# The Essential Articles, Vol. Two
## Table of Contents

1. Introduction ......................................................... 3
2. How To Know God ..................................................... 5
3. Bhakti Or Jnan? ....................................................... 34
4. The Meeting of Heart And Mind ................................. 56
5. Sing The Name of God ............................................... 72
6. Perfect Nondualism ............................................... 96
7. My Translations ...................................................... 125
8. Science And Gnosis ............................................... 159
9. Exemplary Scientists ............................................. 178
10. Complementary Perspectives ................................. 195
11. Wave-Particle Duality ......................................... 217
13. Revelations ......................................................... 270
14. The Conspiracy of Ignorance ................................. 420
INTRODUCTION

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 I saw that these various brief writings centered around only a few mystical or metaphysical topics, and that these short pieces could easily be consolidated, combined to form a broader informative treatment of each of those few important metaphysical topics. And so, each of these metaphysical topics then became the chapters of this little book, each chapter containing an expanded treatment of that specific topic. And now, rather than search through all my writings for those that speak to a specific mystical or metaphysical topic, you can now easily find those writings that reflect my best thoughts about a particular topic simply by searching the chapter headings of this collection.

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

—Swami Abhayananda, February 18, 2019
13. HOW TO KNOW GOD

(Consisting of Articles from The Mystic’s Vision, by Swami Abhayananda. Published June 6, 2018; last revised: 1-19-2019)

Mystical Experience

Nearly everyone comes to the conclusion that there is a divine Reality that is our Source and Father, the Ground of our being, an all-embracing One, Lord and Ruler over all, permeating and coordinating all. One may arrive at this conclusion through the exercise of one’s logical intelligence, or one may experience this reality directly as a ‘mystical’ experience or revelation. The intellectual formulation of this knowledge through logical analysis is capable of providing a basis for a reasonable certainty of the basic premise outlined above, but the direct ‘mystical’ experience of the One brings a person to the conscious awareness of that One as the immediate reality of one’s own being, one’s ultimate identity.

The question that many feel it is necessary to ask is, ‘How does one attain to that direct ‘mystical’ experience of the One?’ And I have had to confess that I have no idea how to answer that question—except to say that the one thing you can be absolutely certain of is that you can't make it happen. Only the eternal Lord of all can make it happen. Therefore, learn to rely upon His unfailing will. If He wishes to draw you to Him, He will reveal it as a divine urge, an implacable yearning, guiding you from within your heart. So be true to your own heart, and you can't go wrong. A guru or teacher may serve as the instrument by which the knowledge of God’s presence is awakened in you, but it is God Himself who kindles the flame of heavenly desire within you, and who leads you to union. We may be able to reduce all multiplicity to two: I and Thou; but only He can reduce the two to one. And so, it is not to a human teacher that you must turn, but it is to Him within yourself that you must turn.

It seems He has unique plans for each of us, and He brings each of us along the journey’s path according to His own design. No one can know how or when He will lead a person to His presence. You must make your intimate
acquaintance with Him entirely by your own efforts within your own consciousness. Needless to say, even your own efforts are prompted by His Grace. So, just follow His inner promptings. Know that He is aware of your desire—in fact, He has initiated it; and He will eagerly meet you in the still of your heart when the time is right. Keep your mind on Him and He will continue to be mindful of you. And, when the time comes, when He has brought you to the purity of heart that is required, then He will bring you into His pure land, and you will be filled with His presence and know unlimited Being.

This is without doubt the greatest attainment possible in this life, providing complete and unremitting inner fulfillment. To be sure, it will not bring you wealth or worldly success; in fact, it is much more likely that you will experience economic privation and social isolation. But it is the greatest attainment possible in this life, and it will fill you with gratitude and provide you with unending peace and abundant happiness.

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:

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 am in God and God is in me. 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.”

“... 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.”

**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.”

“...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.”

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.”  

“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*.”

“…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.”

“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.”

**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.”

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. 32

NOTES:

3.  *Isha* Upanishad, I.7; *Ibid*.
5.  *Svetasvatara* Upanishad, II.1; *Ibid*


16. de B. Evans, C., *op. cit.*, *Sermon XXI*.


32. Anyone interested in reading my own account of the unitive experience, simply go to my website: www.themysticsvision.com, and click on the “Read or Download Books” page. There, you will find a listing for my book, *The Supreme Self.* It is in that book that I describe my own experience of “amazing grace”, and this book, as well as my other books, may be downloaded at no charge in a PDF format. Enjoy.

**Self-Reliance**

For spiritual aspirants, there is a great deal to be said for living in a focused spiritual environment such as a monastery, ashram, or temple; but oftentimes a life so lived is at the cost of one’s intellectual and moral freedom, and this is detrimental. To limit oneself to a specific tradition, with determined hierarchies and specific unquestionable narratives, is always detrimental to the freedom of thought. And if that tradition demands an unswerving devotion, not to the divinity within you, but to the words and divine authority of some book or historical person, so much more is the limitation and the detriment.

Of course, living unprotected in the world is dangerous also. There are many temptations to avoid, and the peace required for meditation and contemplation is hard to find. Also, the absence of the companionship of like-minded souls makes for a lonely existence. But it seems to me, that despite the loneliness and the hardship, an earnest soul has the strength, courage and inner resources to forge a spiritual life in the world. She finds companionship in the presence of God and knows the added advantage of living free of confining restrictions to her intellectual and moral freedom.

I am a great believer in freedom, and therefore recommend to all spiritual aspirants the path of independence, non-affiliation, and self-rule, which allows freedom to evolve. Even if conforming to the herd appeals to your desire for belonging to a community or for the possible attainment of some measure of authority; resist it; be your own master—even if it means you must deal with some loneliness and struggle. The greatest attainment is freedom—the freedom to give your heart entirely to God within you, and to think and act in accord with the dictates of your own divine Self. At the end of a long and productive life, nothing will savor so sweetly to you as the satisfaction of being and having been wholly true to your Self.
We Who Have Been Blessed

If we reason clearly and correctly, we must come to the acknowledgment of our utter dependence on God’s blessings. We have no power, no intelligence, no sweetness, and no illumination of our own; all that we know as ours is in fact the gracious gift of God. For that reason, we cannot claim to have earned spiritual wisdom or vision by some worthiness of our own making. Whatever comes to us does so of His power and His grace. And so, though I would gladly offer instruction and advice in the endeavor to assist others in joining their soul to God, I am too clearly cognizant of the fact that He alone can bring each soul to His embrace; and that He alone, whose Light illumines all, can peel away the blinders of the illusory ego, and show Himself as the true and everlasting Self of all.

So, what am I to say to those who ask the way to God? ‘Follow the noblest that’s in you; that will lead you home to Him. Revere silence, solitude, reflection, and deep thought. Read the lives and words of those who found their way to His door, and thus purify your heart. Above all, converse with Him; He’ll guide you from within and lead you every inch of the way. Rejoice often in His great love in looking after you and all good souls. He is the inner life, the inner heart, of you; and He seeks only what is your highest joy and light. Turn your face to Him, your mind to Him, your heart to Him; and nothing else at all needs to be done. When it is your time to know your eternal identity, the whole universe, including the stars in the heavens, will conspire to bring about your awakening. Do not fear; no one will be forgotten or left behind.

Trust In God

It is not entirely agreed upon by humankind that the universe was created and is governed by a single divine Mind, but after centuries of careful examination of the evidence, the great majority of thinking people have accepted this hypothesis as the correct one. As this divine Mind is taken to be unborn and without progenitors, it is also accepted that He has no ‘given’ name but is referred to by various names according to the language of custom in various regions of the earth. Therefore, He has been called by many different names, all of which are equally valid for the purpose of communing with Him, since He is ever-present as our very Soul and breath. Some call Him “Lord”, “Hari”, “Adonai”, or “Rahim”. I will refer to Him as “God”, a name said to be of Germanic or Gothic origin, and commonly accepted today by all English-speaking people.
God is not only the Creator and Governor of the universe, He is the Foundation of existence, being both the conscious Ground as well as the substance of the universe, and so comprises both our mind and our body, and all else that exists. All is contained in Him, and partakes of Him, and nothing has Being or existence other than in Him. This being so, we must ask ‘How is it possible for one to connect to God? How does one experience His presence?’ This question is like that of a wave on the ocean asking how it may connect to the ocean; or how it might experience the Ocean’s presence. As a wave is contained in the ocean, we are contained in God, and therefore we are able to know His presence both within and without. What more is there to be said?

Be still and know the One who is, the One who lives you. Trust in Him. Every moment He is watching over us all. Though turmoil and anxiety fill many hearts, and fear and distrust is rampant in the world of men, trust in His inscrutable will; He will unfailingly bring us to the wellspring of His love and the refuge of eternal peace.

Reach Out To God

My own revelatory experience of the Divine Reality forms the basis for my assumption that any other devout human being is also capable of experiencing such a transcendent revelation—that, in fact, those who have experienced such a revelation in the past were, like me, ordinary beings and not divinely begotten children or special incarnations of the supreme deity—at least no more so than anyone else. This notion flies in the face of the customary religious suppositions of a large number of people, I know; but old customs must eventually give way to proven experiential knowledge. The acceptance of mystical experience, and the recognition of its misinterpretation through the ages will certainly not come overnight; but eventually human evolution requires the expansion of human understanding through the acceptance of accumulated experiential evidence.

There is no shortage of evidence to show that many people throughout the world and throughout history have experienced the interior revelation of their own divine being; and if you are unaware of this evidence, please see my History of Mysticism, a well-documented account of that evidence (available as a free download from my website). Though, from the perspective of history, so many have testified to the occurrence of that
revelation in their lives, it is, for us, a sad fact that, in our daily lives, so relatively few seem privileged to experience that revelation. In that regard, it is an experience that seems to be both common and yet rare. But it must be accepted as indisputably true that we are, each one, the manifestation of God’s bounty, and are capable, each one, of knowing Him as our immortal Self through prayerful contemplation and a focused and mindful intent. His will is paramount; but if, by acting in accord with His will, you can affect, or in any way influence the course of His will, you must do so. Beg for His favor, implore His merciful gift of light, give your heart unreservedly to Him, surrender your life in His service; see all creation as His manifestation, and know your oneness with Him.

You will have noticed that I do not speak of temporal conditions in the world; I do not propose solutions for the worldly ills that are so apparent to all of us. These things will be remedied on their own if only we, the people, become transformed in heart and mind to focus on God’s loving presence in our own hearts. Surely, then, He will bless you and many others with the interior revelation of His ever-presence, and free you forevermore from all confusion, worry, and sorrow. Reach out to Him with all the power of your mind and heart and soul, and He will surely grant your heart’s desire.

The Path of Divine Love

Whenever the question arises regarding the path to the awareness of God, one’s own Divine Self, we inevitably discover that there are two separate and distinct paths vying for our allegiance. One says, “When you realize God, you will realize that that eternal Self is your true and lasting Identity; therefore, why don’t you identify with That, and not with the ephemeral appearance of the ego-mind and body. Remain always identified with that pure Consciousness which is the eternal witness of the mind and body and be free.” This is the call to the path of knowledge, or jnan.

But there is another point of view, which also asks to be heard; this is the view of those who extol the path of Divine Love, or bhakti. Those who follow this devotional path say: “Oh, it is indeed true that your real Identity is the eternal Self, but how can you hope to become aware of that pure and perfect Self without first making your heart and mind pure? First you must foster in your heart the habit of love, and then you may become aware of the One who is unconditional Love.
“Foster in your mind the thought of oneness with all beings; then you may become aware of the One who is Unity itself. Your separative ego, your sense of individuality, keeps you apart from the awareness of the one Self; therefore, humble your ego before the eternal Self in the manner of a servant before his master, or a child before a parent, or a lover before her beloved. Then you will be prepared and able to experience the Infinite, the eternal Self.”

Which of these two approaches to Self-realization is correct then? The path of knowledge or the path of love? The knower says, “There is but One; identify with That, for in truth you are That!” The lover says, “That may be so, but so long as there is the appearance of a separate self, make it subservient to the universal Self, until it is truly merged in and dissolved in the Divine.” Clearly, they are both true, both correct, both valid and proper paths for the sincere aspirant to Self-realization.

There is a saying that the path of devotion and the path of knowledge are like two men, one blind and the other lame. Neither are able to get about on their own. The devotee without discrimination can’t see where he’s going; and the man of knowledge without love is unable to progress along the spiritual path. However, if we put the two of them together, they manage very well; for then, the man of knowledge rides on the shoulders of the devotee, and the devotee becomes his legs, while he serves as the devotee’s eyes. So, this is what we also must do with the two complementary sides of our own nature; we must utilize them both; that way we have the benefit of both knowledge and devotion.

Oftentimes, the faculty of devotional love is characterized as being the feminine side of our nature; and the sober, discriminative intellect is thought of as being a masculine trait. It is the feminine side of us, which is capable of tenderness, compassion, emotional love, self-effacement through service, etc. And it is the masculine side of ourselves, which allows us to be coldly analytical, logical, dispassionate, unattached, etc. But, clearly, both of these “aspects,” present in everyone to some degree, are necessary to our progress in the spiritual life.

If we were to examine the lives and characteristics of the saints and sages of all the various religious traditions whom we have known, we would no doubt find that some were more devotional, some more discriminative. However, I am certain that, in all cases of genuine spiritual greatness, we
would find that the intellect and the heart played equally essential parts; for, like the blind man and the lame man, the heart and the intellect are insufficient without the other.

The heart without discrimination falls into the pit of sentimentality and sensuality; the intellect without the sweetness of the heart remains a dried-up cripple, unable to enjoy life in the world. It is my considered opinion that if a person is to reach the highest perfection possible to man, there must be a balance of heart and mind. There must be both the knowledge of the Self, and at the same time, the love of God.

All the great scriptures of all the world’s religions extol in one way or another the focusing of the mind on God. This is what is known as “devotion.” Listen to how two different sages have defined it: Narada, who was the epitome of the devotee of God, defines devotion in his *Bhakti Sutras* as “the constant flow of love towards the Lord, without any selfish desire.” Shankaracharya, who was chief among the followers of the path of knowledge, says in his *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination (Vivekachudamani)*, “Devotion is continuous meditation on one’s own true Self.” It will be evident to the intelligent person that whether we focus our minds on God or on the Self, it is the same; for devotion to God is nothing else but meditation on the Self. In either case, we must transcend the individual ego, the false sense of selfhood.

In the Upanishads, we find a description of how the universe came into being: “This world,” it says, “arose from Bliss, lives in Bliss, and will eventually merge back into Bliss.” This word, “Bliss,” is synonymous with the word, “Love.” Love is God. And Love is the universe. The supreme Lord has manifested Himself as this world out of Love. Existence is nothing but the loving throb of the Divine. I have seen that all this universe is the out-flowing radiance of God’s Love. Man, therefore, is nothing but a flame of Love. Within us is the Divine Love that is God. However, if we are not experiencing that Divine Love, we must ask ourselves how we may discover, experience, and manifest that Love, that Bliss. Those who know, say that Love is attained by loving.

Whether we regard ourselves as the worshiper or the worshiped, there is nothing here but the One, playing both of these roles. Whether we call our intrinsic nature by the name of “Bliss” or “Love,” its taste remains the same. We may call the Eternal by whatever name we like; we may sing it out to our heart’s content. Whether we are gamboling in the streets or
sitting quietly in our meditation room, we are always God playing within God. To remember Him is our only happiness; to forget Him our only sorrow.

Meanwhile, we experience His grace in many different ways; and we should recognize that it is God’s grace that is working through us. Perhaps the first grace, the first taste we have of God’s presence in our life, is the grace of aspiration, the desire to understand the nature of our own existence. This grace may occur to us while we are still children, or it may occur when we are older, and have already put behind us all other desires. Such grace may involve the pain of severance from old ties and allegiances; but it is grace nonetheless, and it is drawing us toward the light of our true, eternal Self.

Then comes the dawning of the light of understanding. This is a very special time, a great gift of grace. The mind is suddenly filled with a new and wonderful understanding, which had hitherto been hidden from it. All becomes clear, and all one’s past life is seen to have been leading inexorably toward this present clarity of mind, this new awareness of the unity of Existence.

But this dawning of light is but the beginning. It comes only to whet our appetite. And along with this little bit of light, He also puts before us some obstacles to the keeping of that light, so we might come to understand what those obstacles are that pull the mind away from the clarity of vision. So, we learn to practice patience and to make greater effort to remember Him. He nurses us along in His infinite wisdom, knowing precisely what is needed for each of us to inch along toward perfection. And there will be many inches gained and then lost, only to be regained.

Even in times of great trouble, God’s grace is there. His grace comes to us in two ways: (1) In fulfilling our needs, both spiritual and worldly; and (2) in placing obstacles before us, so that we can grow strong in faith and strong in perseverance. He brings us occasions of trial and dryness so that we may have the victory over all adversities, and thereby become confident in the power and goodness of God within us.

Then there is the grace of devotion, the grace of Love. It is a very special gift of grace and is sought by all the saints who’ve ever lived. It is the one thing needed to wend one’s way to God Himself. And, so, to win this great gift is something much to be prized and prayed for. This is how Krishna,
speaking as the incarnation of God, advised his disciple in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

"Give Me your mind and give Me your heart; give Me your offerings and your adoration; and thus, with your soul in harmony, making Me your supreme goal, you shall truly come to Me."  

And again:

"Only by love can men see Me, and know Me, and come unto Me. He who works for Me, who loves Me, who regards Me alone as his supreme goal, who is free from attachment to all things, and with love for all creation, he in truth comes to Me."  

In my own case, the grace of love for God came upon me very suddenly and spontaneously. And the more I read of the lives of the saints, the more completely I was convinced that I had no other goal in my life but God, and day by day the grace of love increased in me. For me, there is no doubt that it was God’s grace, which drew me lovingly to Himself, and made me to know my oneness with Him. Listen also to what some other Western seers have said about the power of God’s grace:

**Philo Judaeus:**

"Without Divine grace, it is impossible to leave the ranks of mortality; [but] when grace fills the soul, it is possessed and inspired, …and hastens to that most glorious and loveliest of visions, the vision of the Uncreated."  

...The soul, stirred to its depth and maddened by heavenward yearning, [is] drawn by the truly existent Being and pulled upward by Him."  

**Plotinus:**

"When the Divine in us stirs us, then the soul becomes filled with a holy ecstasy; stung by desire, it becomes Love. …When there enters into it a glow from the Divine, the soul gathers strength, spreads true wings, and, however distracted by its proximate environment, speeds its buoyant way to something greater; its very nature bears it upwards, lifted by..."
the giver of that love. Surely, we need not wonder that It possesses the power to draw the soul to Itself, calling it back from every wandering to rest before It; [for] from It came everything; nothing is mightier." 6

St. John of the Cross:

"Desire for God is the preparation for union with Him. If a person is seeking God, his Beloved is seeking him much more. And if a soul directs to God its loving desires, God sends forth His fragrance by which He draws it and makes it run after Him." 7

In a time known only to Him, God sends His grace of revelation; He reveals Himself to His lover. And the lover then knows that God is his own Self. He reveals that there never was anything other than God; that nothing at all exists but God Himself. The lover who obtains this grace knows full well that it was God’s grace and nothing else that brought to him this vision. All who have obtained it declare to all the world that they realized God by His grace alone. Listen to what some seers from the East have had to say about it:

Dattatreya:

"Truly, it is by the grace of God that the knowledge of Unity arises within. Then a man is released at last from the great fear of life and death." 8

Shankaracharya:

"Teachers and scriptures can stimulate spiritual awareness. But the wise disciple crosses the ocean of ignorance by direct illumination, through the grace of God". 9

Sri Ramakrishna:

"You may try thousands of times, but nothing can be achieved without God’s grace. One cannot see God without His grace. But God can be seen the moment His grace descends. He is the Sun of knowledge. One single ray of His has illumined the world with the light of knowledge. This is
how we are able to see one another and acquire various kinds of knowledge. One can see God only if He turns His light towards Himself. "\(^{10}\)

Yet even this, the vision of God, is not the end of His graces to His devotees. After this, He bestows many wonderful graces, leading Jesus of Nazareth to say, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, then all the rest shall be added unto ye.” All that follows upon the grace of vision is just so many lessons on how to live in absolute freedom; in other words, how to be one with God while eating, sleeping, walking, sitting, while giving, while receiving, while enjoying, and while suffering. This is the grace of freedom, of unity, of perfect contentment. Such continuously ongoing peace and happiness cannot be had without much grace. That grace comes from the Self, from God within us. There is no final grace; it just goes on giving forever.

The author of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* said it well when he said:

"He is indeed the Lord supreme whose grace moves the hearts of men. He leads us unto His own Joy and to the glory of His Light."

**Meditation**

The love of God is sweet, O friend! Please do have a taste of it. Call on Him, your compassionate Father, with a true and yearning heart, and He will fill your body and your mind with the nectar of love.

Look up and reach to Him; beg for His embrace. Can a father refuse to draw his child to his breast? Cry for Him, and He will certainly lift you to His heart.

Turn your attention upward within yourself; it is there He lives. Call to Him and feel the rapture He bestows upon your soul. Delicious caresses He bestows upon the yearning heart! The spine tingles with the rushing fountain of joy that flows upward toward Him. O friend, the love of God is sweet! It is nectar to the thirsty soul. Please don’t hesitate; the cup is brimming full. O friend, the love of God is sweet!
NOTES:

2. Bhagavad Gita, 9:34.
3. Ibid., 11:54.

How To Meditate On The Self

First, we must ask ourselves what is this Self on which we are going to meditate? The answer to this question, which we find in the Upanishads, is,

“The Self is the Witness of the mind. ...It is not the thought, but the Thinker one must know. It is not what is seen that should be known, but it is the Seer which must be known.”

This, of course, is why the Self is so hard to get a handle on; we are used to tackling the task of “knowing” by focusing on the object to be known, but, in this case, it is the knowing Subject, which we are attempting to know. It is the Ground, the very Consciousness that is the background of knowing, the Screen, as it were, on which the thought-images appear.

To make matters even more difficult, this Self has no qualities, no characteristics whatsoever by which one is able to describe It. It is as empty and as uncharacterizable as the vastness of the sky. It is the Source
of everything that exists, but It is, Itself, nothing—void. It is called by the Vedantists: “Sat-chit-ananda.” It does not exist; It is Existence (Sat). It is not conscious; It is Consciousness (Chit), unstained, unwavering, eternal. It is perfect, unchallenged Freedom, since It alone is; and for that reason, It does not feel bliss; It is Bliss (Ananda). We, who are manifestations of that Satchidananda, are not different from It. Our body, our physical existence, is That; we can experience our oneness with the universal Energy. We can know It as Consciousness—the very consciousness that is our self-awareness, the silent Witness of all our various states of mind. When we come to realize that we are That, that we are none other than the one undivided Reality, then we experience the infinite, carefree Freedom that is devoid of any obstacle, or any other; then we experience the Bliss.

Another way of understanding the Self is by examining the physical, the mental, and the spiritual aspects of our own reality. We possess a body, but, inwardly, we experience ourselves as a bodiless soul; yet, ultimately, we are nothing but the one Spirit—i.e., the Self. And we identify sometimes with one aspect of our being, and at other times with another aspect of our being. This is clearly illustrated in a story, which appears in the famous Indian epic, called the Ramayana. In it, Rama, who represents the eternal Self, has a monkey-servant, named Hanuman, who represents the mind or intellect. At one point, Rama asks Hanuman, “How do you regard me?” And Hanuman replies, “When I regard myself as the body, I’m your servant; when I regard myself as a soul, I’m a part of you; but when I regard myself as the universal Self, then I am one with you.”

Now, a great truth is pointed out in this saying of Hanuman’s: namely that our relationship to God, and our spiritual practice as well, is entirely dependent upon how we regard ourselves, upon what we believe ourselves to be. Because there are these different ways of thinking of oneself, there are also differences in the way one might approach God, the eternal Self. Notice that, in the first two ways in which Hanuman identifies himself, there is a separation between the subject and the object of reverence. Whether identifying himself with the body or the soul, Hanuman regards himself as having a separate identity from Rama. In the one case, he relates to Rama as a servant, and in the second, he relates to Rama as a part to a whole; but in the third case, there is no separation, no relationship: Hanuman sees himself as not different from Rama.

And so, as we have seen, there are these three different attitudes regarding not only God, but one’s own identity as well. Basically, however, there are
really only the two different approaches to God: (1) as an individualized identity (ego) separate from the supreme Identity, or God; and (2) as pure Consciousness, identical with God, the supreme Self. Let’s look more closely at these two approaches, or methods, for they are found to be the methods adhered to in every single religious tradition: some adhering to the one, some adhering to the other, accounting for the apparent incompatibility of the various religious traditions.

In the path of the separate individual soul, the relationship of the soul to God is as the relationship of a thought to the mind from which it sprang, or as the relationship of a wave to the ocean from which it rises, or as the relationship of a ray of light to the Sun from which it streams. The wave wishes to be dissolved back into the oneness of the Ocean; the thought wishes to be dissolved back into the one mind; the ray wishes to be reabsorbed back into the pure source of all light. These are some of the metaphors used to describe the relationship of the soul to God. And in each of these cases, there is a distinction between the part and the whole. The ray experiences its separateness from the Sun; the thought feels isolated from the mind; the wave wonders, “Where is my father, the ocean?” None of these is really separate from its source, of course; but the sense of separation is there. Each feels separate and apart from its originating principle, and it will not be satisfied until it becomes fully aware of its oneness with its source.

We, as souls, are in the same fix. We are not truly separate from our eternal Self; but, so long as we are not aware of our infinite and eternal Identity, we suffer, and go on seeking ways to become aware of our Source, our real Self. Until we do, we cannot feel complete and fulfilled. Even though, ultimately, this separation of the soul from its source is purely imaginary, still, it is real so long as we suffer the pains and anxieties accompanying this imaginary plight.

So, what to do? The soul turns all its attention to the Self. It loves the Self as a child loves its father or mother. It longs for the embrace of the Self as a lover longs for her beloved. It offers all its thoughts and actions in the service of the Self, as a devoted servant offers himself to his master. A soul endeavors to close the gap between itself and its God by setting aside time to think lovingly on the Self. To wash away all other distracting thoughts, it continually sings in its heart its mantra: the name of the beloved Self. It sings songs of love, it prays, it meditates, it languishes, it agonizes, it becomes pathetic.
At last, all the clouds of ego, or error, are dispersed, and the bright light of the Sun shines through; the Self reveals Itsel resplendently in the consciousness-sky of the soul; and the soul cries out: “O my God! I am you and you are me! All along, there has only been this one Mind, playing the game of ‘I’ and ‘Thou.’” The ray realizes it is only sunlight, and has never been apart from its true self, the Sun; the thought-image realizes it is nothing but mind and has never been separate from the mind; the wave realizes it is only ocean and has never been separate from the ocean.

That is the way of the soul, the way of bhakti, or “devotion.” It is also called the way of duality, because, in this path, there are two: the soul and the Self—until, of course, the soul is graced with the realization that it is, and has always been, none other than the Self.

There is another pathway, however: that way that is mentioned by Hanuman when he said, “When I identify with you, then you and I are one.” This is the way of Non-Duality, or Unity. It is also referred to as the path of jnan, or “knowledge.” This path takes as its starting-point the knowledge that the soul is none other than the Self, that nothing else exists but that One, and the meditation on the Self is therefore devoid of any relationship such as exists on the path of bhakti, or devotion. There is no babbling of the soul crying out, “O Lord, O Lord! Pity me, Thy poorest and most worthless servant!” No, not at all. Nondual meditation is the absolutely silent awareness by the Self of Itself.

But how, you may wonder, is it possible to experience the Self by the Self? What is one to do with the exuberantly effusive mind? Does one continually repeat in one’s mind, “I am the Self! I am the Self!”? No. The method of mantra repetition is helpful, and even necessary, in the early stages of devotional practice; but, in the path of nondual meditation, it is not helpful. Certainly, repetition of a mantra is the way to occupy the mind and force it to pay attention to one single thought to the exclusion of all else, but nondual meditation is intended to go beyond the process of thought. The Self is pure Consciousness, absolute Awareness; does it make sense then for one who wishes to experience this awareness to give it a name and call out to it? This is like painting the words, “blank wall,” on a wall in order to reveal the blankness of the wall; or like using black paint to color a house white. The active thought-producing mind is exactly that which stands in the way of your awareness of the Self. To use it to produce even more thought-forms is not the way to become aware of the
Self. It is like flashing more and more words on a screen instructing you to look only at the screen until the screen cannot be seen at all.

How, then, does one meditate in the nondual path, the path of jnan? In this path, the awareness is not focused on some other, such as a God, or some Divine form or mental image, but rather on one’s own being. It is an inward turning of the awareness, so that it is focused upon itself. That is the state of a mind in meditation on the Self. The Shaivite scripture, Vijnana Bhairava, says, “Meditation is not concentrating on a form. True meditation consists of uninterrupted awareness, without any image or support.”

Here is an exercise for meditation: Concentrate on the sound of your own breath, as it comes in and goes out. Draw the breath in with the sound, So. Release the breath out with the sound, Ham. As you breathe, the prana (the subtle breath) is drawn upward, through the spinal column, the cervical vertebra, and into the cranial region. Consciously draw the breath all the way to the top of the head. As you exhale, feel the prana descend down the front of the head, neck, chest, abdomen, and to the perineum, from whence it ascends on the next inhalation. Feel the muscles of the perineum contract as the new subtle breath is drawn upward. As you breathe in, allow the diaphragm to relax outward for maximum breath intake, and expand the soft palate so that the air rushing upward makes a jet-like sound inwardly and causes your inner ears to pop. It may be that your breath will comfortably remain suspended upward for quite a while; or it may remain suspended after you have exhaled. Or, after breathing in this way for a while, your breath may become very shallow, and spontaneously cease, becoming balanced in perfect stillness. In such a state, consciousness becomes focused and clear, and it is possible that the Self will reveal Itself.

Concentrate on this process and think of nothing else. Aspire to lift your consciousness to the crown of the head, while breathing in with the sound, So, and out with the sound, Ham. This is the famous Hamsah mantra, which is sounded as So-ham. The phrase, So-ham, consists of two Sanskrit words: Sah, “That,” and aham, “I am.” Let its meaning permeate your awareness as you rise into the light at the crown of your head. Become aware, “I am That!”

Aspiration, whether it is the longing for God, or for the realization of the Self, lifts the consciousness above the ego-involved mind. Just as, on a mountaintop, the air becomes thinner and purer, so, as the mind focuses its
intent upward toward the supreme Consciousness, it transcends the hill-country of deliberate thought, and enters the high atmosphere of pure Spirit, where reigns the silence of the clear blue sky of sweetness, peace, and light.

There, no world, no thought, exists; from the top of the mountain, the gaze is fixed upward, into the silver, silent sky of God, or the Self. That is meditation. And if, from there, we are drawn inside His mystery, above that sky, to know His perfect identity in ourselves, then that is His most wonderful Grace. If not, we nonetheless absorb from that sky some of the radiance of His Light, some of the nectar of Self-awareness, to keep in our minds and hearts; and we offer thanks to Him and pray for His continued presence in our conscious life.

By repeated practice, we learn to identify more and more with the witnessing Self, and less and less with the thought-activity of the mind; and the various habitual traits of the mind have less and less power to uproot us from our natural peace. Meditation is not meant only for those times when one is formally “sitting”; meditation is really a state of awareness that can be stretched to include all of one’s time, during all of one’s activities.

During the time of sitting, the mind is filled with the blissful awareness of the Self; this is the practice of Truth. As that practice permeates our awareness more and more, it will be carried into more and more of our active life as well. Listen to what the great 13th century mystic, Jnaneshvar, who had wholly incorporated Self-awareness into his life, had to say about this:

"One who has drunk of the nectar of Self-awareness may say whatever he likes; his silent contemplation remains undisturbed. His state of actionlessness remains unaffected—even though he performs countless actions. Whether he walks in the crowded streets or remains sitting in his room, he is always at home. His “rule of conduct” is his own sweet will. His meditation is whatever he happens to be doing." ²

Now, there are times when, as a soul, you will feel the desire for God, as a lover for her beloved. The love in your heart will bubble up to express itself as devotion to the Lord of the universe. This is the noblest and best path for
the soul, to focus on God within itself with true humility and love, in simple prayer and worship. Even after the supreme realization that your true Self is the universal Self, still you will joy in the singing of His name, and in serving Him in all His creatures and in remembering His presence at every moment in every place.

And there will also be times when you will become intensely focused and quiet, and your breathing will become shallow and soft, and you will taste something of the certainty of your eternal and limitless Selfhood. And you will rest in that quietude, that solitary joyfulness—without thought, without movement, aware only of your own infinite presence.

Because the one Reality is both subject and object, both the personal soul and the Impersonal Self, both the manifest and the Unmanifest, and because both of these aspects are contained within man, both of these paths, or methods, of Self-awareness are perfectly valid and equally true. Just as a ray of sunlight is both distinguishable from and also identical with the Sun; as a thought-image is both distinguishable from and yet identical with the mind; as a wave is at once distinguishable from and yet identical with the ocean; we too are both distinguishable from and identical to that one Self. Whether we turn to It as particularized souls, or as Consciousness to Itself, we are looking toward the one Light.

We should come to understand ourselves so well that we can worship God with heartfelt love at one moment and know Him as non-different from ourselves at another moment, and not feel the slightest contradiction in so doing. This whole world of creation is God’s, and it is also Himself. If God in the form of His creature lovingly worships God, the Creator, the inner Controller, the Self—who is going to object? Once again, listen to Jnaneshvar:

"Everything is contained in the being of God. If a desire for the Master-servant relationship arises, it is God alone who must supply both out of Himself. Even the devotional practices, such as repetition of God’s name, faith and meditation, are not different from God. Therefore, God must worship God with God, in one way or another." ³

"...God Himself is the devotee; the Goal has become the path [in order to enjoy the journey]. The whole
universe is one solitary Being. It is He who becomes a God, and He who becomes a devotee. Yet, in Himself, He enjoys the kingdom of utter Stillness." 4

I’d like to say a few words about the benefits of meditation: Everyone knows that it is through meditation that we are able to know the Self; but there are also many side benefits. Peace of mind lends itself very beneficially to health of body. When the mind becomes focused on God, and all your energies are focused upward, the brain becomes infused with energy and the light of Consciousness. Whatever you focus on in your daily endeavors will be illumined by the increased clarity and intensity of your intellect, and you will easily find solutions to all your problems. You won’t need to jog ten miles to feel healthy. Just by raising that conscious Light within your body, you will feel like a god. And you will radiate that light of health to all around you.

According to the Svetasvatara Upanishad, the first fruits of meditation are: “health, little waste matter, and a clear complexion; lightness of body, a pleasant scent, and a sweet voice; also an absence of greedy desires.” 5 But, above all, of course, meditation enables one to become centered in the eternal Self; to rise above all the vicissitudes of life, and to remain established in peace and goodwill, attuned to the inner joy of the Eternal, while seeing the one God in all creation.

Here are a few suggestions to those who may be new to meditation: First, find a convenient time for your regular practice. In the Vedantic tradition, the times for meditation are spoken of as the brahmamuhurta, the times just after the Sun goes down and just before the Sun comes up. Most people find it difficult to meditate during the brightest of the daylight hours, as at those times the mind and body are most inclined to activity.

Second, have a regular place in which to meditate where it’s quiet and you will be undisturbed. Sit in a comfortable position. Yogic texts recommend various postures, but always insist on a straight spine, so that the subtle energy (prana) may flow freely to the head.

Third, the length of time for sitting will vary with the depth of your practice. Beginners and even long-time practitioners may find it difficult to concentrate intensely for longer than one hour.

Fourth, don’t let the mind just wander; you will only get into bad habits
that will be difficult to break. Use one of the two methods or paths, which I talked about. If you’re able to sit peacefully, absorbed in the Self, by all means do so. But when, because of the forces of nature, which are always in flux, your mind becomes very active or agitated, then put it to work singing God’s name. Be very strict with your mind. Tell it, “Please sing God’s name with love, O my mind! Please chant His name with a voice that is sweet with love!” If you try to quiet your mind by force of will, it will only become more agitated and antagonistic. But, if you lead it gently toward God with love, it will rush to bathe in the sweetness of devotion. It will quickly soar with emotion to the heights of Divinity and become absorbed in God.

Fifth, whatever you do, never become disgusted with yourself—not even in a dream! Always respect your Self. Love your Self. Contemplate your Self. Your Lord lives within you as you. Never forget that you are the Divine Self of all, ever-free, ever-blissful, the One in all.

Meditation

O my Lord, Father of the universe! Let me put aside all thoughts and concerns, all activities of the body or mind, and let me sit silently in Thy presence. Let my mind be stilled in adoration and let all voices within me be stilled. Thy language of intimacy is silence, for my soul most nearly approaches Thy state when it is silent. O my Father conform my mind to Thy peace. Still me in Thy calming glance. Rest me in Thy cradling wings. Dissolve me in Thyself.

How wonderful, Lord, is Thy stillness!! In quietude, I know fulfillment. In nothingness, I know release. How good Thou art, O God of gods, to rest me in Thy peace, to grant me from within this taste of Thee, of Thy bliss. What a great wonder it is that I can find Thee and touch Thee and enjoy Thee when I am empty and still! How happy this, our silent, laughing Self!

1. **NOTES:**

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14. **BHAKTI OR JNAN?**
DEVOTION OR KNOWLEDGE?

(from *The Supreme Self* by Swami Abhayananda.
Originally published 1984; last revised 1-19-19.)

“Of all the means to liberation, devotion is the highest. "To seek earnestly to know one’s real nature—this is said to be devotion.”

—Shankaracharya, *Vivekachudamani*

“Devotion consists of supreme love for God. It is nectar. On obtaining it, man has achieved everything; he becomes immortal; he is completely satisfied.

"Having attained it, he desires nothing else, he strives for nothing else. Having realized that supreme Love, a man becomes as if intoxicated; he delights only in his own intrinsic bliss.”

—Narada, *Bhakti Sutras*
1. THE APPEARANCE OF DUALITY

The two quotations which preface this section—one by Shankaracharya, and the other by the legendary saint, Narada—recommend precisely the same devotion to the very same Reality; but see, how different are the words each of these men use! one speaks of earnestly seeking “to know one’s real nature,” while the other extols “love for God.” Shankaracharya defines devotion as “continual meditation on one’s own true Self”; and Narada, recognized as the greatest ancient authority on the philosophy of love, declares devotion to be “the constant flow of love towards the Lord.” These two paths, of course, are not in any way different from one another; meditation on the Self is the love of God. It is only that Shankaracharya identifies with the Self, while Narada prefers to identify with the soul (jiva). Both are methods of focusing upon the one Reality, and each, inevitably, produces the same result.

Nonetheless, this complementarity of identities necessitates two entirely different mental attitudes, or states of awareness. When we focus on the Self, we are focusing on our own identity, and become aware: *I am the one infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.* But when we take the attitude of love toward God, we are focusing on That which is other and greater than our individual selfhood, and we become aware: *I am Thy creature and Thy servant, O Lord.* And it is the paradoxical fact that both attitudes are correct and valid which accounts for the confused oscillation many dedicated truth-seekers feel between the attitude of Self-knowledge (jnan) and the attitude of devotion (bhakti).

Devotion may be thought of as the love of the soul for God; i.e., a relationship requiring two parties. For that reason, devotion is considered a “Dualistic” practice. The entire Judeo-Christian tradition, as well as the Muslim and Hindu traditions in their popular form, are fundamentally dualistic in nature; that is, they take as their starting point the distinction between God and the created universe. This naturally implies a distinction as well between God and the created soul. These two they regard as intrinsically separate, and the objective of their practice is to unite the one to the other.

However, there are some other religious traditions, which seem to practitioners of devotion to be entirely alien to religion altogether, as they only profess to seek knowledge of the Self. Such traditions, like the yogic, the Vedantic, and the Buddhist, in their esoteric form, are Nondual; that is,
they take as their starting point the non-difference between the individual’s identity and the Cosmic Identity. Their practice is intended to uncover or reveal the underlying unity of the individual self and the universal Self. Put a little differently, they seek to reveal the Divine Identity inherent within us all.

Both of these religious practices—the dualistic which aspires to union with the Divine Reality through prayer, and the nondualist which aspires to revelation of identity with the Divine Reality through meditation—are capable of bringing the practitioner to the realization of the Divine Reality, the ultimate Truth. Yet, how alien to each other are these two practices, or paths! How can we ever hope to reconcile these two, so fundamentally opposed to one another? The dualistic path of devotion (bhakti) is the path taken by the soul in search of God. Whereas, the nondualist path of knowledge (jnan) does not even acknowledge the reality of the soul but clings steadfastly to the identification with the one Divine Self, the true Reality. How different these two paths seem! How could anyone possibly assert that they have anything in common?

And yet, look more closely at the actual process that takes place within the devotee and the jnani. When we call to God, where is it we look for His answer? Is it not within ourselves? It is not in some external location high above that we seek God’s presence, but rather we turn our eyes upward within ourselves to our own highest consciousness. At the initial, mental, level, the soul busily pleads and prays to God; but at a more profound level it simply calls His Name within, or merely searches the inner sky in silence, awaiting the balm of His peace, His love, to have its affect within.

The love of God looks to the center of one’s own consciousness, raises to the greatest height one’s inner gaze in search of That which is beyond the activity of the mind, beyond the critical intellect, beyond the searching soul, at the hidden core of being and awareness. This, too, is where the eye of knowledge looks for Him: Beyond the concerns for self that form within the mind as thoughts and dreams, in the silence of an inward wakeful gaze unobstructed by the clouded haze of memories or fantasies, it scans the heart of darkness, and becomes enraptured in the upward-streaming light.

At the mental, conceptual, level, the love of God, with all its moods and bargaining, is quite a different thing from the meditation on the Self, which is quiet, empty, unwavering, and keenly discriminative. It is only when one reaches to a level of nonverbal sweetness, high above the bustling
commerce of the mind, above the conniving of the intellect, and the self-involvement of the soul, that the two paths become single, “oned” in a common stream of upward-flowing joy which knows no separation, knows no duality of kind or purpose.

And so, while each of these methods of reaching to the ultimate Truth are separate and distinct, and manifest in extremely diverse ways at the mental level, their differences dissolve and their divergent methods converge as they near the object of their quest. In the high reaches of the mountain’s peak, all paths must come to a single point; likewise, when the lover and the meditator come to taste the silent Bliss that characterizes the approach to the pinnacle of Truth, they have entered the subtle and ethereal realm where love and knowledge are one. Here, there is no distinction such as lover and knower; here is only the eternally blissful and all-inclusive ‘I’, who is neither God nor individual soul.

During the time I spent in my Santa Cruz cabin, I had a photo of the jnani, Ramana Maharshi, on one wall, and a picture of the bhakta, Sri Ramakrishna, on the other wall. At one time, I would feel entirely committed to the continued awareness of my identity with infinite unqualified Consciousness, and would identify with Ramana, whose sadhana consisted of questioning within “Who am I?” At another time, I would feel certain that devotional love for God was the only attitude for me, and I would identify with Sri Ramakrishna, who was the simple child of God, crying for his Divine ‘Mother’. And although the duality between the soul and God is, ultimately, an imaginary, or artificial, duality, still it exists so long as the active mind dialogues with that other.

I knew, intellectually, that the duality between “me” and “God” was an artificial one. I knew that to take the attitude of love for God required a sort of pretense of “two-ness”; but the very existence of the active mind demanded such a relationship. In order to disengage my mind from its aimless wandering and to focus it on the eternal Silence, I had to have a point of focus, and that point of focus was that infinite Intelligence which I addressed as “Hari.” Yes, I knew that this ego-self was included in and inseparable from that greater Self, but I also knew instinctually that, if I was to truly know the eternal Truth directly, I had to turn away from conceptual knowledge and concentrate with all the yearning of my soul on that pure and silent Awareness that lived beyond the active mind.
For me, it was love that ushered in the knowledge of the eternal Self; it was love that erased the sense of individual selfhood, allowing the true Self to be revealed. Previous to that unitive revelation, I sought God as a servant, as a soul at the feet of my Lord and Creator, feeling the delicious yet still distant presence of His love and guidance within me. “I” was this separate person, living in the wilderness, and “He” was the Divine Source of all, to whom I prayed, and who I sought to know through submission to His Will and through the continual remembrance of His presence in and as the world about me.

I had so often found great inspiration in the *Imitation of Christ*; but, after I was blessed with enlightenment on that November night, I tore that once favored book a handful of pages at a time from its binding and fed those pages to the fire in my stove. Why? Because it was now clear that the duality of “I” and “Thou,” “me” and “Him,” was a charade, a flimsy myth of ‘two-ness’ that had been discredited and burst asunder by the revelation of the unitive Self. That illusion of duality had been necessary to bring me to the point of perfect love, to open my mind and heart to the “vision”; but once revealed, that Unity swept away all previous delusion of a separate individual identity.

I think that, for many of us mortals, the devotional path is the only way we can reach enlightenment. And yet, ultimately, it is a path that is false in nearly all of its assumptions. The experience of Unity reveals that there were never two, that the prolonged and agonizing dialogue and relationship with God was an “imaginary” relationship. The One we call “I” was always the only one who ever was.

However, long after the destruction of my beloved *Imitation Of Christ*, I came to see that, even after the realization of the eternal Self, there persists the stubborn habits of thought and the convincing sense of bodily separateness and individuality; and it is that false individuality (ego) which necessitates the re-establishment of the dualistic relationship with the true Self. So long as that ego exists, duality exists; and the devotional relationship between the soul and God must go on. And the occasions when the ego is dissolved in God, and Unity alone reigns, are few and far between. It seems that the Self, the One, insists on taking the role of both God and devotee in order to enjoy the relationship of loving soul to loving God. Whether we like it or not, the One will not be denied the enjoyment of playing this game of duality with Himself; and so, there is no way to avoid this dualistic drama of devotion.
I had been shown that the consciousness that lived in this body, that animated the thoughts that arose as wisdom, and moved this body and all bodies—that consciousness was, and had always been, the one Consciousness that filled all things. I was not merely the wave; I was the Ocean. But the wave continued to exist! I was not simply the Ocean; I was the wave as well. I was a *jnani*, but I was still a *bhakta* as well.

I came to understand that there are two identities living within every individual: there is the eternal and unchanging Consciousness, the Witness, the true Self; and there is a superimposed ego-identity called ‘the soul’, which is a contracted and separate self with individual desires and goals. This superimposed self is of the stuff of dreams; it is real enough to go on evolving through numerous lifetimes, but it is ultimately imaginary, and must eventually be dispelled. It is dispelled only when the truth of the *real* Identity shines forth. Then the superimposed self disappears, the way a wrong conviction disappears when it is seen to be unfounded in truth.

And yet, even after the realization of the eternal Self, the stubborn habits of thought and the convincing sense of bodily separateness and individuality reassert themselves; and so, the duality of Self and soul continues to exist. However, the knowledge of the Self, once revealed, dissolves the foundation for belief in a separate identity, and continually erodes the self-centered habits that condition the ego-mind. The will and paramount desire of the projected self becomes the will and desire of the true Self; i.e., becomes universal and divine Love. Disillusioned, and no longer interested in separative attainments once it has known its own universality, the self has no other will or desire than the extolment of Truth for the joy and disillusionment of all beings.

Frequently, the clear realization dawns within me that there are not two, but only I AM. And at such times I embrace the nondual attitude expounded by the *jnanis*. At other times, I am the humble servant of God, trembling in His Light, asking only to fulfill the service I have pledged to my merciful and gracious Lord. These two paths, though they seem so contrary one to the other, are both necessary and true from their own perspectives. The unitive view is, of course, the truth, the final and only Truth. And yet, the world-illusion has its own sort of reality, as it is produced by God, and the appearance of a separate identity also has its own ephemeral reality by God’s design.
To say, “I am God,” as Mansur al-Hallaj did, is offensive to the bhakta, for it denies the separate existence and fallibility of the individual soul; and to say, “I am the servant of God,” does not satisfy the jnani, for it asserts a duality where none in fact exists. I am convinced that, if we are to speak truly and to live realistically, it is necessary to embrace both attitudes, and to relinquish the logic, which begs for an either/or approach to identity. The greatest contemplatives who’ve ever lived, having pondered this quandary, have come to the same conclusion, and have taken a position, which defies categorization into one classification or another.

The best example I know is that of Jesus of Nazareth. He had realized his true, eternal, Self; and had exclaimed, “I and the Father are one.” And yet he taught his disciples to pray to “Our Father, who art in heaven.” He embraced both his eternal Identity and his earthly creature identity. At times he identified with the eternal Self, and at other times he adopted the role of suppliant to God and advised his disciples to do likewise. To his close disciples he taught the truth that, “You are the Light of the world.” But he knew that few could understand the fact that man’s true Self is identical with God, and that many would react angrily to such a saying. So, he said to his disciples, “If they ask you, ‘Are you It?’, say, ‘We are Its children; we are the elect of the living Father.’”

Another example is the Blessed Jan Ruysbroeck, a 14th century disciple of Meister Eckhart, who wrote:

Though I have said before that we are one with God, ... yet now
I will say that we must eternally remain other than God, and
distinct from Him. ...And we must understand and feel both
within us, if all is to be right with us. 3

Because the path of love and the path of knowledge are equally valid, it is possible to love God while being at the same time aware that God is the all-pervading Reality which includes one’s own self. In the following song of that famous 15th century poet-saint of India, the incomparable Kabir, we can hear that perfect blending of the devotion of the bhakta and the unitive knowledge of the jnani:

O brothers, the love of God is sweet!
Wherever I go, I offer salutations to the Lord;
Whatever I do is an act of worship to Him.
In sleep, I reverence Him; I bow my knee to no other.
Whatever I utter is His Name;  
Whatever I hear reminds me of Him.  
Whatever I eat or drink is to His honor.  
To me, society and solitude are one,  
For all feelings of duality have left me.  
I have no need to practice austerity,  
For I see Him smiling everywhere  
As the supreme Beauty in every form.  
Whether sitting, walking or performing actions,  
My heart remains pure, for my mind remains fixed on God.  
Says Kabir: “I have experienced the divine state  
Beyond joy and suffering, and I am absorbed in That.”  
O brothers, the love of God is sweet!  

More than seven hundred years ago, the great Maharashtran saint,  
Jnaneshvar, also spoke of this blending of knowledge and devotion.  
When he was but a youth, he spoke eloquently of the spontaneous love of God  
that arises even in the hearts of the enlightened. He called this “natural devotion.”  
His poetic expression of this wisdom, from the 9th chapter of his Amritanubhav called “The Secret Of Natural Devotion,” is  
unsurpassable:

Just as a nose might become a fragrance, or ears might give  
a melody for their own enjoyment, or the eyes might  
produce a mirror in order to see themselves; ... just so, the  
one pure Consciousness becomes the enjoyer and the object  
of enjoyment, the seer and the object of vision, without  
disturbing its unity.

...One may purchase a necklace, earrings, or a bracelet—but  
it is only gold, whichever one receives. One may gather a  
handful of ripples—but it is only water in the hand. ...  
Likewise, the sensible universe is only the vibration of the  
Self. ...There is really no action or inaction; everything that  
is happening is the sport of the Self.

The undivided One enters the courtyard of duality of His own  
accord. Unity only becomes strengthened by the expansion  
of diversity. Sweeter even than the bliss of liberation is the  
enjoyment of sense objects to one who has attained wisdom.
In the house of bhakti (devotion) that lover and his God experience their sweet union.

...God Himself is the devotee; the goal is the path. The whole universe is one solitary Being. It is He who becomes a God, and He who becomes a devotee. In Himself, He enjoys the kingdom of Stillness.

...Everything is contained in the Being of God. ...If a desire for the Master-disciple relationship arises, it is God alone who must supply both out of Himself.

Even the devotional practices, such as japa (repetition of God’s name), faith and meditation, are not different from God. Therefore, God must worship God with God, in one way or another. The temple, the idol, and the priests—all are carved out of the same stone mountain. Why, then should there be devotional worship? [Why should there not be devotional worship?] A tree spreads its foliage, and produces flowers and fruits, even though it has no objective outside of itself.

...A wise person is aware that he, himself, is the Lord, Shiva; therefore, even when he is not worshiping, he is worshiping. No matter where he goes, that sage is making pilgrimage to Shiva. And if he attains to Shiva, that attainment is non-attainment. ... No matter what his eyes fall upon at any time, he always enjoys the vision of Shiva. If Shiva Himself appears before him, it is as if he has seen nothing; for God and His devotee are on the same level.

...This spontaneous natural devotion cannot be touched by the hand of action, nor can knowledge penetrate it. It goes on without end, in communion with itself. What bliss can be compared to this? This natural devotion is a wonderful secret. It is the place in which meditation and knowledge become merged.

...O blissful and almighty Lord! You have made us the sole sovereign in the kingdom of perfect Bliss. ...We are Yours entirely. Out of love, You include us as Your own, as is
befitting Your greatness. ...Would the scriptures have extolled You, if, by sharing it with Your devotee, Your unity were disturbed? O noble One! It is Your pleasure to become our nearest and dearest by taking away from us our sense of difference from You.  

Just as the Self and the soul cannot be separated one from the other, neither can *jnan* and *bhakti* be separated; though mutually exclusive, they co-exist as complements in everyone. And as our knowledge grows, we must learn to adapt our vision of the world to accept and embrace apparently contradictory views. We must learn to feel comfortable with the notion that a quantity of energy is both a wave *and* a particle; that our lives are determined, *and* that we are free; that our identity is both the Whole *and* the part. We are the universal Self; we *are* the one Consciousness—and we are also the individualized soul, which consists of the mind and its own private impressions. We are the Ocean—but we are also the wave.

We are *Shiva*, but we are also *Shakti*. We are perfect, but we are also imperfect. We are the eternal Reality, but we are also the ephemeral image It projects on Its own screen. We are indeed the Dreamer, but we are also the dream. We are entitled to say, “I am *Shiva*,” but so long as the Shakti-mind exists, it must sing the song of love and devotion to its Lord. While we live and move in this phantasmagoria, we are His creatures, and are utterly dependent upon His grace. Therefore, if we truly understand our own double-faceted reality, we must learn to sing two songs: one, the song of Love; the other, the song of our own immortal Self. Neither, without the other, is complete.

**THE SONG OF LOVE**

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.

THE SONG OF THE SELF

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?

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 who 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.
2. THE ULTIMATE UNITY

Even today, over thirty years after that November night in 1966, I continue to experience that same alternation between Unity and duality, between jnan and bhakti. There are times when the recognition of my own Self as the ultimate Reality bestows profound inner joy. My own consciousness becomes free of thought; and supreme peace, bell-like clarity, and an imperturbable happiness fills my whole being. The sound of my own breath becomes the mantra, So-ham, “I am That”; and my mind is bathed in the calm certain awareness of my eternal Identity.

Then, unexpectedly, the heart speaks, and once again duality raises its head. The image addresses the Imager; the projected soul, feeling powerless, reaches toward its governing Source, and the love of God is born anew. It is born of that inherent tendency in the unitive Divinity toward Self-division, toward the dualistic play of subject and object, of I and Thou.

At such times my heart is flooded with gratitude to my Lord, my God, and thrills rush through my body and my soul, causing tears of love to cascade down my cheeks. Such love of God is truly the awareness of my greater Self, and I am overcome by the fervent desire to praise Him and to express my love—even though I know that this poor mind is only pretending to be separate, and its babbling is only God’s grace expressing its own love in me. The soul loves, but it is His Love that carries on this play of lover and Beloved. He himself is the sweet song of love that sings in my heart.

