—are both the one universal Consciousness and the limited individual consciousness; we can experience ourselves now as one, now as the other—but not both at the same time. Mystical experience is possible only because of that complementarity, as mystical experience is nothing more nor less than the transition from one state of being to its complementary state.

This non-dual view of the one reality is solely a metaphysical one at this time—it has long been a feature of Eastern metaphysics—but it seems certain that, in the course of time, this view will become accepted on a broad

cultural scale, even in the sciences. Mystical experience is the empirical (albeit subjective) proof of this complementary view. It is the experiential basis for the Vedantic expression, “I am That”, and, once experienced, is the foundation of certainty in the mind of the experiencer. In my own case, this experience began with the realization that:

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!

...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...¹

II. The Inseparability of Mind And Body In The One

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. “Where is the temple?” I exclaimed; “Which the Imperishable? Which the abode?” But 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 denies 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. Clearly, from the vantage point of phenomenal existence in time and space, the body and soul are separable and distinct. But the mystical experience reveals that, in the eternal Divine Spirit, in the nondual Reality, these two are inseparable, indistinct. How is this possible?

It is possible because the Divine Spirit, as universal Consciousness, constitutes all individualized souls, and, as the Creative Power, constitutes the entire universe of forms, including all bodily life-forms. All souls and all bodies, therefore, are constituted of and are indistinguishable in the indivisible One.

For long it had been assumed by psychologists that consciousness was an epiphenomenon of the evolving complexity of matter; but eventually the illogic of that assumption became apparent. 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 are in fact integral.

III. 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 physical, but noumenal, not to mention omnipotent.

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 an immense and brilliant light capable of becoming a universe of form.

The 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 [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.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, *I* (Universal Consciousness) exhale the universe in the manner of an expanding breath alternating with an inhalation in which the universe is then withdrawn back into its source. While immersed in this clear awareness, I stated: “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.” I regard this as the very word of God.

IV. Non-Locality

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, 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 *Non-Locality* is a developing scientific view that has come about through the hard-won conceptual battles between the great intellects of the twentieth century, Bohr, Einstein, Heisenberg, Born, Schrödinger, etc. My ‘mystical’ realizations, on the other hand, were 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 in and by a single 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, non-locally. 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. ⁴

...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. ⁵

While the question of non-locality originally arose from the thought-experiment outlined in the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paper in which Einstein entered into his historical debate with 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 non-locality, 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 “non-locality” 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 and a conceptual scientific knowledge based on empirical proofs. The mystical experience is a direct revelation of the living Self 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 oneself. 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 *Non-locality* 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. Of course, the activities taking place within the universe are not dependent upon ‘local’ causes; there are no local causes or effects. Causation begins with Him and extends in an infinite network of effects throughout the universe to bring His purposes to fruition. We creatures 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. For a complete account of my own 'mystical' experience, see my book, *The Supreme Self*, Winchester, U.K., O Books, 2006; or download it from my website at: www.themysticsvision.com.
2. *Bhagavad Gita*, VII.5; Swami Nikhilananda (trans.), *The Bhagavad Gita*, New York, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1944, 1987; p. 83.
3. *Bhagavad Gita*, IX.7, 8; *Ibid.*, p.103.
4. 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.
5. Bohm, David, *Wholeness And Implicate Order*, London, Routledge, 1980.

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