Such alternation between bhakti and jnan will ever continue. It is not a product of indecisiveness but is a product of the complementary nature of Reality. For we live simultaneously in two frameworks of reality: that of the divisible world of multiple phenomena, and that of the eternal Self—the pure Consciousness of the unbroken Whole. All the great issues and arguments of science, philosophy and theology are solved in one stroke by the understanding of this dual-sidedness of reality. From the standpoint of my Shakti-identity, my life in the universal drama is fixed and determined. From the standpoint of my Shiva-identity, as the eternal witness, I am ever free.

When I identify myself as Shakti, I am an individual soul guided by the hand of God; and the planetary configurations relating to my position on earth correspond to my mental, emotional and physical being. When I
identify myself as Shiva, I am the one all-pervading Soul of the universe; I am the Cause of all, the one Consciousness in whom the stars and planets exist, and I remain unaffected by the changes taking place within the manifested world.

When I identify myself as Shakti, I am Shiva’s servant; I worship Him as my Lord, and I am surrendered to His will. When I identify myself as Shiva, there are not two, but only one—and I am that One. These two identities are not a hair’s breadth apart; for the one is superimposed upon the other. Our separative identity and our infinite Identity, the wave and the Ocean, are complementary aspects of the same one Reality.

God is always accessible to us as our own Self. We have only to quiet the mind to become aware of our eternal Identity. And even when we are active in the world we are continually in His presence. If we can refine our vision and become aware of the dual-sidedness of our own nature, we will then be able to see that not only are we the Self, but everything around us is also the Self. The subject is the Self; the object is the Self. Truly, no matter who or what I see or speak to, it is really only my own Self. If we could really grasp the truth of this, what a revolution would occur in our thinking and behavior!

Just as waves on the ocean are only water, just as golden ornaments are only gold, so all the various forms in the universe are forms of our own Self. Becoming aware of this, we would begin to revel in that joy which had been missing in our lives before. We would begin to drink the nectar of the unending Love for which we had been thirsting before. And we would begin to take delight in just being and living and acting in the world in a way we had been unable to before. The universal division into respective subjects and objects does not cease; the world goes on, even for the enlightened. It is just that she knows in her heart, with an indomitable certainty, that she and the universe are one.

Just as a chess-player retains the awareness that the antagonism between him and his opponent is merely a temporary game of role-playing, and that, at the end of the game, both the red and the black pieces will be thrown into the same box—in the same way, one who has clearly experienced the unbroken Whole retains the knowledge of the ultimate Unity, and sees the play of subjects and objects as the ongoing pretense or play of the one Self in whom all contraries must finally merge.
This is why, after more than thirty years since His revelation to me, I cannot forget Him: He is always in my thoughts; His name is sounded in my mind at every moment, and I see Him around me in every form, in every activity. When I walk, I walk in His presence in great gladness; when I sit, I sit in the awareness that all is perfect, all is His glorious play. I play out the role He has given me to play, and I watch Him in all His other forms playing out the roles destined for those souls: the mother, the businessman, the sports hero, the physicist, the druggist, the doctor, the artist.

Each soul is limited by its role; none can be all things, but each must accept the limitation required for success in the performance of its own purpose. And all are but that one bright Consciousness masquerading as individual souls. All is God; there is nothing here that is not Him. Listen, once more, to Jnaneshvar:

There is nothing else here but the Self. Whether appearing as the seen or perceiving as the seeor, nothing else exists besides the Self. ... Just as water plays with itself by assuming the forms of waves, the Self, the ultimate reality, plays happily with Himself. Though there are multitudes of visible objects, and wave upon wave of mental images, still they are not different from their witness. You may break a lump of raw sugar into a million pieces, still there is nothing but sugar. Likewise, the unity of the Self is not lost, even though He fills the whole universe. He is seeing only His own Self – like one who discovers various countries in his imagination and goes wandering through them all with great enjoyment. 6

3. Devotion and Grace

Just as there are many religious devotees (bhaktas) who refuse to acknowledge man’s supreme Identity as God, the one transcendent Self, there are also many philosophical Monists (jnanis) who refuse to open their hearts to the Love of God, protesting that the fact of unity precludes such an attitude, and that the preservation of an “I-Thou” relationship only prolongs the delusion of duality. I would like to point out to such people that so long as we are not lifted into the experience of unity by the grace of God, duality continues to exist for us—whether we admit to it or not. The grace of God is an experience of Love, a Love that draws us to the
experience of unity. Without it, we can never know God as our supreme Self.

The Love of God is not a love between a subject and an object; for in this case, the subject, the object, and the Love itself, are one. Nor is this Love the result of a conclusion based on a rational premise; it is an inner experience. It is something quite real—breathtakingly and intoxicatingly real. It stirs from within, and centers on itself within. It is not a thought-out construction based on philosophical reasoning, but a sweetness that is itself the object of devotion. It is this Love that bhaktas love. It has no location but the human heart, yet its source is the universal Being. It is His gracious gift, and only those who have experienced it know what it is.

It is of this Love that Sri Ramakrishna sang:

How are you trying, O my mind, to know the nature of God?  
You are groping like a madman locked in a dark room.  
He is grasped through ecstatic love;  
How can you fathom Him without it?  
When that Love awakes, the Lord,  
Like a magnet, draws to Him the soul.  

Such love-longing for God always precedes the experience of enlightenment because it is the natural expression, the indicator, of a shift in the consciousness toward the transcendent Unity. All of the outer events as well as the inner ones will conspire to bring one’s life to that point where enlightenment is experienced. When it is time for it to come, it will produce itself, and it will announce its coming by a great wave of love that steers the heart irresistibly to the source of that Love, and eventually reveals itself unaided from within.

Consider the great Shankaracharya’s final message to the disciple in his Vivekachudamani (“The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination”):

Gurus and scriptures can stimulate spiritual awareness, but one crosses the ocean of ignorance only by direct illumination, through the grace of God.

No one has ever realized God except those to whom He has revealed Himself. On this point all Self-realized beings are unanimously agreed.
As one commentator says, in the Tantric text, *Malini Vijaya Vartika*: “The learned men of all times always hold that the descent of grace does not have any cause or condition but depends entirely on the free will of the Lord.” The case may be made, of course, that “grace” is the subjective reading of the influence of the planetary patterns evolving into effect at the time, and not a spur-of-the-moment volitional act by a supreme Being. But, we must object, is not the supreme Cause guiding the unfoldment of the evolving universe? Do not all things move together of (His) one accord? And is He not, therefore, ultimately responsible for every single event in this universe, including the movements of the planets, and man’s ultimate realization of his eternal Identity?

Another Tantric scripture, the *Tantraloka*, states:

> Divine grace leads the individual to the path of spiritual realization. It is the only cause of Self-realization and is independent of human effort. 9

What is grace, then, but God’s unconditional gift, given of His own free will? Were it dependent upon conditions, it would not be absolute and independent grace. What, indeed, in all this universe of phenomena, could be considered apart from His grace? Can we imagine that His highest gift, His realization, is an accident outside of His doing? No.

The experience of Self-realization occurs when the mind is concentrated to a fine laser-point and focused in contemplation of God; but this happens only by the power of the universal Self, of God Himself. This is not a denial of the efficacy of self-effort, but merely an assertion that every effort or desire to remember Him, every intensification of concentration on Him, is instigated by Himself, for He is our own inner Self, the inner Controller. It is He who inspires, enacts, and consummates all our efforts. If the planetary patterns also reflect the arising of divine Consciousness, and the dawn of mystical experience in our lives, that is merely additional evidence that “all things move together of one accord,” that He is indeed the Lord of the universe.

Among the Christian mystics, we find complete agreement on this issue; Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, says: “You would not seek Him at all, O soul, nor love Him at all, if you had not been first sought and first loved.”10 And Meister Eckhart acknowledges: “It is He that prays in us and not we ourselves.” 11 The Blessed Jan Ruysbroeck concurs:
Contemplation places us in a purity and radiance which is far above our understanding, ...and no one can attain to it by knowledge, by subtlety, or by any exercise whatsoever; but he whom God chooses to unite to Himself, and to illumine by Himself, he and no other can contemplate God. 12

We find the same agreement among the Sufi mystics, the Hindus and the Buddhists. It is always so—always. And though the attempt is often made by charlatans to translate the description of the mental state of the mystic at the time of his experience of unity into a sort of “method” or “scientific technique” for the attainment of God, no one has ever claimed that the following of such a technique has actually produced the advertised result. For, by themselves, the practices of shallow breathing, fixed stares, and cessation of thought, will never produce the experience of unity. This experience comes only by the Will of God. Nanak, the great founder of the Sikh tradition, acknowledging this truth, wrote:

Liberation from bondage depends upon Thy Will; there is no one to gainsay it. Should a fool wish to, suffering will teach him wisdom. 13

An even more telling remark is made by Dadu, a mystic-poet who lived shortly after Nanak, and who, like him, eschewed both Islamic and Hindu religious traditions:

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.

The desire for union with God or enlightenment is a very special grace, not given to all. When that desire arises, it fires the heart and fills the mind, just as other desires—such as the desire for a wife, children and other worldly objects—possess the minds of so many. And just as those desires precede and give impetus to their fulfillment, so does the desire for God precede the fulfillment of that desire, resulting in the soul’s experience of union with God.

When He draws the mind to Himself, the mind becomes still automatically. It is not necessary to attempt to still the mind by austere practices or artificial methods. The body becomes still, the mind becomes still when the heart is yearning sincerely for Him alone. Everything happens very naturally by His grace. One begins to begrudge the mind any thought other than the thought directed to God. And with the aim of centering the mind continually on Him, one begins to sing His name in the inner recesses of the mind.

It doesn’t matter what name is used; Christians call Him, “Father,” Muslims call Him “Rahim,” Jews call Him “Adonai,” Buddhists call Him “Buddha”, and Hindus call Him “Hari”; Love responds to whatever name is called with love. To one who loves, His name is nectar; it is like a cold drink of water to a thirsty man. It is no discipline, nor is it an austerity. It is the living of a joyful life. It is the sweetness of peace; it is the delight of delights.

Since there is really nothing else but that infinite Being wherever one may look, as one begins to sing the name of God, that awareness dawns, and the bliss of recognizing one’s own Self both without and within begins to well up. The more one sings His name, the more one revels in that bliss, and the more clearly one perceives His continual presence. Inherent in that perception is all mercy, all right-judgment, all tenderness, all loving-kindness. It is the natural devotion by which a man’s heart is transformed, and by which he becomes fit for the vision of God.

It seems that everyone, sooner or later, in this life or the next, comes to experience the grace of God. It is experienced as an awakening of the soul, a prerequisite to the direct knowledge of God, one’s eternal Self. This “awakening” very often coincides with the hearing or reading of the words
of someone who has had an intimate experience of the Self, and who is able to communicate the understanding he or she has acquired. It is in this way, through our intellects, that God reaches to our hearts.

Speaking from my own experience, the moment I learned of the ultimate identity of man’s self and the universal Self, and of the fact that many have actually experienced this truth, a delicious joy arose in me coupled with a certainty that it was indeed true. I felt that inner grace; I knew that I had found the truth of existence, and I rejoiced in that blissful knowledge! This, I believe, is a common experience, a universal symptom of the first flush of the soul’s awakening to the Self.

Sometimes this awakening is accompanied by thrills of joy that run up the spine into the head. Sometimes there are interior visions, either of saints or temples or simply of a golden light. But it is unmistakable; it is truly an awakening of the soul and is known and experienced as such.

Eventually, each of us passes through a specific period in our lives during which our understanding is awakened to the eternal Self, when we are most keenly receptive to the awareness of God’s presence and Love. Years later, our ability to experience that same sense of God’s presence and Love may wane; perhaps we shall pass into a period of more mundane considerations during which we will learn to carry the understandings which we gained in those more ecstatic and spiritually receptive moments into our daily lives, and to remain obedient to that acquired wisdom. There is, as the author of Ecclesiastes tells us, to everything a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; a time for sowing, and a time for reaping, a time for giving, and a time for receiving.

The point I wish to make is that the time of peak receptivity, the time of grace, is short; and should be cherished and utilized with care. Once that unmistakable awakening has occurred, find some time to enjoy a period of solitude with God. You will learn more in such moments than in a thousand congregational lectures. Forge your link with God, and He will lead you to Himself. He will draw you to love Him, for He Himself is that Love that has awakened in you as love for God. He will draw you to seek Him in prayer and in silent longing, for He is your own heart. Follow, and you will reach Him. Draw near to Him in the silence of the night and He will reveal Himself to you as your very deepest Self, your eternal Identity.
There are some who feel the need to follow closely in the shadow of some great spiritually aware personage in order to learn to live in harmony with their own Divinity; but they should be wary of surrendering their own innate intelligence in service to another, however holy he or she may seem. Teachers are often necessary, and their Divinity is worthy of honor; but dependence on another is full of danger and is to be avoided. Depend upon God; it is His grace you seek, and the awakening of Love within your own heart. That is the only fee for entrance into the kingdom of God.

Keep on loving Him, keep on trusting in Him to guide you, and keep on praying to Him. And when He puts it into your heart to know Him, He will lift aside the veil and reveal that all along, it was He who prayed, who sought, who sorrowed as you; and that, all along, it was you who forever lives beyond all sorrow, as God—forever blissful, forever free.

NOTES:

2. Bhakti Sutras of Narada, I:1
3. Ruysbroeck, Jan, The Sparkling Stone, X
6. Ibid., VII: 240, 135, 143, 144, 146, 163.
9. Tantraloka,
12. Ruysbroeck, Jan, The Sparkling Stone, IV.

15. THE MEETING OF HEART AND MIND

(A Compilation of Articles from The Mystic’s Vision
by Swami Abhayananda, last revised 1-19-2019)

There is a saying that the man of devotion (the bhakta) and the man of knowledge (the jnani) are like a blind man and a lame man, respectively. Neither can get about on his own; the bhakta without discrimination isn’t able to see where he’s going, and the jnani without heart is lame and unable to go forward. A happy solution is found to both their problems, however, when the lame jnani is hoisted upon the shoulders of the blind bhakta. For then, the jnani provides the bhakta with vision, and the bhakta provides the jnani with the means of locomotion. The point of this saying, of course, is that this is what we must do with the two sides of our own nature: we must combine them and utilize both, so we have the benefit of both discriminative knowledge and the sweetness of devotion.

In the spiritual life, the intellect and the heart play equally important parts. Like the blind man and the lame man, each is helpless without the other. Just think: how many times do we meet up with a simple, good-hearted person, full of sincere love for God, and yet who, because of a lack of discrimination, becomes lost on a path which leads only to a gushy sentimentality and misplaced affections. And how often also do we see the proud and stiff, overly intellectual, person unwilling to let go of concepts long enough to feel the joy of love, or to simply pray with a humble, contrite, and loving heart.

Clearly, both are equally handicapped. The heart without discrimination leads one only into darkness and confusion. And the intellect without the sweetness of the heart makes of life a dry and trackless desert, without any flavor or joy. It is my considered opinion that if a person is to reach the highest perfection possible to man, there must be a balance of heart and mind. There must be both the knowledge of the Self, and at the same time, the love of God.

One of the great devotional works of the Vedantic tradition, the Srimad Bhagavatam, states: “The essence of all yoga consists in withdrawing the mind from the objects of sense and fixing it on God alone.” Continuing, it says, “The mind must be engaged in one thing or another: if it meditates on
sense-objects, it becomes worldly; if it meditates on God, it becomes Divine.”

All the great scriptures of Vedanta similarly extol in one way or another the focusing of the mind on God. Some call it “devotion”; some call it “awareness of the Self.” Narada, who was the epitome of the bhakta, states in his Bhakti Sutras, “The constant flow of love towards the Lord, without any selfish desire, is devotion.” And Shankaracharya, who was the jnani of jnanis, says in his Vivekachudamani, “Devotion is continuous meditation on one’s true Self.” Now, if we examine the matter closely, we can see that devotion to God is not in any way different from meditation on the Self; and that the experience of Divine Love is not different from the experience of the Bliss of the Self.

The mind experiences Unity as Consciousness and Bliss. The heart experiences God as the fullness of Love and Joy. Are these two different in any way? If the heart sings of God, does that take anything away from His Unity? If the mind speaks of Unity, does that add anything to His Bliss? The Truth remains, whether we make a joyful noise or keep silent. Whether we give Him this name or that, He remains the same. Whether we regard ourselves as the worshiper or the worshiped, there is nothing here but the One. Whether we call our intrinsic happiness by the name of Bliss or Love, its taste remains the same. We may call Him whatever name we like; we may sing it out to our heart’s content. Whether we are gamboling in the streets or sitting quietly at home, we are always God playing within God. To remember Him is our only happiness; to forget Him our only sorrow.

When we speak of Self-knowledge, we must differentiate between such Knowledge as is identical with the Bliss of the Self and that knowledge which is simply the verbal representation of such Knowledge. Intellectual knowledge of the nondual One is a wonderful thing, but it is only preparatory to true Knowledge, that Knowledge which is synonymous with enlightenment. Conceptual knowledge we must certainly go beyond. To do so, it is necessary to utilize the heart. Devotion leads the mind beyond mere intellectual knowledge to the experience of the Blissful Self—which is true Knowledge.

The 19th century saint, Sri Ramakrishna, was fond of bringing out this truth in his conversations and his songs. Here is one such song:
“How are you trying, O my mind, to know the nature of God? You are groping like a madman locked in a dark room. He is grasped through ecstatic love; How can you fathom Him without it? And, for that love, the mighty yogis practice yoga from age to age. Then, when love awakes, the Lord, like a magnet, draws to Him the soul. It is in love’s elixir only that He delights, O mind! He dwells in the body’s inmost depths, in everlasting Joy.”

Sri Ramakrishna himself became so full of desire for God, whom he regarded as his “Mother,” that people began to fear for his sanity when they would see him rubbing his face on the ground and weeping for his “Mother” to come. At times, he would sing this song:

“O Mother, make me mad with Thy love! What need have I of knowledge or reason? Make me drunk with Thy love’s wine! O Thou, who stealest Thy bhakta’s hearts, Drown me deep in the sea of Thy love! Here in this world, this madhouse of Thine, Some laugh, some weep, some dance for joy: Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Gauranga— All are drunk with the wine of Thy love. O Mother, when shall I be blessed By joining their blissful company?”

Such total abandon, such complete disregard for one’s own reputation, status, future welfare, is typical of those who, in the end, attain to God. The great poet-saint, Kabir, spoke often of the need to renounce all other desires in order to attain God. “Love based on desire for gain,” he said, “is valueless! God is desireless. How then, could one with desire attain the Desireless?” Kabir then went on to say, “When I was conscious of individual existence, the love of God was absent in me. When the love of God filled my heart, my lesser self was displaced. O Kabir, this path is too narrow for two to travel.”

You see, in the experience of the One, there’s no place for two; one of the two must go. Whether your focus is on God or on the Self, you must transcend the (illusory) separate self, the ego. The path of love, says Kabir, is too narrow for two to travel; the ego must yield to the Beloved. “Very
subtle,” he says, “is the path of love! There, one loses one’s self at His feet. There, one is immersed in the joy of the seeking, plunged in the depths of love as the fish in the depths of the water. The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord’s service. This, Kabir is declaring, is the secret of love.”

“How odd!” you may think; “Must I really offer my life, be willing to give up my head in order to attain God?” Let me tell you a story: it is a story from the *Masnavi*, the Persian masterpiece of the great Sufi poet, Jalaluddin Rumi. In it, he tells the story of the Vakil of Bukhara. The Vakil is the prince; he represents the supreme Lord. One of the subjects of this prince is told that the Vakil is seeking him for the purpose of chopping off his head. The poor man, hearing this, flees the city into the desert, and wanders from small village to village, in his attempt to stay out of the hands of the Vakil.

For ten years the man runs and runs. Then, finally exhausted and humiliated, he returns in surrender to Bukhara. The people there who knew him previously shout to him from their homes: “Escape while you can! Run! Run for your life!” But the man continues to walk in the direction of the Vakil’s palace. “The Vakil is searching everywhere for you,” they cry; “He has vowed to cut off your head with his own sword!” And, while everyone was shouting their warnings to this man, he just kept walking toward the palace of the prince. The people were calling to him from right and left: “Are you mad?” they shouted; “You are walking into certain death! Run! Run, while you have the chance!” But the man kept on walking, right into the palace of the Vakil.

When he reached the Vakil’s antechamber, he entered it and walked right up to the throne, then he threw himself on the floor at the prince’s feet. “I tried to escape you,” the man said, “but it is useless. My heart knows that my greatest destiny is to be slain by you. Therefore, here I am; do with me what you will.” But, of course, the prince had no desire to slay the man; he was very pleased, though, to see that the man had surrendered to him even when he thought he would lose his head thereby. And so, the Vakil raised the man up and made him his representative throughout the realm. And Rumi, the author of this story, says at the end, “O lover, cold-hearted and unfaithful, who out of fear for your life shun the Beloved! O base one, behold a hundred thousand souls dancing toward the deadly sword of his love!”
This is a recurrent theme among the devotional poets of the Sufi tradition. Kabir, whom I quoted a moment ago, asks of the devotee:

“Are you ready to cut off your head and place your foot on it? If so, come; love awaits you! Love is not grown in a garden, nor sold in the marketplace. Whether you are a king or a servant, the price is your head and nothing else. The payment for the cup of love is your head! O miser, do you flinch? It is cheap at that price! Give up all expectation of gain. Be like one who has died, alive only to the service of God. Then God will run after you, crying, ‘Wait! Wait! I’m coming.’”

It is clear, of course, that what is necessary is not one’s physical death, but the death of the ego-self. The little identity of “me” and “mine” is to be sublimated into the greater Identity of the one all-pervading Self through a continuous offering of the separative will into the universal will, an offering of the separative mind into the universal Mind, and the offering of the individual self in service of the universal Self.

Sri Ramakrishna knew very well how persistent this false sense of ego, of selfhood, is. For this reason, he taught, not the suppression of this ego, such as the jnani practices, but rather the utilization of the ego in devotion and service to God. “The devotee,” says Sri Ramakrishna, “feels, ‘O God, Thou art the Lord and I am Thy servant.’ This is the “ego of devotion.” Why does such a lover of God retain the “ego of devotion?” There is a reason: The ego cannot be gotten rid of; so, let the rascal remain as the servant of God, the devotee of God.”

You see, Sri Ramakrishna understood that, so long as this universe exists, the apparent duality of soul and God exists. Until such time as God merges the soul into Himself, both of these exist. We are the absolute Consciousness, to be sure; but we are also His manifested images. We are Brahman, but we are also (imaginations within His) Maya; we are Shiva, but we are also Shakti; we are the universal Self, but we are also the individualized self. It is foolish not to acknowledge both sides of our nature. Failing to do so only leads us into great conflicts and difficulties. If we deny and neglect the existence of the soul, asserting only, “I am the one pure Consciousness,” the active soul will rise up and make us acknowledge its presence. The only way to lead the soul to the experience of its all-pervasiveness is to teach it love for God, to transform it into
Divine Love. The soul that goes on expanding its power to love eventually merges into absolute Love and awakes to the truth that it is Love.

Remember, whatever you continually think of for a long time, that you become. So, if the mind continually thinks of God, it will attain the state of Love. No amount of knowledge will awaken the mind to love. Nor will the mind become quieted by force or the power of will. It will only become more frustrated, agitated and antagonistic. Instead of trying to do violence to the mind, lead it into meditation by the path of love. Soak it in the vat of love and dye it in the crimson color of love; then it will merge into the sweetness of God.

I’d like to share with you a few words of inspiration from a modern saint who extolled this very truth of devotion to God for many years. In my search for someone who best represented the synthesis of the heart and mind, I considered many different saints, both ancient and modern. But, it seemed to me that one of the very best examples that could possibly be held up is that of a woman who was called Anandamayee Ma, “the Bliss-permeated Mother.” Anandamayee Ma is mentioned in Paramahansa Yogananda’s Autobiography Of A Yogi, as a saint whom he met in 1935. Even then, she was a remarkable woman, inspiring everyone with whom she came in contact by her simple purity, and the depth of her God-realization.

She was born in 1896 in that part of India that is now the country of Bangladesh. Since the mid-1920’s she has been one of the most revered saints in all of India. She stayed in one place for only brief periods, preferring to travel about India, visiting her many devotees here and there, for more than sixty years. She recently passed from life, leaving this world a poorer place. For she was the epitome of a jnani, with the heart of a bhakta. Her exposition of the Self, from the standpoint of Nondual Vedanta, was flawless. She possessed the shining intellect of a god. She was always poised in the highest state. And yet, she was also a humble servant of God, exhorting others to give all their devotion to God alone. Listen to what she had to say:

“It is by crying and pining for Him that the One is found. In times of adversity and distress as well as in times of well-being and good fortune, try to seek refuge in the One alone. Keep in mind that whatever He, the All-Beneficent, the Fountain of Goodness, does, is wholly for the best.
“He alone knows to whom He will reveal Himself and under which form. By what path and in what manner He attracts any particular person to Himself is incomprehensible to the human intelligence. The path differs for different pilgrims. The love of God is the only thing desirable for a human being. He who has brought you forth, He who is your father, mother, friend, beloved and Lord, who has given you everything, has nourished you with the ambrosia streaming from His own being—by whatever name you invoke Him, that name you should bear in mind at all times.

“Apart from seeking refuge in the contemplation of God, there is no way of becoming liberated from worldly anxiety and annoyance. Engage in whatever practice that helps to keep the mind centered in Him. To regret one’s bad luck only troubles the mind and ruins the body; it has no other effect—keep this in mind! He by whose law everything has been wrought, He alone should be remembered.

“Live for the revelation of the Self hidden within you. He who does not live thus is committing suicide. Try to remove the veil of ignorance by the contemplation of God. Endeavor to tread the path of immortality; become a follower of the Immortal.

“...Meditate on Him alone, on the Fountain of Goodness. Pray to Him; depend on Him. Try to give more time to *japa* (repeating His name) and meditation. Surrender your mind at His feet. Endeavor to sustain your *japa* and meditation without a break.

“It is necessary to dedicate to the Supreme every single action of one’s daily life. From the moment one awakes in the morning until one falls asleep at night, one should endeavor to sustain this attitude of mind. ... Then, when one has sacrificed at His feet whatever small power one possesses, so that there is nothing left that one may call one’s own, do you know what He does at that fortunate moment? Out of your littleness He makes you perfect, whole, and then nothing remains to be desired or achieved.
“The moment your self-dedication becomes complete, at that very instant occurs the revelation of the indivisible, unbroken Perfection, which is ever revealed as the Self.”

These words of Anandamayee Ma constitute the ancient, yet ever-new, message of all the saints. Knowledge is essential to clear away our doubts, to understand where our greatest good lies. But it is devotion that takes us to our Destination. The determined dedication of the heart, mind, and will to God is the means to fulfillment, and the means to the perfect Knowledge which is the Self.

**Meditation**

What does it mean to remember God? It means to awaken in yourself the awareness of His presence within you and all around you. It is to transform the sense of selfhood into the sense of the universal Spirit, and to transform the vision of “others” into the vision of God’s multi-formed beauty.

He is the Source of all that exists, and He is your inner Guide and Teacher. He is the majesty and greatness of your own soul. Remember Him with every breath, and thus keep alive the flame of His unconditional Love in your heart.

Say to Him: “Father, do Thou guide my life and my every thought, for I have no other joy but Thee. Thou art the strength of my soul, my only confidant and source of guidance. When I have forgotten Thee, I have forgotten my very heart’s blood, and I have left aside the very fiber and backbone of my life.

“What I live for, Thou art. My only desire, Thou art. The sole fulfillment of all my dreams, the treasure for which my soul yearns, Thou art. O God of my soul, blood of my heart, let me not forget Thee for a single moment! O God of gods grant me this boon that I may ever remember Thee who art my soul’s support and strength and let me love Thee and praise Thee ever in my heart!”
The Secret of Natural Devotion

Another who recognized the importance of utilizing both heart and mind in the pursuit of God was the 13th century mystic and poet, Jnaneshvar (Gyan-esh-war). A casteless orphan, Jnaneshvar was one of the most brilliant poets, sublime mystics, and fascinating figures in all of Medieval Indian history. At an age when most men have scarcely begun their life’s work, Jnaneshvar, who lived from 1271 to 1296, a mere span of twenty-five years, had ended his; but not before having built an everlasting monument to his memory in the written masterpieces he left behind. The following is from Chapter Nine of his Amritanubhav, “The Nectar of Mystical Experience”:

Just as a nose might become a fragrance,
Or ears might give out a melody
For their own enjoyment,
Or the eyes might produce a mirror
In order to see themselves;

Or flowers might take the form of a bee,
A lovely young girl might become a young man,
Or a sleepy man might become
A bed on which to lie;

As the blossoms of a mango tree
Might become a cuckoo bird,
Or one’s skin might become
Malayan breezes,
Or tongues might become flavors;

Or as a slab of gold might become
Articles of jewelry
For the sake of beauty;
Just so, the one pure Consciousness becomes
The enjoyer and the object of enjoyment,
The seer and the object of vision,
Without disturbing Its unity.

A Shevanti flower bursts forth
With a thousand petals;
Yet it does not become anything
But a Shevanti flower.

Similarly, the auspicious drums
Of ever new experiences
May be sounding,
But in the kingdom of Stillness,
Nothing is heard.

All of the senses may rush simultaneously
Toward the multitude of sense objects,
But—just as, in a mirror,
One’s vision only meets one’s vision—
The rushing senses only meet themselves.

One may purchase a necklace,
Earrings, or a bracelet;
But it is only gold,
Whichever one receives.

One may gather a handful of ripples,
But it is only water in the hand.

To the hand, camphor is touch,
To the eye, it’s a white object,
To the nose it is fragrance;
Nonetheless, it is camphor, and nothing but camphor.

Likewise, the sensible universe
Is only the vibration of the Self.

The various senses attempt to catch
Their objects in their hands—
For example, the ears
Try to catch the words;

But as soon as the senses
Touch their objects,
The objects disappear as objects.
There’s no object for one to touch;
For all is the Self.

The juice of the sugarcane
Is part of the sugarcane;
The light of the full moon
Belongs to the full moon.

The meeting of the senses and their objects
Is like moonlight falling on the moon,
Or like water sprinkling on the sea.

One who has attained this wisdom
May say whatever he likes;
The silence of his contemplation
Remains undisturbed.

His state of actionlessness
Remains unaffected,
Even though he performs countless actions.

Stretching out the arms of desire,
One’s eyesight embraces
The objects she sees;
But, in fact, nothing at all is gained.

It is like the Sun
Stretching out the thousand arms
Of his rays in order to grasp darkness.
He remains only light, as before;

Just as a person, awakening to
Enjoy the activity of a dream,
Finds himself suddenly alone.

Even one who has attained wisdom
May appear to become the enjoyer
Of the sense objects before him;
But we do not know
What his enjoyment is like.

If the moon gathers moonlight,
What is gathered by whom?
It is only a fruitless
And meaningless dream.

There is really no action or inaction;
Everything that is happening
Is the sport of the Self.

The undivided One
Enters the courtyard of duality
Of His own accord.
Unity only becomes strengthened
By the expansion of diversity.

Sweeter even than the bliss of liberation
Is the enjoyment of sense-objects
To one who has attained wisdom.
In the house of bhakti (devotional love),
That lover and his God
Experience their sweet union.

Whether he walks in the streets
Or remains sitting quietly,
He is always in his own home.

He may perform actions,
But he has no goal to attain.
Do not imagine
That, if he did nothing,
He would miss his goal.

He does not allow room
For either remembering or forgetting;
For this reason,
His behavior is not like that of others.

His rule of conduct is his own sweet will.
His meditation is whatever
He happens to be doing.
The glory of liberation
Serves as an asana (seat cushion)
To one in such a state.

God Himself is the devotee;  
The goal is the path.  
The whole universe is one solitary Being.

It is He who becomes a God,  
And He who becomes a devotee.  
In Himself,  
He enjoys the kingdom of Stillness.

The temple itself is merged  
In the all-pervasive God;  
The motion of time  
And the vastness of space  
Are no more.

Everything is contained in the Being of God.  
If a desire  
For the Master-disciple relationship arises,  
It is God alone who must supply both out of Himself.

Even the devotional practices,  
Such as japa (repetition of God’s name), faith and  
meditation,  
Are not different from God.

Therefore, God must worship God  
With God, in one way or another.

The temple, the idol, and the priests—  
All are carved out of the same stone mountain.  
Why, then, should there be devotional worship?  
[Or why shouldn’t there be devotional worship?]

A tree spreads its foliage,  
And produces flowers and fruits,  
Even though it has no objective  
Outside of itself.
What does it matter if a dumb person
Observes a vow of silence or not?
The wise remain steadfast in their own divinity
Whether they worship or not.

Will the flame of a lamp
Remain without light
If we do not ask her to wear
The garment of light?

Is not the moon bathed in light
Even though we do not ask her
To wear the moonlight?

Fire is naturally hot;
Why should we consider heating it?

A wise person is aware
That he, himself, is the Lord;
Therefore, even when he is not worshiping,
He is worshiping.

Now the lamps of action and inaction
Have both been snuffed out,
And worshiping and not worshiping
Are sitting in the same seat,
And eating from the same bowl.

In such a state,
The sacred scriptures are the same as censure,
And censure itself
Is the same as a sweet hymn of praise.

Both praise and censure
Are, in fact, reduced to silence;
Even though there is speech,
It is silence.

No matter where he goes,
That sage is making pilgrimage to God;
And, if he attains to God,
That attainment is non-attainment.

How amazing
That in such a state,
Moving about on foot
And remaining seated in one place
Are the same!

No matter what his eyes fall upon
At any time,
He always enjoys the vision of God.

If God Himself appears before him,
It is as if he has seen nothing;
For God and His devotee
Are on the same level.

Of its own nature,
A ball falls to the ground,
And bounces up again,
Enraptured in its own bliss.

If ever we could watch
The play of a ball,
We might be able to say something
About the behavior of the sage.

This spontaneous, natural devotion
Cannot be touched by the hand of action,
Nor can knowledge penetrate it.

It goes on without end,
In communion with itself.
What bliss can be compared to this?

This natural devotion is a wonderful secret;
It is the place in which meditation
And knowledge become merged.

O blissful and almighty Lord!
You have made us the sole sovereign
In the kingdom of perfect bliss.

How wonderful
That You have awakened the wakeful,
Laid to rest those who are sleeping,
And made us to realize
Our own Self!

We are Yours entirely!
Out of love,
You include us as Your own,
As is befitting Your greatness.

You do not receive anything from anyone,
Nor do You give anything of Yourself to anyone else.
We do not know how You enjoy your greatness.

O noble One!
It is Your pleasure
To become our nearest and dearest
By taking away from us
Our sense of difference from You.

NOTE:
1. The above articles are from *The Mystic’s Vision*, Volume One, and may be found online at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
16. SING THE NAME OF GOD

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by Swami Abhayananda.
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The Object of Our Love

Everyone knows that the form is transient and impermanent, while the essence is unchanging and everlasting. We see this clearly as we note the inevitable changes in our own bodies and note as well the constancy of our inner divinity as we age. And yet, it seems that in our popular culture we tend to value the individual over the universal essence of which the individual is but a form. We proudly announce our love for this or that particular person, though the truth is that who we are in love with is God, manifest in the form of a human being. It is only God’s beauty that attracts us and fills us with love and longing. If we attribute that lovability to the individual person, we are soon disillusioned and disappointed, as the beauty and perfection of which we have become enamored sadly turns out to be marred by human imperfection and is subject to old age, death and dissolution. Therefore, we must acknowledge that it is God’s eternal beauty that we have fallen in love with, for He alone is capable of inspiring our love and He alone is worthy of being the object of our love.

In our popular culture, we sing false and ludicrous love songs to this or that individual person; yet, how quickly the song of ‘I love you’ turns into a song of ‘goodbye’! Every individual person and every person’s heart is subject to infidelity and change, while God, whose beauty and goodness inspires our love, remains always perfect and unchanged. So, we must not be fooled by appearances; the love that God’s beauty has inspired in us cannot be satisfied with the possession of any of His transient human forms. For it is only in His eternal Being, unformed and unmanifest, that His beauty and His perfection remain forever, and it is only in His unformed and eternal Being that He can be eternally possessed and loved. Then, let us continually sing aloud His praise, for He is in fact the beloved, the lover, and the love as well. Filling all, and beguiling all, He remains the one constant source and object of love in every heart.
When You Sing The Name of God In Your Heart

When you sing the name of God in your heart,
When you sing the name of God in your heart,
The curtains of your soul then part
And the truth comes streaming in.

When you sing the name of God in your heart,
A new awareness dawns,
And the voice that called is silenced
In the silence that is Him.

Who calls? Whose awareness sings of God?
Who stands behind the calling and the song?
The very breath that sings His name
Is He whose name is called.

The caller recognizes suddenly from whence the song arose
And turns his attention to the “I” from whom all “I’s derive.
The consciousness that seeks His embrace
Is conscious of itself, above the breathing, beneath the song,
And finds, amazed, the One it sought.

How delicate the thread that holds this knowledge close!
Awareness held aloft upon its very Self!
No call, no song; but only flawless clarity of mind
Above the clamor of the song and breath,
Above the sense of self.

This eternal breathless sky of Mind
Is the Source of breath and song;
The seeker and the One who’s sought
Reveal that they are one.
Japa: The Remembrance of God

The mental repetition of the name of God is the highest form of prayer; it is prayer reduced to its essence. It is concentrated aspiration and love-longing minus all the self-serving guile of petitionary prayer.

A mind focused on a mantra, a single word-symbol of God, is a mind reduced to one-pointedness. It is just such fervent single-mindedness, which is capable of supplanting the normally scattered flow of worldly thoughts, leaving in its stead a calm and focused awareness, empty of thought, full of peace and bliss. And because it is so simple and so effective a method of emptying the mind of its contents, and directing the flow of awareness inward upon itself, it is one which has been highly recommended by numerous sages and saints from all variety of religious traditions over the centuries.

There is, of course, no end to the number of names that may be given to God, who is the absolute Existence in which we live. And each one has the power to focus the mind upon its conscious Source. All that is needed is a sweet fondness for that particular name and a true and sincere love for Him whom that name signifies. There are those who have extolled the name of “Rama,” or “Krishna,” or “Karim,” or “Adonai”; all these names are holy, for it is the same One who is signified by each.

In the following Song in praise of the practice of reciting the Name of God, the name used is “Hari.” As a familiar appellation for Vishnu, or His manifestation, Krishna, it refers to God as the adorable Beloved, “the stealer of hearts.” Here in this Song of twenty-five verses, Eknath Maharaj extols the practice of singing the name of Hari and elaborates upon its benefits. However, before the Song itself, I’d like to tell you just a little about its author, Eknath Maharaj:

Eknath lived from 1548 to 1609 C.E. When he was still a young boy, he heard a voice speaking to him in his meditation, which said, “Go to Devgiri Fort!” Now, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this Fort had been a glorious castle, the center of a great kingdom, but now it was merely ruins. And when Eknath went there and searched among the ruins, he found living there the man who was to become his Guru, whose name was Janardan Swami. Under the tutelage of Janardan, Eknath became a great yogi, and later wrote many wonderful works.
One day, during his adult years, while he was meditating, Eknath saw in his meditation a vision of Jnaneshvar, a great saint who had lived three centuries before him in the same region. Jnaneshvar, who had entered his tomb alive at the age of twenty-five, was seen in this vision sitting in his tomb at Alandi, where a root from a nearby tree had encircled his neck and was choking off the prana in his still-living body.

Acting on this meditative vision, Eknath dug into the tomb and found Jnaneshvar just as he had envisioned him. He loosened the root and removed it from around the saint’s throat. And while he was in the tomb, he took the manuscript of Jnaneshvar’s famous book, Jnaneshvari, which had been buried with him, and brought the book back to the light of day. In Eknath’s time, the words of this great book had been corrupted by various transcribers, and so Eknath brought forth the authentic Jnaneshvari to serve as the authority. This is a true story.

Eknath went on to write some wonderful books on the true realization of God; this little book of Songs written by him is called Haripatha, or “Sing The Name Of God.” Others before him, including Jnaneshvar himself, had written such a collection of verses with the same title; here, then is Eknath’s version of the oft-repeated call to remember God by singing His name continually within the heart:

Haripatha (“Sing The Name Of God”)  
by Ecknath Maharaj

3. In the eyes of Hari’s servant, God is everywhere;  
   We can see Him by our love and faith.  
   To put an end to all distress,  
   Sing Hari’s name, and be released from birth and death.

   Rebirth results from clinging to the world;  
   The devotees of Hari cling to Him alone.  
   Dissolved in Hari, they lose the sense of “I”;  
   Where only one remains, both “I” and “Thou” are gone.

   Says Eknath, “Remember Hari; meditate on Him!  
   Always be aware of Hari; sing aloud His name.”

4. Sing Hari’s name, or else be still;  
   Don’t chatter and gossip—give up your pride.
Find joy in surrender of “I” and “Thou”; 
Your joy will then bring peace to all, 
And lead the lost to the righteous path. 
He who walks God’s path with love and faith 
Will not be caught in the snare of the world. 
Says Eknath, “I have unmistakably seen the Lord; 
He’s everywhere before my eyes. 
I see Him when I’m in a crowd as well as when I’m alone.”

5. That mouth is a rat-hole, which does not sing the name; 
That tongue is a viper that lives therein. 
That unscented speech is the shriek of a witch; 
That life is accursed. In hell suffering awaits. 
Not wife, or wealth, or children, but only Hari, can save you. 
In your final journey, you’ll travel alone; 
Therefore, while living, seek the company of the saints; 
Through such company, you’ll at last be united with God. 
Says Eknath, “These two syllables, Ha and ri, 
Have saved millions; it is this I continually sing.”

6. Blessed is that mother whose child loves the name; 
Such love is the fruit of good deeds in past lives. 
In a life without God, what good fruit can there be? 
The whole essence of Vedanta is in Ha and ri. 
This song of God’s name is sufficient to man; 
Not yoga, nor yajna (ritual), nor puja (worship) does he need. 
The cream of sadhana is the singing of the name; 
Says Eknath, “All is accomplished by singing Hari! 
He who sings the name is ever-free, a knower of Brahman; 
Therefore, sing Hari! Hari!”

7. Your human body is the reward of good deeds, 
But unless it’s used to increase love for God, 
Alas, O man, it will totter to doom. 
O fool, learn the secret of extinguishing all karma, 
And thus hasten the dawn of your unending good. 
Your fervent desire to sing the Divine name
Is the reward you have earned from your countless past lives. Whether a king or a beggar, a prince or a thief, He who does not fill his mouth with the name [of God] fills it with dust. 
Says Eknath, “Sing Hari; Liberation will come!”

8. One who sips Divine nectar by singing the name 
Will view Liberation as a very small thing. That home where the sound of the Divine name is heard 
Is the city of Kashi, the holiest ground. Even Varanasi must crumble one day, 
But the name of God will forever resound.

Thousands of creatures come and go in a wink; 
The Lord’s devotees enjoy watching this play. 
Says Eknath, “So many have lived and died in this world; 
But he alone is blessed who resorts to the name.”

11. To learn the true knowledge, to unlearn what is false, 
The true Teacher’s guidance and grace is required. 
The lovers of God’s form then attain to the Formless; 
Do not doubt this, O man; your tongue may fall out.

When an actor, disguised as a beggar, receives alms, 
It’s the actor who receives what the beggar is given. 
In the same way, the love which is offered to the form 
Is received by the Formless, the God-beyond-form. 
Says Eknath, “I’ve perceived that both the form and the Formless 
Are the play of the Lord.”

12. Can one who’s seen Hari and enthroned Him within 
Ever be touched by sorrow or pain? 
Though that lover may have had an unsavory past, 
By singing the Divine name, his life is made pure.

One who sings every day the holy name of God, 
Brings blessings upon his parents and family as well. But those whose minds are reeking of lust, anger and greed 
Cannot reap the full fruit of singing the name. 
Says Eknath, “The singing of the name is my secret: 
I’ve revealed it to you; now please sing Hari’s name!”
5. Sing Hari when you give, and Hari when you get;
Sing Hari when you’re happy, and Hari when you play.
Sing Hari when you’re chanting, while you eat, and
while you work;
Sing Hari when you’re by yourself; sing Hari in a crowd.
Sing loudly Hari’s name when you find you’re in a brawl;
When your life is giving out, sing Hari’s name aloud.
Sing Hari when you’re pounding grain,
When you sit, and when you rise.
Says Eknath, “In the forest, or in the marketplace—
Wherever you may be, keep singing Hari’s name!”

6. The universe is made of three, five, twenty-five,
Or even thirty-six Principles, they say.
How many branches, I don’t know; but Hari is the root!
“Jiva (the soul) is only Shiva’s Maya,” so they say.
These jivas are only wavelets on the ocean of Hari.
Oyster-shell appears as silver, a rope seems to be a snake;
Yet the “silver” and the “snake” are illusions.
Both the subject and the object are Hari.
Says Eknath, “The crown of wisdom is bestowed
On the one who sings loudly the name of Hari!”

7. By the power of his imagination, a man creates goals;
Then, seeking to attain them, he forgets his Lord.
He may attain those goals on which his heart dwells,
Yet attaining those goals can never bring peace.
Yearn for a goal that’s nearby: Hari’s feet.
Then Hari will grant you whatever you wish.
Until the knot of imagination is untied,
Hari will stay away; birth and death will go on.
Says Eknath, “I’ve found it—the secret of Hari:
Even my imagination has become one with Him.”

16. Can an impotent man appreciate the charms of a girl?
Can a woman who is barren appreciate what childbirth is like?
A lamp to a blind man,
Or fragrant sandal-paste to a mule,
Or milk to a serpent;
All these have no use.
What good is a lecture to an angry, faithless man?
It’s just a tiring exertion of speech!
The company of the mean is not good; it is harmful.
Says Eknath, “Shun the wicked and cherish the good.”

19. Take refuge in the name; it will lead you to Hari.
Why resort to the needless activities of the world?
Take refuge in That which will free you from agony
At the hands of Yama in the kingdom of death—
In That which will free you from the pain of rebirth.
The name of Hari is the essence of all sadhanas,
The seed of all mantras, the means to the Self.
The singing of Hari is worth thousands of yajnas (rituals);
Says Eknath, “Sing Hari, live as Hari Himself—
You’ll become one with Hari; it’s certain, beyond doubt!”

20. The sun and the moon in their circular course
Are ignorant of Hari; hence their unceasing whirl.
The thousand-headed serpent [in the Hindu story of Creation]
Joyously attempted to sing His praises,
But became exhausted in the end.
The Vedas, in hopes of describing Him, failed;
How, then, shall you know Him with no effort at all?
Accumulate merit, always sing the name;
Serve the true Teacher faithfully; then you’ll realize Him.
Says Eknath, “Even fools become wise by singing His name;
So, I urge you all to sing aloud Hari’s name.”

21. Both the world outside and the world within
Will delude you, unless you see Hari in them.
Yajnavalkya, Shuka, Datta, and Kapila
Attained knowledge of Hari and remained united with Him.
Dear ones, come close: cling fast to Hari’s name;
His name is the boat to cross over this sea.
There’s no need for fear! By resorting to the name,
Countless saints have drowned in bliss, and thus were fulfilled.
Says Eknath, “I’ve opened a market that’s unique:
My entire stock I offer you, and everything is free!”

22. Take refuge in Hari’s name; sing it with faith.
Then Hari, Himself, will keep you in His care;
He’ll take up the burden of your worldly life.
Don’t languish and worry; our Lord knows your plight.
He protects every soul; He’ll protect you as well.
Did you think only you would be unloved and forgot?
Accept this life in which you’re now placed;
Witness the play your past karma has made.
Says Eknath, “It’s only by Shri Hari’s grace
That the store of past karma is finally erased.”

23. When a poor girl marries a rich man’s son,
All of her poverty vanishes at once.
The same is true of a devotee
On whom smiles Shri Hari’s grace.
Then God and His devotee are no longer apart,
But one, as they were at the start—
Like the lump of camphor on the arati tray,
Consumed in, and united with, the fire.
Says Eknath, “See even your attachments as Hari.
Then you’ll live as Hari; you’ll live as the Self.”

24. Sing Hari as you talk, and as you move about;
Sing Hari while you play as a child.
Sing the name of Hari; all your wishes will come true;
You’ll hold Brahman, like a fruit, in your palm.
Sing Hari when you’re standing, and when you’re sitting down;
Sing Hari as you witness the game Existence plays.
Sing Hari when you’re in your chair,
and when you’re in your bed;
With every single bite of food, keep singing Hari’s name.
Sing Hari at the end of day, and Hari in the morning;
Sing Hari when you march to war, and Hari when alone.
Sing Hari when you’re in trouble; cling to Him with love.
Sing Hari when you’re wandering, or when you’re doing chores.
Sing Hari when you’re giving, and Hari when you get;
Sing Hari as you move along, with every single step.
Sing Hari in your homeland, and when you’re far away;
Sing Hari in the day and night, and always be awake.
Sing Hari when alone, and in the crowded streets;
Sing Hari when your last breath leaves—
Sing Hari and be free.
Performing duties, taking pleasure, or while you’re earning wealth,
Sing Hari’s name, and all desires will surely be fulfilled.
Sing Hari for your own delight, and for the good of all;
Sing Hari to reach Brahman, even when you feel no love.
O sing the name of Hari: Liberation will be assured.
“Hari is my only treasure!” Remember this, and sing.
Sing “Hari! Hari!” joyfully; He’s the origin of all bliss.
Says Eknath, “Please sing Hari, whether in a crowd or in the solitary woods;
Within you and without—no matter when you are,
There’s no one else but Hari! He’s sporting everywhere!”
This song of fourteen stanzas is, indeed, the Gayatri;¹
Those who sing it save themselves, and their ancestors as well.

25. Yogis try to see the Self through exertions and through strain;
But that Self, whom I call Hari, I see without their pain.
Hari, whom my ears have heard, has also filled my eyes;
Everywhere I see Hari, only Hari, everywhere.
The celebrated paths to God: bhakti, karma, and jnan,
Are outlined in this song of Hari; it’s the essence of all paths.
Whoever sings this song with love for God
Will be blessed with Hari’s grace.
Says Eknath, “My Hari-song has reached its end;
So please sing Hari! Hari! I urge you all once again.”
Haripatha: Sing Hari by Jnaneshvar Maharaj

In addition to his major works, Jnaneshvari and Amritanubhav, the great Maharashtran saint, Jnaneshvar, (1271-1296), composed a number of devotional songs as well. In them, he sings of his inner experiences and of his love of God and his Guru, Nivritti. One such collection of songs is a generic type of song, called Haripatha, or “Sing Hari,” in which he utilizes a traditional poetic form to extol the practice of the repetition of the name of Hari, an endearing name for God. These songs, presumed to have been written during Jnaneshvar’s years at Pandharpur, are sung to various melodies in Maharashtra to this day, in their original Marathi.

Many of the great saints of Maharashtra—Nivritti, Jnaneshvar, Tukaram, Namadev, and Eknath—wrote such Haripathas, declaring the chanting or repeating of the name of God to be the simplest, easiest, and surest way to the continual recollection of God’s presence. This practice is regarded, throughout India, as the means to the focusing of the mind in contemplation of God, and as the natural expression of the love of God. Jnaneshvar advocates it as well; he says, ‘Chant within the name of Hari; your heart will melt with love. And that love will open the door to the true awareness — that you and your beloved God are one.’

Haripatha, Sing The Name of God

1.
One who ascends, even for a moment,
To the threshold of God
Will assuredly attain the four stages of Liberation.
Therefore, chant the name of Hari.
Yes, chant the name of Hari!
The value of chanting His name is immeasurable;
So, let your tongue eagerly chant the name of Hari.

The authors of the Vedas and the various scriptures
Have all proclaimed this path with their arms upraised.
Jnanadev says: chant Hari’s name;
The Lord will then become your slave,
Just as Krishna became the servant of the Pandavas,
As Vyasa, the poet, has so excellently told.
2. In all the four Vedas, Hari’s praise is sung. The six systems of philosophy, and the eighteen Puranas also sing Hari’s praise. Just as we churn curds for the purpose of getting butter, likewise, we churn the Vedas, philosophies, and the Puranas for the purpose of tasting the sweet butter of Hari. Hari is the goal; the rest is mere tales.

Hari is equally in everyone —
He’s as much in all our souls as He is in the gods;
He’s the inner Self of all.
Therefore, don’t weary your mind with strange practices;
Jnanadev says:  You will experience heaven just by chanting Hari’s name.
Everywhere you look, you’ll see only Him.

3. This insubstantial universe, this web of interacting qualities (gunas), is but His superficial form;
His essence is the formless ‘I’ which is always the same, unaffected by the interplay of the qualities.
If you discriminate in this way, you will understand that the continual remembrance of Hari is the supreme goal to be attained.
Hari is both the Formless and the changing forms; remember Him, lest your mind wander idly away.

He, Himself, has no form;
He cannot be seen.
He cannot be bound to a single form;
He’s the Source of all forms.
Both the animate and the inanimate.
Jnanadev says:  Rama-Krishna, the Lord,
Has pervaded my mind;
He is all I meditate on.
Blessed is this birth!
I seem to be reaping infinite fruits
From the good deeds I performed in the past.

4.
To speak of performing strenuous deeds
When all one’s strength is spent
Is nothing but foolish talk;
To speak of one’s love for God
When there is no feeling in the heart
Is also worthless and vain.
Only when true feeling arises
Can love for God bear fruit.
Will the Lord appear to you at your sudden call?
No. You must yearn for Him in your heart!

It’s sad to see that you weary yourself
With so many worthless tasks.
Day after day, you anxiously fret
For your petty worldly affairs.
My dear, why do you never think
To turn to Hari with love?
Jnanadev says: It’s enough
If only you chant His name;
At once your fetters will fall.

5.
You may perform the rites of sacrifice,
Or follow the eight-fold path of yoga,
But neither will bring you to peace;
These are only tiresome activities of the mind,
And usually bring only pride.
Without true, heart-felt love for God,
You’ll not attain knowledge of Him.
How is it possible to experience union with Him
Without the Guru’s grace?
Without the discipline of sadhana,
He cannot be attained.

In order to receive, one must know how to give;
Give your love, and He’ll shower you with grace.
Is there anyone who would be intimate with you
And teach you your highest good,
If you felt no love for him?
Jnanadev says:  This is my judgment based on experience;
Living in the world is easy in the company of the saints.

6.
When one receives the grace of a saint,
His ego-consciousness dissolves;
Eventually, even God-consciousness will dissolve.
If you light a piece of camphor,
It produces a bright flame;
But after a while, both camphor and flame disappear.
In the same way, God-consciousness
Supplants ego-consciousness at first,
But eventually,
Even the awareness ‘I am He’ dissolves.

One who comes under the influence of a saint
Has arrived at the gates of Liberation;
He will attain all glory.
Jnanadev says:  I delight in the company of the saints!
It is due to their grace that I see Hari everywhere —
In the forest, in the crowds, and also in myself.

7.
Those who have no love in their hearts for God
Accumulate a mountain of sin
Which surrounds them like a diamond-hard shell.
He who has no love for God
Is totally deprived of love.
He who never even thinks of God
Is undoubtedly an unfortunate wretch.

How can those who are ceaselessly gossiping
Ever attain the vision of God?
Jnanadev says:  That which lives
As the Self of everyone and everything is my only treasure.
That is Hari.
It is He alone I adore.
8.
If our minds incline us to the company of the saints,
Then we’ll acquire the knowledge of God.
Let your tongue be ever chanting His name;
Let your hunger be ever for Him.
Even Shiva, who is absorbed in His own Self,
Loves to hear the repetition of God’s name.
Those who single-mindedly chant His name
Will realize Him, and be freed from duality;
They’ll revel forever in the awareness of Unity.
Those lovers of God who drink the nectar of His name
Enjoy the same sweetness that yogis enjoy
When their Kundalini Shakti awakes.

Love for the Name arose early in Prahlada;
Uddhava won discipleship to Krishna
Through his love of the Name.
Jnanadev says: The way of Hari’s name is so easy;
Yet, see how rare it is!
Few indeed are those who know
The infinite power of His name.

9.
He has no knowledge
Whose mind does not dwell on Hari,
And whose tongue speaks of everything but Hari.
He is a miserable person
Who takes birth as a human
And yet fails to seek the awareness of Unity.
How could that person find rest in the name of Hari?

Unless the Guru sweeps away the sense of duality,
How could he who has no knowledge
Relish the sweetness of chanting God’s name?
Jnanadev says: Repetition of the Lord’s name
Is really a meditation on Him;
By chanting Hari’s name,
All illusion is dissolved.
10.
You may take a bath
In the confluence of the three holy rivers;
You may visit all the sacred pilgrimage places;
But if your mind does not always rest
In the name of the Lord,
All your efforts are in vain.
He is very foolish who turns away
From remembrance of God’s name;
When the soul is drowning in misery,
Who else but God will rush to its aid?

Valmiki, who is certainly worthy of respect,
Has proclaimed the value of chanting God’s name;
“The Name,” he says, is the one trustworthy means
For salvation in all the three worlds.”
Jnanadev says: Please chant Hari’s name;
Even your children will be saved.

11.
It is enough to chant “Hari” aloud;
In an instant, all your sins will be burnt.
When a pile of grass is set ablaze,
The grass is transformed into fire;
Likewise, one who chants Hari’s name
Becomes transformed into Him.

The power of chanting the name of Hari
Cannot be fathomed or gauged;
It has the power to drive away
All manner of devils and ghosts.

Jnanadev says: All-powerful is my Hari;
Even the Upanishads
Have failed to express His greatness.

12.
Taking baths in various holy rivers,
Observance of vows, and other such outward trappings,
Cannot grant fulfillment,
If in your heart no faith or love exists.
My dears, it seems that you’re needlessly engaged
In the performance of unfruitful deeds!
It is only by the path of love
That God may be approached;
There is no other way.

Give love to God,
And He will be as tangible to you
As a fruit in the palm of your hand.

All other means of attaining God
Are like the attempt to pick up liquid mercury
That’s been spilled out upon the ground.
Jnanadev says: I have been entrusted
By my Guru, Nivritti,
With the possession of the formless God.

13.
Only when you have the continual experience of God
As equally existing in everyone and everything
Will you be truly established in samadhi.
This experience is unavailable to one
Who is addicted to duality.
Only when the mind
Becomes illumined by the experience of samadhi
Will it attain perfect understanding.
There is no higher attainment for the mind than this.

When one attains to God,
All miraculous powers are also attained;
But of what use are these powers by themselves
Without the bliss of samadhi?
In such a case, they are only obstacles
To one’s progress on the path.
Jnanadev says: I have become supremely fulfilled
In the continual remembrance of Hari.

14.
The Goddess of destruction will not even glance at you
If you chant fervently and unceasingly the name of Hari.
The chanting of His name
Is equal to a lifetime of austerities;  
All your sins will fly away.

Even Shiva chants the mantra, “Hari, Hari, Hari!”  
Whoever chants it will attain Liberation.  
Jnanadev says: I am always chanting  
The name of the Lord;  
That is how I have realized my Self,  
The place of supreme inner peace.

15.  
Let the chanting of Hari’s name  
Be your sole determination;  
Throw away even the mention of duality.  
But, alas, such mastery  
In the awareness of Unity is rare.  
First you must practice the vision of equality;  
Only Hari must be seen everywhere.  
In order to do this,  
The mind and senses must be restrained.

When all these essential requirements are fulfilled,  
One merges in Hari,  
And becomes Hari, Himself.  
Just as one solitary Sun  
Manifests in countless rays of light,  
One solitary supreme Being  
Manifests Himself in all these countless forms.  
Jnanadev says: My mind is fixed  
On one unfailing practice:  
The chanting of Hari’s name.  
Thus, I’ve become free of all future rebirths.

16.  
It is an easy thing to chant the name of God,  
Yet they are few who chant His name  
With full awareness of its power.  
Whoever has attained the experience of samadhi  
By chanting His name  
Has acquired all the miraculous powers as well.
If you unfailingly commit yourself
To chanting His name,
Then miraculous powers, intellectual brilliance,
And a disposition toward righteousness,
All will be yours;
Thus, will you cross the ocean of illusion.
Jnanadev says: The Lord’s name has become
Engraved on my heart;
Because of this,
I see Hari, my Self, everywhere.

17.
By chanting the name of Hari and singing His praise,
Even one’s body becomes holy.
By practicing the austerity of chanting His name,
One makes a home for himself in heaven
That will endure for ages and ages.

By chanting His name,
Even one’s parents, brothers, and other loved ones
Will become united with God.
Jnanadev says: The secret of His name’s infinite power
Was laid in my hands by my Guru, Nivritti.

18.
One who reads the scriptures devotedly,
Who repeats Hari’s name,
And keeps company with no one but Hari,
Attains heaven;
He earns the merit of bathing in all the holy rivers.
But piteous is he who chooses
To indulge his mind in its wandering ways.

He alone is blessed and fortunate
Who continues to chant the name of God.
Jnanadev says: I love to taste the name of Hari;
Every moment I am meditating on Him.

19.
The proclamation and command of the Vedas
And all the holy scriptures
Is “Repeat the name of Hari,  
The supreme Lord, who is the Source of all.”  
Without the remembrance of Hari,  
All other practices, such as rituals and austerities,  
Are only futile exertions.  
Those who have dedicated themselves  
To remembrance of His name  
Have found unending peace and contentment.  
They have become enveloped in its sweetness  
Like a bee who, in its search for honey,  
Becomes enveloped in the closed petals of a flower.

Jnanadev says: Hari’s name is my mantra;  
It is also my formidable weapon.  
Out of fear of this weapon,  
The god of death keeps his distance  
From me and from my family as well.

20.  
The repetition of God’s name  
Is the only treasure desired by His lovers;  
By its power, all their sins are destroyed.  
The chanting of His name is equal  
To lifetimes of performing austerities;  
It’s the easiest pathway to Liberation.

For one who chants the name of God,  
Neither yoga nor the ritual of yajna is needed;  
The injunctions of duty do not pertain to him;  
He transcends all illusion.  
Jnanadev says: No other practices,  
Or rituals, or rules of conduct are necessary  
For one who chants the name of Hari with love.

21.  
There are no limitations of place or time  
For the chanting of Hari’s name.  
Hari’s name will save your family  
On both your mother’s and your father’s side.  
His name will wash away every blemish and stain.  
Hari is the savior
Of all who have fallen into ignorance.

Who can think of a word adequate to describe
The good fortune of one whose tongue is restless
To chant the name of Hari,
The Source of all life?

Jnanadev says: My chant of Hari’s name
Is always going on;
I feel that I have thereby made
An easy path to heaven for my ancestors as well.

22.
There are very few who make the chanting of His name
An unfailing daily practice;
Yet, it is in this way that one may gain
The company of Hari, Lakshmi’s Lord.
Chant “Narayana Hari, Narayana Hari,”
And all material happiness
As well as the four stages of Liberation
Will dance attendance at your door.

If there is no room in your life for Hari,
That life is truly a hell;
Whoever lives such a life will surely
Suffer hell after death as well.
Jnanadev says: When I asked my Guru
The value of the name of God,
Nivritti told me,
“It is greater than that of the sky above.”

23.
Some philosophers say that
The universe is made of seven basic principles;
Others say the number is five, or three, or ten.
When Hari is realized, He reveals that,
No matter what the number,
All those principles emanate from Him alone.
But let us not be concerned with philosopher’s games;
The name of God is not like that.
It’s the easiest pathway to approach to the Lord;
It involves no strain or pain.

Some speak of *ajapa-japa*  
As the practice that should be used;  
This practice leads to a reversal of prana’s flow.  
To pursue this practice,  
One needs much stamina and strength of will;  
But the chanting of God’s name with love  
Is free of all such difficulties.  
Jnanadev says: I’m convinced that a man lives in vain  
If he does not resort to the Name.  
That’s why I continue to extol  
The chanting of the Name.

24.  
The practice of *japa*, austerity, and rituals  
Is futile without true purity of heart.  
One must have the heart-felt conviction  
That God lives in every form.  
Please hold onto that conviction,  
And throw away your doubts!  
Chant aloud, “Rama-Krishna, Rama-Krishna,”  
As loudly as you can.

Do not become conscious of your position and your wealth,  
Your family lineage, or your virtuous acts;  
All these considerations produce only pride.  
Hasten only to sing Hari’s name with great love.  
Jnanadev says: Hari pervades my mind and my meditation;  
I feel every moment that I’m living in Him.

25.  
To Hari, the learned and unlearned are the same;  
By repeating His name,  
Eternal freedom is won.  
The Goddess of destruction will never even enter  
That home where “Narayana Hari” is sung.

How can we know His greatness,  
When even the Vedas could not explain Him?  
Jnanadev says: This vast universe
Has turned into heaven for me;
Such luscious fruit has come into my hands
Only because I cling to His name.

26.
O my mind, cherish remembrance of Hari’s name,
And Hari will shower His mercy on you.
It is no great difficult chore
To chant the name of the Lord;
Therefore, please chant His name
With a voice that is sweet with love.

There is nothing greater or more uplifting
Than the chanting of His name;
So why should you wander on difficult paths,
Forsaking the sweet path of His name?
Jnanadev says: I keep silence without,
And keep turning the rosary of His name within;
Thus, my japa is always going on.

27.
There is no pleasure as sweet as His name;
All the scriptures declare
That it’s the secret to be attained.
So, do not spend even a moment
Without enjoying the nectar of His name.
This world is only a superficial play;
It is only an imagination, after all.
Without the remembrance of Hari,
It’s only a futile round of births and deaths.

By remembering His name,
All your sins will go up in flames;
Therefore, commit your mind to chanting Hari’s name.
Take the attitude of adherence to Truth,
And break the spell of illusion.
Do not allow the senses to bar your vision of the Self;
Have faith in the power of chanting His name.

Be kind, serene and compassionate toward all;
In this way, you’ll become the welcome guest of the Lord.
Jnanadev says: The chanting of God’s name
Is the means to samadhi; this, I swear, is true.
This wisdom was bestowed upon me
By Nivrittinath, my Guru.

NOTES:
8. This ‘Haripatha’ by Jnaneshvar is from Swami Abhayananda,
   Jnaneshvar: The Life & Works of The Celebrated 13th Century

Meditation

In this storm-tossed ocean of the mind, your fragile boat is carried up and down, from side to side. You have but one anchor in this chaotic storm: the name of Hari. Fix that anchor deep in the bedrock of this ocean’s floor, and cling tenaciously to the anchor-line; above the sound, above the frightful threat, hear only Hari! Hari! Hari! Hari! Then watch the turbulent waves subside, and see the dawning Sun, triumphant, rise reflected on a tranquil sea.

In times of raging storm, His name is your unfailing anchor; in the calm beauty of the day, the name is the Sun that fills your day with light and illuminates the path ahead. At night, when navigating darkened seas, that same name will be the pole-star leading you home.

Hari! Hari! No other creature, place, or thing exists but Thee. Then, let me name all that appears before my outer or my inner eye as Thee, seeing Thee alone; for there’s nothing else but Thee!

O what marvelous beauty, what delicious joy, what wondrous vision of content, arises, like perfume, from the nectar of the name! O friends let me not be the only one who enjoys such good fortune as this! This nectar is incomparably sweet, and it costs nothing. It’s free! Just taste it: in the secret chamber of your mind, say “Hari!” Again, call “Hari!” Soon you’ll be a Hari-junky, addicted to His name, like me!
17. PERFECT NONDUALISM:

The Philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism

Perfect Nondualism—Part One

The people of India call their indigenous religion, ‘the eternal religion’ (Sanatana Dharma). It existed even before the Aryan incursion, before the Vedas. From the Vedas came the philosophy of Vedanta, ‘the end of the Vedas’, embodied in the Upanishads. The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, or Nondual Vedanta, was beautifully expressed in the Upanishads, written by some nameless sages perhaps a thousand years before the Current Era. Buddhist seers of later centuries wrote their own scriptural texts explaining an identical vision. Then, the great medieval revitalizer of Nondual philosophy, Shankaracharya (6th – 8th centuries C.E.), following in the Upanishadic tradition, set forth in very explicit terms the nature of the One without a second.

Using the ancient terminology, Shankara spoke of the ultimate reality as Brahman. Brahman is ‘the One’ of Platonism, ‘the Godhead’ of Christian theology. Ishvara is Platonism’s Nous (the Divine Mind), and Christian theology’s ‘God’. Brahman and Ishvara are not the same; they differ in exactly the same ways that ‘the One’ and ‘Nous’ differ in Platonism, and as ‘the Godhead’ and ‘God’ differ in Christian theology. In the Advaita Vedanta of the Upanishads as well as in the philosophy of Shankara, Ishvara is regarded as the Lord and ruler of Maya and its world-appearance, including all souls. Brahman is the conscious Ground and Source, while Ishvara serves an executive and creative function. Ishvara can be prayed to, worshipped, envisualized, and realized: Brahman, however, is formless and absolute, far beyond human relationship, though It is the transcendent Source and Foundation of all.

Shankara asserted that the phenomenal world produced by Ishvara’s maya was mithya, “illusory” or “unreal”. The phenomenal universe, said Shankaracharya, is an adhyasa, a “superimposition”, upon Brahman. This statement is not extraordinary in itself, but what is extraordinary about Shankara’s philosophy is that he stated that the superimposition of the world upon Brahman was an act of Ishvara’s Maya produced through the individual minds of those perceiving the world. For Shankara, “Brahman remains eternally infinite and unchanged. It is not transformed into this universe. It simply appears as this universe to us, in our ignorance. We superimpose the apparent world upon Brahman, just as we sometimes superimpose a snake upon a coil of rope.” According to Shankara, “There is no reality independent of our knowing minds.” “The apparent world,” he said, “is caused by our imagination, our ignorance. It is not real. It is like
seeing the snake in the rope. It is like a passing dream.” 2 In other words, according to Shankara, there is no objective world; there is only the world that exists in our minds and that we individually invent.3

Shankara, following in the tradition of his paramguru (his guru’s guru), Gaudapada, taught that only Brahman exists, and that the universally perceived phenomena of ‘the world’ appear, not because they are ‘created’ by God, but rather because we humans, while actually perceiving only Brahman, project, or “superimpose” names and forms upon that invisible substratum by the power of maya. He interpreted God’s power of Maya (illusion) to be, not God’s power to ‘create’ an illusory objective universe, but a power placed by God within the human soul to project, or imagine, a phenomenal world where there is truly only Brahman, much as one might imagine a snake where there is actually a rope, or a body of water where there is only a dry desert.

Thus, while in the traditional philosophy of Vedanta, supported by the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita, the world is represented as an illusory, but objective, phenomenon produced by God, Shankara’s ‘doctrine of superimposition’ asserts that the perceived universe is merely an imaginary projection by the individual mind or soul of a world of objects superimposed upon the substrate of Brahman—in other words, that it is a subjective illusion that takes place solely in the human mind, or individual jiva.

It is clear, however, that Shankara could not have anticipated the eventual development of evolutionary theory, which put a serious crimp in his theory of superimposition. In Shankara’s time no one even imagined that humanity had evolved over time from more primitive species. Insofar as Shankara and his contemporaries knew, humans had existed forever; and had always been around to imagine a world. Like the author of Genesis, he was ignorant of the fact that, prior to around two and a half million years ago, there were no humans. And if the world could only be ‘imagined’ by a human being, then not even an imaginary world existed prior to the time empirically determined to be the time when the lower animal species evolved to the human species. If the present evidence for the evolutionary history of the universe—from its beginning to the development of homo sapiens, including astronomical observations, geological strata, fossils, etc.—indicates an actual historical reality, then it tells of a world that never existed, since there was no one (a human) around at that time to imagine it.
If Shankara’s theory were correct, it would mean that we, as well as the first humans, imagined a world whose past stretched far beyond its original imagining. We imagined the geological strata that told of a more ancient past, and we imagined a universe where the light from galaxies distant in time told, not of an objective reality, but of a merely imagined past. The history of our universe, according to Shankara, never occurred—except in the minds of the first humans; i.e., all the empirical evidence for the antiquity of the world was simply deceptive and illusory.

In recent years, a similar misconception arose when a group of Jews and Christians banding together under the label “Young Earth Creationism”, professed to believe in a literal interpretation of the Biblical book of Genesis, asserting that the universe, earth, and all life was actually created by God between 5700 and 10,000 years ago in six 24-hour days, despite the empirically based evidence that the universe began some 13.7 billion years ago, the earth about 4.5 billion years ago, and intelligent life on earth around 2.5 million years ago. They interpreted the account given in the Bible as literal, believing that it was infallibly and necessarily true. In fact, prior to around 1800 A.D., when the empirical method of science first began to be regarded respectfully, nearly everyone interpreted the Bible literally, like these “Young Earth Creationists”. And a 2011 Gallup survey reports that 30% of U.S. adults still do.

When these ‘Young Earth Creationists’ were confronted with the cosmological and geological evidence for a much more ancient past, they countered that the universe and the earth were created around 6000 years ago with all the false indications of an older cosmological and geological past built into it, even though that past never actually occurred! In other words, the evidence for a more ancient universe and planet earth was divinely fabricated. However, this implied a devious and deceitful Creator God, which ultimately could not be considered as acceptable.

And so, as it turns out, it is not so easy to explain away empirical evidence. We are forced to choose between a speculative metaphysical theory and the evidence of our reason and senses. Is there really a world out there or does it exist only in our consciousness of it? Another way of thinking about this question is to ask: ‘Did the one Divine Mind create this illusory universe around 14 billion years ago, or is it created independently by each of us daily in our own conscious minds?’ This is a question which each of us must answer for ourselves. What do you think?
A second objection to Shankara’s theory arose as well. His terminology was regarded as unfortunate by many, as it seemed to imply a real duality between God and the world. If there is something superimposed, some reasoned, it must be something other than Brahman.

Shankara, in his many writings, frequently differentiated between Brahman, the eternal Self, and Maya’s product, the world, simply in order to guide the earnest seeker away from attention to the transient appearance (the phenomenal world), and toward the eternal Reality (the Self). He never intended to imply, however, that the transient appearance was anything but Brahman. Here, let him explain in his own words:

Brahman is the Reality, the one Existence. Because of the ignorance of our human minds, the universe seems to be composed of diverse forms; but it is Brahman alone. …Apart from Brahman, the universe does not exist. There is nothing beside Him. It has no separate existence, apart from its Ground.

And again:

The universe is truly Brahman, for that which is superimposed has no separate existence from its substratum. Whatever a deluded person perceives through mistake is Brahman and Brahman alone. The silver imagined in mother-of-pearl is really mother-of-pearl. The name, “universe”, is superimposed on Brahman; what we call “the universe” is [really] nothing but Brahman. 4

While Shankara never intended to imply by the use of his word, “superimposition”, that there was something other than Brahman superimposed on Brahman, that unfortunately, is what arises in the minds of some when they hear this word, “superimposition”. Some objected vigorously to his terminology. For example, a 13th century Maharashtran saint, by the name of Jnaneshvar, objected to the notion of superimposition as an implication of duality, and attempted to clarify the doctrine of Nonduality in the following passage from his book, Amritanubhav, “The Nectar of Mystical Experience”:
When it is always only the one pure Consciousness seeing itself, why postulate the necessity of a superimposition? Does one superimpose the sparkle on a jewel? Does gold need to superimpose shininess on itself? A lamp that is lit does not need the superimposition of light; it is resplendent with light. Likewise, the one pure Consciousness is resplendent with radiance. Therefore, without obligation to anything else, He easily perceives Himself.

… Whatever form appears, appears because of Him. There is nothing here but the Self. It is the gold itself which shines in the form of a necklace or a coin; they, themselves, are nothing but gold. In the current of the river or the waves of the sea, there is nothing but water. Similarly, in the universe, nothing exists or is brought into existence that is other than the Self. Whether appearing as the seen, or perceiving as the seer, nothing else exists besides the Self.

Perhaps it is impossible to adequately express in words the differentiation between the eternal Consciousness and its creative Energy without making it appear that they are two separate things. This would seem to be the case, since every time one mystic gives expression to his vision, another mystic takes exception to the way it is described, and tries his own hand at it, only to have another mystic come along somewhere down the line who takes issue with his terminology. In any case, Shankara’s writings gave rise to many misunderstandings, and to clear up some of these misunderstandings of terminology, some mystics living in the northern state of Kashmir, in the 9th century C.E., including a seer named Vasugupta (ca. 950 C.E.), devised their own interpretation of the philosophy of Nondualism, which they called Kashmir Shaivism.

Legend tells that Vasugupta had a dream in which Lord Shiva told him the whereabouts of a large rock on which Shiva himself had inscribed some teachings in the form of brief aphorisms regarding the nature of God, the soul, and the universe. The inscriptions were copied from the rock by Vasugupta and later became known as the Shiva Sutras. Thus, like many other religious traditions, Kashmir Shaivism claims Divine revelation as its source. Such revealed scriptures are called agamas by those who embrace this tradition. Other agamas, besides the Shiva Sutras, are the Malini-vijaya, the Vijnana-bhairava, and the Rudra-yamala. There are also some
subsidiary scriptures which explain the agamas; these are called spandas, or spanda-karikas, which formulate doctrine. Then there are the philosophical works which attempt to present the teachings in a logical and ordered form; these are the Pratyabijna shastras. Some of these are Shiva-drshti by Somananda (ca. 875-925 C.E.), Ishvara-pratyabijna and Shivastotra by Utpaladeva (ca. 900-950 C.E.), and Pratyabijna-hridayam by Kshemaraj (10th -11th centuries). The philosophy expressed in these scriptures of Kashmir Shaivism also came to be known as Pratyabijna Darshana, “The Philosophy of Recognition”; and also as Purna Advaita, or “Perfect Nondualism”.

The ultimate Reality, according to Kashmir Shaivism, is Paramashiva, “the Supreme Shiva”. This is, of course, synonymous with Parabrahman, “The Supreme Brahman” of Vedanta. Indeed, in all cases, there is no difference whatever between the vision of Vedanta and that of Kashmir Shaivism, except for the differences in terminology. For example, the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara holds that it is Brahman’s Power of Illusion (Maya) that produces the world-appearance; and Kashmir Shaivism says that Paramashiva “appears” as the world through His Creative Power (Shakti). Shankara says the universe is a “superimposition” upon Brahman; Kashmir Shaivism says the universe is simply Paramashiva appearing as form. There is not the slightest difference between them except for their distinct individual terminologies. It is commonly found in this world that isolated groups of people with a common religious tradition tend to regard their own way of saying things to be more correct than the way some other people of another tradition may say it. The reality is that language, by its very nature, is imprecise; and it is only the sage who knows the Truth by experiencing It directly who may really be said to know the Truth.

The sages of Kashmir Shaivism say that Paramashiva is the one Reality; all is taking place within Him. But He remains unchanged and unmoved by all this multiplicity and apparent change. He is the transcendent Totality, and so He remains the same, no matter what. To Him, there is only the pure sky of Consciousness and Bliss. He remains awake to His oneness always, while the “creation” comes and goes. It is breathed out by Him and breathed in again, in an ever-recurring cycle. It is manifested, and then re-absorbed back into Him. This emanation is called abhasa, a “shining forth”. Then, when it is withdrawn again, that is called pralaya. The complete cycle is a kalpa—which amounts to 4 billion, 320 million years of Earth-time. This, however, would seem to be contradicted by the empirical fact that the last
cycle of universal manifestation, known as ‘the Big Bang’, occurred nearly fourteen billion years ago.

According to the sages of Kashmir Shaivism, a *kalpa* begins with a *spanda* (what in more recent times is regarded as the impetus to “the Big Bang”). *Spanda* is the first movement of will, the initial flutter or throb of movement in the Divine Will, or *Shakti*. As for the question, “Why does He create at all?” the answer given by the Kashmir Shaivites is the same as that given by the Vedantists: “It is simply His nature to do so.” It is His innate nature to breathe forth the universe of multiplicity; and yet, at the same time, it is asserted that He manifests the universe of His own free will, as a play, or sport. In fact, the very first Sutra of the *Pratyabijna-hridayam* says that “It is the divine Consciousness alone, luminous, absolute, and free-willed, that flashes forth in the form of the numerous worlds.”

The Pratyabijna philosophers say that, from *spanda* comes the bifurcation into *aham* and *idam*, subject and object. While Kapila’s Sankhya spoke of these two aspects of the One as Purusha and Prakrti, and Vedanta speaks of these two as Brahman and Maya, Kashmir Shaivism speaks of them as *prakasha* and *vimarsha*. *Prakasha* is the conscious light, the witness-Consciousness, the “subject” aspect of Paramashiva. *Vimarsha* is Its power of self-manifestation; i.e., the “object” aspect of Paramashiva. Thus, inherent in the process of manifestation is this Self-division of Paramashiva into conscious subject and phenomenal object; from this initial polarity, all other dualities, including manifold souls, come into being. And, according to the Kashmir Shaivite philosophy, while there is never anything but Paramashiva, the souls thus created by this Self-division experience a limitation of their originally unlimited powers. As stated in the *Pratyabijna-hridayam* of Kshemaraj, “Consciousness Itself, descending from Its universal state, becomes the limited consciousness of man, through the process of contraction. Then, because of this contraction, the universal Consciousness becomes an ordinary human being, subject to limitations.”

The truth, of course, is that the Lord, the one Supreme Consciousness, is never subject to limitations. He lives in absolute freedom. He is all-pervading and all-knowing. By His Power, He can do whatever He likes. And so, in order to become many and play within the (imaginary) multiplicity which is the universe, He sheds His undifferentiated state of Unity, becomes divided as subject and object, and accepts the subsequent differences. His various powers of will, knowledge and action then appear
to have shrunk, though this is not really so. This limited state is the state of ordinary people, subject to limitations, such as you and me.

When Shiva’s *Shakti* manifests as individual conscious entities, the one Consciousness *appears* to be bound by Its own Self-imposed limitations; Its primal powers of omniscience, perfection, everlastingness and all-pervasiveness are then experienced in a reduced condition. Although omniscient, He knows only a few things; though omnipotent, He feels helpless and acts effectively only in a small sphere. The master of perfect Bliss, He is ensnared in pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion. The eternal Being cries aloud from fear of death, regarding Himself as mortal. Pervading all space and form, He grieves because He is tied to a particular place and a particular form. This is the condition of all creatures whose *Shakti* is reduced, and who are caught in the transmigratory cycle. Again, quoting from the *Pratyabijna-hridayam*: “To be a transmigratory being, one needs only to be deluded by one’s own Shakti.”

It is because Shiva, the Self, has become involved in His own Shakti—that is, manifested in form—that He finds Himself in the state of “an ordinary being, subject to limitations.” But, we must see, it is His sport to do so. Without such an “involution”, there could be no evolution. The evolution, or unwinding, of a watch spring could not occur unless there is first an involution of the watch spring created by the winding of the watch. A log burns, i.e., evolves into energy, only because energy, in the form of sunlight, water, and soil, has become involuted in the form of the log of wood. Evolution is the reverse transmutation of an effect into its cause. Paramashiva, or Brahman, or Chit-Shakti, has “involved” Himself in the form of gross matter, and through the human form, must “evolve” back to Himself.

It is only in the human form that one is able to choose to take the evolutionary path back to the Source, because of the development of mind. It is the mind that is capable of development toward intelligence, concentration, meditation, and, finally absorption in pure Consciousness. This is evolution. It is also known as “Liberation”, as it is the freeing of oneself from identification with the body and the activity of the mind, and thus from rebirth. Liberation, or *moksha*, is freedom from the vicious cycle of births and deaths which from the beginning of creation are whirling a soul around. In fact, life is not worthy of the name, “life”, as it is really no more than a series of limitations, the very nature of which pinches the soul and makes it hanker after something real, something permanent, beyond the pale.
of sensual pleasures and pains, something not clouded with the gloomy,
lusty, desires, which are never quenched and are never satiable. Real “life”
is that for which the soul yearns with an incessant longing, though not
knowing where and how it is to be obtained. Still, it feels with an inborn
conviction the existence of a greater life, a greater Self, as a tangible reality.
Everyone yearns for it, because life, eternal life, is the soul’s very nature.

The astute student will recognize the aforementioned doctrines of Kashmir
Shaivism as quite consistent with the precepts of Vedanta. The ultimate
goal of the “bound” soul is the knowledge of the Self, which constitutes
“liberation” from the wheel of transmigration. This is the teaching of both
Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism (and Buddhism as well), revealing once
again their undeviatingly common perspective. But, it is only natural that all
philosophies stemming from real “mystical” experience will find agreement
in nearly all their conceptual elements. Listen, for example, to what is said
in the Ishvara Pratyabijna-vimarshini of Abhinavagupta (ca. 950-1000
C.E.):

The knowledge of the identity of the soul (jiva) and God
(Shiva), which has been proclaimed in the scriptures,
constitutes liberation; lack of this knowledge constitutes
bondage. 8

In other words, it is ignorance of our true nature that binds us, and nothing
else. In fact, it is clear that we have never been actually bound. This is
brought out in the Tripura rahasya, attributed to Dattatreya, which states:

Though, in reality, there is no bondage, the individual is in
bondage as long as there exists the feeling of limitation in him.
… In fact, there has never been any veiling or covering
anywhere in Reality. No one has ever been in bondage. Please
show me where such a bondage could be. Besides these two
false beliefs—that there is such a thing as bondage, and that
there is such a thing as mind—there is no bondage for anyone
anywhere. 9

Both Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism recognize the possibility of
jivanmukta, liberation from the wheel of transmigration while still living in
the body. However, it is not merely the mystical experience of Unity which
constitutes this self-liberation; one must also assimilate the knowledge thus
acquired into one’s everyday consciousness and make the knowledge of the
Self an ever-present awareness. Here is the statement of this ultimate liberation from the Pratyabijna-hridayam:

Final realization is possible only when the complete nature of the Self is realized. Though there might be release after death, there can be no release in life unless the universal Self is grasped through the intellect. Indeed, the equanimity in the experience of worldly enjoyment and in the experience of Unity is what truly constitutes the liberation of the soul, while living. … The individual who identifies with the Self and regards the universe to be a sport and is always united with it, is undoubtedly liberated in this life. ¹⁰

And this is reiterated in the Spanda-karika:

This entire universe is a sport of universal Consciousness. He who is constantly aware of this truth is liberated in this life, without doubt. ¹¹
Perfect Nondualism—Part Two

Long before the emergence of Kashmir Shaivism, the religion of devotion to the one ultimate Reality as \textit{Shiva} was widespread in India. Scholars recognize images of Shiva from antiquity going as far back as the Harappan civilization and the civilization of Mohenjo-daro (ca. 2500 BCE). Then, after the Aryan incursion around 2000 BCE, the priest-authors of the Vedas popularized the names of \textit{Brahman} and \textit{Vishnu} as the deity. Later, Kapila (ca. 9\textsuperscript{th} century BCE) introduced the philosophy of Sankhya, which referred to the universal conscious Spirit as \textit{Purusha}. Then, about five centuries later, we find the Svetasvatara Upanishad (400-200 BCE) first extolling the Divine as the Vedic \textit{Brahman}, then as the indigenous \textit{Shiva}, and then as the \textit{Purusha} of Sankhya philosophy, all in the same work—thereby helping to spread the understanding that God is one, though referred to by many names. In fact, much of the theology succinctly expressed in this early devotional Upanishad can later be found in the teachings of Kashmir Shaivism—especially the repeated declaration that there is \textit{nothing else} here but God. This should not be surprising, however, since all those who are graced with the vision of the divine Self, naturally speak of it in very much the same way.

In studying the scriptures of Kashmir Shaivism, we can’t help recognizing that, while the Kashmiri sages who lived in the 9\textsuperscript{th} or 10\textsuperscript{th} centuries did not possess our modern understanding of the natural world, their spiritual vision nonetheless possessed a universal validity. At the same time, the writings of these few mystics living in this common time and place—Vasugupta, Somananda, Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, and Kshemaraj—are distinctly personal expressions of their own unique experience and proclivities and must not be regarded as a single monolithic entity called ‘Kashmir Shaivism’.

The philosophies of Advaita Vedanta and of Kashmir Shaivism both appeal strongly to our spiritual instincts, but we must ask ‘which of these two philosophies—Shankara’s version of Advaita Vedanta or Kashmir Shaivism—is seen to be validated in the actual experience of the inner revelation of the Self? When the truth is revealed, is the universe and all that’s in it seen to be a mere mental illusion, or is all seen to be the very manifestation of God?’ I can only speak for my own ‘mystical’ experience, in which the very first words from my mouth were “O my God, even this body is Thine own!” In that experience, my consciousness was the Consciousness of God, and ‘I’ was seen to be in the clouds and in the earth;
I was realized to be the life-pulse of all creatures, the resounding bells of inner joy and the fiery intensity of song that bursts from the human heart. Everything—even this being I call ‘I’—is made of God. All was seen to be an endless continuum of divine Being; and I experienced that infinite Consciousness as my own. The universe is arguably an illusion, a sequence of appearances, formed at the subatomic level by electromagnetic impulses; but the underlying cause and substance of these electromagnetic impulses is the divine Consciousness that is God.

I saw, in my spiritual vision, that it is the small egoic sense, the personal ‘I’, that creates the interior illusion of duality, that invents the mental opposites of I and Thou, love and hatred, peace and unrest, happiness and sorrow, while in truth there is only the one undivided reality. I saw that the Creator breathes forth the vast universe and then withdraws it again in a repetitive cycle of becoming and ending, and that all things move together of one will in an intricately coordinated universe. In retrospect, my own experience seems to fit more comfortably into the view expounded by the Kashmir Shaivite philosophers than into Shankara’s version. And my experience of the eternal Self occurred decades before I even heard of Kashmir Shaivism. All in all, the precepts of the Kashmir Shaivite philosophers seem to me more representative of the actual experience of the Self than Shankara’s.

I also find the Kashmir Shaivite description of the role of Grace in one’s spiritual sadhana to fit more accurately with my own experience. Sadhana is the period of one’s spiritual journey in search of the Self. And, in many ways, the sadhana of Kashmir Shaivism is similar to the sadhana of Vedanta: it consists of self-effort and Grace. Self-effort is in the form of learning about the Self, contemplating the knowledge gained, and meditating on the Self. It is a self-effort toward Consciousness; but Self-realization comes of Grace. There is nothing to be done to receive it, but to be true to the Self, to give our purified hearts to the communion with God within. In this way, we prepare ourselves for Grace.

Every great spiritual teacher, including Jesus, taught that one realizes God through His Grace alone. This may be verified in the Christian scriptures; for example, when Jesus was asked by some of his disciples, “Who, then, can enter the kingdom of God? (in other words, “Who can realize the Self?”),” Jesus replied, “For man it is impossible; but for God all things are possible.” He was saying, in other words, ‘Don’t ask me how to know God. It can’t be done by you or me or anyone! It is God Himself who makes Himself known. Only He has the power to reveal Himself.’ What
we can do is to open our hearts and minds, our souls, to receive the light of His Grace; and this alone is the skill, the art, if you will, that we must acquire. The giving of His gifts is entirely in His hands. If anyone can dispute this of his own experience and has the power to experience the Self at his own whim and convenience, I have yet to hear of such a person.

The philosophers and sages of Kashmir Shaivism hold exactly this same view; furthermore, they hold that this Grace is absolutely undetermined and unconditioned. As it is stated in the Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta: “Divine Grace leads the individual to the path of spiritual realization. It is the only cause of Self-realization and is independent of human effort.” If it were dependent upon some conditions, it would not be absolute and independent Grace. Grace is the uncaused Cause of the soul’s release. What appears at first glance to be a condition of Grace, is, in reality, a consequence of it. For example, devotion, which may seem to bring Grace, is, in fact, the result or gift of Grace. In the Kashmir Shaivite tradition, the Absolute is said to carry on the sport of self-bondage and self-release of His own free will; and the postulation of conditions or qualifications would be against that doctrine of free will. This position is made clear in the Malini Vijaya-vartika:

The learned men of all times always hold that the descent of grace does not have any cause or condition but depends entirely on the free will of the Lord.

And, again, in the Paramartha Sara:

Throughout all these forms, it is the Lord who illumes His own nature. In reality, there is no other cause of these manifestations except His freedom, which alone gives rise to both worldly enjoyment and Self-realization.

Here, the question may arise that if Divine Grace has no regard for the merit and demerit of the recipients, does it not amount to an act of partiality on the part of God? How is it that He favors some individuals by bestowing His Grace and disfavors others by keeping it away from them? And the answer is that Grace is operative all the time for all individuals. The difference in the descent of Grace is really the differences in the receptivity of the individual souls, each of whom evolves at his own unique pace. Moreover, this problem does not have much significance in the Nondualist philosophies of Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism; because it is the Absolute Himself who appears first as bound, and then as liberated, owing to His own free will. He
cannot be accused of partiality, since it is only Himself whom He favors or rejects.

As for self-effort, this is accomplished by our inherent power of will. Shakti, the Divine power of will, exists in us in a limited form. This will, which we possess, is the faculty by which a person decides upon and initiates action. Fickleness of mind flutters and weakens the will-power; and conversely, a strong desire and one-pointed longing strengthens it. But too many desires and hankerings after many objects, and aimless running about in pursuit of sense-pleasures dissipates the creative energy, the will-power.

As one clear-minded sage said, “A definite purpose of action, backed by a strong will, is a sure way to success in any endeavor. Therefore, minimize your desires, make a deliberate choice, and focus the whole energy of your will-power in that particular direction, and you will never miss your goal.”

The will of a person may be made to flow in two different, and opposite, directions: outwardly, toward secular worldly goals, or inwardly, toward spiritual goals. If one wishes to concentrate one’s energy toward spiritual goals, then the creative energy, the will, must be diverted from its normal outward-flowing course; by closing all such outlets in the form of worldly desires, one at last attains the state of desirelessness. Then, it is possible to turn the mind inwardly to the Self and attain spiritual knowledge.

It is the desires for worldly objectives that distract one from the attainment of spiritual objectives. But, for one who is established in the pursuit of spiritual goals, worldly gains have little charm, and the necessary duties one must perform in the world take on a spiritual significance. To such a person, every act on the worldly plane is a service to the Lord, in the fulfillment of His will, and a stepping stone for the upward progress toward spiritual enlightenment.

Therefore, when the objective, or outward, trend of the will is checked, and is given a turn in the opposite direction, the “involved” Shakti begins its evolutionary journey; and, instead of experiencing a poverty of Shakti, a person begins to expand his or her powers, and to feel greater energy, intelligence, increased abilities and an expanded sense of well-being and completeness. Turning in the direction of its source, the mind begins to sense its identity with the Self, the pure and all-perfect Consciousness of the universe. This is the beginning of the evolution from the human to the Divine.
Now, if it were an easy thing to revert the flow of the will from worldly to spiritual objectives, everyone would be able to manage it. But it is not easy. The mind is totally deluded by the amazing and wonderful appearance spread out before it; and, unaware that it is all its own projection, it reaches out eagerly for satisfaction and pleasure from the ephemeral and empty mirage. Intellectually acquired knowledge helps us to recognize the mirage for what it is—but still, old habits must be overcome. And that is not an easy task. To subdue the habits of nature, instilled by long practice and conviction, to subdue the old outgoing tendencies of the mind, requires great effort. This is known as tapasya.

To understand what tapasya is, we must understand that it is Shakti, the Divine Energy, which manifests as our minds and bodies and their various activities. And, frequently, we expend that Energy in thoughtless and frivolous ways, and thus remain listless and groggy through much of our lives. But, if we could learn to conserve our natural Shakti, then we could reap the benefits in the form of greater physical and mental energy, and a clearer awareness of the blissful Self, our eternal Identity. Tapasya, which literally means, “making heat,” is the restraint of the outgoing tendency of the mind and senses, which conserves and heats the Shakti. The Shakti, turned inward, then begins to nourish and invigorate the brain and the whole body, expanding one’s natural powers as well as one’s consciousness.

Here are some of the traditional methods of tapasya that help to conserve and evolve the Shakti toward its source, Shiva (the Self):

1. **Mantra repetition:** This conserves the Shakti by subduing the wandering mind and the prana and focusing the attention on God within.

2. **Devotional singing:** This heats the Shakti through emotion and elevates the awareness toward God. It is a form of devotional meditation that brings joy and satisfaction to the heart.

3. **Concentration of the mind:** By deep thought, attention, study, or meditation, the Shakti is concentrated and focused, and the mind becomes subtle and clear.

4. **Surrender of the fruits of actions:** This relieves the mind of futile exertions, conserving the Shakti and retaining the steadiness of the mind.

5. **Eating properly, moderately and regularly:** It is the Shakti which is the central regulator of the mind and body; it preserves the heat and cold of the body and distributes the effects of various foods and drinks to the different parts of the body, not only through the bloodstream, but through
the nerve currents as well. The choice of a proper, moderate, and regular diet is therefore of great importance.

(6) **Continence:** When the *Shakti* has been given an evolutionary turn and begins to flow inward and upward instead of outward through the senses, there is an accumulation of heat in the region near the base of the spine. It is there the *Shakti* gathers and creates the heat which causes it to rise. Much of that heat is transferred to the sexual glands, causing an increase in stimulation there. If one allows that energy to be expended frivolously in sexual indulgence, one loses a great portion of one’s *Shakti*. But if it is conserved, it rises, and is absorbed into the body and brain, resulting in greater bodily vigor and luster, as well as greater mental power. This is a practice recommended for *brahmacharis* or *sannyasins* (monks). Married men and women, of course, are exempt from this kind of *tapasya*; for such as these, normal moderation is best.

(7) **Longing for liberation:** Most important, for conserving and increasing the *Shakti*, is a strong aspiration toward, and longing for, liberation. Such aspiration is synonymous with the love of God, for such love is nothing more than a drawing of the heart toward the clarity and joy of absolute Truth. Such aspiration or love will draw the Grace of God and will focus the energy upward toward the seat of Consciousness and will be a strong counteractive to mental inertia and dullness.

According to the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, there are three different levels of spiritual practice; these levels, or methods (*upayas*), are: *anava upaya*, which is practice on the physical and sensual level; *shakta upaya*, which takes place on the mental, intellectual, level; and *shambhava upaya*, which engages the will and the intuition, and is on the astral or soul level. There is a fourth *upaya*, which is not really a practice at all, but an established awareness of the Self, and is therefore known as *anupaya*, or “no practice.” This conceptual division can be simplified somewhat if we simply say that we exist on four levels: “the physical,” “the mental,” “the astral or soul-level” and “the spiritual.” Our activities in pursuit of the Self take place on each of these progressively subtle levels and become increasingly effective as we reach to increasingly subtler levels of activity.

Without doubt, we are all complexly constituted of body, mind, soul, and Spirit. Indeed, all is Spirit, but that Spirit manifests in a progressively more tangible manner as soul, as mind, and as body. According to the subtlety of our awareness, we identify ourselves most predominantly with one or another of these levels of our reality. Normally, we are aware of ourselves as a mixture of several of these elements; but one or another aspect of
ourselves is usually a predominant focus. For example, the athlete focuses predominantly on his or her physical fitness and measures his or her competency according to the abilities and qualities of the physical body. It would be foolish to say that the mind plays no part in such a person's awareness, but it is clear that much of the attention of that person's awareness is on their physical well-being and skills. This is true also of those people who labor in the so-called "lower" echelons of trades requiring physical exertion and manual dexterity. We see this body-orientation much more exaggerated, of course, in the animal realm, where physical instinct predominates to a much greater degree, and the mental realm is little developed.

The person who identifies predominantly with the mind gives less attention to the physical body, and more attention to the comprehension and structuring of ideas. That person’s focus is on exploring their understanding of ideas, mental task-accomplishments, and the comprehension of their world. They may be "intellectuals," or merely normal goal-oriented and career-oriented people. The more mentally developed may become writers, scientists, scholars, or technological experts; others comprise the vast majority of businessmen, teachers, white-collar workers, etc. Again, let me stress that, for most of us, there is a complex mixture of physical, mental, and soul-qualities at work in our lives, and none of these is omitted in our overall awareness; and yet, it is also certain that there is clearly a predominant focus on one or another of these aspects in each of our lives by which we may be "typed" in various ways.

The person who identifies predominantly with the soul is a person who has become opened to the subtler level of reality. Such persons are governed by a sense of the underlying unity of life, and strive to give expression to qualities of love, kindness, and compassion in their lives, with a strong sense of their purpose as a nurturing and inspiring presence in the world. Such people may become religious leaders, doctors, or crusaders for the social welfare. They are aware, not only of the tools they possess in the way of physical and mental abilities but are motivated to use these God-given tools to benefit others and to lead the world toward peace and brotherhood. The individualized "soul" is that conglomerate of deeply ingrained qualities, evolved over many lifetimes, which makes up the character and purpose of an individual; and the person who identifies with the soul is one whose greatest emphasis is on perfecting the qualities of wisdom and love and on manifesting their own unique destiny in a way which will better themselves and all mankind. There is in the soul a clearer awareness of one's source in
Spirit, and so with those who identify with the soul there is a strong desire to manifest that unifying Spirit, and to draw ever nearer to awareness of their own ultimate Being.

That ultimate Existent is the Spirit. The Spirit is that unmanifest Source from which all beings manifest. It is the unqualified Ground of all existence, which, in Its{self}, transcends all manifestation. It has been spoken of as pure Consciousness and Bliss; It has been spoken of as Brahman, God, or the supreme Self of all. It is that eternal Self with which the saints—the most evolved human beings—identify. They see that the body, mind, and soul are transient elements of their being, and that the One Spirit is their unchanging and eternal Identity. And they hold to their identification with that, paying but passing attention to the demands of body, mind, and soul. They realize that these have but a transient existence and will go on, by the operation of natural laws, but that they do not constitute their true Essence nor their purest happiness.

Those who identify with the Spirit, the eternal Self, find little to attract them to physical, mental or soul activity and accomplishments. Rather, they seek, and find, their greatest happiness and contentment in the awareness of their pure Being, beyond body, mind or soul. Such as these have no established place in the world; they are beyond the world of other men and women. Their vocation is to live in close union with God, and, though they may be regarded as monks, renunciants, or simply as societal outcastes, they serve as emissaries of the Divine. They act, to be sure. They are not without thoughts. Their souls have become expanded to include all souls in the One in whom they subsist, and their actions and thoughts derive from their Identity as the all-inclusive One; and, though their value is not recognized by the people of the world who are busily engaged in their own self-involved thoughts and activities, such people give clarity and light to the world, and serve as magnets to draw others to the all-gratifying Truth which exists within them all.

In the ancient world of Vedic India, this rudimentary division of peoples was translated into a set of classes or "castes," and was recognized as a natural fact of life; but as time went on, these stratifications of society became calcified into rigid air-tight compartments into which one was born and from which there was no escape. What had been an observation of natural evolution became an inflexible societal stratification based on racial and familial association. This was, of course, a distortion and corruption of what had been a keen observation of the varied levels of human awareness. That
observation—that people do indeed fall roughly into several broad "types" according to the evolution of their awareness—remains, nonetheless, a valid one.

Recall how, in the Indian epic, the Ramayana, Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, asks Hanuman, his monkey-servant (representative of the individualized soul), “How do you regard me?” And Hanuman replies, “When I regard myself as the body, I am your servant; when I regard myself as the mind, I am a part of you; and when I regard myself as the spirit, the Self, you and I are one.” Note that Hanuman’s realization became more subtle and closer to the absolute Truth as he went from identification with the physical body to the mind, and from the mind to the Spirit. From the perspective of Kashmir Shaivism, all our efforts toward personal growth and Self-realization manifest on one or another of these levels of reality. At the grossest level, we identify with the body; we regard ourselves as the servant of God, as His instrument; we perform physical acts: acts of service, ritual worship, Hatha yoga postures, the sounding of mantras, etc. These are necessary and beneficial practices, but they are at the gross physical level only; we must go deeper toward the subtle if we are to reach God.

The next level of activity is the mental. Here, we perform many practices: we study the scriptures and other writings of the realized saints; we do mental worship, such as prayer, or the mental repetition of the name of God; we continually attempt to refine our understanding and remind ourselves inwardly of the truth of the Spirit. And here, at this stage where we identify with the mind, we come to regard ourselves as a spark or a ray from the one Sun, which manifests and illumines the world. All is seen as God, and we are a part of Him.

Then, on the soul level, the activity is very subtle; we may also call it the level of consciousness. It is simply the constant alertness to reject any obscurcation of conscious awareness. It is the jealous guarding of the pure Consciousness that is the witness, the Self. At that level, there is no duality of I and Thou, mine and Thine; there is only I AM. Notice that each one of these levels of activity leads to the next, subtler, level. For example, when you do physical acts of service, or worship, this brings with it the mental level of service or worship, as our concentration deepens. Or, if we repeat the name of God on the physical level, such as when we chant aloud, that physical repetition brings with it, by sympathetic resonance, the mental awareness of the name, and we find that we’re repeating the mantra on the mental level as well. The idea, of course, is for our worship, our prayer, our
meditation, to reach to deeper and deeper levels of subtlety, becoming a transforming force to recreate us at the spiritual level.

Practice at the mental level is superior, of course, to mere physical action, because it is by the transformation of our mind that we truly become transformed into Divine beings. As Krishna said to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, “The Self is realized by the purified mind!” This is also what Jesus taught when he explained that it was the pure in heart who would see God. Also, we have seen what great emphasis is placed on the mental practice of Self-knowledge by the great Shankaracharya, who said, “The practice of knowledge thoroughly purifies the ignorance-stained mind, and then that [intellectual] knowledge itself disappears, just as a grain of salt disappears in water.”

Shankara’s analogy can be easily understood by one whose concentration on the knowledge, “I am pure Consciousness,” leads the mind, through concentrated effort toward understanding, and eventually to perfect mental quietude, and the direct experience of pure Consciousness. Through one-pointed concentration on this one thought, “I am not merely this body, this mind; I am the Absolute; I am pure Consciousness,” one goes beyond thought and attains the thought-free state. It is in this way that the mental practice leads to the subtler level of spiritual practice. The story of king Janaka and Ashtavakra is a good illustration of this:

King Janaka was sitting one day on the riverbank, repeating his mantra aloud. In a loud, powerful voice, he repeated over and over So-ham, So-ham, So-ham; “I am That! I am That! I am That!” Then, along came his guru, Ashtavakra, who sat on the opposite bank. Observing that king Janaka was involved in the physical practice of mantra-repetition, with maybe a touch of mental practice thrown in, Ashtavakra decided to elevate king Janaka’s practice. So, he began to shout aloud, “This is my water bowl! This is my staff!” And, as he did so, he alternately lifted each of the items mentioned. Ashtavakra continued this for a long time, shouting at the top of his voice, “This is my water bowl! This is my staff!”

Soon the king’s mantra-repetition was disrupted, and he quickly became annoyed. Finally, he could take it no more, and he shouted across to Ashtavakra, “Hey, why all this racket? I know those things belong to you; who says they’re not yours?” And Ashtavakra shot back, “And who says you are not the Self?” Immediately king Janaka’s mind ceased its activity and became absorbed in the silent awareness that he was the Self and didn’t
need to go on engaging his lips or his mind in repeatedly asserting it. In other words, by the grace of his guru, his mental practice merged into the soul’s awareness of its identity with the Self.

This practice does not call into play either the body or the mind, but rather what we would call simply, “the will.” It is the practice of keeping a willful check on the impulses of the mind, and a willful retention of pure awareness, with a sense of identification with the one all-pervasive Consciousness. It is, in other words, a direct soul-awareness through the effort of will. In its highest stage, this subtle practice becomes no practice at all. It simply remains spontaneously, habitually. It is the state of consciousness which the Zen Buddhists call the state of “No-mind,” which Vedantists refer to as sahaj samadhi, “the natural state of unity,” and Kashmir Shaivites refer to as anupaya.

To explain how one level of practice leads to a subtler level, let’s take, as an example, the practice of mantra repetition. You may begin by just repeating it on the physical level. And, even on this level, the sound-vibrations have a certain effect on you, instilling peace and a sense of well-being. Then, you begin to reflect on its meaning. Now, it is no longer just a sound; it’s a meaningful thought: So-ham. The mind translates the sound into “I am That; I am the one Self.” That is the mental practice. You repeat the mantra on the mental level with an awareness of its meaning. Then, as you begin to sense the reality of it, as you begin to experience it, you transcend the mantra, and hold yourself poised in the thought-free state. That’s the level of soul-awareness, and is very close to the awareness of Spirit, or the Self. When, eventually, this awareness deepens, one loses all sense of body, mind, or soul, and, transcending all practice, becomes immersed in the awareness of the Self.

Now, to make all this really clear, here are some sample practices from each of these three levels derived from an ancient scripture of Kashmir Shaivism, one of the agamas, called Vijnana Bhairava, which is said to be a distillation of an earlier text called Rudrayamala Tantra, passed down from Shiva himself. “Bhairava” is another name for Shiva, the Lord, the Self. And “Vijnana” means supreme awareness, or knowledge. And it takes the form of a dialogue between Shiva and his consort, Shakti.

In this imaginary dialogue, Shakti asks Shiva to explain His true nature and the practices by which he can be known; and Shiva then details 112 different practices, utilizing those from each of the three levels we’ve discussed.
First, we’ll hear of some of the physical practices, some of which have to do with the subtle breath, the prana, or the visualizing of inner lights and sounds. Listen to some of the practices Shiva recommends to Shakti. You might like to try them out as I mention them to you:

The breath is exhaled with the sound, Ham, and inhaled with the sound, Sah. Thus, the individual soul always recites the mantra, Hamsah (or So-ham, “I am That!”). ³

Prana goes upward (with the inhalation), and the apana goes downward (with the exhalation). This is the expression of the creative Shakti. By becoming aware of the two places where each originates, experience absolute fulfillment. ⁴

There is a momentary pause, when the outgoing breath has gone out, and there is a momentary pause when the ingoing breath has gone in. Fix your mind steadily on these places of pause, and experience Shiva.⁵

Always fix your mind on those places where the breath pauses, and the mind will quickly cease its fluctuations, and you will acquire a wonderful state. ⁶

In the Bhagavad Gita (4:29), Krishna says, “Some yogis, devoted to pranayama (the control of the prana), offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath into the incoming breath, and the incoming into the outgoing, restraining the course of both.” It is this very practice that is being spoken of here in the Vijnana Bhairava, which goes on to say:

When the in-breath merges with the outgoing breath, they become perfectly balanced and cease to flow. Experience that state and realize equality. ⁷

Let the breath remain balanced and let all thoughts cease; then experience the state of Shiva. ⁸

That’s enough practices on the physical level; let’s move on to the mental practices. Here, we enter into the realm of ideas. These practices deal entirely with formulated intellectual knowledge. Shiva says to Shakti:
Concentrate your mind on whatever gives you satisfaction. Then experience the true nature of supreme satisfaction.  

Meditate on yourself as a vast, cloudless sky, and realize your true nature as Consciousness.  

Becoming detached from the awareness of the body, meditate on the thought, “I am everywhere!” and thus experience joy.  

Hold this thought in your mind: ‘All the waves of the various forms in this universe have arisen from me—just as waves arise from water, flames arise from fire, or rays from the Sun.’  

Contemplate with an unwavering mind that your own body and the whole universe are of the nature of Consciousness and experience the great awakening.  

Contemplate your body and the whole universe as permeated with Bliss. Then experience yourself as that Bliss.  

And then we come to the practices involving the soul; these are at a yet subtler level of consciousness. Here, you don’t have to think at all. You need only to become aware, focusing on that clear, thought-free awareness that is your soul, an individualized manifestation of the Self. Shiva says:  

Observe the arising of a desire. Then immediately put an end to it by reabsorbing it into That from which it arose.  

What are you when a thought or desire does not arise? Truly, the one Reality! Become absorbed in and identified with That.  

When a thought or desire arises, detach yourself from the object of thought or desire, and witness the thought or desire as a manifestation of your Self, and thus realize the Truth.  

The same conscious Self is manifest in all forms; there is no differentiation in It. Realize everything as the same One and rise triumphantly above the appearance of multiplicity.
When under a strong impulse of desire, or anger, greed, infatuation, pride, or envy, make your mind steady and become aware of the Reality underlying the mental state. Perceive the entire universe as a magic-show, or as forms painted on a canvas, or as so many leaves on a single tree; and becoming absorbed in this, experience great happiness.

Leaving aside your own body for the time being, contemplate your Self as the consciousness pervading other bodies, and thus become all-pervasive.

Free the mind of all supports, without and within, and let no thought-vibration take form. Then the self becomes the supreme Self, Shiva.

At the onset or culmination of a sneeze, or at the moment of fright, or deep sorrow, or at the moment of a sigh, or while running for your life, or during intense fascination, or extreme hunger, become aware of Brahman.

What cannot be objectively known, what cannot be held in the mind, that which is empty, and exists even in non-existence: contemplate That as your Self, and thus attain realization of Shiva.

Meditate on yourself as eternal, all-pervasive, the independent Lord of all; and, thus, attain That.

About *anupaya*, the ultimate state beyond all practice, there is really nothing one can say. It is the reversion of the soul to its universal Source. In such a state, one is on a pathless path, beyond the bodily, mental or astral levels. Immersed in God-awareness, there is no more striving, for there is nothing more to attain. There is no action, no thought, no individual awareness. There is only the pure Bliss of the Self.

Here is what Jnaneshvar, the 13th century yogi, says in his *Amritanubhav* about such a state:

One who has attained this wisdom may say whatever he likes; the silence of his contemplation remains undisturbed. His state
of actionlessness remains unaffected, even though he performs countless actions. Whether he walks in the streets or remains sitting quietly, he is always in his own home. His rule of conduct is his own sweet will. His meditation is whatever he happens to be doing. 26

Such a knower of the Self lives in perfect freedom. You too, by utilizing all these practices—of the body, the mind and the soul—can attain eventually to that (fourth) state. As you meditate, just sit quietly; let the mind be still and become aware of the Self. If you can’t do that immediately, then take the help of the mantra, the name of God, the name of the Self. Reflect on its meaning. Identify with that One. And if you cannot do that, at least practice on the physical level: repeat the mantra with the in-breath, and again with the out-breath. Let it carry you to the awareness that you and your beloved God are one.

NOTES AND REFERENCES FOR PART ONE:


3. This philosophy of Shankara’s has resurfaced in our current day in the philosophy of Sri Nisargadatta and his disciple, Ramesh Balsekar.

4. Shankara, Vivekachudamani, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood; Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 73. In order to illustrate the process of ‘superimposition’, Shankara utilizes several examples:
A person might see a piece of rope lying on the ground and think that it is a snake. In such a case, that person is said to ‘superimpose’ a snake on the rope. Or, one might be walking by a field at night, and imagine that a wooden post is a man standing in the field; in such a case, one is said to have ‘superimposed’ a man on the post. Another example Shankara offers is that of a person seeing a piece of an oyster shell—what is known as ‘mother of pearl’; but he imagines that it is a piece of silver. He is said to have
‘superimposed’ the silver on the mother of pearl. All of these examples are intended to be analogous to the superimposition by the jiva of a world of objects upon what is really Brahman. And, while it’s easy to see how one could mistake one form for another, such as mistaking a post for a man, or a rope for a snake, or a piece of shell for silver; Brahman is formless. How, then, could one mistake Brahman for a universe of forms? The analogies do not stand up to scrutiny. Shankara does distinguish between a personal illusion (pratibhasika) and a universal, or collective, illusion (vyavaharika); but, according to Shankara, in both cases, it is the individual jiva who is responsible for the creation and maintenance of his own illusory perception.


8. Ishvara Pratyabijna-vimarshini

9. Tripurarahasya

10. Kshemaraj, Pratyabijnahridayam

11. Spandakarika, 3:3

NOTES AND REFERENCES FOR PART TWO:


3. Vijnana Bhairava, 155.

4. Ibid., 24.


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MY TRANSLATIONS

(from The Mystic’s Vision by Swami Abhayananda.
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CONTENTS

I. SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD

II. THE SECRET OF NATURAL DEVOTION

III. NIRVANASATKAM

IV. SOME SANSKRIT CHANTS
I. **SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD**

_Vedanta_, which means ‘the end of the Vedas’, refers to the ancient Hindu scriptures called the _Upanishads_. The Upanishads were written by numerous anonymous authors at various times, from around 800 B.C.E. to well into the Current Era. One of the most highly respected and honored of these is the _Svetasvatara Upanishad_, guessed to have been written around 400 B.C.E.:

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**Svetasvatara Upanishad**

*Verse Translation by Swami Abhayananda*

**Part One:**

1. Hari Om. Seekers of Brahman enquire:
   ‘What is the Cause of the universe? Is it Brahman?
   Why are we born? What upholds our lives?
   And where do we go after life on earth?
   O knower of Brahman, what compels us to exist
   In this world of joys and sorrows?’

2. ‘Is it Time, or Nature, or Fate, or merely Chance?
   Is it the Elements? Or perhaps the Soul itself is the Cause.
   All these others exist only for the sake of the Soul;
   But, since the Soul is under the sway of joys and sorrows,
   It cannot, therefore, be the ultimate Cause.’

3. Then, through deep meditation, these seekers realized
   That the power of God is the ultimate Cause. ¹
   Though hidden by, and existing within, His own effects,
   It is the Lord alone, who rules all those other sources—
   Such as Time and the individual Soul.

4. They saw the Wheel of existence, ² which has a single rim
   Covered by a three-layered tire. ³
   This Wheel has sixteen parts, ⁴ fifty spokes, ⁵
   Twenty spoke-connectors, ⁶ and six eight-part divisions. ⁷
   It binds with a single rope, ⁸ that goes in three directions, ⁹
   And whose illusion arises from two causes. ¹⁰
5. Or [the world-illusion may be likened to] a River with five currents, \(^1\) Made turbulent and meandering by the five elements, \(^2\) And lashed into waves by the five organs of action. \(^3\) This River has its origin in the mind, Which produces the five kinds of perceptions. \(^4\) It has five whirlpools; \(^5\) its rapids are the five miseries. \(^6\) It has fifty branches, \(^7\) and five dangerous obstructions. \(^8\)

6. Within this Wheel, in which all of us live and seek rest, The swan-like soul wanders restlessly; It thinks it’s separate and far from God, But by His Grace, it awakens to its identity with Him.

7. I sing of Brahman—the subject, the object, the Lord of all. He’s the immutable Foundation of all that exists; Those souls who realize Him as their very own Self Are freed forever from the need for rebirth.

8. The Lord is the Support of both aspects of Reality: He is the Imperishable and the perishable, the Cause and the effect. He takes the form of the limited soul, appearing to be bound; But, in fact, He is forever free.

9. The Lord appears as Creator, and also as the limited soul; He is also the Energy which creates the appearance of the world. Yet He remains unlimited and unaffected by these appearances; When one knows that Brahman, then that soul becomes free.

10. The forms of the world fade like clouds in the sky; But the Lord remains ever-One and unchanged. He is the Ruler of all worlds and all souls; Through meditation on Him, and communion with Him, He becomes known as the Self, and from illusion one is freed.

11. When the Lord is known, then a man’s soul is free; He’ll never need to know sorrow or birth again. Through devotional love, he’ll rise to the highest state, And rest forever in the bliss of God.
12. These three: the soul, the world, and the Lord of all, 
   Are nothing else but the one Brahman. 
   It’s Brahman alone who exists as everyone and everything; 
   Beyond Brahman, the Self, there is nothing to know.

13. Though it can’t be seen, fire is latent in the wood; 
   It’s born as a flame when the wood is rubbed. 
   Like the fire, the Atman, the Self, is concealed within man; 
   By the power of meditation on OM, it becomes revealed.

14. Man, in this analogy, is like a piece of wood; 
   And meditation on OM is the means to kindle the flame. 
   By joining to man the heat of meditation, 
   The truth of the Self, like a flame, is born.

15. Just as oil is in seeds, and butter is in milk, 
   As water is in river-beds, and fire is in wood, 
   So is the one Self concealed in all selves; 
   To those who seek it earnestly, it becomes revealed.

16. That Self is in everything, just as butter’s in milk; 
   Through self-enquiry and tapasya, it becomes revealed to man. 
   That Self is the Brahman of whom I sing! 
   That Self is the Brahman of whom I sing!

Part Two:
1. May the light of the shining Sun 
   Join our minds and our hearts to God. 
   May He also support our lives 
   By filling our bodies with Light from above.

2. With His blessings, and by His Light 
   We’ll join our hearts and our minds to God; 
   We’ll surely reach to the highest state 
   By earnest effort and faithful meditation.

3. May the Sun grant this boon to me: 
   Let my mind and my senses be fixed on God. 
   Direct them inward, and thereby reveal, 
   By means of inner knowledge, that radiant One.
4. Surely it would be of benefit to everyone
   To make such a prayer to the lordly Sun;
   For he is the witness of everyone;
   He grants his gifts to deserving men.

5. O senses—and O gods who rule each one!
   I offer this prayer to the Lord, our Source:
   Let me be one with Thyself, O God;
   May my song be heard by Thy own dear sons!

6. Let me be surrendered to the fire within;
   Let me make offerings to the prana in me.
   May I drink of the nectar of inner Bliss;
   Let this be my ritual worship of Thee.

7. O man, serve God by the light of the Sun;
   Serve Him who engendered this whole universe.
   In deep meditation, become one with Him;
   Then you’ll no longer feel bound by the fruits of your works.

8. A wise man should sit with his body erect;
   With his head, neck and shoulders aligned.
   He should turn both his mind and his senses within;
   Then, by God’s trusty boat, he’ll cross over this world.

9. A yogi should see that his prana’s controlled;
   His breath should flow softly and evenly.
   It is then that the mind may be held and made calm,
   Just as a wild horse may be controlled by its reigns.

10. A yogi should sit in a place that’s confined,
    Where no sounds and no sights tend to distract the mind.
    It should be a place free of wind, and of smoke,
    A place that is level, comfortable and pure.

11. When yoga is practiced, the light of the mind
    May take the form of the Sun, or of fire;
    One may also see images of snow-flakes within,
    Or fire-flies, or lightning, a gem, or the moon.

12. The fire of this yoga consumes everything,
And purifies each of the elements within:
Fire, water, earth, air, and the ether as well;
Then a yogi becomes free from birth, illness, and death.

13. The signs of perfection in yoga, it’s said,
Are lightness of body and bodily health,
A complexion that’s clear, and a voice that is sweet,
A naturally sweet fragrance, and freedom from desire.

14. Just as gold, which is contained in the ore,
Becomes manifest when all dross is burned away,
A yogi, in whom God is revealed,
Knows that he’s one with the Self, and sorrows no more.

15. When a yogi beholds the true nature of God,
He discovers the Light of his own inner Self.
He is one with the unborn, unchangeable Lord;
And he too is free from all limiting bonds.

16. When that Lord, who pervades all the worlds everywhere,
Gave birth to the first motion, He manifested Himself as creation.
It’s Him alone who is born in this world;
He lives within all beings; it’s only Him everywhere.

17. To that effulgent Lord who’s in fire and in the great oceans,
Who lives as this world, who’s in plants and in trees—
To that Lord let us sing! Give all glory to Him!
To that Lord let us sing! Give all glory to Him!

Part Three:

1. He is the One who rules all of us;
His omniscient Power rules all of the worlds.
Though He is continually creating and dissolving,
He remains unaffected, ever-One and unchanged.
Those sages who know Him have passed beyond death.

2. Those who have known Him say that
Even though He manifests all the worlds by His Power,
He always remains One and unchanged.
He lives as the one Self within everyone;
He’s the Creator and Protector to whom all beings return.
3. He has eyes everywhere and mouths everywhere; 
   Everywhere are His arms and His feet. 
   The wings of all birds, and all men’s arms are His own; 
   Both the heavens and the earth belong to Him.

4. May Shiva, the omniscient Lord of the world— 
   The Creator of gods and Bestower of powers, 
   The One who supports all this vast universe— 
   Endow me with a mind whose vision is clear!

5. O Shiva! Thou indwelling, joy-giving Lord! 
   Be gracious and look upon us with Thy love. 
   Grant us Thy glance and Thy favor, O Lord. 
   Dispel all our evil! Dispel all our fear!

6. O Shiva! Thou indwelling, joy-giving Lord! 
   Do not let loose Thy pain-bearing arrows! 
   Thou art our Protector; protect us, O Lord. 
   Do not give injury to man or the world!

7. He is greater than the world; He’s beyond what’s perceived. 
   Though He lives within man, He has no limits or bounds. 
   When a man realizes that Lord who pervades everything, 
   He knows, in that moment, his own deathless Self.

8. I know that one Self who shines like the Sun 
   Through all the deep folds of the darkness within. 
   This knowledge gives freedom from death and from fear; 
   It’s the sole means to the attainment of life’s highest goal.

9. The whole universe is filled with the Self; 
   There is nothing other or greater than Him. 
   There is nothing smaller or larger than Him; 
   He stands all alone, like a glorious tree.

10. Though He lives within the world, He stands far beyond it; 
    He has no form; nor has He any blemish or pain. 
    Those who have known Him have passed beyond death; 
    But, until a man knows Him, he suffers in pain.
11. All faces are His; all men’s heads are His own.
   All necks are His necks; He’s in everyone’s heart.
   He pervades everything; He’s known as ‘the Lord’.
   He’s the compassionate Master who’s found everywhere.

12. He is the great Self, the Purusha;
   He’s the Lord who creates, preserves, then destroys what He’s made.
   From within men, He inspires them to be good and pure;
   He’s the one Ruler, the immortal Light within all.

13. The Purusha, who’s no bigger than a thumb, is the Self;
   He has made His abode in the hearts of all beings.
   The mind, which reflects knowledge, can know Him within;
   And those who have known Him have passed beyond death.

14. With thousands of heads, eyes and feet,
   The Purusha is greater than the world and all space;
   He contains all that is or was, and all that shall be.
   He’s the undying Lord of all creatures that live.

15. He has hands everywhere, and feet everywhere;
   Everywhere are His heads and His eyes.
   His faces are everywhere, and He has ears everywhere;
   Everything that exists is contained within Him.

16. Though He, Himself, has no senses, all senses are His;
   He tastes all the pleasures of life through their use.
   He’s the Lord and Ruler of all that exists;
   To all beings that live, He’s the only Refuge.

17. The Self is the Swan who rules the whole universe
   And everything in it that’s moving or still;
   But when He resides as the Spirit in man,
   He flies through the senses to sense-objects outside.

18. Without hands, He holds, and without feet, He runs;
   He sees without eyes, and He hears without ears.
   He knows everything through men’s minds, but no one knows Him;
   He’s called ‘the Origin’, ‘the One’, ‘the Highest’, ‘the All’.

19. That one conscious Self, the smallest of the small
And the largest of the large, is in everyone’s heart;  
The wise, by the Grace of God, become free  
When they see in themselves that majestic Self  
Who’s beyond all desires.

20. I know the Immortal! The Origin! The Lord!  
The Self of all beings who pervades everything!  
All those who have known Him agree:  
He’s beginningless, endless, and eternally free.

Part Four:

1. Though producing the whole universe, He remains unaffected;  
He never changes, but remains as He was.  
Without ever revealing His purposes,  
He creates all these worlds, and then withdraws them again.  
May that effulgent Self enlighten our minds!

2. He is fire, He is the Sun; He is wind, He is the moon!  
He is the stars, the mountains, the rivers and seas!

3. Thou art woman and man! Thou art the old and the young!  
It is Thou alone, Lord, who hast taken all these forms!

4. Thou art the blue bee; Thou art the green parrot.  
Thou art the dark clouds, the four seasons, the seas;  
Thou art the birthless and limitless God  
Who hast given birth to all worlds and all souls.

5. Unborn Nature, 19 with her gunas, gives birth to all forms;  
Countless unborn souls seek pleasure in Nature’s array.  
But the unborn Self, who creates both Nature and souls,  
Lives apart from Its creations, in eternal Freedom and Bliss.

6. The Self and the soul are like two birds, though one;  
They have the same name, and they’re in the same tree.  
But, while the soul tastes and enjoys the sweet fruits,  
The other eats not; He’s the Witness, the Self.

7. The soul, through enjoyment, forgets it’s the Self;
And, feeling bewildered and helpless, it moans.
But, when it beholds that it is the glorious Lord all adore,
It forgets all its previously felt grief.

8. Of what use then are the Vedas to one who has seen
That Brahman in whom the Vedas and all gods are contained?
He knows the eternal Essence of which all souls are made!
And by knowing that, he possesses a happiness that is lasting and true.

9. All the scriptures, all worship and sacrifices,
All tapasya performed in the future or past,
And also the Vedas, are born of Brahman’s Power;\(^{20}\)
It’s His net that entangles, and He\(^{21}\) who’s ensnared.

10. The world and all souls take on form by His Power;
He, the great Lord, is governing everything.
The whole universe, and all objects within it,
Are only constituents of His manifest Being.

11. By knowing that One who exists as the world—
That One in whom everyone is born, to whom everyone returns—
By knowing that Lord—the Bestower of Grace,
The adorable God—one attains supreme peace.

12. May Shiva, the Creator of the gods and their powers,
The omniscient Support of the world,
He who gives birth to all space and all time,
Endow us with wisdom and clarity of mind!

13. To that Lord, who is King of all gods and all worlds,
The Ruler of all creatures on two legs or four,
That blissful and effulgent Lord whom we love,
Let us give all our worship and serve only Him.

14. He is the Creator of all forms—all’s contained within Him;
Universal chaos surrounds Him, yet He’s ever-unmoved.
He’s the undivided One who pervades everything;
By knowing that One, man attains the supreme peace.

15. He is the Possessor and King of the whole universe,
Concealing Himself in the hearts of all beings.
From there, He inspires all the sages and gods;  
By knowing that Lord, man himself becomes free.

16. As cream is in milk, that one Self is in all;  
Subtle and hidden, He pervades everything.  
One who knows that radiant God who is Bliss  
Becomes released from all the bonds of this world.

17. He is the Self-revealed Creator and Pervader of all;  
He dwells as the Self in the hearts of all beings.  
He’s revealed by discrimination, renunciation, and knowledge;  
Those who know Him are freed from the bondage of death.

18. When His Light dispels the darkness of man’s ignorance,  
Both existence and non-existence vanish; day and night disappear.  
Brahman, and Brahman alone, is all that exists;  
From His light comes the Sun and the wisdom of man.

19. The mind cannot grasp Him, either with form or without;  
We call Him ‘Great Glory’, but there’s no image of Him.  
He can be seen, not with the eyes, but with consciousness, within;  
Those who have seen Him are eternally free.

20. O unmanifest Lord, grant refuge to me!  
O Rudra, Protector, keep watch over me!  
Do not, in Thy anger, destroy us or our dwellings;  
Spare us and our children, we beg Thee, O God!

Part Five:

1. That infinite Brahman, who is eternally One,  
Contains both ignorance and knowledge within Him.  
Through one, man seeks the world; with the other, he seeks God;  
But He who contains them both is neither the one, nor the other.

2. He’s beyond both knowledge and ignorance;  
He’s the Governor and Dispenser of our every thought.  
He controls all beings as their single Source;  
He knew the end of creation at the moment of its birth.

3. He manifested this universe as a spider manifests its web,
And, in time, He’ll withdraw it into Himself again.
He created all these forms; He pervades all bodies and senses.
He’s the One in all, the great Lord of all beings.

4. As the Sun’s radiance illumines the East and the West,
The North and the South, above and below,
So does the Lord, the adorable One,
Illumine and control all that He’s made.

5. He is the Cause and Controller of the ways of all things;
He ripens and brings to fruition all things on the earth.

6. To those who seek Him in scriptures, He is hidden;
But He’s revealed to those sages who become one with Him.

7. Every soul is impelled to act by the power of Nature;
It sows actions and reaps the fruits of those actions.
Continually assuming new forms and new qualities,
The soul continues to wander over the paths of life.

8. The soul is small, but it shines like the Sun;
It possesses a will and the sense of ‘I’.
Because of its identification with the intellect,
That perfect Self appears separate, weak, and of little worth.

9. The wandering soul may be compared
To a hair, divided a hundred times,
Then again divided by a hundred more;
And yet that soul has no finite bounds.

10. It is not female, nor is it male;
Nor is it something in between.
The soul becomes identified with
Whatever body it dwells within.

11. Desiring fruits, the embodied soul
Attains its goals, and then becomes attached;
Experiencing pain, it learns, and in this way, grows,
As a body grows by taking food and drink.

12. The embodied soul, by virtue of its various actions,
Adopts new forms, either subtle or gross;  
And, according to the knowledge and desires it possesses,  
It assumes a new body to enjoy the world.

13. But once it knows the infinite Lord—  
The Creator and Pervader of all life’s forms,  
That One who remains unmoved, while all is in motion—  
That soul is released from all its bonds.

14. Those souls who know that effulgent Lord—  
The One realized by the pure of heart,  
The Creator, Destroyer, and Cause of all—  
Those souls are freed from embodied life.

Part Six:

1. Some people believe that the world is caused  
And controlled by natural laws or by the passage of time.  
Such deluded persons are truly foolish;  
The universe moves by the will of God.

2. The one Consciousness that pervades this universe  
Is the Author and Witness of the laws and of time;  
The elements obey the omniscient Lord;  
Ponder this, O learned and knowledgeable men!

3. A yogi who works, but renounces the fruits of his work,  
Who practices discipline, and serves his Teacher,  
Attains, by virtue of the habits he acquires,  
The soul’s Liberation, the highest goal.

4. One who performs all his actions in service of God,  
Who releases all claim to the fruits of his work,  
Comes to know his Self as the one Self of all,  
And is finally freed from all actions in time.  
By transcending all delusion, he’s released from past actions;  
Though the already-ripened fruits of past actions must be received.  
But when, in time, even these are exhausted,  
The yogi becomes free; he attains the Divine.

5. The Lord is the sole Originator, the Source, in which all is united;
That One remains undivided, beyond countless eons of time.
Liberation is attained when a man knows that Lord,
The Father of all, who abides in the heart.

6. All this universe sprouts from Him;
He is the Root of the entire vast tree of creation.
Living within all, He’s the Bestower of all good things;
Liberation is attained when a man knows that Lord.

7. We know the supreme Self, the Lord of all lords—
The God of all gods, the King of all kings,
The Imperishable behind the perishable world which He made—
The Self-revealing, adorable, Lord of the world.

8. He has no body or organs or limbs; He’s not like anything else that exists.
   Scriptures cannot describe Him and speak only of His Power.\textsuperscript{22}
   He’s able to do anything that He wills;
   His Power is boundless, and He knows everything.

9. He is ruled by no other; there’s no Lord over Him.
   He has left not the slightest trace by which He can be found.
   He, Himself, is the Cause and the Lord of all lords;
   He was fathered by none and is governed by none.

10. May that Lord, like a spider concealed in its own web,
   Whose threads form the fabric of this world—
   May that Lord who is hidden by His own veiling Power,\textsuperscript{23}
   Unite us in Brahman, release us in Him!

11. The non-dual resplendent Lord resides
   As the Self in all creatures and all things;
   He impels all to action and witnesses all.
   While pervading everything, He remains ever free.

12. He controls everyone as their innermost Self;
   He’s the one Seed from whom innumerable sprouts have arisen.
   Only those who see Him within themselves
   Obtain the gift of eternal Bliss.
13. He is the Eternal within the temporal, the Infinite within form; 
   He’s the One within many, who grants all desires. 
   Only those who see Him within themselves 
   Obtain the gift of eternal Peace.

14. In Him, there’s no Sun, no moon, and no stars; 
   Within Him there is no lightning or fire. 
   Because of Him, the Sun, the moon, and the stars all shine; 
   Their light comes from Him; He’s the Source of every light.

15. There is nothing in this universe but the Self, the ‘I AM’; 
   Like a flame, He lives in the hearts of all beings. 
   The only way to pass beyond death is to know Him; 
   There’s no other means, and there’s no other End.

16. He is the only support of the soul and the world; 
   He is the sole Cause of both bondage and liberation. 
   He is the Creator, the Knower, the Self of all things; 
   All good comes from Him. He’s the omniscient Lord.

17. He is the Controller of everything in this world; 
   Bondage and Liberation are given by Him. 
   He, the deathless Protector of everyone, 
   Is the Ruler of all. To whom else might you turn?

18. As one who seeks Liberation, I take refuge in Him, 
   The Revealer of the Self, the Giver of all knowledge, 
   The Creator of Brahma, who, at the beginning of time, 
   Gave expression to true Knowledge, and shared it with men.

19. When a man shall be able to roll up the sky like a rug, 
   Then suffering will end without knowledge of the Lord.

20. He is One, without actions or parts, 
   Remaining serene, like a fire whose fuel is exhausted. 
   He is ever-blameless and unattached to the world; 
   For men, He is the supreme bridge to Immortality.

21. Svetasvatara, by the grace of the Lord, 
   And by his tapasya, has realized God. 
   He’s therefore proclaiming this knowledge to men,
This knowledge that’s cherished by sages and saints.

22. The knowledge of God, the one supreme Truth,
Has been proclaimed in every age, and in every yuga.
It should only be given to the pure of heart;
It may certainly be given to a disciple or a son.

23. When given to one who is wise,
And who has love for God and for his teacher,
These truths will surely give Light to his soul.
They’ll surely give Light to his soul.

NOTES:
2. (The verses 4 and 5 from the first section appear to be interpolations, perhaps by priestly copiers who wanted to insert their own traditional lists of metaphysical categories as metaphors in this Upanishad. It is easy to see that these two verses are very incongruent with the rest of the Upanishad and are unlikely to be from an enlightened soul such as Svetasvatara; nonetheless, we offer these traditional interpretations): ‘The wheel of existence’ refers to the spinning universe.
3. ‘Three-layered tire’ is the three gunas: rajas (the principle of activity), tamas (the principle of restraint), and sattva (the principle of wisdom).
4. ‘Sixteen parts’ is the five elements, five organs of perception, five organs of action, and the mind.
5. ‘Fifty spokes’ is the five kinds of misperception (ignorance, self-love, attachment, hatred, and clinging to life); twenty-eight disabilities, nine inversions (or opposites) of satisfaction, and eight inversions of perfections (siddhis).
6. ‘Twenty spoke-connectors’ is the ten organs and their corresponding objects.
7. ‘Six eight-part divisions’ is the eight aspects of Prakrti: akasha, air, fire, water, earth, mind, buddhi, and I-consciousness, plus the eight bodily substances (dhatus): skin, cuticle, flesh, blood, fat, bone, marrow, and semen; plus the eight supernatural powers (siddhis), the eight attitudes (bhavas): righteousness, knowledge, renunciation, majesty, unrighteousness, ignorance, non-renunciation, and poverty; plus the eight gods: Brahman, Prajapati, deities, gandarvas, yakshas, rakshashas, pitris, and fiends; plus the eight virtues: compassion, forgiveness, absence of malice, purity, spontaneity, goodness, liberality, and absence of desires.
8. ‘A single rope’ is the binding rope of love.
9. ‘The three directions’ of love are love for (producing) children, love of food, and love of the heavenly worlds.
10. ‘Illusion arising from two causes’ is the illusion that the body is the Self, which arises from both virtuous action and sinful action.
11. ‘River with five currents’ is the world-illusion with the five organs of perception: the ears, nose, tongue, skin, and eyes.
12. ‘The five elements’ are earth, air, water, fire, and ether (akasha).
13. ‘The five organs of action’ are: the hands, feet, tongue, and the organs of procreation and evacuation.
14. ‘The five kinds of perceptions’ are: taste, hearing, vision, touch, and smell.
15. ‘The five whirlpools’ are the objects of the five senses.
16. ‘The five miseries’ are: resting in the womb, being born, growing old, becoming ill, and dying.
17. ‘The fifty branches’ are unknown. Some say they refer to a category in Sankhya philosophy.
18. ‘The five dangerous obstructions’ are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life.
19. ‘Unborn Nature’ is Prakrti in the original Sanskrit.
20. ‘Brahman’s Power’ is originally His Maya, the power of world-manifestation.
21. The net of Maya is His Power, and yet ‘He’, in the form of the jiva, becomes ensnared in the net of Maya.
22. ‘Speak only of His Power’; in other words, since the unmanifest Brahman cannot be described in words, scriptures speak mainly of His manifested appearances, produced by His Power of Maya.
23. ‘His own veiling Power’ refers again to His Maya, His manifestory Power.
24. ‘Gave expression to true knowledge’ refers to His imparting of the Vedas.
II. THE SECRET OF NATURAL DEVOTION

(Adapted from Jnaneshvar’s Amritanubhav in Abhayananda's Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works of The Celebrated 13th Century Indian Mystic-Poet, 1989)

Jnaneshvar, a casteless orphan, was one of the most brilliant poets, sublime mystics, and fascinating figures in all of Medieval Indian history. At an age when most men have scarcely begun their life’s work, Jnaneshvar (Gyan-esh-war), who lived from 1271 to 1296, a mere span of twenty-five years, had ended his; but not before having built an everlasting monument to his memory in the written masterpieces he left behind. In so few years, he had established a legacy that was to revitalize his culture, his language, his religious tradition, and make a place for himself as an enduring presence in the hearts of his countrymen for all time. The following is from Chapter Nine of Amritanubhav:

Just as a nose might become a fragrance,
Or ears might give out a melody
For their own enjoyment,
Or the eyes might produce a mirror
In order to see themselves;

Or flowers might take the form of a bee,
A lovely young girl might become a young man,
Or a sleepy man might become
A bed on which to lie;

As the blossoms of a mango tree
 Might become a cuckoo bird,
Or one’s skin might become
Malayan breezes,
Or tongues might become flavors;

Or as a slab of gold might become
Articles of jewelry
For the sake of beauty;
Just so, the one pure Consciousness becomes
The enjoyer and the object of enjoyment,
The seer and the object of vision,
Without disturbing Its unity.

A Shevanti flower bursts forth
With a thousand petals;
Yet it does not become anything
But a Shevanti flower.

Similarly, the auspicious drums
Of ever new experiences
May be sounding,
But in the kingdom of Stillness,
Nothing is heard.

All of the senses may rush simultaneously
Toward the multitude of sense objects,
But—just as, in a mirror,
One’s vision only meets one’s vision—
The rushing senses only meet themselves.

One may purchase a necklace,
Earrings, or a bracelet;
But it is only gold,
Whichever one receives.

One may gather a handful of ripples,
But it is only water in the hand.

To the hand, camphor is touch,
To the eye, it’s a white object,
To the nose it is fragrance;
Nonetheless, it is camphor, and nothing but camphor.

Likewise, the sensible universe
Is only the vibration of the Self.

The various senses attempt to catch
Their objects in their hands—
For example, the ears
Try to catch the words;
But as soon as the senses
Touch their objects,
The objects disappear as objects.
There’s no object for one to touch;
For all is the Self.

The juice of the sugarcane
Is part of the sugarcane;
The light of the full moon
Belongs to the full moon.

The meeting of the senses and their objects
Is like moonlight falling on the moon,
Or like water sprinkling on the sea.

One who has attained this wisdom
May say whatever he likes;
The silence of his contemplation
Remains undisturbed.

His state of actionlessness
Remains unaffected,
Even though he performs countless actions.

Stretching out the arms of desire,
One’s eyesight embraces
The objects she sees;
But, in fact, nothing at all is gained.

It is like the Sun
Stretching out the thousand arms
Of his rays in order to grasp darkness.
He remains only light, as before;

Just as a person, awakening to
Enjoy the activity of a dream,
Finds himself suddenly alone.

Even one who has attained wisdom
May appear to become the enjoyer
Of the sense objects before him;
But we do not know
What his enjoyment is like.

If the moon gathers moonlight,
What is gathered by whom?
It is only a fruitless
And meaningless dream.

There is really no action or inaction;
Everything that is happening
Is the sport of the Self.

The undivided One
Enters the courtyard of duality
Of His own accord.
Unity only becomes strengthened
By the expansion of diversity.

Sweeter even than the bliss of liberation
Is the enjoyment of sense-objects
To one who has attained wisdom.
In the house of bhakti (devotional love),
That lover and his God
Experience their sweet union.

Whether he walks in the streets
Or remains sitting quietly,
He is always in his own home.

He may perform actions,
But he has no goal to attain.
Do not imagine
That, if he did nothing,
He would miss his goal.

He does not allow room
For either remembering or forgetting;
For this reason,
His behavior is not like that of others.

His rule of conduct is his own sweet will.
His meditation is whatever
He happens to be doing.
The glory of liberation
Serves as an *asana* (seat cushion)
To one in such a state.

God Himself is the devotee;
The goal is the path.
The whole universe is one solitary Being.

It is He who becomes a God,
And He who becomes a devotee.
In Himself,
He enjoys the kingdom of Stillness.

The temple itself is merged
In the all-pervasive God;
The motion of time
And the vastness of space
Are no more.

Everything is contained in the Being of God.
If a desire
For the Master-disciple relationship arises,
It is God alone who must supply both out of Himself.

Even the devotional practices,
Such as *japa* (repetition of God’s name), faith and
meditation,
Are not different from God.

Therefore, God must worship God
With God, in one way or another.

The temple, the idol, and the priests—
All are carved out of the same stone mountain.
Why, then, should there be devotional worship?
[Or why shouldn’t there be devotional worship?]

A tree spreads its foliage,
And produces flowers and fruits,  
Even though it has no objective  
Outside of itself.

What does it matter if a dumb person  
Observes a vow of silence or not?  
The wise remain steadfast in their own divinity  
Whether they worship or not.

Will the flame of a lamp  
Remain without light  
If we do not ask her to wear  
The garment of light?

Is not the moon bathed in light  
Even though we do not ask her  
To wear the moonlight?

Fire is naturally hot;  
Why should we consider heating it?

A wise person is aware  
That he, himself, is the Lord;  
Therefore, even when he is not worshiping,  
He is worshiping.

Now the lamps of action and inaction  
Have both been snuffed out,  
And worshiping and not worshiping  
Are sitting in the same seat,  
And eating from the same bowl.

In such a state,  
The sacred scriptures are the same as censure,  
And censure itself  
Is the same as a sweet hymn of praise.

Both praise and censure  
Are, in fact, reduced to silence;  
Even though there is speech,  
It is silence.
No matter where he goes,
That sage is making pilgrimage to God;
And, if he attains to God,
That attainment is non-attainment.

How amazing
That in such a state,
Moving about on foot
And remaining seated in one place
Are the same!

No matter what his eyes fall upon
At any time,
He always enjoys the vision of God.

If God Himself appears before him,
It is as if he has seen nothing;
For God and His devotee
Are on the same level.

Of its own nature,
A ball falls to the ground,
And bounces up again,
Enraptured in its own bliss.

If ever we could watch
The play of a ball,
We might be able to say something
About the behavior of the sage.

This spontaneous, natural devotion
Cannot be touched by the hand of action,
Nor can knowledge penetrate it.

It goes on without end,
In communion with itself.
What bliss can be compared to this?

This natural devotion is a wonderful secret;
It is the place in which meditation
And knowledge become merged.

O blissful and almighty Lord!
You have made us the sole sovereign
In the kingdom of perfect bliss.

How wonderful
That You have awakened the wakeful,
Laid to rest those who are sleeping,
And made us to realize
Our own Self!

We are Yours entirely!
Out of love,
You include us as Your own,
As is befitting Your greatness.

You do not receive anything from anyone,
Nor do You give anything of Yourself to anyone else.
We do not know how You enjoy your greatness.

O noble One!
It is Your pleasure
To become our nearest and dearest
By taking away from us
Our sense of difference from You.

III. NIRVANASATKAM

The philosophy of Nondualism states that, just as every wave arising in the sea is nothing but ocean, and just as every clod of dirt is nothing but earth, so, in the same way, every object and every conscious soul is nothing else but the one all-pervading universal Consciousness. This philosophy is founded on the experiential realization that occurs when that eternal Self becomes revealed in the depths of one's soul. Otherwise, we remain ignorant of our true nature. The reason for our ignorance is that, at birth, that Consciousness becomes associated with the individual physical body that is born, and from that time forward we tend to identify as a separate individual person. We are limited not only by the illusion of separateness,
but we are also limited by the karmic conditions under which we are born, as well as by the characteristics we acquire through our current life-experiences.

These limitations obscure, but cannot alter, the fact that the underlying being and true identity of every one of us is that one universal and indivisible Consciousness who is the Creator and Sustainer of this multi-formed phenomenal universe. It is He who lives as every conscious form, and it is He alone who is the identity of all that exists. And yet, no matter how hard we try to know that eternal Self through the reasoning mind, we cannot know It; the direct awareness of that Self eludes us. We can reduce all existence to two: ‘I’ and ‘Thou’; but the further reduction to one, to the nondual Self, is something only He can do. When, however, by the grace of God, these two do in fact become one, contrary to our expectations, it is not ‘Thou’ who remains standing, but ‘I’ who inevitably stands alone as the sole Reality. This is why all the sages and seers to whom that eternal Self has revealed Itself have declared that “God and I are one; in truth I am He!”

Here is a song by the eighth century Indian sage, Sri Shankaracharya, called Nirvanasatkam, in which he tells of the unitive knowledge that came to him through his realization of the Self. Subsequent to that realization, he no longer identifies with any of the modifications of Consciousness with which we ignorantly tend to identify; rather, he declares over and over that He is the absolute Reality, Chidananda (Chit and Ananda; eternal Consciousness and Bliss; he is the one divine Self, traditionally referred to as ‘Shiva’:


Nirvanasatkam (On The Eternal Reality)

Song by Sri Shankaracharya,
translated into English by Swami Abhayananda

1. I am neither mind, nor the reason, nor ego; I am not the senses of taste, smell, or vision; Nor water, nor fire, nor earth, nor the ether; I am Chidananda.¹ I’m Shiva. I’m Shiva.

2. I am not the prana, nor its five kinds of movement, Nor seven gross components, nor five subtle bodies. I am neither speech nor the organs of action; I am Chidananda. I’m Shiva. I’m Shiva.

3. I am not the feeling of pride, nor of envy; Neither pleasure, nor duty, nor wealth belong to me. I am not attachment, nor greed, nor delusion; I am Chidananda. I’m Shiva. I’m Shiva.

4. I’m neither evil nor good; I’m neither pleasure nor pain; Nor mantra, nor temple, nor yajna, nor Veda. I am neither food, nor the one who consumes it; I am Chidananda. I’m Shiva. I’m Shiva.

5. I have neither death nor concern, nor vocation, Nor mother, nor father; no birth have I taken. I’m not Guru, not shishya, not friend, nor a brother; I am Chidananda. I’m Shiva. I’m Shiva.

6. I’m beyond every form and beyond all conception; I am everywhere, but beyond sense-perception. I am not detachment, nor am I salvation; I am Chidananda. I’m Shiva. I’m Shiva.

NOTES:

1. Chidananda: Sanskrit word, made up of Chit (Consciousness) and Ananda (Bliss); synonymous with the eternal Reality.
IV. SOME SANSKRIT CHANTS:

The Universal Prayer

Durjanah sajjano bhūyāt
sajjanah śāntim-āpnuṣyāt
Śānto mucyeta bandhebhyo
muktāś-cānyān vimocayet

Svasti prājābhyaḥ paripālayantām
nyāyyena mārgena mahīm mahīśāh
Go-brāhmanebhya śubham-astu nityam
lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu

Kāle varsatu parjanyah
prthivī śasya-śalinī
deśo’ yam ksobha-rahitō
brahmanāh santu nirbhayāh

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu nirāmayah
Sarve bhadraṁi paśyantu
ma kaścid-duhkha-bhāg-bhavet

Sarvas-taratu durgāni
sarve bhadrāṁi paśyantu
Sarvah kāmān-avāpnotu
sarvah sarvatra nandatā

Svasti mātra uta pitre no astu
svasti gobhyo jagate purusebhyaḥ
Viśvam subhūtam suvidatram no astu
jyogeva drṣyema sūryam

OM śantih śantih śantih
English translation of The Universal Prayer:

May all of the wicked return to good;
May all who are good obtain true peace.
May all who are peaceful be freed from their bonds;
May all who are free set others free.

Blessings upon all the people on earth;
May all the world’s rulers uphold what is right.
May only good fortune befall everyone;
May all the world’s creatures obtain happiness.

May the rain fall when the earth is thirsty;
May all the storehouses be filled with grain.
May everyone here be free from harm;
May all who are good be free from fear.

May everyone know a life of joy;
May everyone live a life of health.
May everyone see only good in this world;
May everyone soon be released from pain.

May everyone overcome all their woes;
May everyone see only good in this world.
May everyone realize all their desires;
May everyone everywhere be glad.

May our mother and father be blessed;
Blessings upon every creature on earth.
May our works flourish and aid everyone;
And long may our eyes see the sun.

OM. Peace, peace, peace
Prayer To Hari

Tvameva māta ca pitā tvameva
Tvameva bandhuśca sakhā tvameva
Tvameva vidyā dravinam tvameva
Tvameva sarvam mama deva deva

Dūra karo duhkha darada saba
Dayā karo bhagavān
Mana mandira mem ujjvala ho
Terā nirmala jnān

Jisa gharā mem ho āratī
Charana-kamala chita lāy
Tahām hari vasā kare
Jyota ananta jagāy

Jahām bhakta kīrṭana kare
Bahe prema dariyā
Tahām harī śravana kare
Satya loka se āy

Saba kucha diyā āpa ne
Bhemta karūn kyā-nāth
[ Namaskāra kī bhemta karūn
Jodūn maim dono hāth ] (Repeat these two lines)

OM pūrnamadah pūrnamidam
Pūrnāt pūrnamudacyate
Pūrnasya pūrnamādāya
Pūrnamevāvaśisyate

OM śantih śantih śantih
English translation of the Prayer To Hari:

Thou art my Mother, my Father Thou art;
Thou art my Brother, my Friend Thou art.
My wisdom Thou art, all my wealth Thou art;
Thou art my all, O God of gods!

Let all our anxious sorrows depart;
Mercy we beg, Bhagawan.
Enlighten me with Thy wisdom’s glow
And fill this mind’s abode with Light.

Everywhere in homes where Thou art served with love,
Everywhere Thy lotus-feet adored:
In that place, Hari, Thy radiant glory dwells,
Shedding Light everywhere.

Where Thy bhaktas sing their songs to Thee,
Where love flows like streams of rain;
In that place, Hari, from Thy high abode,
Thou dost listen to the strains of love.

Every good thing Thou has given free to me;
What, O Lord, may I give unto Thee?
Please accept this heart which I offer Thee
In these folded hands of mine (Repeat verse)

Thou art ever-perfect and complete;
This world, arising from Thy perfection, is also perfect.
Yet should this perfect world be withdrawn by Thee,
Still, Thy perfection would remain the same.

OM. Peace, peace, peace.
Song To Shiva

Namo’stvantāya sahasra-mūrtaye
sahasra-pādā’ksi śīroru-bāhave
Sahasra-nāmne purusāya śāśvate
sahasra-kotī-yuga-dhārine namah

OM viśvatoś-caksuruta viśvato-mukho
viśvato-bāhur-uta viśvatas-pāt
Sambahubhyām dhamati sam-patatrair
dyāva-bhūmi janayan deva ekah

Nānā-sugandha-puspāni
yathā-kālodbhavāni ca
Puspānjalin maya dattam
grhāna paramesvara

Ityesā vānmayī pūjā
srīmacchankara-pādayo
Ārpitā tena deveśah
prīyatām me sadā-śivah

Yad-aksaram padam bhrastam
mātrā-hīnam ca yad bhavet
Tat-sarvam ksamyatām deva
praśīda paremeśvara

OM saha nāvavatu
saha nau bhunaktu
Saha vīryam karavāvahai
tejasvī nāvadhītam-astu

Ma vidvisāvahai
OM śāntih śāntih śāntih
English translation of the Song To Shiva:

I bow to Thee, O Shiva, of many thousand forms; with thousands of feet, eyes, heads, thighs and arms. With thousands of names, Thou art One forevermore. Through thousands of ages, I bow to Thee, my Lord.

OM. Thy eyes are everywhere, everywhere Thy mouths; Everywhere Thy arms reach out, everywhere Thy feet. Thine the wings of birds, Thine the arms of men. Both heaven and earth belong to Thee, O God.

Many sweet flowers I offer Thee, many-scented and newly-blown; From these two hands this small bouquet please receive, O Lord supreme!

This short song of love I sing at Thy feet, O Shankara; By it, may the Lord of gods, Sadasiva, be pleased with me.

If I’ve wrongly sung some words, or mispronounced one syllable, All these lapses please forgive, and pardon me, O greatest Lord.

OM. Lord, protect us as one; nourish us, Lord, as one. Let us flourish in Thy strength as one; let our knowledge, O Lord, be changed to light.

Lord, change our hate to love. OM. Peace, peace, peace.

*  *  *
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. 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.

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 \( \text{gamma} \) 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

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:

**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 nondual 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…

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-intuitionals, 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.

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; 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.

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-Localy

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-Localy 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:
3. Bhagavad Gita, IX.7, 8; Ibid., p.103.

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20. EXEMPLARY SCIENTISTS:
JAMES JEANS AND DAVID BOHM

(from The Mystic’s Vision by Swami Abhayananda.
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I. JAMES JEANS

Homage To The Visionary Scientist, James Jeans

When I was a young man in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, many paperback books on popular science were published and were available at my local drugstore perched on revolving wire racks, usually priced around 35 cents. There I was able to find, not only anthologies of the great philosophers, but also the latest books popularizing the scientific theories of George Gamow, Sir Arthur Eddington, James Jeans, and others.

One of the first acute observers to see the ‘writing on the wall’ implied in the observations of early twentieth century physics was British mathematician and astronomer, James Jeans (1877-1946). Long before it became evident to his peers, Jeans understood that Einstein’s equations equalizing energy and matter meant that the material universe was nothing more than congealed light. In his book, The Mysterious Universe, published in 1931, he wrote:

The tendency of modern physics is to resolve the whole material universe into waves, and nothing but waves. These waves are of two kinds: bottled-up waves, which we call matter, and unbottled waves, which we call radiation or light. If annihilation of matter occurs, the process is merely that of unbottling imprisoned wave-energy and setting it free to travel through space. These concepts reduce the whole universe to a world of light, potential or existent, so that the whole story of its creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in the six words: “God said, ‘Let there be light’.” 1
But the recognition that the material world was born of light was not the extent of Jeans’ extrapolations on the revolutionary discoveries of physics in the early twentieth century. In that same book, he 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.”  

“…The terrestrial pure mathematician does not concern himself with material substance but with pure thought. His creations are not only created by thought but are pure thought. ... And the concepts which now seem to be fundamental to our understanding of nature ... four-dimensional space, a space which expands forever; a sequence of events which follows the laws of probability instead of the laws of causation; all these concepts seem to my mind to be structures of pure thought. To my mind the laws which nature obeys are less suggestive of those which a machine obeys in its motion than those which a musician obeys in writing a fugue, or a poet in composing a sonnet. ... If all this is so, then the universe can best be pictured, although still very imperfectly and inadequately, as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker.

“If the universe is a universe of thought, then its creation must have been an act of thought. Indeed, the finiteness of time and space almost compel us, of themselves, to picture the creation as an act of thought. …Modern scientific theory compels us to think of the creator as working outside time and space; which are part of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvas. … Indeed, the doctrine dates back as far as Plato:
‘Time and the heavens came into being at the same instant, in order that, if they were ever to dissolve, they might be dissolved together. Such was the mind and thoughts of God in the creation of time.’

Jeans had framed a new/old scientific paradigm—one in which the universe of time and space was the product of Thought, and the Thinker was transcendent to the Thought. But Jeans was a product of the long-enduring tradition of Western philosophical and religious dualism in which God and His Creation (Spirit and Matter, Thinker and Thought) were distinct and separate entities; and he was scarcely able to escape this old way of thinking, and to clearly enunciate the implications of this radical paradigm. Here, he suggests that the Thinker/Creator is outside the Thought/Creation in the same way that an artist is outside his canvas. He fails to realize that, just as in the case of our personal minds the thoughts exist within our minds, so must the universal Thought exist within the Divine Mind. The Thinker transcends the Thought, to be sure; but He is not “outside of” or separate from the Thought, but rather encompasses the Thought/Creation and fashions it in accordance with His own Will.

Then, in 1934, when Jeans was the President of the British Association For The Advancement of Science, he delivered an Address to that Association in Aberdeen, Scotland, entitled “The New World-Picture of Modern Physics”, in which he explained more fully his position. Here is an extensive excerpt from that lecture:

“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. It was created by the labors of chemists and experimental physicists, working on the basis provided by the classical physicist. Its time of testing came in 1913, when Bohr tried to find out whether the two particles of the hydrogen atom could possibly
produce the highly complicated spectrum of hydrogen by their motion. He found a type of motion which could produce this spectrum down to its minutest details, but the motion was quite inconsistent with the mechanistic determinism of the Newtonian mechanics. The electron did not move continuously through space and time, but jumped, and its jumps were not governed by the laws of mechanics, but to all appearance, as Einstein showed more fully four years later, by the laws of probability. Of 1000 identical atoms, 100 might make the jump, while the other 900 would not. Before the jumps occurred, there was nothing to show which atoms were going to jump. Thus, the particle-picture conspicuously failed to provide an answer to the question ‘What will happen next?’

“...The wave-parable serves this purpose; it does not describe the universe as a collection of particles but as a system of waves. 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—or the grin of the Cheshire cat if we can think of a grin as undulatory. This parable was not devised by Heisenberg, but by de Broglie and Schrödinger. At first, they thought their waves merely provided a superior model of an ordinary electron; later it was established that they were a sort of parable to explain Heisenberg’s pseudo-electron.

“...In this way we have the two co-existent pictures—the particle-picture for the materialist, and the wave-picture for the determinist. When the cartographer has to make two distinct maps to exhibit the geography of, say, North America, he is able to explain why two maps are necessary, and can also tell us the relation between the two; he can show us how to transform one into the other. He will tell us, for instance, that he needs two maps simply because he is restricted to flat surfaces—pieces of paper. Give him a sphere instead, and he can show us North America, perfectly and completely, on a single map.
“The physicist has not yet found anything corresponding to this sphere; when, if ever, he does, the particle-picture and the wave-picture will be merged into a single new picture. At present some kink in our minds, or perhaps merely some ingrained habit of thought, prevents our understanding the universe as a consistent whole.

“The old physics imagined it was studying an objective nature which had its own existence independently of the mind which perceived it— which, indeed, had existed from all eternity whether it was perceived or not. It would have gone on imagining this to this day, had the electron observed by the physicists behaved as on this supposition it ought to have done.

“But it did not so behave, and this led to the birth of the new physics, with its general thesis that the nature we study does not consist so much of something we perceive as of our perceptions; it is not the object of the subject-object relation, but the relation itself. There is, in fact, no clear-cut division between the subject and object; they form an indivisible whole which now becomes nature. This thesis finds its final expression in the wave-parable, which tells us that nature consists of waves and that these are of the general quality of waves of knowledge, or of absence of knowledge, in our own minds.

“Let me digress to remind you that if ever we are to know the true nature of waves, these waves must consist of something we already have in our own minds. Now knowledge and absence of knowledge satisfy this criterion as few other things could; waves in an ether, for instance, emphatically did not. It may seem strange, and almost too good to be true, that nature should in the last resort consist of something we can really understand; but there is always the simple solution available that the external world is essentially of the same nature as mental ideas.

“Again, we may begin to feel that the new physics is little better than the old— that it has merely replaced one
determinism by another. It has; but there is all the difference in the world between the two determinisms. For in the old physics the perceiving mind was a spectator; in the new it is an actor. Nature no longer forms a closed system detached from the perceiving mind; the perceiver and perceived are interacting parts of a single system. The nature depicted by the wave-picture in some way embraces our minds as well as inanimate matter. Things still change solely as they are compelled, but it no longer seems impossible that part of the compulsion may originate in our own minds.

“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 proved 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.

“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 what General Smuts would describe as ‘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.

“The same is true, mutatis mutandis, of the electrons of a parallel-moving shower. The biologists are beginning to
tell us, although not very unanimously, that the same may be true of the cells of our bodies. 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 space and time we are quite obviously distinct individuals; when we pass beyond space and time we may perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life. It is only a step from this to a solution of the problem which would have commended itself to many philosophers, from Plato to Berkeley, and is, I think, directly in line with the new world-picture of modern physics.”

Then, in his book, Physics And Philosophy, published in 1942, Jeans continued explaining this concept of a Mind-based universe which, he felt, was the inescapable conclusion to be derived from the newest discoveries in physics. Here are a few excerpts from that book:

“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. Mechanical Explanations of Nature

“Explanations which introduce tactile ideas—forces, pressures and tensions—are of course dynamical or mechanical in their nature. It is not surprising that such explanations also should have been attempted from Greek times on, for, after all, our hairy ancestors had to think more about muscular force than about perfect circles or geodesics. Plato tells us that Anaxagoras claimed to be able to explain the workings of nature as a machine. In more recent times Newton, Huygens and others thought that the only possible explanations of nature were mechanical. Thus in 1690 Huygens wrote: ‘In true philosophy, the causes of all natural phenomena are conceived in mechanical terms. We must do this, in my opinion, or else give up all hope of ever understanding anything in physics.’

“Today the average man probably holds very similar opinions. An explanation in any other than mechanical terms would seem incomprehensible to him, as it did to Newton and Huygens, through the necessary ideas—the language in which the explanation was conveyed—not being in his mind. When he wants to move an object, he pulls or pushes it through the activity of his muscles, and he cannot imagine that Nature does not cause her movements in a similar way. Among attempted explanations in mechanical terms, the Newtonian system of mechanics stands first. This was supplemented in due course by various mechanical representations of the electromagnetic theories of Maxwell and Faraday. All envisaged the world as a collection of particles moving under the pushes and pulls of other particles, these pushes and pulls being of the same general nature as those we exert with our muscles on the objects we touch.

“We shall see later in the present book how these and other attempted mechanical explanations have all failed. Indeed, the progress of science has disclosed in detail the reasons why all failed, and all must fail. Two of the simpler of these reasons may be mentioned here.
The first is provided by the theory of relativity. The essence of a mechanical explanation is that each particle of a mechanism experiences a real and definite push or pull. This must be objective as regards both quantity and quality, so that its measure will always be the same, whatever means of ‘measurement’ are employed to measure it just as a real object must always weigh the same whether it is weighed on a spring balance or on a weighing-beam. But the theory of relativity shows that if motions are attributed to forces, these forces will be differently estimated, as regards both quantity and quality, by observers who happen to be moving at different speeds, and furthermore that all their estimates have an equal claim to be considered right. Thus, the supposed forces cannot have a real objective existence; they are seen to be mere mental constructs which we make for ourselves in our efforts to understand the workings of nature.

…A second reason is provided by the theory of quanta. A mechanical explanation implies not only that the particles of the universe move in space and time, but also that their motion is governed by agencies which operate in space and time. But the quantum theory finds, as we shall see later, that the fundamental activities of nature cannot be represented as occurring in space and time; they cannot, then, be mechanical in the ordinary sense of the word.

In any case, no mechanical explanation could ever be satisfying and final; it could at best only postpone the demand for an explanation. For suppose—to imagine a simple although not very likely possibility—that it had been found that the pattern of events could be fully explained by assuming that matter consisted of hard spherical atoms, and that each of these behaved like a minute billiard-ball. At first this may look like a perfect mechanical explanation, but we soon find that it has only introduced us to a vicious circle; it first explains billiard-balls in terms of atoms, and then proceeds to explain atoms in terms of billiard-balls, so that we have not
advanced a step towards a true understanding of the ultimate nature of either billiard-balls or atoms. All mechanical explanations are open to a similar criticism, since all are of the form ‘A is like B, and B is like A’. Nothing is gained by saying that the loom of nature works like our muscles if we cannot explain how our muscles work. We come, then, to the position that nothing but a mechanical explanation can be satisfying to our minds, and that such an explanation would be valueless if we attained it. We see that we can never understand the true nature of reality.

2. The Mathematical Description of Nature

“In these and similar ways, the progress of science has itself shown that there can be no pictorial representation of the workings of nature of a kind which would be intelligible to our limited minds. The study of physics has driven us to the positivist conception of physics. We can never understand what events are but must limit ourselves to describing the pattern of events in mathematical terms; no other aim is possible— at least until man becomes endowed with more senses than he at present possesses. Physicists who are trying to understand nature may work in many different fields and by many different methods; one may dig, one may sow, one may reap. But the final harvest will always be a sheaf of mathematical formulae. These will never describe nature itself, but only our observations on nature. Our studies can never put us into contact with reality; we can never penetrate beyond the impressions that reality implants in our minds.

“Although we can never devise a pictorial representation which shall be both true to nature and intelligible to our minds, we may still be able to make partial aspects of the truth comprehensible through pictorial representations or parables. As the whole truth does not admit of intelligible representation, every such pictorial representation or parable must fail somewhere. The physicist of the last generation was continually making pictorial
representations and parables, and also making the mistake of treating the half-truths of pictorial representations and parables as literal truths. He did not see that all the concrete details of his picture—his luminiferous ether, his electric and magnetic forces, and possibly his atoms and electrons as well—were mere articles of clothing that he had himself draped over the mathematical symbols; they did not belong to the world of reality, but to the parables by which he had tried to make reality comprehensible. For instance, when observation was found to suggest that light was of the nature of waves, it became customary to describe it as undulations in a rigid homogeneous ether which filled the whole of space. The only ascertained fact in this description is contained in the one word ‘undulations’, and even this must be understood in the narrowest mathematical sense; all the rest is pictorial detail, introduced to help out the limitations of our minds.

“To sum up, physics tries to discover the pattern of events which controls the phenomena we observe. But we can never know what this pattern means or how it originates; and even if some superior intelligence were to tell us, we should find the explanation unintelligible. Our studies can never put us into contact with reality, and its true meaning and nature must be forever hidden from us.”

Sir James Jeans was indeed a visionary scientist in that he was able to see a truth that few others had seen, and he made that truth credible to others through his lucid writings. The mystic’s vision confirms and verifies that truth which Jeans came to solely through physics and philosophy, enabling us all to enthusiastically extol the fact that the Great Mind is indeed “the creator and governor of the realm of matter”, and proclaim that Divine Mind in which we live and move as the one and only reality to be adored as our own divine Self.

NOTES:

II. DAVID BOHM

David Bohm’s Implicate Order

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. ¹

—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 an individual mind 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 Synchrotons and Syndrocyclotrons 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 he was asked to testify against Robert Oppenheimer who was being accused of Communist sympathies. Bohm refused to testify, and he was thereafter tried and acquitted. But the damage had been done; he was fired from his position at Princeton University, and was unable to find work in this country. He then moved to Brazil where he taught briefly at the University of Sao Paolo. 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

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 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.”  

2
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”. 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 “superimplicate order”, which in turn may result from a “super-superimplicate 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 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. 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 indesirably 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 (mystics) of every generation.

NOTES:
1. Bohm, David; quoted in Friedman, Norman, Bridging Science And Spirit, St. Louis, Missouri, Living Lake Books, 1994; p. 95.
4. 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.
I. The Coincidence of Science And Mysticism

In the field of physics, the dispute over whether light was particulate or wavular continued to play out over several centuries. Newton asserted that light was particulate; Faraday and Maxwell showed that it was wavular. Plank and Einstein showed that it was particulate; DeBroglie and Schrödinger showed that both light and matter (electrons) were wavular. Eventually, Neils Bohr attempted to settle the matter by declaring that light and matter appear to be either wavular or particulate, depending on how you measure them; and he declared them to be “complementary” perspectives, each contributing to the total information about light and matter. This became known as the ‘Copenhagen interpretation’ since that’s where Bohr’s institute was located; and this notion of ‘complementarity’ was eventually adopted by the majority in the physics community.

As a result, today we have 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 both light and matter prove to be particulate; and in some experiments 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” or “wavicles”; and the phrase “wave-particle duality”, despite the clearly contradictory nature of the term, is commonly heard, though few seem to understand what it means.

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 the experience of which there is no distinction 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 attempted to explain in a picturesque way why these two complementary versions of reality were required:
“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…”

“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 space and time, we are quite obviously distinct individuals; when we pass beyond space and time, we may perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life.”

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. At that time, I had experienced a shift in consciousness from what I regarded as the ‘normal’ version of
reality consisting of numerous distinct objects into another, unfamiliar, version of reality in which subject and object are one. 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 spirituality 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:

3. **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 subatomic 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:

4. **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 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 this ‘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 I. And there was no difference between the world and I. 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, lo these many centuries. It was no doubt that very experience occurring to Jesus twenty centuries ago that led him to declare, “I and the Father are one.” The wave-theory of the scientists has only 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!
II. Are There Two Versions of Reality?

Not only is wave-particle duality a recognized property of light (electromagnetic radiation), quantum theory implies that “Wave-particle duality is a property of all matter as well. The electron, which we think of as a particle, is really a quantum bundle of an ‘electron-field’ which acts with wave-like properties.” However, we humans regularly perceive our macroscopic world (which is made up of the microscopic world) not as a Wavular (Nondual) Field, but as multiple Particulate (Dualistic) entities. Yet these two perspectives (or ‘parables’) are vastly dissimilar, one having its basis in an eternal sub-reality, and the other occurring as its gross manifestation in a spatio-temporal version of reality that only came into being fourteen billion years ago with ‘the Great Radiance’.

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, and from 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 nature of reality is a wavular continuum, and that this one eternal continuum of Consciousness and Bliss is all that is. This is clearly experienced at a ‘higher’, or subtler, level of consciousness, but having experienced it, how and why do we then sink 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 ‘quantum field’, this undivided continuum of Consciousness—this wavy ocean of reality? Is It 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. Some say 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 ultimately real 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 overlayed 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 opposites? Or is our delusion a universal one, created and ordained 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 almost seem to be distinctly separate dimensional realms: One, the Particulate, is our normal, personal, ‘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. The Wavular, Nondual, reality is absolute; but the Particulate, Dualist, reality is a product of the individual mind. It is initiated, I believe, by the arising of the sense of ‘I’—that 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 as the eternal 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 Dualist perspective is false, and begin behaving in such a way to bring about the transformation of your perspective from that of a personal 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 you can begin simply by treating everyone with love.

III. David Bohm’s Implicate Order

According to the mystics who have seen into the nature of reality at the noumenal level, God, the one absolute Consciousness, is the Source and Cause of all phenomena, manifesting the universe by His Creative Power in a manner similar to the projection of thought in the mind of an individual. 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 realization. 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 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 as research physicist at Berkeley, working on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotron and Syndrocyclotrons 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 he was asked to testify against Robert Oppenheimer who was being accused of Communist sympathies. Bohm refused to testify, and he was thereafter tried and acquitted. But the damage had been done; he was fired from his position at Princeton University, and was unable to find work in this country. He then moved to Brazil where he taught briefly at the University of Sao Paolo. He also taught for a brief time in Israel before moving to Bristol, England in 1957. In 1961, he became professor of physics at 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. Albert Einstein regarded him as his successor. 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 origin and manifestation of our world, Bohm developed and presented his ontological theory, postulating the “unfoldment” of the order of the phenomenal world from an “enfolded” order at a subtler invisible level, referring to these two as “the explicate order” and “the implicate order”. These two ‘orders’, one invisible and timeless (the implicate order), the other phenomenal and temporal (the explicate order), comprise what Bohm calls ‘the holomovement’, “the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”. 6

According to his theory, the implicate order is an invisible substratum containing an archetypal template for the emergence and dynamics of both matter and consciousness, much the way the human mind is the archetypal template of conscious thoughts produced from it. And in his wonderfully lucid writings he endeavored to explain how an “explicate order” such as this perceived universe is has its source in and unfolds from an implicate, or enfolded order. The implicate order implicitly contains and manifests the
explicate order, and the explicate order contains within itself the implicate order.

Bohm theorizes that, in the implicate order, all things are interconnected in a way that transcends space and time. This is because the implicate order is an integral noumenal substratum resembling a transcendent Thought-matrix which generates, forms, and organizes the constituents of the explicate order. Everything in the implicate order consists of one wavular continuum (as does thought) until it is manifest in the explicate (spatio-temporal) order; i.e., is witnessed by a conscious observer. Then it becomes particulate; i.e., ‘an individualized ‘thing’. Bohm suggests that this wave/particle complementarity can be explained by the implicate-explicate order duality. In the implicate order, objects consist of waves in a continuum (a Field); in the explicate order, those objects appear to be particulate.

Bohm eventually felt it necessary to amend his theory to acknowledge a yet subtler Source underlying the implicate order as its Fount, a superimplicate order (or even a subtler super-superimplicate order, both of which were only vaguely defined), which could be interpreted as an eternal multidimensional Ground resembling the Absolute Consciousness, or “the One”, of Neoplatonism, or the absolute Brahman of the Upanishads. Thus, not only is the emergence of time and space, matter and energy, given a causal base in this superimplicate order, so is the subjective consciousness of man. This view, while it replicates the metaphysics of the mystic, and has the advantage of being a consistent and plausible model, also has the disadvantage, from the standpoint of science, of being wholly undemonstrable, as is any metaphysics that postulates a transcendent and noumenal source for the physical universe. But Bohm was more interested in a correspondence with truth than with a correspondence with scientific criteria.

Bohm presented his ‘ontological’ theory, not as empirical evidence or ‘scientific’ proof, but as a plausible framework to answer many of the questions that were and remain to this day so baffling to science—such as the source of the wave-particle duality, the Mind-Matter duality, the apparent purposive activity of natural elements, the so-called ‘entanglement’ of individual particles, and many other unexplained phenomena. His multi-dimensional framework is consistent with the ‘mystical’ visions reported repeatedly by mystics and seers of every spiritual tradition throughout history. And, though there is no mention of a personal ‘mystical’ experience
in any of his writings, one suspects that Bohm did indeed experience a revelation of sorts in his early life that led him to devote his future life and career to the framing of a metaphysics inspired by that vision and applicable to many of the recent observations in quantum physics, his chosen field.

In his original theory, Bohm postulated the existence of a “quantum potential”, which he saw as a wave-like complement to each individual quantum (particle) that provided the information to guide and control the movement and function of each particle. In his later writings, he amended this concept to a “quantum field potential” assigning the guidance-wave—not merely to the individual quantum particle, but to the entire energy field from which the particle arose, and by extension to the entire universe. This brings Bohm’s theory more in line with traditional mystical theology which suggests a single divine Mind as the one guiding and controlling force operative throughout the universe.

We may readily recognize that the concept of the “implicate order” is quite similar to what the mystic describes as ‘the divine Mind’ (*Nous*), or ‘the creative Energy of God’, out of which all phenomena arise, and in which all are contained. While remaining ever-free and clear, the divine Mind extends Him/Itself by way of this Energy to the entire universe. The divine Mind is inherent and implicit in His Energy, and so He fills all animate and inanimate beings, to varying degrees according to their evolution, with His own Consciousness and Joy, and moves them all according to His will. Thus, the manifested living beings, who are the evolutes of His Energy, are able to know within themselves His being, His freedom, His Consciousness, His Joy. By His grace, they are able to transcend in mind the limitations of the egocentricity imposed on them in the process of manifestation and are able to ascend in consciousness to the very being of God, knowing Him as their original and authentic Self.

In that ascension, they perceive the perfection of His universal manifestation in which all created things are linked in a wonderful unity of being and becoming. 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 that 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
205

grain.” This vision is to be found also in David Bohm’s expression of the implicate-explicate order of the universe. He sees the “superimplicate order” as the ultimate conscious Source of the implicate order, and the implicate order as the causal framework of the explicate order—the explicate order (the manifest universe) being merely a limited “reflection” of the implicate order. In the mystic’s vision, as in Bohm’s theoretical postulations, the question of causality, dispensed with in the ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’ of quantum physics, reappears as an inherent principle in the design of the Whole.

In Bohm’s broad suppositional proposition, causality is seen to rest in the implicate order (and ultimately in the superimplicate order), whose phenomenal effect is the explicate order in all its manifestory effusiveness. And, while this ‘ontological interpretation’ of David Bohm’s is a marvelous restatement of and extrapolation on the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of science, merely another speculative philosophy, unprovable and unfalsifiable by science’s criteria of proof.

But consider: On the evening of November 18, 1966, I was privileged to “tap in” to what I now consider to be the subtle-level aspect of reality that Dr. David Bohm labeled “the implicate order”. Dr. Bohm founded his conception of ‘the implicate order’ on purely theoretical grounds, never suggesting that this hidden ‘order’ could be known intelligibly; but the fact remains that the visual experience described by myself and other mystics is identical with what Dr. Bohm describes as the characteristic features of ‘the implicate order’. Surely, this would tend to lend credence to the reality of what is experienced in ‘the mystical vision’ as well as to offer confirmation of the theories of David Bohm.

Though this non-spatio-temporal aspect of reality he refers to as ‘the implicate order’ has been called in the past by many different names, no one prior to Dr. Bohm has so clearly connected its existence to current scientific evidence and the requirements of a logically consistent scientific framework. Clearly, Bohm’s work is ground-breaking proof that gnosis is a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. In effect, Bohm has translated the great theology of mystics like Plotinus and Shankara into the vocabulary of physics and given it a form and rationale that is relevant today. 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.

Here is a graphic to show how each of the prominent mystical traditions relate to Bohm’s ‘causal’ scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plotinus</th>
<th>Vedanta</th>
<th>David Bohm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The One</td>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>The Superimplicate Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Divine Mind</td>
<td>Ishvara/Maya</td>
<td>The Implicate Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul/World</td>
<td>Jiva/Jagat</td>
<td>The Explicate Order</td>
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Bohm’s vision is, in its essence, compatible with, and virtually identical to, the perennial vision of the mystics. It is flexible enough to encompass consciousness, creativity, and all the phenomena experienced in the subjective and objective world of experience. It also provides the answers to nearly all of the questions put forth by quantum physics in recent times; in fact, it was designed by Bohm to answer these questions. For example, the question regarding the wave-particle duality and the phenomena of non-local effects. “Non-locality” refers to the fact that particles from a larger particle that are split off from one another are able to affect one another immediately even at great distances—hence non-locally, as well as acausally. Since there is no actual causal relationship between such distant particles, these non-local interactions are considered to be entangled or synchronous, representing instantaneously connected ripples in a vast conscious ocean of energy.

Thus, in Bohm’s scheme, as in those of the mystics, all things, as projections of a higher dimensional reality, are immediately linked in a web of relationship which is not determined by proximity, or interacting forces, but simply by participation in that common conscious Whole. That distinct entities need not share the same local region of space to be immediately interconnected is therefore explained by Bohm’s theory. As Bohm has stated:

> 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.
This explanation of the nonlocal (acausal) interconnectedness of particles that are constituents within a whole, as well as an unbroken continuum of Consciousness, suggests an explanation for clairvoyance, telepathy, and the oft-experienced phenomenon of synchronicity in human events, first given attention by Carl Jung. ‘Synchronicity’ refers to the occurrence of unexplainable and causally unconnected, yet meaningful, “coincidences” such as the type all of us have at times experienced. It may involve thinking of someone who then immediately calls on the phone. Or it may involve the uncanny repetition of a theme or motif in our daily life, such as an image, name or number repeatedly appearing in various circumstances. Or it might be evidenced in the actuality of some occurring event that you had dreamed of the night before. Such “coincidences” are explained similarly in terms of the quantum interconnectedness of all things in both the implicate and the explicate orders.

On the cosmic and the human scale, “synchronicity” refers to the universal propensity of matter and consciousness to follow a specific governing energy pattern: what Jung called an “archetype”. Archetype is the name given to specifically defined “energies” which exist as invisible real-world “forces” that manifest in both the material and the mental realm. For example, the Sun, Moon, and the planets all have “archetypal” energies associated with them. These energies were described and elaborated into metaphorical personalities by earlier civilizations, namely the Babylonians and the Greeks, who regarded them as “gods”, embodied as the planets. Thus, each of the bodies within the solar system, including the Sun and Moon, individually embody an archetypal energy which is said to define its particular “influence”. These archetypal influences continue to exist today, even though we no longer think of them as “gods”.

Many events which we would normally think of as synchronistic, or coincidental, occur in a common astronomical milieu; i.e., under common planetary conditions, as, for example, a retrograde station of Mercury, a Moon-Neptune square aspect, or any other similar configuration occurring in the heavens. A violent dream might occur at the exact time of a Mars transit to the position of a planet in our own personal natal planetary map. This would constitute a synchronistic relationship between the Mars’ transit and our own psyche. However, most of us are unaware of the continuously changing angular interrelationships between planets or of their relationship to our own natal maps. And while many hold that such interplanetary relationships are not the causes of earth-events or psychological states, they
are synchronous with them, and serve to signal the presence of archetypal energies operating in the external universe for those who are prepared to read these signs.\(^8\)

How, one wonders, do the planetary positions and angular relationships relate to human subjects? And most especially, how do the current positions of planets and their angular relationships relate to the positions of the planets at the time of the birth of the individual? Most scientists would answer, ‘They don’t! Such a notion is simply a relic of ancient superstition!’ But the reality of the synchronicity of planetary positions and their archetypal energies with actual events or states of consciousness is unquestionable to one who has made a long and careful study of the planetary motions and their synchronous correlations. And yet the question of how these distant planets can affect a significant change in one’s world and in the subjective content of one’s mind is still an open question, and a matter of yet unresolved controversy. Is the connection local or non-local? Is it causal or acausal?

The theory of a local connection, adhered to by some, derives from the classical mechanistic view of the universe, and suggests some kind of wave pattern interference or facilitation. If there is an electromagnetic-type of wave field that extends from all the planets to earth and also interacts with human brain waves, then the connection is local, and the phenomena of astrological correspondences is explained as a causal relationship. To date, however, no such field has been discovered. The alternative theory is that mind and planets are instantaneously interconnected non-locally as embodiments of one all-pervasive Intelligence. Such correlations exist not in any cause-effect manner, but rather in the same way as the other acausal connections we have discussed; they exist because of the interconnectedness of all things within the universe at the “implicate” level. Clearly, synchronicity, the synchronization of events, takes place only within a coordinated whole. In such a coordinated whole, we would never be able to know or prove how such correlations work; we could only say, “Thy will be done.” According to this theory, the universe is not a great clock; it is one conscious and coordinated Whole established in the one great Mind.

According to this theory, it is a consciously projected and integrated Thought-construct in which we live; a dream-world. The planets and their synchronicity with mental and physical actions are, like us, constituents in an integral Thought-drama. Who can measure the relationships between
items in a dream? They are not separate; they are constituents of a Whole, in which there are no divisions. It’s all God – His Thought-projection. He is both the Cause and the effect. Within this Thought-drama, planets move, people evolve; it’s all organically coordinated, but there are no independent causal relationships going on within it. It is the way it is because that is just the way He thought it, willed it. In other words, the planets are to be seen as signs, or markers, of particular archetypal energies contained within the whole, signifying elements of the cosmic design fashioned by a transcendent Intelligence. In such a universe, what clearer understanding could one gain by pursuing the matter further? Additional scientific enquiry would be irrelevant. Communing with the Author through love would be far more fruitful.

IV. The Synchronicity of Cosmos And Psyche

The dawning recognition by many scientists of the quantum interconnectedness of everything in the cosmos is one of the most significant recent developments within the scientific community. And one of the most potent sources of evidence for this view has recently been produced by Richard Tarnas, a cultural historian and professor of philosophy, whose book, Cosmos And Psyche, gives lucid and dramatic expression to one particular facet of this wholistic view. In his book, he relates the results of the thirty-years of research he accumulated on the relationships between the ordered movements of the planets and the historical events and psychological states observed in our Western culture over the last two millennia. From this study, he concludes:

I have become convinced, after the most painstaking investigation and critical assessment of which I am capable, that there does in fact exist a highly significant—indeed a pervasive—correspondence between planetary movements and human affairs, and that the modern assumption to the contrary has been erroneous. The evidence suggests not that the planets themselves cause various events or character traits, but rather that a consistently meaningful empirical correspondence exists between the two sets of phenomena, astronomical and human, with the connecting principle most fruitfully approached as some form of archetypally informed synchronicity.  

Drawing upon an enormous amount of research, which is divulged in the course of his book, Tarnas builds an impressively unassailable case for the
above conclusion. He has shown by scientific methods that there is, indeed, a proven correlation between the recognized archetypal energies associated with the various planets and the manifestation of those energies in the lives and activities of humans on earth. I had attempted to show, in my book, *The Supreme Self*, that even the mystical experience, what has been referred to as ‘the union of soul and God’, is seen to be signaled by particular planetary patterns, especially as those transiting patterns relate to the positions of the planets at the time of the individual’s birth; and Tarnas’ work now confirms and corroborates those findings.

What an extraordinarily remarkable and amazing discovery this is: that our lives, our births, our very thoughts, are intertwined with the planetary energies and their angular relationships to one another! I too have watched and wondered at the amazing synchronicity evidenced between the planets and my own inner and outer world for over thirty years, and I doubted that I would ever see a comprehensive presentation of empirical evidence for these synchronicities in my lifetime. But Richard Tarnas has accomplished the impossible. For that, he will take his place among the giants. In this recently published book, Richard Tarnas, one of the finest, most well-informed, minds of our time or any other, has shown in an overwhelming fashion the synchronous correlations between various planetary patterns occurring throughout history and the events and cultural motifs that have surfaced historically in human affairs. It seems almost certain to me that this book will be regarded in the future as a significant watershed in the intellectual and spiritual development of our Western culture. Whether the minds of average citizens are capable of the mental subtlety required for grasping and utilizing this knowledge in their lives remains yet to be seen.

Tarnas’ monumental study does not omit the recognition of a noumenal Cause behind the many interconnections in the universe; in fact, he acknowledges the limitations of a purely “scientific” engagement with the cosmos, and advocates a larger engagement that integrates science with spiritual vision:

.. This larger engagement with the cosmos will require of us a profound shift in what we regard as legitimate knowledge. It will demand an initial act of trust in the possible reality of an ensouled cosmos of transformative beauty and purposeful intelligence.
... The cosmos as a living whole appears to be informed by some kind of pervasive creative intelligence—an intelligence, judging by the data, of scarcely conceivable power, complexity, and aesthetic subtlety, yet one with which human intelligence is intimately connected, and in which it can consciously participate.\textsuperscript{11}

Though Tarnas is clearly an exception, there is a tendency among many of the purveyors of the newly formulated synchronistic worldview to omit or entirely dismiss the concept of an ultimate intelligent Cause, immanent within Its own creation. Acausal connections within the Whole do not eliminate the requirement of a Cause for the Whole itself. We must not simply take the ‘implicate order’ to be an independent \textit{a priori} substratum.

There is a supreme ruler from whom the implicate order derives, who generated the universe and set it in motion, who is its efficient and its material Cause as well as its underlying order, and who permeates every particle of the Whole. He is not merely the implicate order; He is the Cause of all that exists, and is the center of our intelligence, our creativity, our soul; He is our true and lasting Self. He cannot be seen or measured in any way; and so, He is beyond the methods of science. He can be known only through His gracious Self-revelation—in other words, through gnosis. He is the One to whom we must look, and the One to whom we offer reverence and gratitude for all that we are and all that we enjoy. Yes, Virginia, there is a God; He does exist. He really exists! And yes, He is loving; He is full of kindness and joy, and He knows everything. I know; I have seen Him.

\textbf{V. Summarizing Complementary Perspectives}

For David Bohm, the wave-particle duality was indicative of the perspective from two different planes or levels of reality, one invisible and beyond time and space, consisting of a field of spreading waves, and a second plane or level of reality manifesting in the physical time-and-space world consisting 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, he believed, contribute to our experience of the world that we perceive and with which we interact.

As Bohm points out, from the eternal perspective of \textit{the implicate order}, one contiguous field, or continuum, spreads its ripples, and everything consists
of those ripples or waves—there are no distinct individual entities; all are interconnected in one, and consist of that one, as waves spreading on the ocean consist of the ocean. But from the perspective of the (spatio-temporally manifest) explicate order, things are individualized, particularized; as each wave on the ocean has its own individual characteristics, each thing or being in the explicate order has its own separate identity or soul. So, in a way similar to, and directly related to, the wave-particle duality, there is also a duality of self-identification. Just as, from different perspectives we may appear wavular or particulate, similarly, from different perspectives we may appear to be identical to the universal Consciousness or distinct as an individual soul.

Another dispute similar to the wave-particle debate had been going on for centuries in the realm of metaphysics: 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 a free and independent will to do as we choose? 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 seemed to notice that this dispute was directly linked to the wave-particle dispute!

Just as light 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 as distinct individual souls. The perspective from the vantage point of eternity is quite different than the perspective from the vantage point of time and space! Likewise, viewed from these different perspectives, we may appear to be either totally determined by universal causal factors or entirely free to choose our own actions.

The notion that we, and everything in the universe, may appear as wavular from one perspective, and particulate from another has not yet sunk into the collective psyche; no doubt, it will also be difficult for humanity to come to terms with the understanding that, from one perspective, we are entirely at the mercy of the universal causal fiat, and from another perspective, we are entirely self-determined and solely responsible for our actions— in other words, that we are both the manifestations of the one nondual continuum and an individual soul, that we are both determined and free!
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 have not yet fully dawned on the scientists—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 (like David Bohm) that there are two separate perspectives overlapping—a wavular one and a particulate one (even if the particulate perspective turns out to be merely a subjectively induced illusion).

So far, humanity has not been able to come to terms with the question of whether we are determined or free in our willing; but perhaps we will also eventually come to an understanding that the determinism-freedom duality, like the wave-particle duality, is a complementarity of perspectives that we can accept, recognizing that we may appear to be causally determined and/or appear to possess a free will, depending on our perspective. Such an understanding, however challenging to our current world-view and to everyone’s sanity, would certainly serve to clarify and resolve one more long-standing dispute over the question of whether we are free or determined in our will.

We may also eventually see that this complementarity of determinism and freedom is closely bound up with the complementarity of identities—the recognition that from an eternal perspective we may appear to be participants in the continuum of the one world-soul (Atman/Brahman), and therefore identical with It; and we may also appear from the spatio-temporal perspective to be distinct individualized souls (jivas). Both of these perspectives contribute information necessary to the complete knowledge of ourselves and are therefore complementary. The relationship between the underlying unity of Consciousness (the implicate order, or wavular continuum) and the manifold universe of individual subjective souls and objects (the explicate order, or particulate phenomena) is comparable to the relationship between the ocean and its waves. What we mean by ‘the ocean’ is the self-contained body of water; ‘the waves’ are the varied unique configurations of water that play on its surface. Like waves, each soul, defined by the astronomical pattern that accompanies its embodiment, is unique and may or may not be harmoniously compatible with other souls, who are associated with different astronomical patterns.

The relationship between the varied soul-manifestations may be harmonious or disharmonious; but in the underlying Consci...
implicate order), as in the depths of the ocean, there is no differentiation, no multiplicity, and therefore no relationship which may be either compatible or conflicting. At the level of the explicate order, from the perspective of a particular soul, another soul may indeed appear to be incompatible, unlovable, and indeed unlikable; while, at the level of the implicate order, all souls are in fact inseparably one in the indivisible unity of Consciousness. The question of how we are to reconcile these two seemingly irreconcilable perspectives is one to which we have as yet found no answer.

I am convinced that, so long as we are embodied on this earth, there are two complementary identities within us: one, an undifferentiated continuum of Consciousness which we usually refer to as ‘the eternal Self’; and the other, an assembly of predispositions, habits, and karmic history, that we refer to as ‘an individual soul’. And until we come to terms with both complementary aspects of our identity, we cannot wholly know who we really are; we cannot know the full truth about ourselves.

Many spiritual teachers have advised that this ensemble of qualities that comprises the individual soul must become transparent to the light of God, the eternal Self who is within us, so that those finer divine qualities may shine through. One such spiritual advisor, Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), put it this way: “The very best and utmost of attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee.”

God, our eternal Self, has created everything from Himself, and so, ultimately, all is God. But within His creation, there are apparent dualities—such as body-soul, matter-space, the One-the many—all appearances only. “I” and “Thou” is another of these apparent dualities. So Meister Eckhart’s saying “let God act and speak in thee,” presumes a duality between “God” and “thee” which is only an apparent duality; there is no real distinction between the two—and yet there certainly appears to be a distinction: “I”, the individual soul, am that separate ego, that isolated “me” that stands over against the all-embracing One in whom all the universe exists. My little mind engages in self-centered noise and chatter; God’s Mind is pure clarity and inspiration—so, clearly, “I” must be still, and let God do all the speaking and acting. But these two, “I” and “God”, are simply two different perspectives from two different levels of consciousness in the same manifest individual. They are what David Bohm called the Explicate Order and the Implicate Order.
From the perspective of one’s individualized consciousness—what we refer to as “the soul”—God is other; God is the heavenly Father in whom we live and move and have our being. Our relationship to Him is to a hazily perceived Overseer who guides and inspires us. But from the perspective of the illumined soul, dissolved in and made one with the Divine Consciousness that is God, the duality of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ that is apparent only in the world of time and space vanishes, and the only perspective remaining is that of the One who alone is—the Implicate Order and not the Explicate Order.

Still, the apparent duality persists through habit, through the long-accustomed habit of separating one’s individual identity from the One, creating an ‘I’ and a “Thou” where only the One truly exists. So, while this apparent duality exists (i.e., while we are embodied), the practical solution would seem to be to regard the two—“I” and “Thou”—as complementary. Of course, when the true eternal Self is revealed, both I and Thou will vanish, and only the One will experience Its ever-present existence. The fact is, while we are always the nondual Reality, we are temporarily confined to a Divinely-produced universe of complementary identities, both of which must be thoroughly known and acknowledged.

NOTES:

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

2. 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-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html

3. Ibid.

4. See the description of that experience in my book, The Supreme Self,
available as a free download at the Downloads page on my website at: www.themysticsvision.com.

5. Neils Bohr: “Evidence obtained under different experimental conditions cannot be comprehended within a single picture, but [it] must be regarded as complementary in the sense that only the totality of the phenomena exhausts the possible information about the objects.” 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.


8. For more information on the mystical interpretation of astrological synchrony, please see my website: [www.theastrologersvision.com](http://www.theastrologersvision.com).


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22. WAVE-PARTICLE DUALITY
(from The Mystic’s Vision by Swami Abhayananda.
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A Wonderful New Science

Over a century ago, the science of physics was revolutionized by the discovery that light and matter appear to behave both as waves and as particles. The long-standing question of whether the nature of light and matter was wavular or particulate had gone back and forth throughout the previous three centuries, the consensus now favoring one, now the other. But then, in the early twentieth century, the leading scientists in the field of theoretical physics were unanimous in declaring that matter and light evidenced both wavular and particulate properties—properties that alternately appeared, depending on how they were measured. Thereafter, for all practical purposes, waves and particles (quanta) were considered to be “complementary” ways of describing light and matter.

But even though the standard ‘Copenhagen’ interpretation considers this complementarity a fundamental property of the universe, there are others who think that the ambiguity lies not in the nature of light and matter but in the fundamental nature of human perception and measurement. There are yet others who believe that the universe consists of one single wave-propagating continuum—and that the appearance of light and matter as particulate is merely the effect of the countless number of ways of perceiving the distinguishable manifestations of that one continuum. However, those scientists involved in practical experimental physics completely avoid dealing with the controversy simply by following the established mathematical formulas (involving the ‘collapse’ of the wave functions) that allow for whichever interpretation—wave or particle—that is called for; thereby leaving such theoretical questions regarding the ‘true’ nature of reality to more philosophically adventurous minds.

A distinctly more philosophically adventurous mind, that of David Bohm, gave expression to a ‘new’ conception of the universe in a 1975 article written with Basil Hiley. Here is a relevant portion of that 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.”

The ‘old’ way of conceiving the universe, I will remind you, regarded all the
things, particles, and individual beings as separate independent objects and
creatures that interacted in accordance with physical ‘laws’. The ‘new’ 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 outcomes of merely blind forces, and governed by laws of
probability, is now seen to be acting in harmonious accord within an
“unbroken whole” conceived and contained within the one Mind, wherein
“all things move together of one accord, and wherein assent is given
throughout the universe to every falling grain.”

The most amazing and most wonderful aspect of this new way of seeing the
universe is the recognition that every individual mind partakes of the one
Mind and is capable not only of establishing a meaningful connection to the
one Mind, but of actually experiencing its identity with that one all-
pervasive Mind. For those to whom this identity has been revealed, all
things and all beings are seen to be connected in an all-inclusive matrix of
what some call ‘Spirit’, and others refer to as ‘Mind-stuff’; and all things are
seen to be interrelated through one universal will or intention. Those who
have experienced their own existence and the existence of all phenomena as
manifestations of the one Spirit, the one immortal Mind, know with certainty
that all identity is one. Such people, known as ‘mystics’, are yet few, but
their numbers are growing, and one day the vision of a divine cosmos,
existing within a divine Mind, will become the ‘standard model’ of a wonderful new science.

NOTES:

Consciousness And Matter

Part One: Consciousness

Humans meet reality on two fronts: the mental front and the physical front—what the ancient Greeks referred to as Psyche and Cosmos—or what we today might call the subjective and the objective realities. Another way of referring to these two fronts is as the realm of Consciousness (Mind), and the realm of Matter (Body). And so, if we are to give a full picture of our experience of reality, we must give an account of both its mental and its physical aspects. The mental aspect of our reality, or consciousness, is experienced as wavular; the physical, or material aspect of reality is experienced primarily as particulate. But, since Consciousness is the source and creator of Matter, every distinct particle of Matter also contains Consciousness; and so, Matter is both wavular and particulate, as is the Light from which Matter is made. There is one all-pervasive Consciousness, and the consciousness of every distinct individual is included in and partakes of it.

Consciousness is like an ocean in that it is a continuum that is wavular; in other words, it is capable of producing waves of consciousness in the form of thoughts. We are all familiar with the waves we produce in our consciousness, and we are familiar with the fact that waves, in whatever continuum, are formed of two opposing movements: a crest and a trough—each movement necessitating the other. This became clear to me during a ‘mystical’ experience that occurred when I was in my twenties:

The experience had begun as an intense prayer, and initially, while I was still identified with my separate self, I was addressing God as “Thou”; but when God’s grace revealed to me that I was merely a wave on the one ocean of Consciousness, and that He alone was the sole reality, I realized that, now, to speak the word, ‘Thou’, would be to re-establish duality. For I saw that, with the thought of ‘Thou’, I bring into existence at the same time, an
‘I’. ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are interdependent; there is no ‘Thou’ without an ‘I’, no ‘I’ without a ‘Thou’. The crest and trough of a single wave are opposing twins, two sides of one coin. It is the same with all such pairs of contraries: “I love and (thereby) create (its opposite) hatred; I am in peace, and am fashioning chaos; standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.” All opposites occur as the crest and trough of a single wave. It is only in a continuum capable of producing waves that opposites necessitate one another in this manner. Thoughts, created in and of consciousness, are therefore undeniably wavular.

These waves of thought on the ocean of Consciousness produce duality, but Consciousness Itself, like an ocean, has no contrary to Itself, no opposite; It is the one substratum, the boundless and undivided ocean of Consciousness, and has no duality in It. Grace having revealed that ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are merely the crest and trough of a wave of thought, both were resolved in the one ocean of Consciousness who alone exists absolutely. Then, the false ego-identification simply vanished, leaving only the one all-pervasive Consciousness aware of Itself; and in that expanded awareness, all became clear: “Now, weeping and laughing are gone; night is become day; music and silence are heard as one; my ears are all the universe.” In that moment beyond time, “All motion has ceased; everything continues. Life and death no longer stand apart (because that One contains everything—living or otherwise). No I, no Thou; no now, or then. Unless I move, there is no stillness (for stillness cannot be without movement).”

This is the realization of the one eternal ocean of Consciousness; It is That which has been called ‘God’, ‘the Absolute’, ‘the Unchanging Ground’, ‘the divine Self’. When it is known, It is known to be the ultimate Reality, the final irrefutable answer to the question, ‘Who am I?’. Anyone who has experienced the divine Self in this way will tell you that the experience at its peak does not last forever; but it is certainly transformative and lasting in its joyous certainty.

Part Two: Matter

What, then, of the material universe that surrounds us and constitutes our bodily form? Theoretically, the universe of Matter is the result of an initiating eruption of high-frequency electromagnetic radiation, or Light, that occurred around fourteen billion years ago from the eternal Consciousness. That Light transformed into wave-particles, collected into atoms, molecules, gases, stars, and entire galaxies spread throughout this
vast universe. The one eternal Consciousness, manifesting in this way as multiple forms within Itself, then imparted Its own awareness to these forms as Life and Consciousness, and multiplied.

Eventually, after the passing of a lengthy stretch of time, this universal expansion will reverse like the alteration of a breath, becoming a universal contraction; and all Matter will implode back to its energy state in the eternal Consciousness from which it originated, and the universal cycle will be repeated once again. That high-frequency Light which transforms into the fabric that we call Matter is woven of God’s Intelligence and Light. Scientists prefer to say that Matter is made of wave-particles; but, of course, no one has ever seen a wave-particle. In fact, no such thing actually exists; ‘wave-particle’ is merely a statement of alternate possibilities.

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, Jedrzej 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”. It states:

The quantum uncertainty principle is the idea that it’s impossible to know two certain sets of information 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. ²

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 recognized 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.

The only question remaining is: ‘Can we give up our addiction to worry and doubt, our addiction to fear and fault-finding, and rest simply in the peace of God, our eternal Self? Can we accept our inability to know all the mysterious details of this material universe, and put all our trust and faith securely in God, knowing that we are upheld in His mercy, guided by His wisdom, enlivened by His breath, and made happy in His joy?’ Is it possible that such knowledge could be enough for us simple mortals? Can we learn to turn our gaze within, to quiet our own minds, purify our hearts, and know God as our own eternal Self? Yes, with His Grace, we can. Praise God.

NOTES:
Complementary Perspectives

Part I. The Coincidence of Science And Mysticism

In the field of physics, the dispute over whether light is particulate or wavular continued to play out over several centuries. Newton asserted that light was particulate; Faraday and Maxwell showed that it was wavular. Plank and Einstein showed that it was particulate; DeBroglie and Schrödinger showed that both light and matter (electrons) were wavular. Eventually, Neils Bohr attempted to settle the matter by declaring that light and matter appear to be either wavular or particulate, depending on how you measure them; and he declared them to be “complementary” perspectives, each contributing to the total information about light and matter.¹ This became known as the ‘Copenhagen interpretation’ since that’s where Bohr’s institute was located; and this notion of ‘complementarity’ was eventually adopted by the majority in the physics community.

As a result, today we have 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 both light and matter prove to be particulate; and in some experiments 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” or “wavicles”; and the phrase “wave-particle duality”, despite the clearly contradictory nature of the term, is commonly heard, though few seem to understand what it means.

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 the experience of which there is no distinction 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 attempted to explain in a picturesque way why these two complementary versions of reality were required:

“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…”

“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 space and time we are quite obviously distinct individuals; when we pass beyond space and time we may perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life.”

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. At that time, I had experienced a shift in consciousness from what I regarded as the ‘normal’ version of reality consisting of numerous distinct objects into another, unfamiliar, version of reality in which subject and object are one. 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 spirituality.
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 subatomic 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, pleasure-displeasure, approval-disapproval, 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 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 this ‘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 I. And there was no difference between the world and I. 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 recognize and cooperate with that grace or to ignore and deny 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 has been the experiential foundation of religion, and the bedrock of idealist philosophy, for lo these many centuries. It was no doubt that very experience occurring to Jesus twenty centuries ago that led him to declare, “I and the Father are one.” The wave-theory of the scientists has only 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!
Part II. Are There Two Versions of Reality?

Not only is wave-particle duality a recognized property of light (electromagnetic radiation), quantum theory implies that “Wave-particle duality is a property of all matter as well. The electron, which we think of as a particle, is really a quantum bundle of an ‘electron-field’ which acts with wave-like properties.” 1 However, we humans regularly perceive our macroscopic world (which is made up of the microscopic world) not as a Wavular (Nondual) Field, but as multiple Particulate (Dualistic) entities. Yet these two perspectives (or ‘parables’) are vastly dissimilar, one having its basis in an eternal sub-reality, and the other occurring as its gross manifestation in a spatio-temporal version of reality that only came into being fourteen billion years ago with ‘the Great Radiance’.

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, and from 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 nature of reality is a wavular continuum, and that this one eternal continuum of Consciousness and Bliss is all that is. This is clearly experienced at a ‘higher’, or subtler, level of consciousness, but having experienced it, how and why do we then sink 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 our individual minds?

What *is* this indescribable ‘quantum field’, this undivided continuum of Consciousness—this wavy ocean of reality? Is it 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. Some say 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 ultimately *real* one, then 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 overlayed 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 opposites? Or is our delusion a universal one, created and ordained 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 almost seem to be distinctly separate dimensional realms: One, the Particulate, is our normal, personal, ‘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. The Wavular, Nondual, reality is absolute; but the Particulate, Dual, reality is a product of the individual mind. It is initiated, I believe, by the arising of the sense of ‘I’—that 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 as the eternal 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 Dualist perspective is false, and begin behaving in such a way to bring about the transformation of your perspective from that of a personal 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 you can begin simply by treating everyone with love and respect, as yourself.

**Part III. David Bohm’s Implicate Order**

According to the mystics who have seen into the nature of reality at the noumenal level, God, the one absolute Consciousness, is the Source and Cause of all phenomena, manifesting the universe by His Creative Power in a manner similar to the projection of thought in the mind of an individual. 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 realization. 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 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 as research physicist at Berkeley, working on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotron and Syndrocyclotrons 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 political era, Bohm was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and he was asked to testify against Robert Oppenheimer who was being accused of Communist sympathies. Bohm refused to testify, and he was thereafter tried and acquitted. But the damage had been done; he was fired from his position at Princeton University, and was unable to find work in this country. He then moved to Brazil where he taught briefly at the University of Sao Paolo. He also taught for a brief time in Israel before moving to Bristol, England in 1957. In 1961, he became professor of physics at 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. Albert Einstein regarded him as his successor. 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 origin and manifestation of our world, Bohm developed and presented his ontological theory, postulating the “unfoldment” of the order of the phenomenal world from an “enfolded” order at a subtler invisible level, referring to these two as “the explicate order” and “the implicate order”. These two ‘orders’, one invisible and eternal (the implicate order), the other phenomenal and temporal (the explicate order), comprise what Bohm calls ‘the holomovement’, “the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”. 1

According to his theory, the implicate order is an invisible substratum containing an archetypal template for the emergence and dynamics of both matter and consciousness, much the way the human mind is the archetypal template of conscious thoughts produced from it. And in his wonderfully lucid writings he endeavored to explain how an “explicate order” — such as this perceived universe— has its source in and unfolds from an implicate, or enfolded order. The implicate order implicitly contains and manifests the
explicate order, and the explicate order contains within itself the implicate order.

Bohm theorizes that, in the implicate order, all things are interconnected in a way that transcends space and time. This is because the implicate order is an integral noumenal substratum resembling a transcendent Thought-matrix which generates, forms, and organizes the constituents of the explicate order. Everything in the implicate order consists of one wavular continuum (as does thought) until it is manifest in the explicate (spatio-temporal) order; i.e., is witnessed by a conscious observer. Then it becomes particulate; i.e., ‘an individualized ‘thing’. Bohm suggests that this wave/particle complementarity can be explained by the implicate-explicate order duality. In the implicate order, objects consist of waves in a continuum (a Field); in the explicate order, those objects appear to be particulate.

Bohm eventually felt it necessary to amend his theory to acknowledge a yet subtler Source underlying the implicate order as its Fount, a superimplicate order (or even a subtler super-superimplicate order, both of which were only vaguely defined), which could be interpreted as an eternal multidimensional Ground resembling the Absolute Consciousness, or “the One”, of Neoplatonism, or the absolute Brahman of the Upanishads. Thus, not only is the emergence of time and space, matter and energy, given a causal base in this superimplicate order, so is the subjective consciousness of man. This view, while it replicates the metaphysics of the mystic, and has the advantage of being a consistent and plausible model, also has the disadvantage, from the standpoint of science, of being wholly undemonstrable, as is any metaphysics that postulates a transcendent and noumenal source for the physical universe. But Bohm was more interested in a correspondence with truth than with a correspondence with scientific criteria.

Bohm presented his ‘ontological’ theory, not as empirical evidence or ‘scientific’ proof, but as a plausible framework to answer many of the questions that were and remain to this day so baffling to science—such as the source of the wave-particle duality, the Mind-Matter duality, the apparent purposive activity of natural elements, the so-called ‘entanglement’ of individual particles, and many other unexplained phenomena. His multi-dimensional framework is consistent with the ‘mystical’ visions reported repeatedly by mystics and seers of every spiritual tradition throughout history. And, though there is no mention of a personal ‘mystical’ experience in any of his writings, one suspects that Bohm did indeed experience a
revelation of sorts in his early life that led him to devote his future life and career to the framing of a metaphysics inspired by that vision and applicable to many of the recent observations in quantum physics, his chosen field.

In his original theory, Bohm postulated the existence of a “quantum potential”, which he saw as a wave-like complement to each individual quantum (particle) that provided the information to guide and control the movement and function of each particle. In his later writings, he amended this concept to a “quantum field potential” assigning the guidance-wave—not merely to the individual quantum particle, but to the entire energy field from which the particle arose, and by extension to the entire universe. This brings Bohm’s theory more in line with traditional mystical theology which suggests a single divine Mind as the one guiding and controlling force operative throughout the universe.

We may readily recognize that the concept of the “implicate order” is quite similar to what the mystic describes as ‘the divine Mind’ (Nous), or ‘the creative Energy of God’, out of which all phenomena arise, and in which all are contained. While remaining ever-free and clear, the divine Mind extends Itself by way of this Energy to the entire universe. The divine Mind is inherent and implicit in Its Energy, and so It fills all animate and inanimate beings, to varying degrees according to their evolution, with Its own Consciousness and Joy, and moves them all according to Its will.

Thus, the manifested living beings, who are the evolutes of Its Energy, are able to know within themselves Its being, Its freedom, Its Consciousness, Its Joy. By the grace of the divine Mind, they are able to transcend in mind the limitations of the egocentricity imposed on them in the process of manifestation and are able to ascend in consciousness to the very being of God, knowing Him as their original and authentic Self.

In that ascension, they perceive the perfection of God’s universal manifestation in which all created things are linked in a wonderful unity of being and becoming. 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 that 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.” This vision is to be found also in David Bohm’s expression of the
implicate-explicate order of the universe. He sees the “superimplicate order” as the ultimate conscious Source of the implicate order, and the implicate order as the causal framework of the explicate order—the explicate order (the manifest universe) being merely a limited “reflection” of the implicate order. In the mystic’s vision, as in Bohm’s theoretical postulations, the causal source, dispensed with in the ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’ of quantum physics, reappears as an inherent principle in the design of the Whole.

In Bohm’s broad suppositional proposition, causality is seen to rest in the implicate order (and ultimately in the superimplicate order), whose phenomenal effect is the explicate order in all its manifestory effusiveness. And, while this ‘ontological interpretation’ of David Bohm’s is a marvelous restatement of and extrapolation on the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of science, merely another speculative philosophy, unprovable and unfalsifiable by science’s criteria of proof.

But consider: On the evening of November 18, 1966, I was privileged to “tap in” to what I now consider to be the subtle-level aspect of reality that Dr. David Bohm labeled “the implicate order”. Dr. Bohm founded his conception of ‘the implicate order’ on purely theoretical grounds, never suggesting that this hidden ‘order’ could be known intelligibly; but the fact remains that the visual experience described by myself and other mystics is identical with what Dr. Bohm describes as the characteristic features of ‘the implicate order’. Surely, this would tend to lend credence to the reality of what is experienced in ‘the mystical vision’ as well as to offer confirmation of the theories of David Bohm.

Though the non-spatio-temporal aspect of reality that Bohm refers to as ‘the implicate order’ has been called in the past by many different names, no one prior to Dr. Bohm has so clearly connected its existence to current scientific evidence and the requirements of a logically consistent scientific framework. Clearly, Bohm’s work is ground-breaking proof that gnosis is a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. In effect, Bohm has translated the great mystical theology of mystics like Plotinus and Shankara into the vocabulary of physics and given it a form and rationale that is relevant today. 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.

Here is a graphic to show how each of the prominent mystical traditions relate to Bohm’s ‘causal’ scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Plotinus</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vedanta</strong></th>
<th><strong>David Bohm</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The One</td>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>The Superimplicate Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Divine Mind</td>
<td>Ishvara/Maya</td>
<td>The Implicate Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul/World</td>
<td>Jiva/Jagat</td>
<td>The Explicate Order</td>
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</tbody>
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Bohm’s vision is, in its essence, compatible with, and virtually identical to, the perennial vision of the mystics. It is flexible enough to encompass consciousness, creativity, and all the phenomena experienced in the subjective and objective world of experience. It also provides the answers to nearly all of the questions put forth by quantum physics in recent times; in fact, it was designed by Bohm to answer these questions. For example, the question regarding the wave-particle duality and the phenomena of non-local effects. “Non-locality” refers to the fact that particles from a larger particle that are split off from one another are able to affect one another immediately even at great distances—hence non-locally, as well as acausally. Since there is no actual causal relationship between such distant particles, these non-local interactions are considered to be entangled or synchronous, representing instantaneously connected ripples in a vast conscious ocean of energy.

Thus, in Bohm’s scheme, as in those of the mystics, all things, as projections of a higher dimensional reality, are immediately linked in a web of relationship which is not determined by proximity, or interacting forces, but simply by participation in that common conscious Whole. That distinct entities need not share the same local region of space to be immediately interconnected is therefore explained by Bohm’s theory. As Bohm has stated:

> 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
This explanation of the nonlocal (acausal) interconnectedness of particles that are constituents within a whole, as well as an unbroken continuum of Consciousness, suggests an explanation for clairvoyance, telepathy, and the oft-experienced phenomenon of synchronicity in human events, first given attention by Carl Jung. ‘Synchronicity’ refers to the occurrence of unexplainable and causally unconnected, yet meaningful, “coincidences” such as the type all of us have at times experienced. It may involve thinking of someone who then immediately calls on the phone. Or it may involve the uncanny repetition of a theme or motif in our daily life, such as an image, name or number repeatedly appearing in various circumstances. Or it might be evidenced in the actuality of some occurring event that you had dreamed of the night before. Such “coincidences” are explained similarly in terms of the quantum interconnectedness of all things in both the implicate and the explicate orders.

On the cosmic and the human scale, “synchronicity” refers to the universal propensity of matter and consciousness to follow a specific governing energy pattern: what Jung called an “archetype”. Archetype is the name given to specifically defined “energies” which exist as invisible real-world “forces” that manifest in both the material and the mental realm. For example, the Sun, Moon, and the planets all have “archetypal” energies associated with them. These energies were described and elaborated into metaphorical personalities by earlier civilizations, namely the Babylonians and the Greeks, who regarded them as “gods”, embodied as the planets. Thus, each of the bodies within the solar system, including the Sun and Moon, individually embody an archetypal energy which is said to define its particular “influence”. These archetypal influences continue to exist today, even though we no longer think of them as “gods”.

Many events which we would normally think of as synchronistic, or coincidental, occur in a common astronomical milieu; i.e., under common planetary conditions, as, for example, a retrograde station of Mercury, a Moon-Neptune square aspect, or any other similar configuration occurring in the heavens. A violent dream might occur at the exact time of a Mars transit to the position of a planet in our own personal natal planetary map. This would constitute a synchronistic relationship between the Mars’ transit and our own psyche. However, most of us are unaware of the continuously changing angular interrelationships between planets or of their relationship to our own natal maps. And while many hold that such interplanetary relationships are not the causes of earth-events or psychological states, they
are synchronous with them, and serve to signal the presence of archetypal energies operating in the external universe for those who are prepared to read these signs.³

How, one wonders, do the planetary positions and angular relationships relate to human subjects? And most especially, how do the current positions of planets and their angular relationships relate to the positions of the planets at the time of the birth of the individual? Most scientists would answer, ‘They don’t! Such a notion is simply a relic of ancient superstition!’ But the reality of the synchronicity of planetary positions and their archetypal energies with actual events or states of consciousness is unquestionable to one who has made a long and careful study of the planetary motions and their synchronous correlations. And yet the question of how these distant planets can affect a significant change in one’s world and in the subjective content of one’s mind is still an open question, and a matter of yet unresolved controversy. Is the connection local or non-local? Is it causal or acausal?

The theory of a local connection, adhered to by some, derives from the classical mechanistic view of the universe, and suggests some kind of wave pattern interference or facilitation. If there is an electromagnetic-type of wave field that extends from all the planets to earth and also interacts with human brain waves, then the connection is local, and the phenomena of astrological correspondences can be explained as a causal relationship. To date, however, no such field has been discovered. The alternative theory is that mind and planets are instantaneously interconnected non-locally as embodiments of one all-pervasive Intelligence. Such correlations exist not in any cause-effect manner, but rather in the same way as the other acausal connections we have discussed; they exist because of the interconnectedness of all things within the universe at the “implicate” level. Clearly, synchronicity, the synchronization of events, takes place only within a coordinated whole. In such a coordinated whole, we would never be able to know or prove how such correlations work; we could only say, “Thy will be done.” According to this theory, the universe is not a great clock; it is one conscious and coordinated Whole established in the one great Mind.

According to this theory, it is a consciously projected and integrated Thought-construct in which we live; a dream-world. The planets and their synchronicity with mental and physical actions are, like us, constituents in an integral Thought-drama. Who can measure the relationships between
items in a dream? They are not separate; they are constituents of a Whole, in which there are no divisions. The same is true regarding the relationships between items in the objective world: It’s all God – His Thought-projection. He is both the Cause and the effect. Within this Thought-drama, planets move, people evolve; it’s all organically coordinated, but there are no independent causal relationships going on within it. It is the way it is because that is just the way He thought it, willed it. In other words, the planets are to be seen as signs, or markers, of particular archetypal energies contained within the whole, signifying elements of the cosmic design fashioned by a transcendent Intelligence. In such a universe, what clearer understanding could one gain by pursuing the matter further? Additional scientific enquiry would be irrelevant. Communing with the Author through love would be far more fruitful.

**Part IV. The Synchronicity of Cosmos And Psyche**

The dawning recognition by many scientists of the quantum interconnectedness of everything in the cosmos is one of the most significant recent developments within the scientific community. And one of the most potent sources of evidence for this view has recently been produced by Richard Tarnas, a cultural historian and professor of philosophy, whose book, *Cosmos And Psyche*, gives lucid and dramatic expression to one particular facet of this wholistic view. In his book, he relates the results of the thirty-years of research he accumulated on the relationships between the ordered movements of the planets and the historical events and psychological states observed in our Western culture over the last two millennia. From this study, he concludes:

> I have become convinced, after the most painstaking investigation and critical assessment of which I am capable, that there does in fact exist a highly significant—indeed a pervasive—correspondence between planetary movements and human affairs, and that the modern assumption to the contrary has been erroneous. The evidence suggests not that the planets themselves cause various events or character traits, but rather that a consistently meaningful empirical correspondence exists between the two sets of phenomena, astronomical and human, with the connecting principle most fruitfully approached as some form of archetypally informed synchronicity.  

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Drawing upon an enormous amount of research, which is divulged in the course of his book, Tarnas builds an impressively unassailable case for the above conclusion. He has shown by scientific methods that there is, indeed, a proven correlation between the recognized archetypal energies associated with the various planets and the manifestation of those energies in the lives and activities of humans on earth. I had attempted to show, in my book, *The Supreme Self*, that even the mystical experience, what has been referred to as ‘the union of soul and God’, is seen to be signaled by particular planetary patterns, especially as those transiting patterns relate to the positions of the planets at the time of the individual’s birth; and Tarnas’ work now confirms and corroborates those findings.

What an extraordinarily remarkable and amazing discovery this is: that our lives, our births, our very thoughts, are intertwined with the planetary energies and their angular relationships to one another! I too have watched and wondered at the amazing synchronicity evidenced between the planets and my own inner and outer world for over thirty years, and I too have become firmly convinced of their factual validity. I doubted, however, that I would ever see a comprehensive presentation of empirical evidence for these synchronicities in my lifetime. But Richard Tarnas has accomplished the impossible. For that, he will take his place among the giants. In this recently published book, Richard Tarnas, one of the finest, most well-informed, minds of our time or any other, has shown in an overwhelming fashion the synchronous correlations between various planetary patterns occurring throughout history and the events and cultural motifs that have surfaced historically in human affairs. It seems almost certain to me that this book will be regarded in the future as a significant watershed in the intellectual and spiritual development of our Western culture. Whether the minds of average citizens are capable of the mental subtlety required for grasping and utilizing this knowledge in their lives remains yet to be seen.

Tarnas’ monumental study does not omit the recognition of a noumenal Cause behind the many interconnections in the universe; in fact, he acknowledges the limitations of a purely “scientific” engagement with the cosmos, and advocates a larger engagement that integrates science with spiritual vision:

.. This larger engagement with the cosmos will require of us a profound shift in what we regard as legitimate knowledge. It will demand an initial act of trust in the possible reality of an
ensouled cosmos of transformative beauty and purposeful intelligence. ²

… The cosmos as a living whole appears to be informed by some kind of pervasive creative intelligence—an intelligence, judging by the data, of scarcely conceivable power, complexity, and aesthetic subtlety, yet one with which human intelligence is intimately connected, and in which it can consciously participate. ³

Though Tarnas is clearly an exception, there is a tendency among many of the purveyors of the newly formulated synchronistic worldview to omit or entirely dismiss the concept of an ultimate intelligent Cause, immanent within Its own creation. Acausal connections within the Whole do not eliminate the requirement of a Cause for the Whole itself. We must not simply take the ‘implicate order’ to be an independent a priori substratum.

There is a Supreme Ruler from whom the implicate order derives, who generated the universe and set it in motion, who is its efficient and its material Cause as well as its underlying order, and who permeates every particle of the Whole. He is not merely the implicate order; He is the Cause of all that exists, and is the center of our intelligence, our creativity, our soul; He is our true and lasting Self. He cannot be seen or measured in any way; and so, He is beyond the methods of science. He can be known only through His gracious Self-revelation—in other words, through gnosis. He is the One to whom we must look, and the One to whom we offer reverence and gratitude for all that we are and all that we enjoy. Yes, Virginia, there is a God; He does exist. He really exists! And yes, He is loving; He is full of kindness and joy, and He knows everything. I know; I have seen Him.

**Part V. Summarizing Complementary Perspectives**

For David Bohm, the wave-particle duality is indicative of the perspective from two different planes or levels of reality, one invisible and beyond time and space, consisting of a field of spreading waves, and a second plane or level of reality manifesting in the physical time-and-space world consisting 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, he believed, contribute to our experience of the world that we perceive and with which we interact.

As Bohm points out, from the eternal perspective of the implicate order, one contiguous field, or continuum, spreads its ripples, and everything consists of those ripples or waves—there are no distinct individual entities; all are interconnected in one, and consist of that one, as waves spreading on the ocean consist of the ocean. But from the perspective of the (spatio-temporally manifest) explicate order, things are individualized, particularized; as each wave on the ocean has its own individual characteristics, each thing or being in the explicate order has its own separate identity or soul. So, in a way similar to, and directly related to, the wave-particle duality, there is also a duality of self-identification. Just as, from different perspectives we may appear wavular or particulate, similarly, from different perspectives we may appear to be identical to the universal Consciousness or distinct as an individual soul.

Another dispute similar to the wave-particle debate had been going on for centuries in the realm of metaphysics: 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 a free and independent will to do as we choose? 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 seemed to notice that this dispute was directly linked to the wave-particle dispute! Just as light 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 as distinct individual souls. The perspective from the vantage point of eternity is quite different than the perspective from the vantage point of time and space! Likewise, viewed from these different perspectives, we may appear to be either totally determined by universal causal factors or entirely free to choose our own actions.

The notion that we, and everything in the universe, may appear as wavular from one perspective, and particulate from another has not yet sunk into the collective psyche; no doubt, it will also be difficult for humanity to come to terms with the understanding that, from one perspective, we are entirely at the mercy of the universal causal fiat, and from another perspective, we are
entirely self-determined and solely responsible for our actions— in other words, that we are both the manifestations of the one nondual continuum and an individual soul, that we are both determined and free!

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 have not yet fully dawned on the scientists—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 (like David Bohm) that there are two separate perspectives overlapping—a wavular one and a particulate one (even if the particulate perspective turns out to be merely a subjectively induced illusion).

So far, humanity has not been able to come to terms with the question of whether we are determined or free in our willing; but perhaps we will also eventually come to an understanding that the determinism-freedom duality, like the wave-particle duality, is a complementarity of perspectives that we can accept, recognizing that we may appear to be causally determined and/or appear to possess a free will, depending on our perspective. Such an understanding, however challenging to our current world-view and to everyone’s sanity, would certainly serve to clarify and resolve one more long-standing dispute over the question of whether we are free or determined in our will.

We may also eventually see that this complementarity of determinism and freedom is closely bound up with the complementarity of identities—the recognition that from an eternal perspective we may appear to be participants in the continuum of the one world-soul, and therefore identical with It; and we may also appear from the spatio-temporal perspective to be distinct individualized souls (jivas). Both of these perspectives contribute information necessary to the complete knowledge of ourself and are therefore complementary. The relationship between the underlying unity of Consciousness (the implicate order, or wavular continuum) and the manifold universe of individual subjective souls and objects (the explicate order, or particulate phenomena) is comparable to the relationship between the ocean and its waves. What we mean by ‘the ocean’ is the self-contained body of water; ‘the waves’ are the varied unique configurations of water that play on its surface. Like waves, each soul, defined by the astronomical pattern that accompanies its embodiment, is unique and may or may not be
harmoniously compatible with other souls, who are associated with different astronomical patterns.

The relationship between the varied soul-manifestations may be harmonious or disharmonious; but in the underlying Consciousness (the level of the implicate order), as in the depths of the ocean, there is no differentiation, no multiplicity, and therefore no relationship which may be either compatible or conflicting. At the level of the explicate order, from the perspective of a particular soul, another soul may indeed appear to be incompatible, unlovable, and indeed unlikable; while, at the level of the implicate order, all souls are in fact inseparably one in the indivisible unity of Consciousness. The question of how we are to reconcile these two seemingly irreconcilable perspectives is one to which we have as yet found no answer.

I am convinced that, so long as we are embodied on this earth, there are two complementary identities within us: one, an undifferentiated continuum of Consciousness which we usually refer to as ‘the eternal Self’; and the other, an assembly of predispositions, habits, and karmic history, that we refer to as ‘an individual soul’. And until we come to terms with both complementary aspects of our identity, we cannot wholly know who we really are; we cannot know the full truth about ourselves.

Many spiritual teachers have advised that this ensemble of qualities that comprises the individual soul must become transparent to the light of God, the eternal Self who is within us, so that those finer divine qualities may shine through. One such spiritual advisor, Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), put it this way: “The very best and utmost of attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee.”

God, our eternal Self, has created everything from Himself, and so, ultimately, all is God. But within His creation, there are apparent dualities—such as body-soul, matter-space, the One-the many—all appearances only. “I” and “Thou” is another of these apparent dualities. So, Meister Eckhart’s saying, “let God act and speak in thee,” presumes a duality between “God” and “thee” which is only an apparent duality; there is no real distinction between the two—and yet there certainly appears to be a distinction: “I”, the individual soul, am that separate ego, that isolated “me” that stands over against the all-embracing One in whom all the universe exists. My little mind engages in self-centered noise and chatter; God’s Mind is pure clarity and inspiration—so, clearly, “I” must be still, and let God do all the speaking and acting. But these two, “I” and “God”, are
simply two different perspectives from two different levels of consciousness in the same manifest individual. They are what David Bohm called the Explicate Order and the Implicate Order.

From the perspective of one’s individualized consciousness—what we refer to as “the soul”—God is other; God is the heavenly Father in whom we live and move and have our being. Our relationship to Him is to a hazily perceived Overseer who guides and inspires us. But from the perspective of the illumined soul, dissolved in and made one with the Divine Consciousness that is God, the duality of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ that is apparent only in the world of time and space vanishes, and the only perspective remaining is that of the One who alone is—the Implicate Order and not the Explicate Order.

Still, the apparent duality persists through habit, through the long-acclimated habit of separating one’s individual identity from the One, creating an “I” and a “Thou” where only the One truly exists. So, while this apparent duality exists (i.e., while we are embodied), the practical solution would seem to be to regard the two—“I” and “Thou”—as complementary. Of course, when the true eternal Self is revealed, both I and Thou will vanish, and only the One will experience Its ever-present existence. The fact is, while we are always the nondual Reality, we are temporarily confined to a Divinely-produced universe of complementary identities, both of which must be thoroughly known and acknowledged.

NOTES:

for Part I. ‘The Coincidence of Science And Mysticism’:

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

2. 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:
Ibid.


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.”

NOTES for Part II. ‘Two Versions of Reality?’:

Neils Bohr: “Evidence obtained under different experimental conditions cannot be comprehended within a single picture, but [it] must be regarded as complementary in the sense that only the totality of the phenomena exhausts the possible information about the objects.” 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.

NOTES for Part III. ‘David Bohm’s Implicate Order’:


For more information on the mystical interpretation of astrological synchrony, please see my website: www.theastrologersvision.com.

IV. NOTES for Part IV. ‘The Synchronicity of Cosmos And Psyche’:

1. Tarnas, Richard, Cosmos And Psyche, New York, Viking, 2006; p. 68.
2. Ibid., p. 468.
Ibid., P. 489.

* * *
23. IS THE WORLD AN OBJECTIVE PHENOMENON?
(last revised: 5-18-19)

by Swami Abhayananda

This Article consists of excerpts from several different essays written at different times in the past few years; I have pulled them together in an effort to construct a coherent statement of my position regarding the question of whether the world that we experience actually exists ‘out there’ or simply resides only in our minds.

Part One

Elsewhere, I have described what I believe to be the method by which God created the universe as an emanation of high-frequency Light, which subsequently converted into material wave-particles that formed the atoms and molecules that constitute the many forms of the universe. It must be recognized, however, that not everyone believes that the universe was ‘created’, either by a divine Light or any other means. There are some thinkers like Shankaracharya, the 9th century Indian philosopher, and his late neo-Advaita 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 divine Consciousness-Bliss produces in each and every mind the illusion of a universe that does not actually exist anywhere but in the mind. An excellent summary of this philosophy may be found in an online book by one of the advocates of this philosophy, Stanley Sobottka, the late university physicist. Professor Sobottka was highly enamored of this philosophy as it was 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).

I and others, including most of the traditional Upanishadic rishis, as well as the author of The Bhagavad Gita, have a different theory: we hold the opinion that God has created an apparently objective universe through His Power of Creation (variously called Shakti, Maya, Ishvara). And so, the question is: ‘Does God create in our minds an illusory universe of objects that does not really exist, OR has God, the one divine Consciousness, created an apparently objective universe out of an insubstantial ‘stuff’ that
simply appears to us to be substantial?’ Which of these cosmological theories seems to be supported by the observations of current science? Scientists, like philosophers, are divided, since it is impossible to know for certain which of these theories is correct, or, in fact, if either one is correct.

It should be noted, however, that both of these theories lead ultimately to the same overall metaphysical conclusion: They both 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 one, that universe is essentially illusory and that the one and only permanent reality is the nondual Consciousness-Bliss (often referred to as ‘God’), 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 which we 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 divine 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.

Perhaps that is as close as we humans can come to resolution of this controversy, but let us investigate further with some relevant background information:

**The Mystical Tradition of Vedanta**

The people of India call their indigenous religion, ‘the eternal religion’ (*Sanatana Dharma*). It existed even before the Aryan incursion, before the Vedas. From the Vedas came the philosophy of *Vedanta*, ‘the end of the Vedas’, embodied in the *Upanishads*. The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, or Nondual Vedanta, was beautifully expressed in the Upanishads, written by some nameless sages perhaps a thousand years before the Current Era. 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 brings forth the entire universe, which he
describes as his ‘lower’ nature; 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, O son of Kunti, 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."

But, as He tells Arjuna, He contains a ‘higher nature’ [Purusha] that is not subject to this cyclic manifestation:

"But different from it, know, O mighty Arjuna, My higher nature—the Indwelling Spirit by which the universe is sustained. ...By Me, in my unmanifest form, are all things in this universe pervaded."

Pervading the material universe, He (Brahman) is the invisible Spirit, or soul, in all:

"The Lord (Krishna) said, Brahman is the Imperishable, the Supreme. Dwelling in each body, Brahman is called the individual soul."

This soul, says Krishna, “is indivisible, and yet It is, as it were divided among beings.”

"It is never born, nor does It ever die, nor, having once been, does It again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, It is not slain when the body is slain. Only the bodies, of which this eternal, imperishable, incomprehensible Self is the indweller, are said to have an end. That by which all this is pervaded know to be imperishable. None can cause the destruction of That which is immutable."

He goes on to explain to Arjuna that this indestructible soul or Self is not limited to one embodiment only:

"Even as the embodied Self passes, in this body, through the stages of childhood, youth, and old age, so does it pass into another body. Even as a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others that are new, so the embodied Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others that are new."
Much later, the illustrious teacher (acharya), Shankara (seventh to ninth century C.E.), attempted a reformulation of Advaita (Nondual) Vedanta, and in the process, introduced some ideas which are controversial to this day.

Shankaracharya (7th – 9th centuries C.E.), following in the Upanishadic tradition, set forth in very explicit terms the nature of the One without a second. Using the ancient terminology, Shankara spoke of the ultimate reality as Brahman. In the Advaita Vedanta of the Upanishads as well as in the philosophy of Shankara, Ishvara is regarded as the Lord and ruler of Maya and its world-appearance, including all souls. Brahman is the conscious Ground and Source, while Ishvara serves an executive and creative function. Ishvara can be prayed to, worshipped, envisualized, and realized; Brahman, however, is formless and absolute, far beyond human relationship, though It is the transcendent Source and Foundation of all. Since It cannot be described in speech, Brahman is sometimes simply referred to as Satchidananda, “Existence, Consciousness, Bliss”.

Shankara asserted that the phenomenal world produced by Ishvara’s maya was mithya, “illusory” or “unreal”. The phenomenal universe, said Shankaracharya, is an adhyasa, a “superimposition”, upon Brahman. This statement is not extraordinary in itself, but what is extraordinary is his statement that the superimposition of the world upon Brahman was an act of Ishvara’s Maya produced through the individual minds of those perceiving the world. For Shankara, “Brahman remains eternally infinite and unchanged. It is not transformed into this universe. It simply appears as this universe to us, in our ignorance. We superimpose the apparent world upon Brahman, just as we sometimes superimpose a snake upon a coil of rope.” 8 According to Shankara, “There is no reality independent of our knowing minds.” “The apparent world,” he said, “is caused by our imagination, our ignorance. It is not real. It is like seeing the snake in the rope. It is like a passing dream.” 9 In other words, according to Shankara, there is no objective world; there is only the world that exists in our minds and that we individually invent.10

Shankara, following in the tradition of his paramguru (his guru’s guru), Gaudapada, taught that only Brahman exists, and that the universally perceived phenomena of ‘the world’ appear, not because they are ‘created’ by God, but rather because we humans, while actually perceiving only Brahman, project, or “superimpose” names and forms upon that invisible substratum by the power of maya. He interpreted God’s power of Maya (illusion) to be, not God’s power to ‘create’ an illusory objective universe,
but a power placed by God within the human soul to project, or imagine, a phenomenal world where there is truly only Brahman, much as one might imagine a snake where there is actually a rope, or a body of water where there is only a dry desert. But since Brahman is not an object of our perception upon which an illusory object might be superimposed, we must wonder how such analogies could apply.

Thus, while in the traditional philosophy of Vedanta—supported by the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita—the world is represented as an illusory, but objective, phenomenon produced by God through His Creative Power (Shakti, Maya, Brahma, Ishvara), Shankara’s ‘doctrine of superimposition’ asserts that the perceived universe is merely an imaginary projection by the individual mind or soul of a world of objects superimposed upon the substrate of Brahman—in other words, that it is a subjective illusion that takes place solely in the human mind, or individual jiva.

[Let me remind the reader, however, that “the individual jiva” is, in reality, the Atman, the divine Self, Brahman, or the one Consciousness-Bliss.]

In the West, Plato and Plotinus postulated an all-pervading radiation of the Divine Consciousness throughout the material universe, which they called “Soul”. It is by means of this pervading Divine Consciousness, says Plotinus, that God is present as the Self of everyone. Shankaracharya offers no such explanation, however; in fact, for him, there is no universe to be pervaded. There is only Brahman/Atman; and the perceived universe is but a projected illusion existing only in the consciousness of the jiva (which is really the Atman).

Nevertheless, he concedes that, from a relative point of view, Brahman/Atman is omnipresent as the absolute Consciousness that is the substratum of the universe and the inner Self of man, falsely appearing to us as an ego, soul, or jiva. He explains that it is due to Ishvara’s power of Maya that one appears to be an individualized soul; but this soul is actually Atman, the Divine Self, and can be realized as such. Here, Shankara explains the identity of the individual soul and the Divine Self (Atman/Brahman):

"The transmigrating soul is not different from the Lord. …Just as the light of the Sun and the Sun itself are not absolutely different, so also the soul and the supreme Self are not different.

"…Because all souls are essentially non-different, and their apparent difference is due to ignorance (avidya) only, the
individual soul, after having dispelled ignorance by true knowledge, passes into Unity with the supreme Self.  

"The Self…can be directly realized as pure Consciousness and infinite Bliss. Its appearance as an individual soul is caused by the delusion of our understanding and has no reality. By its very nature, this appearance is unreal. When our delusion has been removed, it [the individualized soul] ceases to exist."

So far, Shankara’s philosophy is in accord with the mystical philosophy of all true seers; however, it is when Shankara explains the illusory nature of the universe that some difficulties arise. The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita hold that Brahman possesses a creative Power, called Maya, by which He creates or projects, an objective universe of visible objects. Passages from certain of the works attributed to Shankara, such as the following from his Atma Bodha, would lead one to believe that he held a similar position:

"Visible objects, like the body, mind, etc., are born of the primal Energy (Shakti) and the ignorance (avidya) attending it and are evanescent like bubbles. One should realize the pure, eternal Self, which is other than these, and know, “I am Brahman (aham brahmasmi).”

But Shankara clearly believed that the world was never actually created, that it is merely a “projection” (adhyasa) upon Brahman produced by the individual soul or mind, due to an ignorance (avidya) divinely inherent in it. From his considerable body of works, it is apparent that Shankara believed that we “project” or “superimpose” an imagined world upon Brahman, as one “projects” a mirage upon the desert, or an imaginary snake upon a rope. This is known as ‘the doctrine of superimposition’ (vivartavada). Here is Shankara’s explanation of this idea:

"The universe does not exist apart from the Self (Atman). Our perception of it as having an independent existence is false, like our perception of blueness in the sky. How can a superimposed attribute have any existence, apart from its substratum? It is only our delusion which causes this misconception of the underlying reality. …The apparent world is caused by our imagination, in its ignorance. It is not real. It is like seeing the snake in the rope. It is like a passing dream"

Shankara’s theory of ‘superimposition’ asserts that the subjective human ego, or jiva, endowed with a Mayic power, projects the entire universe of objects upon Brahman. That means that, since the universe has clearly been
around for a while, the universe was initially projected by early man. But we must remember that in Shankara’s time no one even imagined that man had evolved over time from more primitive species. Shankara could not have anticipated the eventual development of evolutionary theory, which, if it is correct, puts a serious crimp in the theory of superimposition. Insofar as Shankara knew, man had existed forever, and had always been around to imagine a world. He was ignorant of the fact that prior to around two million years ago there were no humans. And if the world could only be ‘imagined’ by a human being, then the world did not exist prior to the evolution from the lower animal species to the human species. If this were true, the present evidence for the evolutionary history of the universe, from its beginning to the development of homo sapiens, including astronomical observations, geological strata, fossils, etc., tells of a world that never existed, since there was no one around at that time to imagine it.

If Shankara’s theory were correct, it would mean that the first humans, as well as all subsequent humans, imagined (or projected) the geological strata that told of a more ancient past, and we imagined a universe where the light from galaxies distant in time told, not of an objective reality, but of a merely imagined past. The history of our universe, according to Shankara, never occurred—except in the minds of the first humans; i.e., all the empirical evidence for the antiquity of the world was simply deceptive and illusory. The obvious question that arises is: ‘If the world, the universe, is much older than man, as it appears to be, how could the world possibly be the product of man’s mind? Can an effect precede its Cause?’

Had Shankara known of the relatively recent origin of man, it would have been necessary to suggest that perhaps the animal and even bacterial life-forms, who seem also to perceive a world of objects, project the world by means of the same Mayic power of imagination, this same mental projection! But what of the compelling astronomical and geographical evidence for the existence of the universe during preceding billions of years prior to the appearance of even the simplest forms of life? How could we possibly justify the belief that the universe only came into existence when there was a conscious living being to imagine or superimpose it upon Brahman?

In recent years, a similar misconception arose when a group of Jews and Christians banding together under the label “Young Earth Creationism”, professed to believe in a literal interpretation of the Biblical book of Genesis, asserting that the universe, earth, and all life was actually created by God between 5700 and 10,000 years ago in six 24-hour days, despite the
empirically based evidence that the universe began some 13.7 billion years ago, the earth about 4.5 billion years ago, and intelligent life on earth around 2.5 million years ago. They interpreted the account given in the Bible as literal, believing that it was infallibly and necessarily true. In fact, prior to around 1800 A.D., when the empirical method of science first began to be regarded respectfully, nearly everyone interpreted the Bible literally, like these “Young Earth Creationists”. And a 2011 Gallup survey reports that 30% of U.S. adults still do.

When these ‘Young Earth Creationists’ were confronted with the cosmological and geological evidence for a much more ancient past, they countered that the universe and the earth were created around 6000 years ago with all the false indications of an older cosmological and geological past built into it, even though that past never actually occurred! In other words, the evidence for a more ancient universe and planet earth was divinely fabricated. However, this implied a devious and deceitful Creator God, which ultimately could not be considered as acceptable.

And so, as it turns out, it is not so easy to explain away empirical evidence. We are forced to choose between a speculative metaphysical theory and the evidence of our reason and senses. Is there really a world out there or does it exist only in our consciousness of it? Another way of thinking about this question is to ask: ‘Did the one Divine Mind create this illusory universe around 14 billion years ago, or is it created independently by each of us daily in our own conscious minds?’ This is a question which each of us must answer for ourselves. What do you think?

Our current understanding of the nature of the material world leads us to conclude that the forms we perceive through our senses are ultimately mere agglomerations of the electromagnetic charges and emergent forces that constitute the fermions and bosons produced from the original electromagnetic radiation (the ‘Great Radiance’), and that the perceivable forms produced by the congregation of these insubstantial wave-particles are indeed “illusory”. Shankara, however, could not possibly have understood in his own time that the appearance of physical matter arises from the organization of intangible submicroscopic wave-particles in such a way that they present the appearance of substance and extension.

Shankara knew nothing of such wave-particles. Though he had not imagined them, we have every reason to believe that they nonetheless existed, even then. He did know, from his unitive visionary experience, that the Soul (Atman) is identical with Brahman and that, in relation to eternal Being, the
phenomenal world is illusory; but, without a knowledge of the true nature of matter, and perhaps influenced somewhat by the Buddhist metaphysics popular at the time, he was able to account for the unreality of the world only by assuming that it was an illusion produced by a Mayic ignorance (avidya) within the human mind, causing the mind to imagine a world exterior to it.

Science And Gnosis

Science and philosophy deal with theories, and we attempt to prove them by logic and experiment; but the mystic is gifted with a visionary experience that comes to him without his knowing how, and it shows to him the true nature of reality. 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. In this state, the universe does not cease to exist; the universe continues as before, but he experiences it from a perspective that is free of the duality produced by a limited individual perspective. He becomes aware that his sense of an individual identity is gone, and that his body is not the possession of any individual persona but belongs to the one independent 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 related 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; the veil of an illusory ego had been lifted, and now he is seeing truly and without the obfuscation of an erroneous orientation. He experiences himself as 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-Bliss. 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 realizes that his former dualistic relationship with God was 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, or opposites, 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 of emotion, 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 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 all-pervasive existence is conscious, autonomous, and integrally coordinated.

The idea that we, as individual egos, experience our world subjectively does not exclude the possibility of an objective world; in fact, it seems to me that the world that we experience is most certainly both subjective and objective. It is true, as is claimed by the subjectivists, that everything we experience is experienced within our minds, subjectively. But consider: the world that we experience is one that has evolved objectively in time from its primitive beginnings to its present state. In other words, if there hadn’t been a real evolution, from high-frequency light to quanta, to atoms and molecules, to objects and living creatures, and their development through time, then how would the world that we perceive today have otherwise attained to its present form? Is it possible that the relics of the past, such as skeletal remains, etc. have resulted from an historical evolution that takes place entirely in our subjective minds? It seems to me that we have to conclude that the world, the broad universe, though illusory, is an objective universe that is really out there, and that it is experienced subjectively, in here.

So, to answer the question that is posed in the title, is the world an objective phenomenon? Objective for whom? For all of us egos in the world of duality, the world certainly appears as an objective phenomenon, but to the One who alone exists, to the eternal Consciousness-Bliss, the appearance of the universe is experienced as a subjective illusion. So, no, the world is not an objective phenomenon!16

We have to distinguish between the false ego, that doesn’t really exist, and the real Identity, which is the one Consciousness-Bliss that is revealed as everyone’s ultimate Self. Many confusions arise when we speak of the false (ego) as the doer or experiencer. That individual being you refer to as “me”
is but a transitory imagination. The divine Consciousness within you is God and is eternal; but the imaginary self you falsely identify with never really existed. That ego is just a false idea that has no factual agency. While it lasts, it is merely an illusion. The ultimate ‘I’, the undefinable Self that mystical experience shows to be the eternal Reality, is who we really are; and everything in the entire universe undeniably exists within that Self. That being so, the world— from the vantage point of the One—is experienced as a subjective illusion. He/It/I is the one and only doer, the only reality; the world-appearance is within Him/It/I, and, for Him/It/I, that world-appearance is a subjective illusion.

Because the one Consciousness-Bliss has produced along with the world-appearance the illusion of separate individual beings (egos), there is an appearance of multiple experiences occurring to these individual beings both within and without, both subjectively and objectively, but that is in the world of duality, in the projected world of illusion. The one Consciousness-Bliss is beyond the illusion of duality. That world of duality is nothing more than a dream—a subjective dream occurring within the one eternal Consciousness-Bliss, the only true ‘I’. That Mind-constructed world comes and goes. It is a transient illusion. The one and only lasting Reality is the eternal Consciousness-Bliss. He alone is. That eternal YOU alone exists. Rejoice!

When this truth was revealed in me, the very first words from my mouth were “O my God, even this body is Thine own!” In that experience, my consciousness was the Consciousness of God, and I' was seen to be in the clouds and in the earth; I' was realized to be the life-pulse of all creatures, the resounding bells of inner joy and the fiery intensity of song that bursts from the human heart. Everything—even this being I call ‘I’—is made of God. All was seen to be an endless continuum of divine Being; and I experienced that infinite Consciousness as my own. The universe is arguably an illusion, a sequence of appearances, formed at the subatomic level by electromagnetic impulses and experienced in the subjective mind; but the underlying cause and substance is the divine Consciousness that is God. And That, it is realized, is one’s eternal Identity.

I saw, in my spiritual vision, that it is the restrictive egoic sense, the personal ‘I’, that creates the interior illusion of duality, that invents the mental opposites of love and hatred, peace and unrest, happiness and sorrow, while in truth there is only the one undivided blissful reality. I saw that the Creator breathes forth the vast universe and then withdraws it again in a
repetitive cycle of becoming and ending, and that all things move together of one will in an intricately coordinated universe.

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, that soul 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 eternal 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 own 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.

The revelatory unitive experience, sometimes referred to as “mystical experience”, that reveals the Divine nature of the universe, is the same for all who have known it, and yet it is interpreted variously. The unitive experience has the quality of being ultimately real, unmediated, indubitable. And the experience of returning from that unitive vision to the world of duality, to the phenomenal world of space and time, does seem like re-entering a mind-projection, a hologram, or a dream scene. In fact, it is a mind-based projection. But it is not the projection of one’s own mind; it is a projection of the one Divine Mind, who has formed this universe of His own Light.

For everyone who has experienced this revelation, the Divine Self is realized to be the source and essence of the universe; but in the one interpretation, the Self projects an Energy from Itself that forms the perceived universe;
and in the other interpretation, the Self projects (or imagines) a non-existent universe within the mind of the perceiver. The one interpretation states that the universe exists in the Mind of God, even when there is no one else to be consciously aware of it; and the other interpretation holds that the universe exists in the mind of the individual soul, and that without a soul to be conscious of it, the universe does not exist. Which view do you regard as “true”?

Whether you think that the phenomenal universe is an illusory reality produced by the Divine Mind, or that it is an illusion produced by a Divine power (Maya) within the human mind, the resolution of this dispute is not, and probably never will be, amenable to conclusive and demonstrable proof. However, it is amenable to a happy resolution, since the final conclusion remains the same in either case; It is this, as expressed by Shankara in the following premise:

\[
\begin{align*}
Brahma satyam \\
Jagat mithya \\
Jivo brahmaiva naparah
\end{align*}
\]

(“Brahman (the one eternal Consciousness-Bliss) is the Reality; The phenomenal universe is merely an appearance, an illusion; The soul is truly Brahman, without a doubt.”)
NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Bhagavad Gita, IX.7, 8; Ibid., p.103.
2. Bhagavad Gita, VII.5; Ibid., p. 83.
10. Shankara, Vivekachudamani, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood; Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 73. In order to illustrate the process of ‘superimposition’, Shankara utilizes several examples:

A person might see a piece of rope lying on the ground and think that it is a snake. In such a case, that person is said to ‘superimpose’ a snake on the rope. Or, one might be walking by a field at night, and imagine that a wooden post is a man standing in the field; in such a case, one is said to have ‘superimposed’ a man on the post. Another example Shankara offers is that of a person seeing a piece of an oyster shell—what is known as ‘mother of pearl’; but he imagines that it is a piece of silver. He is said to have ‘superimposed’ the silver on the mother of pearl. All of these examples are intended to be analogous to the superimposition by the jiva of a world of objects upon what is really Brahman. And, while it’s easy to see how one could mistake one form for another, such as mistaking a post for a man, or a rope for a snake, or a piece of shell for silver; Brahman is formless. How, then, could one mistake Brahman for a universe of forms? The analogies do not stand up to scrutiny. Shankara does distinguish between a personal illusion (pratibhasika) and a universal, or collective, illusion (vyavaharika); but, according to Shankara, in both cases, it is the individual jiva who is responsible for the creation and maintenance of his own illusory perceptions.


16. In the One, the duality of ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ does not exist. The One contains everything, and yet It transcends everything. It is only the human ego that sees a division in the world such as ‘subject’ and ‘object’. In the world of duality, perceived by the false ego-identity, this may be a useful distinction, but in the One, there is no such distinction. There is only the One.

**Part Two**

*It is generally understood today that the community of scientists—in particular, quantum physicists—regard the existence of the quantum world as entirely dependent upon its observation by a human observer. It is this understanding and the belief among the populace that this principle can be applied to the non-quantum world as well, that is investigated here:*

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 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 knowledge (epistemology), for the only means by which 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.

However, scientists were unable to see subatomic particles such as the electron—even with a microscope. They could not calculate where it is 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 knell for scientific investigation into the nature of matter and causality. It appeared to be 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 that wave-particle 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 thus ‘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’.

It is in this sense that Quantum Physics has effectively replaced our notion of being or existing with the act of knowing. 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 and immutable 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 the thinking of quantum physicists, and subsequently into ours. Because of that blurring, Heisenberg’s ‘principle of uncertainty’, having to do with what we could know; in other words, epistemology, is nowadays taken to refer to what is; i.e., an ontological condition. The same is true of Schröedinger’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 simply undemonstrable.’ Science operates on the principle that empirical knowledge is the only criterion for existence—not because it is necessarily so, but only because scientists have as yet discovered no other criteria for determining existence, or the real. But you may be sure that existence, or reality, is not limited by our ability to perceive it; it is, in fact, only our knowledge that is limited! It is merely our ability to perceive, to know, other dimensions of reality, other dimensions of existence, that is limited.

Happily, however, God has made Himself known to a few of us as the formless Reality within us that is eternal and all-pervasive. That Reality 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!

**Consciousness And Matter**

Humans meet reality on two fronts: the mental front and the physical front—what the ancient Greeks referred to as *Psyche* and *Cosmos*—or what we today might call the subjective and the objective realities. Another way of referring to these two fronts is as the realm of Consciousness (*Mind*), and the realm of Matter (*Body*). And so, if we are to give a full picture of our experience of reality, we must give an account of both its mental and its physical aspects. The mental aspect of our reality, or consciousness, is experienced as wavular; the physical, or material aspect of reality is experienced primarily as particulate. But, since Consciousness is the source and creator of Matter, every distinct particle of Matter also contains Consciousness; and so, Matter is both wavular and particulate, as is the Light from which Matter is made. There is one all-pervasive Consciousness,
and the consciousness of every distinct individual is included in and partakes of it.

Consciousness is like an ocean in that it is a continuum that is wavular; in other words, it is capable of producing waves of consciousness in the form of thoughts. We are all familiar with the waves we produce in our consciousness, and we are familiar with the fact that waves, in whatever continuum, are formed of two opposing movements: a crest and a trough—each movement necessitating the other. This became clear to me during a ‘mystical’ experience that occurred when I was in my twenties:

The experience had been initiated by an intense prayer, and initially, while I was still identified with my separate self, I was addressing God as “Thou”; but when God’s grace revealed to me that I was merely a wave on the one ocean of Consciousness, and that He alone was the sole reality, I realized that, now, to speak the word, ‘Thou’, would be to re-establish duality. For I saw that, with the thought of ‘Thou’, I bring into existence at the same time, an ‘I’. ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are interdependent; there is no ‘Thou’ without an ‘I’, no ‘I’ without a ‘Thou’. The crest and trough of a single wave are opposing twins, two sides of one coin. It is the same with all such pairs of contraries: “I love and (thereby) create (its opposite) hatred; I am in peace, and am fashioning chaos; standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.” All opposites occur as the crest and trough of a single wave. It is only in a continuum capable of producing waves that opposites necessitate one another in this manner. Thoughts, created in and of consciousness, are therefore undeniably wavular.

These waves of thought on the ocean of Consciousness produce duality, but Consciousness Itself, like an ocean, has no contrary to Itself, no opposite; It is the one substratum, the boundless and undivided ocean of Consciousness, and has no duality in It. Divine Grace having revealed that ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are merely the crest and trough of a wave of thought, both were resolved in the one ocean of Consciousness who alone exists absolutely. Then, the false ego-identification simply vanished, leaving only the one all-pervasive Consciousness aware of Itself; and in that expanded awareness, all became clear:

“But now, weeping and laughing are gone;
Night is become day;
Music and silence are heard as one;
My ears are all the universe.”
In that moment beyond time,

“All motion has ceased; everything continues. Life and death no longer stand apart (because that One contains everything—living or otherwise). No I, no Thou; no now, or then. Unless I move, there is no stillness (for stillness cannot be without movement).”

This is the realization of the one eternal ocean of Consciousness; It is That which has been called ‘God’, ‘the Absolute’, ‘the Unchanging Ground’, ‘the divine Self’. When it is known, It is known to be the ultimate Reality, the final irrefutable answer to the question, ‘Who am I?’ Anyone who has experienced the divine Self in this way will tell you that the experience at its peak does not last forever; but it is certainly transformative and lasting in its joyous certainty.

What, then, of the material universe that surrounds us and constitutes our bodily form? Theoretically, the universe of Matter is the result of an initiating eruption of high-frequency electromagnetic radiation, or Light, that occurred around fourteen billion years ago from the eternal Consciousness. That Light transformed into wave-particles, collected into atoms, molecules, gases, stars, and entire galaxies spread throughout this vast universe. The one eternal Consciousness, manifesting in this way as multiple forms within Itself, then imparted Its own awareness to these animate forms as Life and Consciousness, and thereafter evolved and multiplied.

Eventually, after the passing of a lengthy stretch of time, the expansion of the universe will cease and then reverse like the alteration of a breath, becoming a universal contraction; and all Matter will implode back to its energy state in the eternal Consciousness from which it originated, and the universal cycle will be repeated once again. That high-frequency Light which transforms into the fabric that we call Matter is woven of God’s Intelligence and Light. Scientists prefer to say that Matter is made of wave-particles; but, of course, no one has ever seen a wave-particle. In fact, no such thing actually exists; ‘wave-particle’ is merely a statement of alternate possibilities of experience.
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, Jedrzej 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”. It states:

The quantum uncertainty principle is the idea that it’s impossible to know two certain sets of information about a quantum particle at once. For example, the more precisely you know the position of an atom, the less precisely you can know its momentum; i.e., 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 same 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.

The only question remaining is: ‘Can we give up our long-accumulated addiction to dualistic conflict, our addiction to worry and doubt, our addiction to fear and fault-finding, and rest simply in the peace of God, our eternal Self? Can we accept our inability to know all the mysterious details of this material universe, and put all our trust and faith securely in God, knowing that we are upheld in His mercy, guided by His wisdom, enlivened by His breath, and made happy in His joy?’ Is it possible that such knowledge could be enough for us simple mortals? Can we learn to turn our gaze within, to quiet our own minds, purify our hearts, and know God as our own eternal Self? Yes, with His Grace, we can. Praise God.

NOTES:

1. (‘Only when it is observed by a conscious observer may that wave-particle be said to actually exist.’”) The paradoxical nature of this quantum circumstance is illustrated in the story in which quantum principles are erroneously attributed to the non-quantum circumstance 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, (if we apply quantum principles) the cat is in a superposed state, neither alive nor dead, until 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. For, if we falsely apply quantum principles to this non-quantum circumstance, then we may say that, unless the cat is observed by a human observer, it does not exist. In other words, according to quantum logic, it is neither alive nor dead.


24. REVELATIONS

A Brief History of The Progressive Development of My Philosophy

by Swami Abhayananda

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I. MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE
   (The publication of *The Supreme Self*)

II. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
    (The publication of *History of Mysticism*)

III. THE NONDUAL PERSPECTIVE
     (The publication of *The Wisdom of Vedanta*)

IV. THE BLENDING OF MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE
    (The publication of *The Divine Universe*)

V. THE GREAT RADIANCE
   (The publication of *Reflections On The Soul*)

VI. THE DUAL ASPECTS OF GOD
    (The publication of *Body And Soul*)

VII. IN HIM WE LIVE
     (The publication of *Mystical Theology*)

POSTSCRIPT
Introduction

This book is about the progress of my own spiritual teachings as they are reflected in the sequence of my book publications. I feel that, since I have now reached the age of eighty, I can confidently look back in an overview of my written works with some sense of finality, and so this is a retrospective look at the metaphysics that has developed over the years from both my mystical experience and my philosophical and scientific enquiry.

My early life in Indianapolis, Indiana was ordinary and unspectacular, but comfortable and happy. As a teen, I was interested in girls, but I was also interested in history, poetry, literature, and philosophy. I was disdainful of schools, however, and preferred to follow my own uncharted path of learning. I was proudly unreligious and thought that all religion was a sham. After High School, I joined the Navy Reserves, and served as a Seaman aboard a Destroyer Escort based in Pearl Harbor. After being discharged, I worked for a time in Indianapolis, and then joined a couple of friends in Southern California, migrating later to San Francisco. For as long as I can remember, I knew that I would become a writer, though I had no idea what I would write. By the time I was in my twenties, I had passed through an infatuation with the writings of Jack Kerouac, Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, and the absurdist playwrights, Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco. But there came a drastic change in the focus of my attention as I approached maturity in my late twenties. Here is how I described that change of focus in my autobiographical book, *The Supreme Self*:

“Everyone has a spiritual awakening somewhere along the way. For me, it was sudden and unexpected. It was 1966; I was approaching twenty-eight, and it was a very special time in my world. Laura and I had moved from San Francisco to Los Gatos, California, in the mountains south of San Jose. We had rented a beautiful house with a knotty-pine interior and a huge porch overlooking a bubbling brook. I worked nearby at the Post Office on a split-shift that gave me time in the afternoons to sit on my beautiful private porch and drink coffee and read or work on the great American novel I was writing.

“In June of 1966, I was fascinated with the symbology of myths, and was reading Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell, both of whom were speaking repeatedly about “Vedanta,” the mysterious philosophy of India. And so, when I saw in a local bookstore a copy of a book
called *Vedanta For The Western World*, I bought a copy. This book, edited by Christopher Isherwood, consisted of a series of articles by such figures as Swami Prabhavananda and Aldous Huxley, and spelled out in very easy-to-understand terms the philosophy of Vedanta.

“Vedanta, I soon learned, refers to the philosophy expressed in the *Upanishads*, considered to be the final appendages to the Vedas. It is a nondualist philosophy; that is to say, a monistic one. It admits to an *apparent* duality between God and the world, between Consciousness and matter, but this duality, says Vedanta, is apparent only. In the “mystical vision” they are experienced as one.

“According to Vedanta, when a person becomes enlightened—in other words, when he realizes the ultimate Truth, or God, in mystical vision—he experiences an absolute Unity, wherein everything is seen to be a manifestation of one universal Self. He knows for certain: “I and the Father are one.” This is not a mere aberration of consciousness, nor an illusory “union” of the soul and God; it is a glimpse into the nature of the underlying Reality of one’s existence. It is the revelation of one’s true and eternal Self. This, says Vedanta, is the perennial teaching of all the sages and saints of all times. For the experience of Unity, whether called *samadhi, satori*, or “union with God,” is the same for all, and is the basis for all the various religions.

“Reading of this, I suddenly understood what the religious mystics had been talking about. The teachings of Jesus, the Buddha, and all the saints of all religions were seen to be based upon this same experiential knowledge. Everything I had ever puzzled over became clear; everything fell into place. I had scarcely finished with the Introduction to this book, and I knew that I had acquired a new and profound vision, which brought everything together for me and answered all my questions forever. I knew my life would never be the same. I knew I had found the key to an extraordinary wealth of understanding about myself and the nature of reality.

“It was as though a veil that I had previously been unaware of had suddenly been drawn away, revealing a world I had heretofore been looking at as through a hazy fog. It was not so much an intellectual revelation as a spiritual one, for suddenly I saw everything bathed in light, and from deep within me there welled up a happiness, a clear,
bright joyfulness, that testified to its truth, its rightness, more convincingly than any reason or merely intellectual conviction could do.

“As I continued reading this amazing book, I was introduced to the 19th century mystic, Sri Ramakrishna, who was mad with fervor for “the vision of God” from an early age, and who became so one-pointed in mind through devotional love that he became entirely lost to the world of forms, aware only of the all-pervasive Reality. Reading of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and other such saints, I felt I had entered into an elite society of delirious madmen, madmen who called themselves, “the lovers Of God,” who, turning away from the normal transitory pursuits of man, sought to become intimate with the very fountainhead of the universe. Somehow, I had never understood before that such a thing was really possible.

“Reading the inspiring words of Sri Ramakrishna, who had clearly known the unitive Reality, I experienced a wave of such happiness that I could scarcely bear it. Sitting on my porch, becoming aware of these things for the first time, I experienced a shower of golden light pouring down upon me, as though raining on the back of my neck, and awaking a deep and delicious chill in my body that ran up my spine and caused my scalp to tingle.

“For the first time, I understood what drew men to religion. I had previously attributed it to weakness of mind. How much grander was the heritage of man than I had supposed. I had viewed all this talk of “God” through the ages as the superstitious babbling of fools. But I had been the fool. There was a God—but it was not what I had supposed men meant by the term. “God” meant not some ethereal being with a white beard, etc.; God was Being itself—the eternal substratum of Existence. And the proof of it was that God could be experienced, actually realized, seen with the inner eye of unleashed awareness. For the first time, I could fathom it; I understood the method in the madness of the saints. My mind was dazzled, ecstatic.

I was really extraordinarily happy. Of course, all my friends thought I had suddenly gone mad. Their faces betrayed their uneasiness when I began talking about God and the mystics who had known Him. I began to realize that I had touched on something that not everyone could, or was willing to, understand. I read about “Grace,” the
amazing descent of Grace; and it seemed to me that just such a thing was happening to me. By some process of awakening, to which I was an unwitting spectator, I was seeing with an entirely new and different pair of eyes. My old friends were unable to understand or to share in any way the intensity of my fervor, my excitement; and I realized that I would have to go on this journey alone.”

**NOTE:**
The above passages are excerpted from *The Supreme Self* by Swami Abhayananda.

* * *
I. MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE  
(The publication of The Supreme Self)

The details regarding the content of one’s mystical experience usually become lost or obscured during the passage of time prior to the attempt to recount the experience; but, now, perhaps for the first time in history, an account of a mystical experience was written down during and as it occurred, lending a unique clarity to what is often merely a vague and uncertain recollection. Here is a continuation of the previous narrative from The Supreme Self, which takes us up to the account, written as it occurred, of my mystical experience and Self-realization:

“I had read, in one of the chapters of Vedanta For the Western World, a story of a man whose wife told him that their neighbor had decided to renounce the world of petty distractions to focus on the realization of God. When the man asked his wife how the neighbor was going about this renunciation, she said, “Well, he’s renouncing a few things today, and then tomorrow he’ll renounce a few more things, and so on, until he’s entirely free to meditate solely on God.” The man said, “That’s not the way to renounce the world!” And the wife retorted, “Well, how then would you do it?” And the man, by way of answering her, tore the shirt from his body, turned around and walked out the door of his home, never to return.

“Impressed with the stark simplicity and decisiveness of this approach to the renunciation of all restricting conditions, I decided to follow the example of the man in the story. Within only a few days, my life took a startling and unalterable turn. I sent a note to my employer stating that I would not be in on Monday “…for reasons beyond my control”; I then gave what I owned to Laura, and went off into the mountains of Santa Cruz, into solitude, to give my life to the quest for knowledge of God.

“Walking along a tree-shrouded mountain road, I came across an empty cabin nestled down in the woods a little off the road, and, exploring it, I discovered that it had been long uninhabited, except for the mice who had left abundant evidence of their assumed occupancy. I decided to take shelter there until I could talk to the owners, and so I cleaned the place up, and then went into Santa Cruz to look up the owner at the County Records office. I
wrote to the two men who were the present owners and awaited their contact while I made myself at home in the rustic cabin.

“The building had been left unfinished and was really just a shell with a concrete floor and a kitchen sink that drained directly out onto the ground outside. There was no running water, but a beautiful pure stream of water flowed just a few feet from the back door of the cabin in the form of a babbling spring-fed brook. There was a large picnic-type table in the main room and a mattressless cot in one of the two adjoining bedrooms. In the kitchen was a cast-iron cooking stove, and next to it a canvas director’s chair, along with a fold-up card table. That was the extent of the furniture.

“There was no electricity, but just out back, a previous tenant had stacked a good cord of seasoned oak to warm me through the winter and provide me with cooking heat as well. Candles did the job of providing me with light. Out front, just beyond the old dilapidated garage, was a wooden outhouse, and so, although I lacked what some might consider the necessities of modern life, I truly lacked for nothing, and I came to love the simple life my situation required.

“The two men who owned the property showed up one day, and after I explained my intentions and my willingness to safeguard their property against hunters and trespassers, they readily agreed to let me stay in the unused cabin. In fact, we became good friends, and they frequently came to the woods on weekends with their chainsaws to cut some live oak trees for their own firewood and for me as well. They owned about 300 acres of beautiful redwood groves, green meadows, rocky cliffs and scenic plateaus; this was surrounded by another 1000 acres of similar woodland owned and preserved as wilderness by the University of California. And, for the next nearly five years, all this magnificent country was my own private garden of meditation.

“How romantic it was! I felt that I was a Francis of Assisi. I was Rumi, the Sufi poet. I was Basho, the Zen hermit. Walking on the country roads in the early morning with my freshly baked honey-bread in my brown canvas bag on my shoulder, I’d walk the long winding mountain road to town to sell my loaves to the owner of a coffee shop. And on the way, I’d sit myself down in the grass by the roadside and write Zen poems to the poppies in the fields, or to the cottontails that went suddenly hopping through the dewy morning grass. Walking along, I would see the curving road suddenly turn and open wide a breathtaking expanse of sky and green slopes and blue ocean rising
up to meet the sky—and a tearful joy would well up in me and drown me in a rapturous sweetness I’d never before known.

“There were places where the dense pine and redwood forests formed a canopy over the narrow twisting mountain roads, and the light would stream in green sprays and twinkling raindrops of beauty through the trees; and I’d stoop by the bubbling stream to sink my cupped palm into the pebbly cold water and drink. And again, that sensation of chill that caused the hairs of my neck to rise, and the sweet delirious bliss of dissolving into an all-pervading light!

“I was just a poor hermit of the woods, singing the name of God. I had learned that, in the Indian tradition, one of the names for God was “Hari,” meaning ‘the stealer of hearts’. It was that name I called: “Hari! Hari! Hari!” as I walked along in my clumsy rags. I was a sweet bearded monk of the forest and the world was in my eyes the beauteously glorious form of the Divine; all about me the playful sport of God.

2. THE COMMON VISION

“I had come into the mountains to realize God, to know Him as Sri Ramakrishna and others had done. But I also had an insatiable hunger to know about those saints of the past who had succeeded in their attempt to know Him, and to know how they had lived and how they had spoken.

“The University of California was only a few miles away, and the University library was very complete. So, nearly every morning, I’d pack some bread in my sack and set out for the University, where I’d read for the whole day, or bring home some books to study. Though I was already familiar with many philosophers, both ancient and modern, I voraciously read or reread every major philosopher and every saint in the Religion & Philosophy section of the University library, from the Greeks and early Christian Fathers to the Hindu, Sikh, Moslem, Taoist and Buddhist saints and sages. I read of Catholic monastic disciplines and Christian Science; I poured over the classics of medieval Indian and Sufi literature; I burrowed into the remote past through the long-lost writings of the Dead Sea scrolls and the Gnostic apocryphal books; I re-examined Heraclitus, Epictetus, Philo and Plotinus; and discovered the writings of Swami Vivekananda, al-Ghazali, Vidyaranya, Rumi and Shankara. It was a glorious time of wild excitement and uncontainable exhilaration.
“The *Upanishads* were a revelation to me. These scriptures of the ancient Hindus were as old as the Jewish scriptures, but their conception of God was quite different from the jealous tyrant the Jews had invented. He was knowable as the one all-inclusive Reality, the one Self of the universe. I could not help feeling that there had been a tacit conspiracy in the Western world by the church, the state, and academia to conceal from me the fact that God could be “seen” and known. But, of course, the truth of the matter is that the knowledge was always there; only I was simply not ready to grasp these ideas until this moment, and it was only now that I was able to comprehend what the *Upanishads* had to tell:

“He is beyond time and space, and yet He is the God of infinite forms who dwells in our inmost thoughts, and who is seen by those who love Him.”

“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.”

“He is the Eternal among things that pass away, pure Consciousness of conscious beings, the One who fulfills the prayers of many. Only the wise who see Him in their souls attain the peace eternal.”

“Reading through the collection of writings known as the *Upanishads*, I had a sense of recognition, a recollection of truths I had known before. “Of course, of course,” I kept repeating as I devoured the words of the sages. Nothing in the Western cultural tradition came close to the penetrating subtlety and clarity of the writings of these ancient Indian seers who had penned these immortal scriptures.

“But the West *did* have its seers—though they do not appear as early or as abundantly as their Eastern counterparts. In the West, the experience of Unity, “the vision of God,” is only vaguely implied by the early Greek philosophers such as Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates (by way of Plato). The later Stoics and Philo of Alexandria in the 1st century C.E. also refer only vaguely to such an experience, without any real attempt to offer a convincing account. In fact, it is not until Plotinus (204-270 C.E.) that an
explicit and unequivocal account of “the vision of God” is offered in the West. Here is Plotinus’ description of his own experience in an extensive passage from his *Enneads*:

“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 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.4

“After Plotinus, perhaps the most lucid and explicit description of the experience of Unity comes from the 13th century German mystic, the Dominican Prior of Erfurt, Meister Eckhart (1260-1327). Eckhart’s Sermons and other writings were “condemned” by the Catholic Church in 1329; nonetheless, his writings have carried the torch of mystical experience over the centuries by which the way of many later mystics has been lighted. Speaking of his own experience of Unity, Meister Eckhart declares:

“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. 5

“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. 6

“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. 7

“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. 8
“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.9

“Here and there, I found other seers scattered along the shores of time, from legendary eras to the present: early Greek philosophers, sages from the Vedic period of India, Moslem Sufis, Christians, Chinese Taoists and Buddhists; each telling the experience of Unity in terms that reflect the time and tradition in which he or she wrote. The women, in most cases, tended to color their accounts with emotion and allegory, but it was clear that the experience had occurred in them, and obviously showed no sexual bias. In fact, it appeared that all sorts of people had experienced the vision of Unity; not only those who could express it in philosophical or poetical terms, but also simple good-hearted people who have left us no record of their experience.

“Of those who wrote, who recorded for posterity some of the insights gained in that vision of truth, were many who said little or nothing of the experience itself but confined themselves to presenting a systematic philosophy based on that experience; others, like the prophets of early Judaism, wrote or spoke as “holy” men, feeling that they were chosen to be spokesmen for God. And some, like the Buddha and the yogis, in an effort to stem a tide of futile intellectual speculation, declined to speak at all of the traditional notions of God, soul, and the nature of reality, but stressed instead the need to practice those disciplines which would lead to the direct experience of Truth, wherein all doubts and speculations would be resolved.

“Naturally, each of these great beings spoke in his own language, his own restricted terminology, and the consequence is that today we regard each of these efforts to reveal the nature of reality as disparate and unrelated “philosophies” or “religions.” But the experience of Reality is the same for all, of course; and in all the declarations of the many prophets and Messiahs one can hear the attempt to convey a common knowledge based on that common vision.

“It was thus I passed my days in the forest, devouring the writings of the sages and saints of the world in whose company I found great comfort and happiness. During the day I read, and in the evenings, I sat quietly, happily, in the presence of God. The growing clarity of my understanding seemed to open my heart to His ever-present reality, and little by little, I grew more
aware of and filled by His Love. My intellectual curiosity had been satisfied; and now there remained only the simple directing of all my attention, all my thought, to the God whom I desired with all my heart.
My cabin in the woods
3. ENLIGHTENMENT

“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 *Across The Wide Missouri*:

“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 lighthouse 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 that 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.

4. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“That magical night, while sitting there before the fire in my dark cabin, I had entered into “the kingdom of God.” I had been privileged to see into the real nature of my Self and all existence. When the veil of ignorance, which constitutes the ego, was lifted, it was revealed that my true, underlying identity is, and had always been, the one all-pervading Consciousness that is the Source and substratum of all that exists.

“When God reveals Himself, He is not seen as something or someone apart. The soul is lifted up to identity with God, so that there is no longer a soul, but God Himself is revealed as one’s own Self. That Self is eternal, beyond all manifestation, never affected by the ongoing drama of worldly
experience. It masquerades as every being, all the while remaining purely Consciousness and perfect Bliss. When my mind reached the highest state of contemplation, all opposites disappeared, resolved into that one Existence. Weeping and laughing, night and day, sound and silence, motion and stillness, life and death, I and Thou, past and future—none of these exist in that Unity. Only the one eternal Consciousness, containing all, exists alone as the supreme Self of all.

“This revelatory experience revealed that I am, and, by extension, everyone is, the one Soul of the universe. The slightest movement of the mind would initiate the recreation of duality; but, held singly on its concentrated focus, the mind remains immersed in the Eternal. Raised to that eternal Consciousness, I saw that all creation is one coordinated whole, that every movement of every tiny grain of sand is in perfect harmony with the coordinated unfolding of the universe. My physical existence was then seen to have no separate identity but was part of a unified continuum of creative energy.

“The individualized soul, though it feels separate and disconnected from God, is never actually separated from its source and substratum any more than a wave is separate from the ocean. Nothing, not even thought, is other than God; for nothing exists outside of the One. This one eternal Consciousness, experienced as oneself, knows that It is the life pulsing in every creature; It is the joy of exhilaration; It is the urge to song, and It is the producer of the obscuration of ignorance. It exists as clouds, water, and earth, and It appears as every man, woman and child. It is the dust on the feet of the saints. It gives worldly rewards and pleasures to those who seek them; but It reveals Itself only to those who have no other desire but to know the Eternal, to those who, abandoning all, go deliberately and alone to the meeting with God. These are the two paths it openly presents before us.

“The energy of the Sun stirs the mind and heart to activity; and, in the dark of night, the heart and mind are drawn to rest. For the Eternal, likewise, there is a period of creation, and a period of rest. Though, from the vantage point of man in time, the existence of the universe lasts for billions of earth years, from the vantage point of Eternity, the universal manifestation is seen to be created, sustained, and withdrawn in the short space of a breath. Like the exhalation and inhalation of a breath, this cyclic beginning and ending of time’s array goes on recurrently, while the eternal Consciousness remains blissfully unchanged.
“At the highest level of consciousness, all is one existence; but the ego-
mind, by its choices, creates the duality of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’, good and bad,
likes and dislikes. Only by learning to see everything as God, does one
approach the true vision of Reality, and the state of equanimity. In this rare
state, the ego is vanished, and it is seen that all is perfect. Neither pride, nor
assertion, nor regret can arise, for all is seen to be accomplished by the One.
No questions arise in that perfect clarity. There is no longer a distinction
between the created body and the uncreated Consciousness; all existence is
seen to be one undifferentiated continuum. Body and soul, matter and spirit,
like ice and water, are made of the same substance.

“I had seen clearly that I was the Life in all life, the one Existence manifest
in all forms; and yet, that clarity had been all too brief, and I was now once
again separate and isolated, no longer aware of my greater Self, but
projected back into a world of time and space, a world of separable forms.

After some time, I adjusted to the fact that I would have to live out my life in
this dream-like world and would need to learn to hold to the awareness of
my eternal identity, my real Self, while living in this divinely projected
body. I was as though born anew; I was free to live as I chose, without fear,
without concern. And since that time, I have continued to live in a bright
world glowing with nectarean light and shining with God’s beauty.”

NOTES:
1. Svetasvatara Upanishad: 6; Mascaro, Juan, 1965; p. 95
2. Mundaka Upanishad: 3.1; Ibid., p. 80
3. Katha Upanishad: 5; Ibid., p. 64
4. Plotinus, Enneads: VI:7.34, 36; VI: 9.5-11
5. de B. Evans, C., Eckhart, Vol. I., p. 221
   Ibid., p. 206
7. Huxley, Aldous, 1944; p. 12
8. de B. Evans, C., op. cit., Sermon XXI.

(The above 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. The Supreme Self is freely downloadable along with many of
my more recent books and articles at my website:
www.themysticsvision.com.)
II. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
(The publication of History of Mysticism)

After my mystical experience in 1966, I continued to live happily in my little cabin in the woods, until I met Swami Muktananda, an Indian Guru, who, while on an American tour, gave a lecture at the nearby University of California at Santa Cruz in 1970. I then wrote to him, and being invited to join him, I subsequently traveled to Ganeshpuri, India to live at his ashram and learn from him. I spent almost ten years in his service and was initiated by him into the ancient order of sannyasa in 1978, thereby becoming ‘Swami Abhayananda’ after which I became the Director and teacher at several of Muktananda’s Ashrams.

It was only after I had left Muktananda and his organization of SYDA Yoga in 1981, that I settled in Fallsburg, New York at the vacation home of an acquaintance from SYDA Yoga, with the sole intention of fulfilling my earlier prayerful promise to God to “speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children”, and I began writing the book that would be titled, The Supreme Self. By this time, I was in my mid-forties. In that book, I had publicly announced my mystical experience and the understanding that accompanied it, and, only a few years later, I recounted the story of the perennial recurrence of that experience in the many others who had known it throughout history in a comprehensive History of Mysticism. One of my significant realizations at the time of researching and writing that book was that the religion of Christianity was based entirely on the mystical experience of Jesus that occurred when he was around twenty-eight at a baptism held by the wandering ascetic who was known simply as John the Baptist.

There were many significant findings that surfaced as I undertook the research for History of Mysticism. I was re-introduced to the Western mystical tradition, including the writings of Heraclitus, which I recovered and compiled from the extant ancient fragments of manuscripts that remained, and I became acquainted as well with the writings of Plotinus, the father of Western Mysticism, from whom the Neoplatonist tradition arose. One of the best results of the publication of my History was the awakening of the wide-spread public recognition of the depth and endurance of the mystical tradition as it existed through all the religions and over all the ages. Here is a small sampling from that book:
“Preface To History of Mysticism

“I am one of those who have been privileged, by the grace of God, to experience the ultimate Truth of existence. This “mystical experience” occurred, for me, on the night of November 18, 1966. Since that time, I have easily recognized, by their various descriptions of it, those who have also directly experienced that absolute Truth. And it has become abundantly clear to me that, over the course of man’s long history, many individuals of differing cultures, languages, and religious traditions have known that same unitive experience. Contained in this book are the accounts of the lives and teachings of some of the best known of those individuals, for whom I feel great empathy and comradery, as my own experience coincides with and confirms their own. In fact, their experience is my experience; for all who have realized the Truth have known that same eternal Self.

“The material contained herein presents no speculative philosophy; it offers no metaphysical hypothesis. Rather, it is the collected legacy of those who have experienced, first-hand, the unitive Truth underlying all existence. It is a record of the voices of the illumined souls of the past, all of whom gave their hearts, their very lives, to sharing their transcendent knowledge with unborn humanity. And so, to the prospective reader, I say: mark well what you read here. This is no ordinary history of people, places and events; it is the secret history of man’s perennial journey on the ultimate Quest, where all the travelers, arriving from widely diverse paths, arrive at the self-same unitive Truth. It is really the greatest, the most thrillingly wonderful, story ever told. May it awaken you and inspire you to join the great Quest.

Swami Abhayananda”

“Introduction To History of Mysticism

“Mysticism is that point of view which claims as its basis an intimate knowledge of the one source and substratum of all existence, a knowledge, which is obtained through a revelatory experience during a rare moment of clarity in contemplation. Those who claim to have actually experienced this direct revelation constitute an elite tradition, which transcends the boundary lines of individual religions, cultures and languages, and which has existed, uninterrupted, since the beginning of time. It is, as Aldous
Huxley points out, the “perennial philosophy” that resurfaces again and again throughout history in the teachings of the great prophets and founders of all religions.

“When we study the many speculative philosophies and religious creeds which men have espoused, we must wonder at the amazing diversity of opinions expressed regarding the nature of reality; but when we examine the testimonies of the mystics of past and present, we are struck by the unanimity of agreement between them all. Their methods may vary, but their ultimate realizations are identical in content. They tell us of a supramental experience, obtained through contemplation, which directly reveals the Truth, the ultimate, the final, Truth of all existence. It is this experience, which is the hallmark of the mystic; it goes by different names, but the experience is the same for all.

“By many of the Christian tradition, this experience is referred to as “the vision of God”; yet it must be stated that such a vision is not really a “vision” at all in the sense in which we use the word to mean the perception of some ‘thing’ extraneous to ourselves. Nothing at all is perceived in “the vision of God”; rather, it is a sudden expansion, or delimitation, of one’s own awareness which experiences itself as the ultimate Ground, the primal Source and Godhead of all being. In that “vision,” all existence is experienced as Identity.

“We first hear of this extraordinary revelation from the authors of the Upanishads, who lived over three thousand years ago: “I have known that spirit,” said Svetasvatara, “who is infinite and in all, who is everyone, beyond time.”1 “He can be seen indivisible in the silence of contemplation,” said the author of the Mundaka Upanishad.2 “There man possesses everything; for he is one with the ONE.” 3

“About five hundred years later, another, a young prince named Siddhartha, who was to become known as the Buddha, the enlightened one, sat commingling inwardly in the forest, when suddenly, as though a veil had been lifted, his mind became infinite and all-encompassing: “I have seen the Truth!” he exclaimed; “I am the Father of the world, sprung from myself!”4 And again, after the passage of another five hundred years, another young man, a Jew, named Jesus, of Nazareth, sat in a solitary place among the desert cliffs of Galilee, commingling inwardly, when suddenly he realized that the Father in heaven to whom he had been praying was his
very own Self; that he was, himself, the sole Spirit pervading the universe; “I and the Father are one!” he declared. 5

“Throughout history, this extraordinary experience of unity has repeatedly occurred; in India, in Rome, in Persia, in Amsterdam, in China, devout young men and women, reflecting on the truth of their own existence, experienced this amazing transcendence of the mind, and announced to everyone who would listen that they had realized the truth of man and the universe, that they had known their own Self, and known it to be the All, the Eternal. And throughout succeeding ages, these announcements were echoed by others who had experienced the same realization: “I am the Truth!” exclaimed the Muslim, al-Hallaj; “My Me is God, nor do I recognize any other Me except my God Himself,” said the Christian saint, Catherine of Genoa. And Rumi, Jnaneshvar, Milarepa, Kabir and Basho from the East, and Eckhart, Boehme and Emerson from the West, said the same.

“These assertions by the great mystics of the world were not made as mere philosophical speculations; they were based on experience—an experience so convincing, so real, that all those to whom it has occurred testify unanimously that it is the unmistakable realization of the ultimate Truth of existence. In this experience, called samadhi by the Hindus, nirvana by the Buddhists, fana by the Muslims, and “the mystic union” by Christians, the consciousness of the individual suddenly becomes the consciousness of the entire vast universe. All previous sense of duality is swallowed up in an awareness of indivisible unity. The man who previously regarded himself as an individualized soul, encumbered with sins and inhabiting a body, now realizes that he is, truly, the one Consciousness; that it is he, himself, who is manifesting as all souls and all bodies, while yet remaining completely unaffected by the unfolding drama of the multiform universe.

“Even if, before, as a soul, he sought union with his God, now, there is no longer a soul/God relationship. He, himself, he now realizes, is the one Existence in whom there is neither a soul nor a God, but only the one Self, within whom this “imaginary” relationship of soul and God manifested. For him, there is no more relationship, but only the eternal and all-inclusive I AM. Not surprisingly, this illuminating knowledge of an underlying ‘I’ that is the Soul of the entire universe has a profoundly transformative effect upon the mind of those who have experienced it.
The sense of being bound and limited to an individual body and mind, set in
time and rimmed by birth and death, is entirely displaced by the keenly
experienced awareness of unlimited Being; of an infinitely larger,
unqualified Self beyond birth and death. It is an experience, which
uniquely and utterly transforms one’s sense of identity, and initiates a
permanently acquired freedom from all doubt, from all fear, from all
insecurity forevermore. Little wonder that all who experience such
liberating knowledge wish to share it, to announce in exuberant song to
everyone who will hear that, through the inner revelation of wisdom, “You
shall know the truth, and the Truth will make you free!”

“If we can believe these men, it is this experience of unity, which is the
ultimate goal of all knowledge, of all worldly endeavor; the summit of
human attainment, which all men, knowingly or unknowingly, pursue. It
would seem, then, a valuable task to study and review the lives and
teachings of those who have acquired this knowledge. In this book, I
have sought to present just such a study and anthology; it is presented in an
historical perspective in order to better view the long-enduring tradition of
mystical thought, and to reveal more clearly the unity underlying the
diversity of its manifold expressions. Naturally, it has not been possible to
include every single instance of mystical experience, or to touch upon all
the myriad extensions of mystical knowledge, but I have attempted to tell
the story of the lives and teachings of those who most intelligibly represent
the mystical tradition as it has manifested throughout the ages. It is a story
that begins long, long ago, in a past so remote that it is but vague and faint,
beyond the reach of our straining vision, obscure in the hazy mists of time.”

NOTES:
1. Svetasvatara Upanishad, 3
2. Mundaka Upanishad, 3:1
3. Svetasvatara Upanishad, 1
4. Saddharma bhandarika, 15:21; Radhakrishnan, S.,
   Indian Philosophy (Vol. I), London, Geo. Allen & Unwin,1962,
   p. 600.
“PRE-HISTORY OF MYSTICISM

“Where, we must wonder, did mysticism begin? Who was the first to experience the transcendent vision? To these questions, there are no answers; but it is reasonable to assume that the experience of unity is as old as man himself and occurred to a few searching souls even in the most primitive of times. The mystical experience of unity is entirely independent of advancements in learning or civilization. Indeed, it would seem, if anything, to be more likely to occur in a simpler, less “civilized” environment, since such an experience requires a totally interiorized state of mind, undistracted by external stimuli. One can easily imagine how spending one’s nights beside a fire under the canopy of the stars might enhance one’s contemplation of eternity. It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, to suppose that seers of the Infinite existed even in the very remotest unrecorded period of man’s history. Unfortunately, however, these ancient mystics are lost to us forever in the dark abyss of time.

“Yet, while we do not possess the written testimonies of the mystic sages of the dim past, there is some evidence for the antiquity of mysticism to be found in the popular religious symbols which have come down to us as the artifacts and mythologies of primitive cultures. When we examine the mythologies of these earliest civilizations, especially those myths which describe the origin of the cosmos, we find a curious similarity in the religious symbols used by widely separated cultures. In almost every instance, we may discover the legend of an original Father-God, whose first Thought or Word, symbolized in the form of a Mother-Goddess, is said to have given birth to all creation.

“In nearly every part of the globe these two have appeared, albeit with many names. He, the Father-God, has been called An, Apsu, Huan, Prajapati, Purusha, Yahweh, El, Tem, Atmu, Ptah, Ra, Shiva, Brahman, Dyaus, Zeus, Vishnu, Ahura Mazda, Ch’ien, and Tao, among countless other names. He is the absolute Stillness, the pure Consciousness, the unclouded Mind, the unmanifest Ground, who exists as the substratum upon which all this universe is projected. Likewise, in nearly every recorded mythology, we find the Mother-Goddess; She has been called Inanna, Isis, Shakti, Kali, Devi, Chokmah, Durga, Maya, Teh, Cybele, Athena, Astarte, Mylitta,
Tara, Juno, Prthivi, Freia, Sophia, Prakrti, Semele, Ishtar, and many, many other names as well. She is the creative aspect of the Father; She is Mother Nature, the creative, manifestory Power of the Father-God, manifest as the entire cosmos.

“In order to understand the vision of the earliest seers and mythologizers, we must look beyond the various names given to this primordial Pair and try to grasp the meaning behind the words and myths. The reason for the similarity of view among the various primitive cultures is that the Reality, which their pictorial symbols are contrived to represent, is the common and universal Reality experienced in the mystical vision, a Reality that is the same for all who “see” It. Scholars who know nothing of the experience of unity postulate some cultural interchange to account for such similarities between the various primitive cosmologies, or postulate an “archetypal memory” from which these many identical images supposedly arose, it never dawning on them that the direct knowledge of the one Absolute and Its projection of the universe is an actual experience common to all seers of all times.

“In this “vision” or “union,” the mind is somehow privileged to experience itself as the eternal Consciousness from which the entire universe is projected. It knows itself as the unchanging Ground, or Absolute, and the world as Its own projected Thought or Ideation. The individual who contacts, through prayer or deep meditation, that universal Consciousness, experiences It as his (or her) own identity. He (or she) realizes, in those few moments, that he (or she) is indeed nothing else but that one Being manifest in a singular individual form; and that all this universe is the manifestation of that one Being, flowing forth from It as a wave of love streams out from a loving heart.

“One who has known It sees clearly that this mystically experienced Reality has two distinct aspects; It is the pure, eternal One, beyond motion or change; and It is also the world-Thought, which emanates from It, like the rays of a Sun, or the thoughts of a Mind. In this clear realization of Reality, the mind, while knowing itself as the undifferentiated Absolute, experiences concurrently the projection and reabsorption of the universe in a continuous cycle of outflowing and returning. The universal manifestation appears and disappears in a cyclic rhythm extending over eons of our temporal reckoning, but the eternal
Awareness, along with Its manifestory-Power, never changes. It is ever immersed in Its own bliss.

“So difficult is this two-in-One to speak of—since It cannot be spoken of without differentiating the two aspects, and making It appear to be two when It is always One—that the ancient seers tended to characterize the two aspects as male and female complements. In their attempts to explain this ineluctable duality-in-Unity, the seers of early cultures relied upon pictorial symbols—such as the yin-yang symbol of the Chinese or depicted as the projection of the world of matter upon the Absolute in anthropomorphic or animistic images. In nearly every such instance, the unmanifested Absolute was depicted as Male, and Its projected image-Power, co-existent with It, was regarded as Female. He is the Father-God, the eternal One, the ultimate Source and Controller; but She, His inherent Mind is the Creatrix, the Mother-Power from whom all creation flows.

“That these two aspects of Reality should be so commonly symbolized as male and female should not surprise us; for what better pair of symbols can be imagined as representative of the duality-in-Unity experienced by the mystic than the two sexes who, while retaining their individual characteristics, are joined as husband and wife, forming an indivisible unit? The human male seems an apt symbol for the immovable Absolute, the unchanging Consciousness, who witnesses, as the subjective Self, the drama of universal manifestation. He represents the Absolute in mythology as the wise and just Father and King, aloof and impersonal, the pillar of strength, governance, and protection. The human female seems equally well suited to symbolize the creative Force, which emanates from the witnessing Self. She is the Womb of Nature from whom all life is born; She is the Source and Nourisher, and She is also the object of desire. She represents the manifestory-Power in mythology as the ever-young maiden, the warm and tender Mother, the Giver of mercy, and the Fountain of all beauty, bounty, and grace. Perhaps, in some very real way, these two—the human male and female—really are representative images, or manifestations, of the two complementary aspects of the one Divine Reality.

“Evidence exists to show that, by the 3rd millennium B.C.E., and no doubt long before that, worship of a transcendent Father-God and Mother
(Nature) Goddess was widespread. The genuine mystics, the seers of Unity, were no doubt few then, as they are today, but there is repeated evidence in the Creation myths of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon that such seers did exist. In the cosmologies of many of these early civilizations we find the common conception of the One Reality as consisting of two aspects: the eternally transcendent Mind, and the dynamically creative Thought, which is responsible for the formation and substance of the relative world. Representing this creative Energy in the 3rd millennium B.C.E., the Sumerian Goddess, Inanna, is made to say: “Begetting Mother am I. Within An (the Father-God) I abide, and no one sees me.”

“Since She, the Mother, is actually the manifestory-Power of the Father, and therefore indistinguishable from Him, they are frequently pictured together, locked in an inseparable embrace; two, yet inextricably One. As we shall see, this mythic image of the Father-God and His ubiquitous Consort is one which recurs again and again in the metaphysical formulations of all cultures. It is this recurring conception, which hints to us of mystical experience as the common origin.

“When we delve even further backward, into the upper Paleolithic era (ca. 35,000-9,000 B.C.E.), we find it difficult to imagine how one might have communicated mystical experience in that time, long ago, even to one’s peers, considering the limited language skills of the peoples of that time. But the challenge of communicating it to future generations without the benefit of a written language was even more immense. The transcendent Absolute is beyond even the most eloquent speech; how then was one to represent It in myth or legend?

“Here is one possible answer: Let us suppose that many thousands of years ago some nameless mystic told his comrades of his experience of the great Unity. And, for century after century, that tale was passed down orally as an authentic description of the origin and beginning of all things; until, around 700 B.C.E., it finally appeared in written form as an allegorical tale, or myth, of creation. Here is that tale as it appears in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad:

“In the beginning, there was only the Self. ... He reflected, and saw that there was nothing but Himself, whereupon he exclaimed, “I am” (Aham). Ever since, He has been known
within as “I.” Even now, when announcing oneself, one says, “I am ...,” and then gives the other name that one bears.

“He was afraid. Even today, one who is alone is afraid. But then he realized, “Since there is nothing else but my Self, what is there to fear?” It is only from [the presence of] a second [entity] that fear need ever arise. However, he was still unhappy. Even today, one is unhappy when alone. He desired a mate. And so, he took on the form of a being the size of a man and woman joined in a close embrace; and then He separated into two individuals: a man and a wife.

“Therefore, as the sage Yajnavalkya has declared, this body, by itself, is like half of a split pea. [In order to become whole again,] this empty space must be filled by a woman. The male [half] then embraced the female [half], and from that the human race arose.

“But the female wondered: “How can he unite with me, whom he has produced from himself? Well then, let me hide!” She became a cow; he became a bull and united with her, and from that cattle arose. She became a mare; he became a stallion. She an ass, he a donkey and united with her; and from that solid-hoofed animals arose. She became a goat, he a buck; she a sheep, he a ram and united with her; and from that goats and sheep arose. In this way, he poured forth all pairing creatures, down to the ants. Then he realized: “All this creation is actually myself; for I have poured forth all this.” One who knows this truth realizes that he, himself, is truly the creator [living] within his own creation.²

“A distorted version of this tale shows up a few centuries later in Plato’s Symposium,³ where Aristophanes recounts the legend of the original androgynous creature who was both male and female rolled in one, and who was then divided into two by Zeus as a means of checking its power. But Plato’s version is without the profound allegorical meaning of the original myth as retold in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Let me attempt to explain:
“In the One, there is no form, no experience at all. There is no vision, and no knowledge. For, in order for there to be experience, there has to be two: the experiencer and the experienced. For vision, there has to be a seer and a seen; for knowledge, there must be a knower and a known, a subject and an object. For any of these things to be, the One must pretend to be two, must create within Itself the semblance of duality. If there is only a seer and no seen, there can be no vision. And if there is only a seen and no seer, again, vision cannot be.

“Figuratively speaking, the One is lonely being alone; so, It creates (images forth) a second, in order to experience (enjoy) Itself. This is the primal division, the primary creation: it is an apparent bifurcation of the one Consciousness into subject and object, seer and seen. In all existence, there are only these two—and they are really both the One. This Self-division of the One into subject and object is the primal dichotomy alluded to in this allegory. The subject is, in actuality, the One; the object is, in actuality, the One. That One is, naturally, beyond gender; but, in Its (pretended) roles as subject and object, It becomes the male principle and the female principle.

“The male principle, the subject, cannot be seen, touched or sensed in any way; only the object, the female principle, is sensed. The male principle is the unchanging witness, or seer; it is the pure, unmanifested, awareness that knows “I am.” When there is the impulse of desire, a thought-object is produced to satisfy it; and as soon as that thought-form is manifested, that is the object of experience; that is the seen. This creation of duality occurs at the macrocosmic level, and it occurs at the microcosmic level. Mankind, the image of God, operates in the same manner as God, the universal Self.

“Keep in mind that neither the seer nor the seen can exist without the other. They are complements. They depend upon each other for their own existence. The seer without a seen or the seen without a seer—neither exists. When they are together, then we have experience. We have the enjoyment of life. We have the expression of the One as many. This is the meaning of the two “halves” seeking each other for the purpose of delight. Unless It becomes two, the One has no experience, no universe of forms, no delight.
“This same bifurcation is continued throughout creation; the subject and object, as male and female, become the multitude of living forms, and through delighting in each other, continue to recreate themselves. This is the allegory of the cow and the bull, the mare and the stallion, the jenny and the jack-ass. “Then he realizes, ‘all this is my Self!’” This is the wondrous knowledge that comes to man when he knows and understands his own true nature and the nature of all ‘objective’ reality. He is, indeed, the one Self of all, who lives within his own creation, experiencing the play of duality, while remaining the forever-undivided One.

“This is the tale told by all who have been graced with the knowledge of the One who is their source and origin. It is, no doubt, the tale that was told by some mystic of the Paleolithic era, a tale which had the power of truth, and spread, becoming the archetypal myth or tale of the mystery of Being that was told ‘round the nightly fires and in the holy caverns across the continent of Old Europe, across the steppes of Central Asia, and eventually written down somewhere in the upper Gangetic plain.

“The primitive artifacts brought to light by archaeology seem also to bear out our suspicion of a mystical influence going back thousands of years. For, today, archaeologists, having unearthed thousands of objects of representative art—some of which date to over 20,000 years ago—have greatly expanded our vision of man’s prehistory from that of a century ago. Some of the most striking examples of this early figurative art come, not from the so-called “cradle of civilization,” but from Europe— an “Old Europe”—which spawned a rich independent culture whose primary religious symbols turn out to be the same Father-God and Mother-Goddess who appear in a thousand guises in the East and, in fact, in every significant culture that appeared on earth. 4

“When we gaze in awe at the magnificent painted beasts stampeding ‘cross the walls of the great Magdalenian caves of Altamira in Spain, of Lascaux and Les Trois Freres in France, dating from 17,000 to 12,000 B.C.E., we see a great preponderance of cows and bulls, mares and stallions, goats and rams, marked with symbols as to gender. In a chamber of the Tuc d’Audoubert cavern, stand a pair of coupling bison made of clay, from ca. 14,000 B.C.E. Can we help but wonder if it is not this very same allegory of the origin of life that is illustrated in the art of these many ancient sites? How frequently in both Paleolithic and
Neolithic sites do we find representations of the bull, and sometimes just its two horns, to be the premier symbol of the Divine! Is it only coincidence that it also figures as the premier creature in our ancient tale of creation?

“There are other artifacts which seem to illustrate the familiarity of early man with that mystical tale of the One who became two. The most interesting was found near one of the oldest (ca. 20,000 B.C.E), and most familiar examples of Paleolithic art yet discovered: “The Woman With A Horn” (Figure 1), a 17” high relief carved into a sheltering overhang of limestone just above a 100 meter-long ledge, or terrace, at Laussel, in the Dordogne region of France, only a few miles from the spectacular caverns of Lascaux. Sometimes referred to as “the Venus of Laussel,” she is a corpulent naked female, who is holding in one upraised hand what resembles a bull or bison’s horn. The other hand is over her protruding belly. That she is intended to represent the great Mother (Nature) Goddess seems clear. In fact, it is evident that the site where this Goddess figure appears was a Paleolithic shrine, or sanctuary, to the great Mother-Power; other emblems, symbolic of the female generative organ, are etched into the stone overhang adjoining the Goddess, along with several other female forms and one male form as well.

“But most significant of all, and the artifact to which I wish to call your attention, is an adjoining carved relief, which stands out from the rest: it is of a male and female united in a single emblem, or symbol (Figure 2). It has been suggested that the two figures are in a position of intercourse, with the female sitting atop a prone male. If so, it is reminiscent of certain modern representations from India of Shakti sitting atop the prone corpse of Shiva, symbolizing the dynamic activity of the creative Energy whose foundation and support is the unmoving Absolute. And if this is the case, the two works of art, though 20,000 years apart, may be fundamentally related. However, when one examines the ancient rock-carving closely, the two figures, female and male, seem not to be joined in intercourse, but seem rather to be designed to represent the two Principles joined into a single unit. It is not a realistic joining; in fact, certain elements of the arrangement are difficult to explain: if one looks at it reversed, with the (bearded) male at the top, his legs seem to extend along her left side, merging into and becoming her arm and breast, his
feet becoming her head. Thus, each figure merges into the other, with a unifying border clearly designed to encompass them both.

“Set as it is into this sanctuary of worship, this integrated male-female symbol would appear to be the earliest known example of the representation of the divine two-in-One upon which later mystics would so amply elaborate. Is this conjoined pair intended as an illustration of our primal myth of the original androgyne, prior to its separation into male and female principles? “Some would protest that this is a concept too abstract, too sophisticated for a Cro-Magnon homo sapiens with a flint chisel. But, as stated earlier, mystical experience is not dependent upon intellectual sophistication, and, without a written language, how else would some early mystic tell of his revelation to future generations except through myth and symbol?

“But what are we to make of the horn in the upraised hand of the Goddess? It is evidently intended as a prominent and recognizable symbol. But for us, 20,000 years removed, the tale told in that gesture remains a mystery. We may feel relatively certain, however, that She is intended to represent the Female principle, the universal Mother, the great Womb of Nature, who produces all this (objective) universe from Herself. Like all such universal Mother symbols, she is considered the source of all earthly bounty, and I would like to suggest that the upraised horn is the cornucopia, the ‘horn of plenty’ representing her bountiful nature. But that would make the myth of the cornucopia much older than previously estimated by scholars.

“The myth of the cornucopia is said to have originated with the story of the infant Zeus who had to be hidden from his devouring father, Kronos. In a cave on Mount Ida on the island of Crete, baby Zeus was cared for and protected by a number of divine attendants, including the goat Amalthea ("Nourishing Goddess"), who fed him with her milk. The suckling future king of the gods had unusual abilities and strength, and in playing with his nursemaid accidentally broke off one of her horns, which then had the divine power to provide unending nourishment, as the foster mother had to the god. Later, the cornucopia became the attribute of several Greek and Roman deities, such as Gaia, Demeter, and Terra, personifications of the bounteous Earth. Its appearance in the hand of the Paleolithic Mother
Goddess, however, puts its origin at least 10,000 years earlier than previously suspected.

“Another artifact depicting the great Mother (Nature) as a pregnant naked female was found in the same region: it is a fragment of reindeer bone from 12,000 B.C.E. on which is engraved a scene showing the Father-God, symbolized by a bull, standing over the Mother-Goddess. The Mother, symbolized by the pregnant female, is below, suppliant, and receptive of the fecundation of the Father (Figure 3). An inconceivable 8,000 years had passed since the nearby ‘Woman With a Horn’ was created; but the bull was still the primary symbol for the Male principle, the transcendent Father-God, as it would remain for at least another 10,000 years.

“In the mystical experience of unity, there is seen, of course, neither male nor female. The One, which contains in Itself all pairs of opposites, is Itself beyond gender. However, It is apprehended under two different aspects: It is the transcendent, quiescent Consciousness, beyond the manifestation of time and space; and It is the Creative Force, which cyclically manifests and de-manifests the entire universe. And it is evident that, in almost every early culture, these two aspects have been commonly represented in word and picture by those who have apprehended them both, as the Father-God and the Mother-Goddess (Figures 4-6). These two symbols of the primary duality-in-Unity appear in abundance in the earliest myths and cultural artifacts of preliterate civilization, and they hint to us of the existence of mystical experience transmitted orally and pictographically in the early days of man’s history. The transmission of actual personal testimonies of mystical experience had to await the written record of man’s thought; and this occurred in various parts of the world during the third millennium B.C.E., when hieroglyphs, ideograms, and cuneiform writing first began to appear.

“Where, then, do we find the earliest records of mystical experience? We know that some of the most advanced early civilizations existed concurrently in the Nile, Mesopotamian, and Indus valleys; and, while we may only conjecture about the development of a mystical philosophy in ancient Egypt, Sumeria, and other Middle Eastern regions, it is in India that we find the earliest explicit testimonies of the mystics and the earliest
development of an advanced mystical philosophy, and so it is there we shall begin.”

**Figure 1.** Limestone bas-relief of the great Goddess, known as “The Woman With A Horn,” from Laussel (Dordogne region), France (ca. 20,000 B.C.E.). She is the great Mother Nature, from whom all creation flows, the Energy of the transcendent Self, which manifests as the objective universe.
Figure 2. Opposing male and female figures from limestone shelter at Laussel (Dordogne region), France (ca. 20,000 B.C.E.), possibly intended to be symbolic of the one Reality experienced in the mystical vision, which is both transcendent and immanent.
**Figure 3.** Engraving on reindeer bone (ca. 12,000 B.C.E.), from Laugerie Bass (Dordogne), France. The story illustrated is unknown, but the symbols are familiar: the Father-God is symbolized here by the bull; the creative aspect, or Great Mother, symbolized by the pregnant female, is below, suppliant, and receptive of the Father’s fecundation.
Figure 4. God-sculpture (4.5” high) from a grave-site in Cernavoda, at Hemangia on the edge of the Black Sea, present-day Romania (5000 B.C.E.). Often referred to as “The Thinker,” He is clearly laboring in thought as the pure Mind from whom the world-thought emanates.

Figure 5. Goddess-sculpture found alongside the God-sculpture at the grave-site in Cernavoda (5000 B.C.E.). Reminiscent of a modern abstract work, this ancient figurine represents the Great fecund Mother Nature, the creative thought-Power of the Father, the source and nourisher of all manifest creation.
Figure 6. Wooden carving of Zeus and Hera from Samos (ca. 625-600 B.C.E.). Zeus (the Father-God) is holding forth the breast of Hera (Mother-Nature), signifying that, while it is She who nourishes the world, it is by His hand, since She is, indeed, His manifestory-Power. In an Orphic hymn, Zeus is referred to as ‘the foundation of the earth and of the starry sky, ... male and immortal female, ... the beginner of all things, the God with the dazzling light. For He has hidden all things within himself, and brought them forth again, into the joyful light, from His sacred heart, working marvels.’
Figure 7. The “prototype Shiva,” an ithyphallic figure on a seal from the Indus Valley city of Mohenjo-daro (ca. 2500-1800 B.C.E.), is represented as a yogi, transcending the world of creation, while yet sustaining all creatures as *Pashupati*, “Lord of all creatures.” Note the three faces and the carry-over of the bull’s horns.

Figure 8. A sealing found in the excavated Indus Valley city of Harappa (ca. 2000 B.C.E.) On one side (top), two man-bull figures, and to the right the upside-down figure of the great Mother (Nature) from whose womb a tree, representative of all creation, grows. On the reverse (bottom), a female obeisant to a male figure. The lettered inscription is the same on both sides and has not been deciphered.
NOTES:


II. THE NONDUAL PERSPECTIVE  
(The publication of *The Wisdom of Vedanta*)

After writing *History of Mysticism*, I concentrated on finishing my Jnaneshvar book. While still a part of Swami Muktananda’s organization, I had translated some of Jnaneshvar’s works with the help of a native Marathi speaker. Now, in order to complete the book, I needed to research and write the biographical portion. I was living in Fallsburg, New York, not far from Muktananda’s ashram, and had frequently driven the thirty miles to New Paltz, New York in order to research *History of Mysticism* at the SUNY library. Now, I continued my trips to the university library to research the historical milieu of the thirteenth century Indian saint, Jnaneshvar. The completed book, *Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works Of The Celebrated Thirteenth Century Indian Mystic-Poet*, was not published, however, until 1989, after I had moved to Lacey, Washington.

It was at this time, in Lacey, Washington, that my interest focused on the writings of the pioneer mystic-philosopher, Plotinus, and I wrote a book, describing his immense contribution to mystical philosophy in the Western world and containing some significant excerpts from his third-century book, *Enneads*, and called my book, *Plotinus: The Origin of Western Mysticism*. I published this book in the year, 2000.

Another book published during my Washington state residence was *The Wisdom of Vedanta*. The content of that book was derived primarily from lecture notes that went back to my teaching days with SYDA Yoga. *The Wisdom of Vedanta* was published in Olympia, Washington in 1991. Here are a few excerpts from that book:

**“Introduction To Vedanta**

“All people of intelligence eventually awaken to some degree to the presence of God in their lives, and, depending on what religious or philosophical environment they happen to be in at the time of that awakening, they tend to interpret their spiritual experience in that context. The person living in a Moslem intellectual environment interprets his experience through the Koran, and worships Allah; the Hindu gives his heart to Krishna or Shiva; the person inundated with Buddhist ideas sees his awakening in Buddhist terms; the Jew relates strongly to the religious
history of his forefathers, and looks to Yahweh; the Christian describes his path in Christian terms, and the Platonist in Platonist terms. But, of course, they are all turning in the same direction. If they reach the object of their yearning, they transcend sectarian interpretations and come to know directly the Source of their attraction, and realize that It is beyond all religious tradition, containing all traditions and yet transcending them all.

“We may picture the many spiritual seekers of various traditions as a group of men widely scattered around the base of a peaked mountain; each starts up the mountain from his own place and wends his way along his own mountain path. From their individual perspectives, each appears to be far apart from the other, with different destinations. But each, as he nears the top, draws nearer the others, and eventually all reach the very same mountaintop. It is then they realize that the destination each sought, though each along his own unique pathway, was ultimately the same for all. And once they have reached the pinnacle of their quest, they come to know directly the One they sought, and realize It as the eternal and universal Self of all. As the 16th century mystic, Dadu, said so well: “Ask of those who have attained God; all speak the same word. ... All the enlightened have left one message; ... it is only those in the midst of their journey who hold diverse opinions.”

“This book is intended to reveal the perspective of the enlightened, those who have reached the pinnacle at the end of their journey, all sharing a common vista. We find today many who have attained that summit of knowledge and who espouse a common perspective based on that universal knowledge; they are to be found in every religious tradition that exists. However, it only rarely that we find an acknowledgement that this unitary knowledge was originally expressed in its fullness and perfection in the written scriptures of that most ancient of lands, India, in a tradition known as Vedanta, the purest and most concisely expressed understanding of Non-Duality. Vedanta is not Hinduism; Hinduism is a religious tradition, with its own rites and customs; but Vedanta is an expression of the direct knowledge of Unity. Vedanta may be expressed in the tradition of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism; but it is none of them. It is the essence and guiding principle of them all. It is the heart of each of them, the string on which the pearls of all religious traditions are strung. Vedanta is a perspective based, not on the teachings of any one particular person, but on the common experience of countless souls since the beginning of time.
“Vedanta” means “the end of the Veda,” and was originally intended to signify the collection of writings called the Upanishads, which were written nearly three thousand years ago by some anonymous Indian sages and appended to the earlier Vedas as their final portion. But the word, Veda, simply means “knowledge,” or “wisdom”; and so, the real meaning of Vedanta is “the end of knowledge,” “the ultimate wisdom.” In this broader interpretation, Vedanta refers, not only to the Upanishads, but covers the whole body of literature which explains, elaborates and comments on the Upanishadic teachings from their conception to the present day. It is synonymous with “the perennial philosophy,” that universal knowledge of Unity possessed by all the mystics and sages of past and present. In this sense, Vedanta is the culmination of all knowledge seeking. It is the final philosophy, recurrently discovered by seekers of Truth in every age.

“Because it is the highest knowledge possible to the man, the philosophy of Vedanta does not appeal to those without the courage and desire to ferret out the Truth for themselves. But those minds long accustomed to enquiry and Truth-seeking will experience a thrilling surge of joy upon discovering the philosophy of Vedanta. For it provides all the missing pieces to the puzzle of life and makes the total picture puzzle at last intelligible and perfectly clear. What a moment it is for the long-searching intellect when it finally comes across the truths expressed in Vedanta! What excitement it feels on having all its doubts dispelled, like cobwebs swept from the newly lighted corner of a room. How happy it feels on looking out upon a world perceived as for the first time bathed in clarity and light!

“What is it then, about Vedanta that infuses the mind with such delight and happiness? Reduced to its elements, the philosophy of Vedanta consists of three propositions: First, that man’s real nature is Divine. Second, that the aim of human life is to realize this Divine nature. Third, that those first two propositions constitute what we know as “religion,” and that, therefore, all genuine religious traditions are essentially in agreement. It is the teaching of all genuine religion that our separative ego, our vaunted individuality, is but a flimsy charade; and that who we really are beneath the ever-changing tide of thoughts and impressions which flood our minds, is that one, bright, undivided Consciousness whom men call God. He is the one Self of all selves, “the One who has become many”; and the realization of our eternal and ever-joyful Self is the realization of the Truth that shall make us free.

“It is the aim of Vedanta to show men the way to realize and become
established in the awareness of their true, Divine, Self. A thousand years before Jesus asserted, “I and the Father are one,” the Upanishads declared: aham brahmasmi, “I am Brahman”; and tat twam asi, “That thou art.” These assertions are not merely high-flown theories or mere suggestions to bolster the ego, but are the confident declarations of those who, in a moment of rare quietude and clarity, have seen through the veil of appearance and come face to face with their eternal Identity.

“It is of utmost importance to understand that Vedanta is not a mere speculative theory about the nature of Reality; it is the account of Reality by those who have “seen” It and known It—much more clearly than you see these words before you. It must be approached therefore as the sacred knowledge that it is. We must open ourselves to be taught, with an eagerness to look beyond the limitations of language and of our own conceptual framework, in order to understand what the seers of Truth have to say. If their words are true, they will not contradict our own rational judgment. If they are true, they will stir us to new heights of mental clarity and intellectual delight; and they will have the power to inspire us toward the realization of our own Divine Self.

**“Historical Origins of Vedanta**

“The Vedas may be thought of as the “Old Testament” of Indian religion, insofar as they represent, for the most part, the views of an archaic Indian priesthood who had not the benefit of mystical vision, but who taught men rather to accept a conciliatory relationship to a pantheon of warring, jealous gods. The Vedas, which comprised the oral religious tradition imported into India at the time of the Aryan invasion (ca. 2000 B.C.E.), tended to hypostasize various natural elements and forces, attributing to them lurid personalities and histories, much as did the mythologies of ancient Greece. The Upanishads, on the other hand, were the esoteric writings of the rishis, the seers, the rare sages of ancient times, who had actually realized the unitive Reality through their own contemplative experience.

“The Upanishads, as well as the Bhagavad Gita, may be thought of, therefore, as comprising the “New Testament” of the Indian religious tradition, which, while expanding upon the old Vedic writings, also supplants them by transcending the polytheism and anthropomorphism of the more elementary Vedas. However, neither the Upanishads nor the Bhagavad Gita should be thought of as the “authority” of Vedanta in the
same sense as some take the Bible to be the authority of Judaism and Christianity. The authority of Vedanta is one’s own personal experience of enlightenment. But the *Upanishads* are the earliest and clearest expression of the mystical, or unitive, experience and of the knowledge resulting from such an experience; and for that reason, hold an honored place in the world of religious literature. They stand as testimony and proof of the common perennial knowledge available throughout the history of the world to all who earnestly seek to know their origin and their destination in this life; and all who have come to attain that knowledge have acknowledged the authenticity and purity of these ancient testaments.

“Of the many recognized *Upanishads*, twelve are regarded as of primary importance and merit. In philosophical clarity and persuasiveness, these few represent what, for most of us, are to be considered “The Upanishads.” Their names are: *Isha, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Chandogya, Brihad-aranyaka, Aitareya, Taitiriya, Svetasvatara*, and *Maitri Upanishads*. The authors and exact date of authorship of these individual spiritual treatises are unknown; we know only that they were written, by various anonymous sages who had realized that Truth of which they speak, sometime between 1200 B.C.E. and the first few centuries of the Current Era. While they vary in length and in style, their one common theme is the inner realization of the identity of the Self (*Atman*) and God (*Brahman*). We may seek to know God, or we may strive to know our Self; but, say the *Upanishads*, when you find the one, you will find the other as well—for they are one. It is this inner discovery, which constitutes enlightenment.

“In its long history, Vedanta has had many enlightened sages, many holy saints, to serve as its glorious representatives. Indeed, it may be said that even those enlightened souls of other lands and other religious traditions—such as the 3rd century Roman, Plotinus, or the 13th century Christian, Meister Eckhart, or the Sufi, Ibn Arabi—may be regarded as representatives of Vedanta, insofar as their experiences and their teachings are wholly consistent with the philosophy of Vedanta. But there is one historical figure who played a most prominent role in revitalizing Vedanta by his writings, his teachings and his very life: that man is the medieval Indian *acharya*, or teacher, known as Shankara.

“Shankaracharya lived sometime between the 7th and 9th centuries, during a time when Vedanta had become almost forgotten and nearly supplanted throughout the Indian landscape by Buddhism. And even those who clung
to the ancient ways tended, for the most part, to make of Vedanta nothing more than a priestly Brahmanism based primarily on the adherence to conventional Vedic ritual and the laws of behavior governing the various castes. It was Shankara who brought, through his single-handed efforts, a return to the unitive philosophy of the *Upanishads* and a reawakening of the Indian spirit to its long-established heritage of spiritual wisdom.

“Before his death in the Himalayas at the age of thirty-two, Shankara authored many independent treatises as well as commentaries on ancient Vedantic texts; he re-established the monastic tradition on a firm footing; and he traveled the length and breadth of India on foot, teaching the truth which he had realized in himself, and which corroborated the teachings of the ancient *rishis*. He taught also the means whereby one could realize, as he had done, that eternal Lord of the universe. Here are his own words:

> “Gain experience directly. Realize God for yourself! Know the Self as the one indivisible Being and become perfect. Free your mind from all unnecessary distractions and dwell in the consciousness of the Self.

> “This is the final declaration of Vedanta: Brahman is everything; it is this universe and every creature. To be liberated [from ignorance] is to live in the continual awareness of Brahman, the undivided Reality.  

> “Shankara’s philosophy, the philosophy of Non-Dual Vedanta, may be characterized by a simple formula taken from his writings; it is this:

> *brahma satyam*
> *jagan mithya*
> *jivo brahmaiva napara*

> (God is the Reality; 
The world is illusory. 
The soul [or Self] is, indeed, nothing else but God.)

> “In the following sections, these three subjects: God, the world, and the Self, will be discussed in the light of the above statement.
“God

“The beginning student of Vedanta will have to become accustomed to many different names for God, as it has long been recognized in the Indian religious tradition that God cannot be limited to any particular name or form. It was stated in the Vedas: “Truth is one; men call It by many different names.” The important thing to understand is that beneath the various names—Brahman, Purusha, Rama, Shiva, Hari—the Reality is one and the same for all.

“The word most commonly used in the Upanishads for God is Brahman. By “Brahman” is meant the limitless Awareness, the universal Consciousness that is experienced in the contemplative state. That universal Consciousness is, of course, beyond names and images, as It is That which exists prior to the manifestation of name and form; but, from another perspective, every name that can be uttered is God’s name, as there is no name or form that is not His manifestation.

“Brahman exists as both the subjective and the objective Reality. He may be intuited in the objective world, but He can only be directly known as the subjective Reality; i.e., from within as I. The objective Reality is that which is perceived, either as subtle form (on the mental, or psychic, level), or as gross form (on the sensual level). The subjective Reality is the perceiver, the Witness. It is that very consciousness which we experience as our very own existence. That is Brahman; and it is That which is to be known. This is clearly explained in the Upanishads:

“What cannot be spoken with words, but That whereby words are spoken: know That alone to be Brahman and not what people here adore. What cannot be thought with the mind but That whereby the mind can think: know That alone to be Brahman and not what people here adore. What cannot be seen with the eye, but That whereby the eye can see: know That to be Brahman and not what people here adore. 2

“... It is not speech we should wish to know; we should know the speaker. It is not the things that are seen that we should wish to know; we should know the seer. It is not sounds that we should wish to know; we should know the listener. It is not the thoughts that we should wish to know; we should know the
“The experience, or "revelation," of Brahman is an experience, which changes forever the perceived identity of the experiencer. For, having seen Brahman, he has seen his real, eternal, Self. In that rare awakening, he experiences his own consciousness as the limitless Consciousness of the universe. It is the background Reality to all that is manifest as universal phenomena. While immersed in that infinite Awareness, one is able to perceive that all the various worlds and galaxies of this vast universe are but the spreading rays of love expanding from one’s own Self. All that we call "the world" is nothing but the mental projections of that one Consciousness, which expand to manifest as the evolving universe and then are withdrawn again, back into that unfathomable Consciousness. Like breaths alternating from inspiration to expiration, this creation-destruction cycle repeats itself eternally. Each “breath,” though momentary from the perspective of that Awareness, contains the millions of ages required to evolve and then dissolve the myriad worlds presently evolving their destinies throughout space.

“The ordinarily time-bound consciousness which experiences this glimpse into timeless Awareness is overwhelmed by this experience. While deeply immersed in it, he is God, he is eternal, he is alone—without a second; and there is no limited consciousness to distract his attention by responses of awe and amazement. There is nothing but himself; and nothing could be clearer or more obviously true and natural. But after the absorption of the limited identity into the universal has waned, and the time-bound ego resurfaces, then the reflective mind is struck with bewilderment and awe. With breathless humility and gratitude, it realizes only gradually the immensity of the experience that has come to it. “I am all this!” it exclaims incredulously. “All this universe is only my Self. I am the one Consciousness. There is no one but Me!”

“Who is this one Self, which includes all selves? What shall we call It? The ancient rishis of India who experienced It called It “Brahman.” But because It is always experienced only as the subject, the I-consciousness, It is commonly referred to in the Upanishads also as the Atman, which means, “the Self.” Atman and Brahman refer to the same One. In other words, Vedanta declares that God and the Self are one: God is who you are. Whether you know it or not, you are That; tat tuam asi. This is not merely a pleasant and convenient theory; it is the truth that has been experienced
directly by countless souls since the beginning of time.

“The World

“The mystic who experiences Brahman, the unitive Reality, in the contemplative state experiences that Unity as himself. In fact, if he were something other than That, it would no longer be a Unity, but a duality. And while experiencing himself to be Brahman, the one pure Consciousness, he experiences also that all the manifested universe is but his own projection, much as a thought-form is the projection of an individual mind within itself. It is his own radiation, his own glory. No matter what words one uses to describe it—whether as a “projection,” an “imaging forth,” a “superimposition,” a “manifestation of Will”—it cannot be adequately described, as we have nothing in our worldly experience with which to compare it.

“It is a unique and indescribable experience that the mystic confronts. He knows that he is the unchanging Ground, the Absolute, pure Consciousness; and yet simultaneously, he is exuding an inconceivably complex universe of evolving worlds in which he himself lives, as one lives within his own dream. This creative expansiveness is similar to the expansion of love, which we, as humans, feel in the heart for all creatures, or like the emanation of a thought-image increased to an infinite degree of power and light. It is quite beyond telling, except to say that within the one Being these two complementary aspects exist: the one infinite and unchanging, an unblinking Consciousness, pure and clear, like the vast blue sky; the other, a Power of manifestation which creates the world in which all creatures and things exist. Seers have called these two aspects by many different names, such as “Godhead and Creator,” “Theos and Logos,” “Light and Darkness,” Purusha and Prakriti,” “Shiva and Shakti”; Vedantists often refer to them as “Brahman and Maya.”

“One who has experienced this complementarity of aspects within the one Reality knows without a shadow of a doubt that the world is a projected Energy-manifestation of the universal Self. In other words, this world is nothing but God. Indeed, if a “world” is seen, that is an illusion—because what is seen is really nothing but God. To postulate a “world” as a second thing is to postulate an absolute Duality. But duality is merely God’s illusion; there is never anything but the One. The forms perceived by the senses, the forms perceived by the mind; the ideas, the images, the pleasures, the pains—all God’s. It is all His dream-like creation; nothing is separate
from Him. All is God and nothing but God.

“However, we must understand that, so long as we perceive a “world,” there is an apparent duality; *apparent*, because, while there is always One and One alone, there is the appearance of two-ness. Take, for example, the Sun and its rays: it appears to be two things, but, in fact, it is one thing. Or take the mind and its thoughts: they are apparently two. But no, there is only the mind. Shall we say, then, that the rays are unreal, imaginary? Or that the thoughts are non-existent? No. Nor can we say they are real. They have no independent reality; that is to say, they do not exist independent of their source. It is like that also with God and the world. The world is a manifestation of God; and from that perspective, the two are one. But God is eternal, while the world has but an ephemeral transient appearance, like a thought. Therefore, like a thought, the world is neither real nor unreal. Vedantists call it “*Maya*.”

*Maya* is just another name for God’s Power of manifestation, His Power of world-projection. That Power is inherent and co-eternal with God—whether there’s a creation or not. But *Maya* is both the (eternal) Cause and the (temporal) effect. *Maya* is God’s Power (*shakti*); and it is also the world-illusion produced by that Power.

“Anyone who has studied the analysis by modern-day physicists of the sub-atomic world of matter must have come to the realization that all this world of various forms is composed simply of Energy, or “fields of force”; and that every form that exists is merely an “appearance” conjured by this mysterious chimera called “Energy.” That Energy is God’s Power of illusion; i.e., *Maya*. It is *Maya* that creates what we regard as the “objective” universe.

“All experience of the world is dependent upon there being both a subject and an object; in other words, a seer and a seen. It should be clear that if you have only the subject, the seer, nothing can be experienced unless you have also the object, the seen. Or, if you have only the object, the seen, but do not have a subject, a seer, still nothing is experienced. We have all heard the conundrum, which asks, “If a tree falls in a forest, and no one hears it fall, was there really a sound?” The question might also be stated as, “If a tree falls in a forest, and no one sees it, did it really fall?” Modern physics has shown quite clearly that the subject, the seer, is an integral ingredient in the existence of an object, that which is seen. For example, the manner in which one observes a quantum particle determines its manner of existence;
 indeed, without the perceiving subject, the object cannot be said to exist at all. The one exists only so long as the other exists.

“This is the view of Vedanta as well. There must be both the subject and the object; otherwise, there is only God, absolute, undivided. God has made Himself into both the subject and the object, the seer and the seen. This is how He has created all this drama within Himself. It is all Himself, of course; but, in order to make for any kind of experience at all, He had to provide out of Himself both sides; He had to become both the subject and the object. Now, keep in mind, there is really nothing else but God; He is playing both these parts. So, you are That also.

“When you examine yourself, you find that, in your makeup, there are also these two sides, these two aspects: there is the subject, the “I”; and there is also that which is experienced through the senses as the body, and also as the thoughts, dreams, images that play before the subjective “I”. These things are the objects of your experience. Of course, there is also the world outside of your body and mind; all that too is seen, experienced, as the “object.” So, you can see: everything has this (apparent) two-sidedness. So long as there is a world, there will be “two”; in other words, an apparent duality. Only when we can merge the objective, thought-producing, mind back into God, are we able to realize directly the truth that there is ultimately only One.

“The Self

“The Self is Brahman, the universal Consciousness. It is the one “I” that everyone experiences as the Self. In the Upanishads, the question is asked, “Who is the Self?” And the reply given is, “The Self is the witness of the mind.” It is that inconspicuous Witness behind all of our various states of mind, which is our true, everlasting Self, and not those various states of mind themselves, with which most of us identify. The Self is the only Reality; but, because we tend to identify with the separative mind and the transient body, we lose sight of our eternal nature as pure Consciousness. Yet It is always there, just behind our minds.

“If we reflect, “Who am I? Am I the body? Am I the mind or the intellect?” we quickly realize that we are none of these; we are the pure Consciousness that is witnessing all these. For example, in the waking state, who is looking out from behind your eyes reading this? Who is witnessing all the forms
around you? Is it only the senses? Only the mind? No. You cannot be the mind, because you are witnessing the activity of the mind. Is it not so? And, in the dream state, who watches the dreams and remembers them upon awaking? And, in the deep sleep state, if you were really asleep, who was it that experienced that blissful nothingness, and who knows that it was a sound and deep state of peace that was experienced? It is clear to the discriminating mind that, in all three states, there is an unchanging Consciousness which is not involved in the activities of those states, but who witnesses them, and who is the real you, the real Self, independent of the mind and body. That is our true Identity.

“There is a fourth state, which can be experienced in deep meditation. It occurs when the mind becomes entirely pure and still and merges into that universal Consciousness. Then, one becomes aware, “I am everything; all this universe is only myself? And yet, though all these things and beings are contained in Me, I am forever One and undifferentiated. I am Consciousness and Bliss.” Such a state is not just imaginary; it is not just a theory. Many people have experienced such a state. It is the experience of that which underlies all of the great philosophies and religions of the world and constitutes the wisdom of all the saints. Listen to what the seers of the Upanishads said:

“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 world of the Spirit is found where man possesses all—for he is one with the One.

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

... 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, he fears no more.
“In the Vedantic tradition, such an awareness is said to be “Liberation.” Jesus of Nazareth also spoke of this freedom that is attained through knowledge of the Truth: “You shall know the Truth,” he said, “and the Truth shall make you free.” Why does the knowledge of Truth make you free? Because, when you become aware that you are all pervading, you no longer suffer under the illusion that you are a limited individual being. You will go on playing your role as a father, mother, a wife, a doctor, a lawyer, a beggar, or king; in fact, your enjoyment in playing your role will be increased manifold. But you will also be at rest within, in the joyful awareness of your perfect Self, infinite and eternal—like an actor, who earnestly plays his role on stage, but who remains conscious throughout the drama that he is not the character whom he is playing. He does not identify with the fortunes or misfortunes of his *dramatis personae*, but remains free within, happy and secure in the knowledge of his true identity.

“It is this truth that we must come to know and understand: Just as waves on the ocean are only water, just as golden ornaments are only gold, so all the various forms in the universe are only your Self. When you know this, and make it a part of your understanding, you will begin to revel in that joy that had been missing in your life before. You will begin to drink the nectar of the love for which you had been thirsting before. And you will begin to take delight in simply being and living and acting in the world in a much more fulfilling way than you had been able to before. Indeed, the knowledge of the Self is the only means to real fulfillment, and enduring happiness. To know the Self is the aim and destiny of all human life.

“The question then arises, “How can I attain it?” And the answer is: “The Self is already attained!” The Self has never left you; in fact, It can never go away. You are that eternal Self! The body will go; the mind will go. But you will always be. This is the truth. This is the liberating knowledge of all the wise seers and sages of every land of every time. It is found in the sacred scriptures of the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jews, the Muslims, and in the teachings of Jesus. All say the same: You are the eternal Self, the Source and Witness of your thoughts. That is who you really are. But because you are not aware of it, you identify with the mental activity and the transient worldly forms, and, forgetting your real Identity, you become swept away in the agitated currents of the mind. It is just this false identification, which is the source of all your woes and troubles. And if you could become aware of your true, eternal, Self, the various thought-forms that arise would be powerless to affect you one way or the other.
“Another question that may arise is that of the relationship of the individualized, transmigrating soul to the ultimate Self, the Divine Unity. This question is also resolved in the teachings of Vedanta. All the seers of the Self have acknowledged the existence of an individualized soul; but, they say, it has no permanent existence. The individualized soul is really nothing more than a congregation of mental tendencies, which, while continuing throughout many lifetimes, must eventually come to an end when its real essence is realized. Listen to what Shankaracharya had to say about it:

“The Self is the Witness, beyond all attributes, beyond action. It can be directly realized as pure Consciousness and infinite bliss. Its appearance as an individual soul is caused by the delusion of our understanding and has no reality. By its very nature, this appearance is unreal. When our delusion has been removed, it ceases to exist.”

“This is why enlightenment is regarded as “liberation from the round of birth and death.” As Shankaracharya says:

“The transmigrating soul is not different from the Lord... Just as the light of the Sun and the Sun itself are not different, so also the soul and the supreme Self are not different.

“Because all souls are essentially not different, and their apparent difference is due only to ignorance of the Self, the individual soul, after having dispelled that ignorance by true knowledge of the Self, becomes one with the Self.

“This, indeed, is the teaching of all who have truly known the Self. When the Self is experienced, they say, there is no soul. All duality is swallowed up. The seeker and the sought, the seer and the seen, the “I” and the “Thou,” are no longer two in the experience of Unity. Only the Self experiences the Self.

“It is this experience, this realization, of the eternal Self, which, according to Vedanta, constitutes salvation, or liberation. We find this stated in every piece of Vedantic literature, including all the Upanishads. It is not a very difficult concept to grasp: The Self is the truth of the universe; It’s the truth
of ourselves. It’s who we really are. There’s truly no one here but you! And to know, to really know, this Truth is the attainment of the final knowledge and the ultimate freedom.

“What, then, is the means to attain this knowledge, according to Vedanta? Those who have known the Self say that there are basically two different paths to the attainment of Self-knowledge: (1) The path of identifying with the soul (also called the path of Devotion); and (2) The path of identifying with the Self (also called the path of Knowledge).

“There are times when, as an individual soul, you feel the necessity of approaching God as His child, His devotee, His servant. The love in your heart bubbles up and expresses itself as devotion to the Lord of the universe. This is the noblest and highest path for the soul, to focus on God within itself with true humility and love in simple prayer and worship. You will joy in the singing of His name, and in serving Him in all His creatures, and in remembering His presence at every moment in every place.

“And there are other times, when you become quiet, and your breathing becomes shallow and soft, and you taste something of the certainty of your eternal and limitless Selfhood. Then you rest in that quietude, that solitary joyfulness—without thought, without movement, aware only of your own infinite presence. This is meditation, a glorious practice. It enables one to become centered in the Self, to rise above all the vicissitudes of temporal life, and to remain established in peace and goodwill, attuned to the inner joy, and seeing the one Divinity in all creation.

“Both of these practices, the devotional and the meditative, are perfectly valid; they are both firmly based in Truth. For remember, we are both distinguishable from, and at the same time, identical with, the one Consciousness. Just as a ray of sunlight is both distinguishable from and also identical with the sun, a thought-image is both distinguishable from and yet identical with the mind, a wave is at once distinguishable from and yet identical with the ocean, so we, too, possess this complementarity in our identity.

“Whether we turn, as a soul, to our Lord and God, or turn, as the Self, within to our own Identity; in both instances, we are looking toward the one Light. We should come to understand ourselves so well that we can worship God with heart-felt love at one moment and know Him as not different from our
inner Self at another moment, and not feel the slightest contradiction in so
doing. This whole world of creation is God, and it is also God’s. If God in
the form of His creature lovingly worships God, the Creator, who is going to
object? Remember, He, the One, is both the subject and the object; He is
both the worshipper and That which is worshipped; He is the lover and the
Beloved; and he is the love as well.

“It is only the One who has become many; and there is nothing else but the
One in the many. Beneath the differences lies the Undifferentiated. It is that
one Self who is spread out everywhere in all these variegated forms—in the
drifting cotton-puffs of clouds, and in the moist soil beneath our feet. It is
our own Self who is the life-pulse in every form of life—in trees,
crustaceans, amphibians, in every weasel and woodchuck in its burrow.
Every yearning human soul you see is you. Every loving heart eager for
God is your own. The crystal-clear eyes of every illumined soul are bright
with your love. You have cast yourself into the magical forms of man and
woman for the sake of delight, for the sake of joy. If we are to live in the
Truth, we must learn to expand our vision and our love to embrace all that
exists. This is the teaching of Vedanta. Listen, now, to the words of the
Upanishads:

“These three: the soul, the world, and the Lord of all,
Are nothing else but the one Brahman.
It’s Brahman alone who exists as everyone and everything;
beyond Brahman, the Self, there is nothing further to know.12

“That one conscious Self, the smallest of the small, the greatest
of the great,
Conceals Himself in everyone’s heart.
The wise, by the grace of God, become free
When they see that majestic and desireless Self within. 13

“When the Lord is known, then a man’s soul is freed;
He’ll never know sorrow or birth again.
Through devotion, he’ll rise to the highest state,
And rest forever in the bliss of God. 14

“To that effulgent Lord who’s in fire and in seas,
Who lives as this world, who’s in plants and in trees,
To that Lord let us sing! Give all glory to Him!
To that Lord let us sing! Give all glory to Him!  

**“Meditation**

“The essence of Vedanta is “Surrender to God!” The essence is “Cling to His feet!” Vedanta means “Remember Him constantly; lift yourself to Him by the strength of your desire!” How can one express the essence of Vedanta? It is a state of the soul when it’s buoyed up by grace.

“Vedanta’s essence is intimacy; “Be dissolved in His Bliss!” The offering of one’s heart, mind and body in service of God is the essence of Vedanta; it is the wisdom of love. It is unshaken confidence in the strength of the soul: “Identify with Him; be as great and as good!”

“There is one Life, one Mind, one infinite Ocean of Truth. He is manifest as souls, as the sea manifests waves. Vedanta is the awakening of the wave to its Truth; it is the soul’s joyful recognition of its infinite Self.”

**NOTES:**

5. *Ibid.*, I:11
6. *Isha Upanishad*, I:7
7. *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad*,
12. *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, I:12
15. *Ibid.*, II:17
IV. THE BLENDING OF MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE
(The publication of *The Divine Universe*)

In 1992, still living in Washington state, I published two books simultaneously, as a statement of the equal importance of both devotion and Self-knowledge; they were *Thomas á Kempis: On The Love of God* and *Dattatreya: Song of The Avadhut*. I had written each of these books long previous to their publication—*Thomas á Kempis* back in the sixties when I was still in my Santa Cruz cabin, and *Dattatreya* in 1977, while I was living in the Oakland, California ashram of Swami Muktananda.

Returning to Florida in October of 2002, I took up residence on the Treasure Coast. I had long had an interest in reconciling my mystical vision with the perspective of contemporary science, which I attempted to do in my next book, *Mysticism And Science: A Call For Reconciliation*. This book was published by O Books in London in 2007.

This was followed quickly by another book focused on the disparity between Gnosis and Science, the Mystical worldview and the Scientific perspective. This book was called *The Divine Universe: An Alternative To The Scientific Worldview*. I published it myself with the help of the iuniverse organization in 2008. Here are some excerpts from that book:

“*Introduction*

“For many, contemporary materialistic science offers a sufficiently convincing worldview; but I wish in this book to offer an equally convincing alternative to that established worldview. I offer not a refutation, but rather a reformulation of the scientific perspective into which the worldview of spirituality is neatly integrated. Upon examination, this worldview integrating science and spirituality will be recognized to be an ancient and perennial one, and yet it is a vision that wonderfully satisfies the requirements and sensibilities of the modern intellect as well. However, it is a vision that can only be approximated, and never fully told. For, to be truly known, its truth must be revealed to the inner eye, and thus “seen” by each single soul who seeks to know it. It is a vision that does not lend itself well to language but shines forth and communicates itself clearly through a higher and subtler means of expression that is at once intuitive and
revelatory. And so, these words I offer in the service of Spirit are only suggestive, like the finger pointing at the moon. Only the reader can make them productive of understanding by tracing their meaning to the living Reality within to which they point.

“In our contemporary world, the spiritual worldview is very much under attack. Many books have appeared on the market today touting scientism and decrying the spiritual worldview, and just the other day, I heard a segment on the radio highlighting a group of atheists. How smug they seemed with their scientific perspective on things, and how condescending they were toward those they referred to as “believers”, we poor ignorant masses of superstitious humanity. I could only laugh. Years ago, as a young man, I sympathized with their position. I saw no evidence for belief in God; in fact, those who embraced religion seemed to me to be merely passive followers of the naïve beliefs blindly accepted by the culture as a whole. When I was twenty-eight, however, my mind became opened to the possibility of the direct experience of God, and I went into solitary retreat in a mountain cabin to prepare myself for a direct meeting with God. By the grace of God, that meeting came on the night of November 18, 1966.

“At that time, drawn deeply into contemplative prayer, I experienced from the vantage of eternity the outflow of the universal manifestation and its subsequent return in a never-ending cycle of manifestation and dissolution. Much later, I read of the theory of ‘the Big Bang’ put forward by the theoretical physicists. It was not long before I realized that the initial expansion of the newborn universe, said by the physicists to have occurred around 15 billion years ago from an ‘infinitely dense point’, was the same origin that I had witnessed in meditation years earlier. With this understanding, I set out to reconcile these two visions—one from the viewpoint of the Eternal, and one from the viewpoint of contemporary theoretical physics—in the hope of bringing about a synthesis of the spiritual and the scientific visions regarding the origin of our Cosmos.

“Here, then, is a collection of independent Essays on various aspects of this integrated worldview, written spontaneously over the past year or so, with an intent to offer a clear and reasoned alternative to the worldview promulgated by the many advocates for the popular ‘scientism’ of our age. There are four distinct ‘groups’ of Essays included here: there are those that deal with correcting some of the myths of popular science; there are some that are expressive of the ‘perennial philosophy’; there are some that deal with that
much maligned subject: astrology; and there are those which attempt to give
some idea of what it is like to “see God” (See Chapter 11, “My Own
Experience”).

“One of the reasons for the difficulty in describing such an experience is the
fact that God is not experienced as someone or something that can be spoken
of in the third person as “He” or “Him”, or even spoken of in the second
person as “Thou” or “Thee”. God is experienced as one’s Self, and therefore
can only be spoken of as “I”. In the religious traditions of India, this
understanding is commonplace; God is spoken of as Paramatman, “the
Supreme Self”, or simply as the congregation of the subjective qualities sat,
“Being or Existence”; chit, “Consciousness”; and ananda, “Bliss”. Yet in
our Western culture and language, this entanglement of the individual’s “I”
(or ego) and the Divine “I” still makes for confusing and problematic
communication regarding the subject of God, the Divine Self.

“Perhaps the most persistent and perplexing question about God is “How is
the experience of God to be attained? Is there a reliable scientific answer to
the question of how this can be done?” And the answer is “No”. To be sure,
the focused directing of the soul’s attention to the eternal Reality through
meditation or prayerful contemplation is paramount; but why do so few
obtain the desired results where so many make the effort? There are clearly
no clear-cut guidelines that can promise success in this endeavor. And so, it
has always been regarded as a matter of God’s grace or favor. This
declaration of partiality on the part of God is regarded by many as
unsatisfactory, though individual merit does not seem to be a determining
factor either. Yet, how else may we regard it? It is possible that the karmic
evolution of the soul is a factor. Having discovered some unusual planetary
phenomena occurring at the time of my “mystical” experience, I have
suggested the possibility of a connection between the two occurrences; but
the establishment of a tangible correlation between them awaits the
collection of data concerning many more such experiences. The fact is that
we do not know for sure why God reveals Himself in some and not in others.

“The question of how a God, who is Eternal Consciousness, is able to
“create” this immense and multi-faceted universe is also one which presents
a stumbling block for many. From my own experience, the universe is
projected and withdrawn in a recurring cycle, in the manner of a breath that
is exhaled and inhaled. Each cycle of that ‘breath’ lasts, from our temporal
perspective, for billions of years; yet from the perspective of eternity,
beyond time and space, each endures for merely the space of a breath. God is not confined to human possibilities; He is at once eternally transcendent Consciousness, and active Energy operating in the spatio-temporal field. He is both unmoved and mover. He projects or emanates our universe in a manner similar to the way we project a thought-form or dream upon our own consciousness while remaining the witness to our creations.

“Underlying a dream phantasm is the active mind of the dreamer. That dreamer’s mind is the material cause, the formal cause, the effective cause and the final cause of the dream. Using that analogy, God, the Divine Mind whose projected “dream” this universe is, is the material, formal, effective and final cause of this phenomenal world. Once this is grasped, what further purpose does the investigative analysis of this world serve? It brings to mind the thought of a scientist-character in a dream tearing up the dream-pavement in the dream-landscape in order to analyze it, then placing the pieces under a dream-microscope. We might further imagine such a dream-scientist coming up with pronouncements about what this dream-terrain is made of, such as: “It seems to be made of waves!” “No, it is made of particles, but the particles themselves seem to be nothing more than a kind of energy!” “I’ll be damned! It’s both waves and particles! What is this stuff?” Truly, it is clear that such efforts would be utterly futile, and that, in order to really know the truth about himself and the reality in which he lived, our dream-scientist would simply need to wake up. Our dreams thus show a close parallel to the nature of our ‘real’ universe. While I do not wish to denigrate the efforts of scientists, I have seen that the true nature of ‘reality’ can only be realized by those who ‘wake up’ to the eternal Self.

“While that eternal Self is forever unaffected by the evolution of our cosmos, He is intimately involved in it. Just as our own consciousness is involved in the play of dreams, so is the one Divine Consciousness playing in this universal drama. He is the Self of our self, the Joy of our joy; and as we evolve toward full awareness of His truth, our understanding will eventually become clearer and expand to encompass both the heavens and the earth. I sincerely hope that the following collection of Essays will stimulate you to look deeply into the nature of your own self and the universe around you, and truly come to see yourself as the one Divine Consciousness playing in your own Divine Universe.
“Mysticism Versus Scientism

“Let me say at the onset that I have no scientific training. My interest in cosmogony derives primarily from my own direct “mystical” experience. I certainly would not pretend to know anything about this universal ‘Creation’ if I had not seen it with my own eyes in the light of an inner revelation, while drawn into a deep contemplative union with the Father. And I am now attempting to bring together this vision of gnosis with the vision of science in the hope of shedding some small amount of light on both.

“The theology of the illumined mystics is the same the world over. Only the names for God and His Power are different owing to the differing languages. All hold that the Supreme Being is absolute and unchanging. And all hold that He possesses a creative Power by which He manifests this spatio-temporal universe. In His eternally absolute and unchanging aspect, He has been called by one name, and in His aspect of universe Creator, He is called by another name. In the West, these two aspects of God have been called Theos and Logos, Jahveh and Chokmah, The One and Nous, Godhead and God, Father and Mother, and so on. In the East, they have been called Prajapati and Prthivi, Purusha and Prakrti, Shiva and Shakti, Brahman and Maya, Tao and Teh, Haqq and Khalq, and many other names. In our modern era, the names most commonly used to denote these two aspects of God are the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Energy.

“Undoubtedly, some confusion arises due to the fact that these terms, consciousness and energy, are also used by contemporary scientists in their own more limited contexts to denote quite different realities. For example, science does not recognize Consciousness as the universal Source of all, but rather sees it as a mysterious byproduct of the biological activity of the human brain. Likewise, the term, Energy, which I regard in its theological sense as the Divine Power, has an historically traditional use in the scientific lexicon as an ambiguously defined term attached to various qualifiers—chemical, nuclear, thermal, potential, electrical, etc.—to represent the dynamic activities of these differing material frameworks. And so there is a paradigmatic disconnect between the conceptions and terminology of theology and science, as they are quite different both in content and meaning. And so, here, in this First Section, I present what I hope are some unusual and thought-provoking Essays regarding the contemporary scientific perspective, and some innovative ideas on how this perspective might be enhanced by the perspective of gnosis.
“Mysticism, Science, And The Heirs of Democritus
Part One

“Mysticism and science represent two opposing worldviews which may be reduced to the two diametrically opposed philosophical positions known as idealism and materialism. These two starkly differing views of the nature of the reality underlying the appearance of the world have been at odds with each other for twenty-five centuries beginning with Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Anaxagoras and Socrates on the idealist side, and Thales, Leucippus, and Democritus on the materialist side. Idealists hold that Mind is the primary reality of which matter is an evolute; materialists hold that matter is the primary reality of which mind is an evolute. Mystics, those who claim to have actually experienced or “seen” the ultimate reality directly in a moment of contemplative revelation, fall 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.

“Mysticism, therefore, is an idealist point of view which asserts the possibility of the direct apperception of the ultimate reality in a rare, profound, and purely introspective experience, wherein an extraordinarily 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, transcendent Noumenon, 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 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 (by way of 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.
“Science, in its present state, represents the position of materialism; though, it should be noted, science is not necessarily materialistic; that is, materialism is not an essential feature of science, shown by the fact that many of the greatest scientists who ever lived held religious views which demanded a noumenal source for the phenomenal world. But there is an established trend among modern scientists toward an exclusively materialistic view, no doubt as a result of the emphasis in science on conclusions which are empirically demonstrable. 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 materialistic bias and will grant little credence to noumena experienced in a subjective and unverifiable state of awareness.

“While science, and its attendant materialism, 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 ascendency from the seventeenth 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, Johannes Kepler, and Isaac Newton. By the twentieth century, materialism was firmly embedded in the scientific (empirical) method and implicitly formulated in the widely held philosophy of logical positivism. This view, that only knowledge obtained by the scientific method and capable of being demonstrated experimentally was worthy of the label ‘knowledge’, became the widespread faith of our Western culture, a faith referred to by its critics as ‘scientism’. And, while there are still a few maverick idealists among the ranks of scientists today, the vocal majority utterly reject the slightest hint of mysticism or idealism and hold as firm doctrine that the universe came into being and is sustained through “natural,” that is to say, purely material, processes. Nevermind that “matter”, upon close examination, dissolves into “thought”.

“These two, empirical knowledge, or science, and mystical knowledge, or gnosis, represent knowledge obtained through two radically different methodologies: empirical knowledge represents the ordering and analysis of outward observations of phenomena perceived by the senses in the normal waking state; mystical knowledge represents the inward 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, 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 science.

“The difficulty presently apparent is that advocates of materialistic science refuse to acknowledge not only the validity and relevance of gnosis, but even the very possibility of its existence. Today, science is so steeped in the materialistic perspective that scientists and, through their influence, “educated” members of the public, routinely regard all those who hold to idealistic views as unfortunate members of the ignorant and uneducated masses, misguided by superstition. Those with a mystic bent are held in especial disdain and are the subjects of frequent ridicule in our materialist-oriented culture. Colleges and universities around the nation instill this arrogant prejudice in the youth who flock to them for their one-sided 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.

“Part Two

“Let’s go back once again and look a little closer at the initial split between these two ways of knowing: It probably began with the earliest hominids; but the best records of this division that we possess from Western civilization only go back around twenty-five hundred years to ancient Greece. Democritus (ca. 460-390 B.C.E.), student of Leucippus, contemporary of Socrates, was the Greek philosopher who surmised that the world we live in is made up of very small, indivisible, entities which he called atoms. These atoms, he guessed, were the elementary particles and building blocks of the cosmos, and were, therefore, the ultimate and final answer to the question ‘what is everything made of?’ Democritus was a firm materialist. He was, in fact, the foremost in a long line of materialistic scientists. He saw no need to look any further than these ‘elemental’ particles for the material foundation of existence. Other materialists of the time were Thales (ca. 625-545 B.C.E.), who thought that water was the ‘material principle’ of the world; and Anaxamenes (fl. 548 B.C.E.), who believed that the element, air, was the fundamental constituent of everything. But there were some other philosophers of the period who were a bit more
intuitional, and certainly more contemplative, in their approach to the knowledge of ultimate reality. These philosophers had “seen” into the depths of their own conscious minds and discovered through that vision that the source of the material universe is not itself material, but is rather an eternal Mind, a Noumenon beyond all phenomena, who is the source of the phenomenal, projecting the cosmos as a human mind projects thoughts and ideas upon itself. This view, known as idealism, was held by Xenophanes (ca. 580-480 B.C.E.), Pythagoras (b. 570 B.C.E.), Parmenides (b. ca. 540 B.C.E.), Anaxamander (fl. 547 B.C.E.), Heraclitus (fl. ca. 500 B.C.E.), and of course Socrates (469-399 B.C.E.) and Plato (427-347 B.C.E.).

“Both the materialistic scientist, Democritus, and the idealists such as Socrates and Plato, have their present-day descendents. It seems, after 2500 years, that the controversy is unresolvable. Some consider the reason for this division in human perspectives to lie in the differences in the educations and life-experiences—in other words, the nurture—of those individuals making up these two philosophical worldviews. Others feel that it may be because of certain basic differences in the cerebral makeup—in other words, the nature—of idealists and materialists. Perhaps there are subtle differences related to the evolutionary stage at which each individual soul finds itself; perhaps these differences are reflected in right-brain/left-brain patterns of dominance. Who can say? But what is certain is that this duality of philosophical perspectives greatly affects our current society and colors nearly every aspect of the conduct of life on earth.

“In our contemporary American culture, these opposing views may exist unnoticed side by side, often within the same individual. Many find that their favorite religious faith provides their subconscious idealistic perspective, while their worldly preoccupations bespeak their conscious materialistic bias. But these two co-existing, though opposing, ideologies are rarely ever analyzed, defined or even mentioned in our society. Religious faith and materialistic science co-exist comfortably within the minds of the vast majority of the indiscriminate masses. In fact, materialistic science, and its corollary, ‘scientism’, has for several centuries been sanctified as the ideology of choice within the American culture. And though we, as a culture, currently seem to be slowly emerging from that lengthy period of blind materialism, the materialistic perspective continues to flourish, and no doubt shall continue until the last man and child on earth becomes enlightened by the merciful grace of God.
“Today, there are many heirs to Democritus’ materialistic science who are vociferous in extolling their ideology. I would like to mention two of them, without mentioning their names: One is a Theoretical Physicist, physics professor, and best-selling author. In his latest book he attempts to enthuse his reading audience for the expected coming validation of ‘Superstring Theory’, which, he expects, will prove that the ultimate reality is actually very tiny material ‘strings’ of which all matter and forces are made. It seems that someone has calculated mathematically that the present menagerie of particles and forces so far discovered may be reduced to a common unifying ‘element’ if all those particles and forces were themselves constituted of a yet tinier material entity in the form of vibrating strings, which would then, according to theorists, produce by their vibrations and varying configurations the appearance of every particle and force thus far known. The only problem is that these ‘strings’ would have to be so tiny that, if a hydrogen atom were blown up to the proportions of the Milky Way galaxy, strings within it would only be the size of dust mites. It would take more than a billion, billion quadrillion of these strings to make up an inch. Also, they would have to exist in a universe consisting of 10 to 24 curled-up dimensions.

“Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you really could infer the ultimate reality by taking things apart and finding that one common element in everything! However, it’s a very multi-faceted and insubstantial ocean of constantly transforming (Thought) energy that we find instead. The cosmos in which we live almost seems to be designed in such a way as to confound any and all efforts to comprehend the manner of its existence. Fortunately, the One who is the ultimate Source of this energetic ocean of appearance has periodically revealed Himself to certain individuals and made known the manner of His projection of this universal array. But, unfortunately, that vision and that certainty is not available to all. There’s the rub. So, the unillumined go on refusing to acknowledge a Mind greater than their own; and they go on inventing myriads of incredibly bizarre scenarios for the origin and constituency of the universe. They go on enquiring, delving, analyzing, and presupposing, wending their way more and more deeply and inextricably into labyrinthine mazes of imagination – all to no avail. Isn’t it amazing what an ingeniously designed comedic drama the Author of this universal production has fostered! 1

“Another materialistic scientist, a Cosmologist, also a professor and author, is anxiously awaiting the empirical verification of the ‘quantum fluctuations
in the vacuum of space’ as the ultimate cause and origin of the ‘Big Bang’. He suggests that the universe began from nothing as a “quantum fluctuation in the vacuum”; but it seems to me that one would then be required to explain what caused the quantum vacuum. Is the “quantum fluctuation” the prime mover, the ultimate reality? I’m being facetious, of course; I know it’s not the ultimate reality. I’ve seen the ultimate Source. He lives in/as eternity, and this universe is the projection of His will, an indescribable breathing forth of the whole Mind-born shebang and a subsequent withdrawing of it all once again, a cycle endlessly repeated. Why? No one knows. And I don’t think there is a why. But the important point is that, while the manifested universe is our temporal reality, that one Mind is our eternal reality. And He can be known within as the consciousness of “I” through His gracious revelation.

“In a recent book, our Cosmologist offers ten questions which comprise his ten Chapter titles: 1. How do we know the things we think we know? 2. Is there a theory of everything? 3. How did the universe begin? 4. How did the early universe develop? 5. Why is the universe the way it is? 6. What is it that holds the universe together? 7. Where did the chemical elements come from? 8. Where did the solar system come from? 9. Where did life originate? 10. How will it all end? While our Cosmologist explains the answers to each of these questions as ‘natural’ processes, I couldn’t help laughing when I realized that, for me, in my simplistic view of things, the answer to each of these questions is perfectly obvious. The answer to each is “God”. Needless to say, that answer would fall short of satisfying any of our materialistic scientists. But it clearly points out the immense difference between our perspectives on reality.

“For me, the richness of the multitude of universal phenomena is understood to be projected by and contained within the One. The One, and not the perplexing multitude of phenomena, is the unvarying focus of my attention. Having seen the splaying out of the universe from the vantage of eternity, curiosity for just how each particular phenomenon is produced is utterly lacking in me. What a simple bumkin I must seem! Yet I truly believe that, once the scientists follow all their theoretical extrapolations to their ultimate resolution, they will come at last to the same simple unity in which I am comfortably settled. They may call it by another name, but they must in the end come to the one eternal Mind that has breathed forth this immensely complex universe of seething motion. That is the ultimate Theory of Everything. The universe began from (in) Him. The universe is the way it
is because He thought (willed) it so. It is His Thought that produced it and holds it together. The chemical elements, the solar system, and life all come from Him. It will end also by His will when He withdraws it all back into Himself.\(^2\) This is the theory backed up by the visionary experience of countless mystics, seers, sages, and prophets from time immemorial.

“In the conceptualization of a materialistic universe, there are clearly no limits to the possibilities of one’s imagination. These clever materialistic scientists hope one day to announce to the world: ‘We’ve finally discovered what the universe is made of; it’s made of a whole lot of strings!’ ‘And it all began with a random fluctuation!’ But, sorry boys; you’re on the wrong track. We (mystical idealists) have seen the ultimate source, and turns out He’s an eternal Mind, who, though completely beyond our time and space universe, also intimately pervades and constitutes this universe as divine Thought. That’s why you keep coming up with little particles that turn out to be waves of pure (Thought) energy. That’s why all those little particles seem to be interconnected, though there is nothing apparently connecting them. That’s why you can’t get a handle on what’s making the whole thing hold together and behave as an intelligently guided and integral whole. That’s why you’re never going to discover the ultimate reality by means of a microscope or telescope or supercollider. Give it up, boys. The ultimate reality is an open secret already; and you guys have been sadly and terribly misled by your unillumined mentors. It’s okay if you’re just clowning around, trying to see what amazing fantasies you can come up with; go ahead, knock yourselves out. But please give some due acknowledgment and respect to the truth as it has already been revealed countless times to countless individuals.

“The Ultimate Theory of Everything

“When physicists and cosmologists talk about a ‘Theory of Everything’ they are referring to the potential for a theory that would provide a single unifying mathematical law governing the properties of all elementary phenomena: the various wave/particles categorized as quarks or leptons and the four known basic interactions. Such a law, if it exists, would enable these scientists to feel that they understood the means by which all the matter in the universe operates. Such a law, once formulated and proven by evidence, would be greatly celebrated among the scientific community, and would fulfill the long-sought desire on the part of physicists for a consistent theoretical framework—at least for a brief moment. For it would very
quickly become apparent that there is much more to this universe than merely matter and material interactions, and that mathematical laws concerning the material universe do not answer the important questions, nor are they able to offer any lasting satisfaction in the quest for true knowledge. Such a law, if it did not take into account the Conscious eternal Source and Ruler of the universe, who constitutes the very identity of those physicists and cosmologists, would be ultimately futile and meaningless.

“There can only be one ultimate theory of everything; it must be the theory that accurately describes the origin, evolution, sustenance, and purpose of the universe and all that’s in it. And such a theory does indeed exist; it is a theory that has been both implicitly and explicitly expressed throughout the span of human history, sometimes referred to as “the perennial philosophy”, but often regarded as mere myth. This ultimate theory is based entirely on direct experience and is therefore an experientially confirmed philosophy or theory. It begins and ends with the One, known as “the Lord of the universe”, “the Divine Source”, “the Eternal”. ‘In the beginning,’ this ultimate theory starts out, ‘there was no universe, nor any creatures to perceive its absence; there was only the One, the “I am”, who has always been. Within that One, a breath-impulse welled up, and He expelled it, projecting His own life force into the simultaneously newborn spaces. And, while there were not yet any eyes to see it, it was as though a great explosion had appeared out of nowhere, from which the entire universe evolved. From Him, the universe is breathed forth; in Him it lives and evolves, and to Him it ultimately returns, in the same manner as a person’s outgoing breath is indrawn once again. This world is constituted of His life’s breath and contains His life within it. From the beginning, it is alive with Consciousness and Energy, manifesting as quanta of light and matter, and evolving into manifold forms; and this Consciousness and Energy, inherent in all matter, evolves eventually into the various sentient life-forms that populate the Earth.

“All this variegated universe of form appears to exist independently as a thing in itself, with its own internal laws; but it is entirely contained in the One, consisting of His Power, and governed by His inherent and unfolding Thought. Just as men create imaginative worlds within themselves, He creates this world in time, supplying it with Consciousness and Energy out of Himself. But, just as a man dreaming is not affected by the events in his dream-world, neither is the One affected by His Mind-born creation. He remains an immaterial Presence beyond this imagined world, an eternal
Consciousness in omniscient and eternal bliss. For Him, the expansion and withdrawal of this universe is but a momentary breath, though to His creatures encased in time’s illusion, billions of Earth-years pass both in its expansion and in its contraction. He is beyond time and space, beyond beginnings and endings, and though He contains all things, He is uncontained, as He is the only One, besides whom there is no other.

“The evolution of His cosmos brings into being sentient creatures, the most intricately evolved of these creatures being human beings. These beings inherit the eternal Consciousness of their Creator; but they also possess a false sense of individuality (called the ego), which constitutes a subtle, ideational identity (called the soul). This ego-soul comprises an ideational identity within the eternal Consciousness—which is the real underlying Identity of all human beings; and this ego-soul, in correlation with the evolving planetary patterns of this solar system, continues to evolve in intelligence and awareness through numerous lifetimes, until at last it is awakened to its true Identity. When such an ego-soul is awakened to its true Identity, it knows the true, everlasting Self as the one eternal Consciousness; and the ego-soul vanishes, as an imaginary snake disappears when it is realized to be in actuality a rope. Until such an awakening, souls continue to pass from life to life pursuing illusory selfish goals. But once having evolved, and having awakened to their true Self, such individualized souls are released from the need for further human birth and live in the freedom and bliss of the one eternal Consciousness, serving as manifest instruments of the Divine. This is the ultimate Theory of Everything. It is discovered by each soul in its allotted time.

“The empirical sciences developed by human beings serve a valuable function in that they seek to discover consistent laws governing physical phenomena, without dependence upon theoretical considerations. They seek, through pragmatic experiment and empirical sensory evidence, to derive a satisfactory understanding of universal phenomena, from the microscopic to the macroscopic, in the endeavor to formulate a consistent and accurate spectrum of human knowledge. This endeavor is both exemplary and praiseworthy; it has led to many outstanding clarifications of our understanding of the world and has brought many improvements in the lives and circumstances of much of humanity. However, the representatives of science, by their materialistic framework and self-imposed limitation of the acceptance of empirical (physical) evidence only, have rendered science impotent to see and consider the entirety of reality, which consists of
spiritual and psychological elements as well. It is as though the representatives of Science have declared that ‘We only deal with that part of reality that is perceivable by the senses because that is the limit of human certainty, and therefore the limit of our epistemological province; and if evidence from other experience outside that province contradicts our theories of the nature of the universe, we must simply ignore them, since such experience is not our concern’. Thus, in their attempt to limit reality to the physical only, they have bound themselves to partial and mistaken judgments of the nature of reality. It is the task of this and future generations to correct this illogical and harmful limitation on the exploration of knowledge in all its forms, and to bring about an integral perspective that takes into account not only the physical evidence, but the psychological and spiritual evidence as well. It is only then that we will possess the capability of providing an ultimate Theory of Everything that is comprehensive, accurate, and irrefutable. Only then will the human thirst for a complete knowledge of the reality in which we live be truly satisfied.”

NOTES:

1. Regarding the Big Bang and some of the modern cosmological theories, renowned mathematician and physicist, Roger Penrose, has said: “We really don’t know what happened there—the big bang was a totally amazing occurrence. I don’t believe any of these theories about fields we haven’t found or baby universes we have no evidence for, or a larger universe in which ours is embedded. There is no objective reason to believe in any of these hypotheses. … I don’t know about the cosmological constant—I don’t believe in it. As for the inflationary universe theory—I am a skeptic. What these people do is come up with a theory, and when the evidence doesn’t support it, they change their theory, then change it again and again.” (quoted by Amir Aczel as a personal conversation with Penrose, in God’s Equation, N.Y., Dell Publishing, 1999; pp.217-218).

2. The cyclic arising and disappearance of the universe is famously described by the mystic-author of the Bhagavad Gita, Chapters VIII., verses 17-20; and IX, verses 7-10. For other similar historical descriptions, see Swami Abhayananda, Mysticism And Science, Winchester, U.K., O Books, 2007; Chapter 8, “The Eternal Return”, pp. 75-83.
V. THE GREAT RADIANCE
(The publication of Reflections On The Soul)

In 2007, when I wrote The Divine Universe, I was bursting with the notion that the world had been exploded into existence by the Creative Power of God, His Divine Energy, noting that “Energy” was a mysterious thing that even science had not fully defined. It hadn’t yet dawned on me that the original “Energy” of which the universe consists had to have been in the form of Light—i.e., high-frequency electromagnetic radiation. It was only after the publication of The Divine Universe that this likelihood dawned on me. And so, the theory that the Energy that created the universe was Light-Energy only became clearly formulated and elucidated in my book, Reflections On The Soul which was published in 2010. The concept of “Divine Energy” as the origin and substance of the universe, which I had written of in The Divine Universe, was correct; it just didn’t go far enough: it didn’t explain what kind of energy!

So, there had been a radical change in my perspective, from the one expressed in The Divine Universe to the revised one expressed in Reflections On The Soul. In addition to coming up with the theory that the Big Bang was a Divine emanation of Light-Energy, I also reconsidered the concept that the organizing Consciousness of God had been innately contained in the Creative Light-Energy of God constituting our universe; and I came to the new conclusion that, while they were both Divine, the Light-Energy was distinct from the conscious Spirit, or Soul; that Divine Consciousness and Its Energy were distinct and independent aspects of the Divine. The conventional wisdom since Biblical times had held that the life-giving Spirit, or Soul, was breathed or “infused” into matter by God; but it became clear to me that the very manifestation of the ‘material’ universe had taken place within the Consciousness of God, and therefore never required an ‘infusion’ of Consciousness to act as Soul and as a guide to the organization of matter, since the material universe, created and existing within God, within the eternal Consciousness, was thereby already imbued with the Consciousness of God, or Soul.

Here are a few excerpts from that book:
“The Mind-Body Problem

“For much of human history, nearly everyone concluded, as Descartes did, that God manifests as two complementary ‘substances’: a subtle one of Spirit, or soul, that manifests as a subjective conscious awareness (mind); and a coarser one of matter, or body. And that, at human conception or birth, the two are joined, and then, at the cessation of life in the body, they separate. At death, the body returns to its elements, eventually decaying back into its original Energy state, while the soul continues to live in its subtle Spirit realm, until such time as, according to some, it is re-embodied in a newly born creature; or, according to others, it is relegated eternally to a place of punishment or reward, depending on the deserts accumulated in its earthly sojourn. This dualistic scheme is all very reasonable, and very neat: there is the material world, and the spiritual world, both made of God-stuff, but of different kinds. They combine and interpenetrate during the lifetime of the body, and then separate when the body is no longer an apt host.

“How, then, are we to explain this intermingling of Soul and Matter in a manner consistent with our current understanding of the nature of Matter? We can’t, of course. For Soul is not a substance; it cannot be described in a way similar to material particles or to photons or wave frequencies. It leaves no physical imprint; it requires no medium; I suspect it has no spatial or temporal signature at all. It is utterly undemonstrable to the senses. It is a Divine and eternal Consciousness which, despite its non-material nature, permeates and interacts with the world of phenomenal material; and which, though undetectable by the senses, is clearly perceived subjectively as human awareness.

“Plotinus, utilizing his flawed third-century knowledge of natural science, attempts to draw an apt analogy:

“May we think that the mode of the soul’s presence to body is that of the presence of light to the air? This certainly is presence with distinction: the light penetrates through and through, but nowhere coalesces; the light is the stable thing, the air flows in and out; when the air passes beyond the lit area it is dark; under the light it is lit: we have a true parallel to what we have been saying of body and soul, for the air is in the light quite as much as the light [is] in the air.”

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“But, of course, the permeation of Matter by Soul cannot truly be compared to the permeation of air by light: both of these latter are of a physical, or phenomenal, nature; whereas Soul, we may rightly say, is of another ‘dimension’. It is not phenomenal, but noumenal.

“Plotinus formulated a linear progression of generation: from the One to the Divine Mind, to Soul, to the material universe. For, since the Divine Mind was engendered by the One, and Soul was engendered by the Divine Mind, the material universe, thought Plotinus, must have been engendered by Soul. It appeared to him that it had to have been Soul that imaged forth a material universe of forms in which to reside. Here are his words:

“In the absence of body, soul could not have gone forth, since there is no other place to which its nature would allow it to descend. Since go forth it must, it will generate a place for itself; at once body also exists.

“When the Soul…comes at last to the extreme extent of its light and dwindles to darkness, this darkness, now lying there beneath, the soul sees and by seeing brings [it] to shape…

“But such a causal scheme is logically untenable. For one thing, it would contradict Plotinus’ condition that Soul could not have gone forth without the pre-existence of body, or Matter. Also, his suggestion that Soul is analogous to light, that it dwindles as it recedes, and has the power to create a universe out of darkness, is an incorrect and fanciful one. We now know the origin and constituency of Matter to a degree unknown in Plotinus’ time. And so, we must “revise” the vision of Plotinus somewhat: asserting that it is not Soul, but the Divine Mind that projects a universe of substance: a periodically appearing world of ‘matter’, in which Soul is disposed to operate.

“In order to visualize this process of universal generation, we must suppose that the Divine Mind sends forth a sudden great burst of Energy with the capability of transforming into an expanding world of time, space, and material substance—a substantial world which Soul inhabits, and which it is able to set in order according to its own designs. Soul, the amorphous realm of multiple ideas, now has a playground where it may temporarily inhabit substantial forms and act out its many fantasies to its heart’s
content. We will explain this ‘creation’ of the material universe in more
detail when we get to the section on “The Phenomenon of Light”; but for
now, we will continue to discuss the nature of the Soul.

“Plotinus regards Soul as the intelligent organizing principle that impresses
its order upon matter. In the language of contemporary knowledge, we
would say that Soul is the all-pervading Intelligence that coalesces matter
wave-particles into structures such as atoms, molecules, cells; and organizes
them into microbiological structures such as amoeba and bacteria, into
photosynthetic vegetation and aquatic creatures, becoming the very life-
pulse of all that lives and moves. Matter alone has no abilities such as these;
it is Soul that permeates the expanding heavens and earth, bringing living
organization into matter and enabling replication and evolutionary change.
Soul is the guiding intelligence, the evolutionary force, and the breath of
Life permeating all the universe.

“Soul, as an organizing influence in the structuring of the material universe,
on either the microcosmic or macrocosmic level, is not empirically evident;
but cumulatively, the various “fine-tuned” developments in the ordering of
the simplest atoms to the grandest galaxies leads us to discern a purposeful
intelligence at work that has been recognized even by hardened empiricists,
who have dubbed it “the anthropic principle”. This principle derives from
the increasing recognition on the part of scientific observers that nature
appears from the beginning, at every step, and in countless ways, to be
teleologically structured with an innate intention toward the emergence of
human life-forms. May we not accept this principle as evidence of the
presence of an invisible guiding intelligence such as that Plotinus labeled
“Soul”?

“Soul, the all-pervading Intelligence of God, may be said to be the “unified
force” that manifests as the weak, strong, electromagnetic, and gravitational
forces, binding the elements of this universe together. We may also account
for the phenomenon of quantum interconnectedness known as ‘quantum
entanglement’, which requires a medium of transmission allowing for the
instantaneous relaying of information, if we assume the existence of an all-
pervading consciousness extending throughout the universe—something
akin to what Plotinus refers to as ‘Soul’. Further, Soul is the life-force that
transforms inert matter into living, breathing entities. And it is the conscious
intelligence that operates as the minds of men, acting as an evolutionary
force to lead them to the knowledge of their true source and being, the one Spirit, their own Divine Self.

“Throughout most of our history, every major theology has agreed with this conception of a dual-faceted Divine Reality, consisting of a transcendent-immanent Mind, or Consciousness, and an active Energy emanating from that absolute Consciousness, by which the universe of forms is made manifest. These two aspects of Reality were given innumerable names throughout the course of history, such as Purusha and Prakrti, Brahman and Maya, Shiva and Shakti, Jahveh and Chokmah, Theos and Logos, Tao and Teh, Dharmakaya and Samsara, Haqq and Khalq, and on and on.

“This classic Spirit-Matter dualism has not only been the conventional Eastern metaphysical view; it has been the conventional Western metaphysical view as well, from the time of Pythagorus and Plato, on through the Neoplatonists, Hermetics, and Jews, carried forward by Christianity and Islam, and reaffirmed analytically in the seventeenth century by René Descartes. Its rationality and broad acceptance firmly established this Spirit-Matter dualism in the depths of our collective psyche. But by many today, this dualistic worldview is considered archaic and moribund. Today, we base our knowledge, our convictions, on what is revealed solely by our sense-experience; that is to say, by what is revealed to us through empirical evidence; and Spirit or Consciousness, which is only experienced subjectively, remains, from the standpoint of the empiricist, an inexplicable mystery, as does the origin of Life and Consciousness itself.

“Life and Consciousness

“From the perspective of materialistic science or scientific materialism, the question of how life arose on earth appears to be one of the greatest mysteries. And, clearly, if we attempt to explain the arising of the phenomena of life on earth, relying solely on the physical sciences and our rational faculties, we run into many difficult-to-answer questions.

“We may assume that the original creative act by the transcendent Spirit was the instigation of a great burst of Energy, the particles of which transformed into “matter” through the ‘spontaneous’ process of energy-matter transformation, thus forming the universe of time and space. But in order to account for the development from inorganic matter (minerals, gases,
liquids) to micro-organisms that resulted in bacterial and vegetative life arising on earth, we need to assume some rather remarkable additional transformations. However, no one can account for how the mere handful of ingredients existing on earth prior to the existence of life might have spontaneously produced living organisms.

“Our present evolutionary theory, including our understanding of natural selection and the spontaneous mutation of genes, begins with the transformations that occurred from simple microbiological forms to more complex animal forms, and subsequently to humans. But the prior elementary transformations, from mineral to vegetable and microbial life forms, are wholly unexplained. The causal progression of those ‘elementary transformations’ represents a gap or ‘missing link’ in the evolutionary story (beginning with matter-bearing Energy and culminating in man) that materialistic science is currently unable to bridge. Despite a couple of centuries of active scientific research, the transformation from inorganic to organic matter has not been observed to occur, and no scientist has been able to account for its having occurred.

“However, the knowledge acquired in the past fifty years concerning the biological mechanism of heredity, and its working, is nothing short of awe-inspiring. We have learned how the cells of living tissue encode instructions, store information, and manufacture the necessary nutrients to form the new cells that maintain all bodily functions. The complexity and productivity of the manufacturing process going on every second within each of the seventy-five trillion cells of our bodies, producing four to five million new cells every second, as other cells die and are replaced, dwarfs any concepts of complexity and productivity that we may have previously had. Truly, what a marvel of God’s Energy, Consciousness and Joy we are! If only we had eyes to see!

“Biological scientists celebrate having found “the secret of life” in the information storage and processing factories discovered to reside in the nucleus of every living cell: the tiny strand of genetic material called deoxyribonucleic acid—DNA for short. For they have discovered that the information that instructs every one of the amazingly complex processes of life is encoded in the DNA molecules located in the nuclei of the cells that make up our bodies. It is the encoded information in this double-helix strand of nucleic material that directs, empowers, and produces the dazzling complexity that is our living body. But the Source of that intracellular
information, the Designer, the Organizer, the Programmer, of that information, is hidden from them, and from us. Clearly, there is some intelligent force bringing about so marvelous a machine as the human body. No one could conceivably imagine that the encoded information in a strand of DNA just randomly arranges itself in such a way without an indwelling intelligence. And if it is conceded that there is some manner of intelligence at work here, what is its source? Science has no answer to this question. But mustn’t it be an invisible yet pervasive Intelligence similar to what Plotinus has described as “Soul”?

“I think it is entirely possible that we may never fully understand the details of the transformations which gave rise to life on earth, but of this much we may be certain: The one eternal Consciousness, He whom we call God, insinuates His own Life as Soul into all that is created. That God-essence, that Soul, is the Life in all life-forms. He is the substratum of all that lives and breathes, of all that is sentient and aware, and of all that appears in our world. He is the only Awareness, filling the entire universe, enlivening, animating, and constituting the consciousness of all beings. Life—in fact, all existence, including the material entropy we call death—is contained in and supported by His Being.

“The essence of life cannot, therefore, be reduced simply to the complexity of any material structure but is attributable only to the one transcendent and eternal Source of all. Life arose on earth by His power, enlivening matter through His extension as Soul in order to manifest His own Life in among the stars. Soul pours itself into individual forms, enlivening them and becoming thereby individualized conscious souls.⁸

“But today, the overwhelming trend is toward a nondual materialistic worldview in which Spirit (including soul) is rejected, and Matter (including body) is all that is said to exist. This, in fact, is the nearly unanimously avowed position of the contemporary scientific community, which has, in effect, drawn the entire civilized world toward a purely materialistic worldview; and handily solved ‘the mind-body problem’ by declaring that there is no problem, because there is no soul or mind, but only material bodies and their effects.

“Materialists are spoken of in some types of literature as ‘physicalists,’ physicalism being the preferred scientific term for the position that everything is in fact physical, that consciousness, for example, is simply an
attribute of a particular physical state of the animal or human brain, and not the attribute of an indwelling Soul. One representative of this group of skeptics, a professor of philosophy at UC Berkeley, here epitomizes the doubt of the scientific community regarding the existence of such a thing as “soul”:

“It is a logical possibility, though I think it extremely unlikely, that when our bodies are destroyed, our souls will go marching on. I have not tried to show that this is an impossibility (indeed, I wish it were true), but rather that it is inconsistent with just about everything else we know about how the universe works and therefore it is irrational to believe in it.”

“But perhaps what we know about how the universe works is not correct. For our distinguished professor, as for so many others, consciousness does not require the necessity of a soul: “Consciousness”, he says, “is just a brain process. It is a qualitative, subjective, first-person process going on in the nervous system.” And he takes the somewhat unusual position that Descartes was wrong to define mind (soul) and body, or consciousness and matter, as two separate experiential realms; that in fact the phenomenon of consciousness, along with its subjective nature, is just one of the ways matter—biological matter—appears and behaves, and therefore, despite its unique attributes, consciousness falls under the heading of matter—a biologically enhanced aspect of matter, but matter nonetheless. “At the most fundamental level,” he says:

“Points of mass/energy are constituted by the forces that are described by the laws of nature. From those laws the existence of consciousness follows as a logical consequence, just as does the existence of any other biological phenomena, such as growth, digestion, or reproduction.”

“From the viewpoint of our representative materialist/physicalist philosophy professor, life (biology) is inherent in matter, and “consciousness is caused by microlevel processes in the brain,” though all that has ever been actually shown by neurological evidence is that consciousness corresponds to, or is accompanied by, microlevel processes in the brain. Here is one neurobiologist addressing this issue:
“Consciousness indubitably exists, and it is connected to the brain in some intelligible way, but the nature of this connection necessarily eludes us.\textsuperscript{13}

“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.\textsuperscript{14}

“Over the years leading up to the present (2009 C.E.), little progress has been made in the attempt to formulate a 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.\textsuperscript{15}

“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.\textsuperscript{16}

“What we do not understand is the hard problem of consciousness—the mystery of how neural activity gives rise to subjective experience.\textsuperscript{17} …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).\textsuperscript{18}
“It is clear to me that the disappointed expectations of materialistic science in solving the mystery of consciousness have their roots in the basic assumptions of materialists regarding the origin of the universe and the origin of life on earth. Their position on consciousness is logically dependent upon the theory that life (biological phenomena) occurs spontaneously and is intrinsic to matter, without the necessity of any extraneous operative; and that theory is in turn dependent upon the assumption that the universe itself originated from a material source without the involvement of any supernatural cause. The materialist-physicalist theory of consciousness is founded on those precedent assumptions; and without those assumptions, the physicalist theory of consciousness crumbles. It is a theory based on a theory based on a theory, each one dependent, not upon the accumulation of evidence, but upon the lack of empirical evidence to the contrary.

“The ‘archaic’ theory of the Soul also has no evidentiary foundation. It has been suggested by some of its advocates that the individual human brain is constructed, through the process of evolution, to act as a receiver and processor of Soul-consciousness in a manner similar to a radio that receives and processes radio signals. The radio receiver is not the source of the broadcast signal, but its range and quality determine the range and quality of the signal produced. Is it not possible that our brains act in a similar manner in relation to Soul-consciousness? One might also compare the human brain to the power and hardware drive of a computer, and the Soul to the software used to program that computer. But, despite such analogies, we clearly do not yet have a precise comprehension of how the consciousness of Soul and individual brains might interact.

“No; the only hard evidence for the Soul is the subjective personal experience known to thousands, perhaps millions, who have been referred to as “mystics” or “yogis,” but whom materialists refer to as deluded and “irrational” individuals, whose “mystical” experiences they regard as aberrational hallucinations caused by some neuronal malfunction in the brain. In the interest of transparency, I must admit that I am one of those “mystics” who has been fortunate enough to experience the Divine reality; and so, I think it is both appropriate and beneficial to interject here an account of my own experience of the Divine reality in order to provide a first-hand account of just what such an experience reveals:

“At the age of twenty-seven, I began experiencing the presence of interior sensations and spiritual understandings which led me to actively seek the
knowledge of the existence or non-existence of God. At the time of the occurrence of my contemplative ‘vision’, I had retired to a small cabin in a secluded forest environment and was giving all of my attention to the pursuit of that goal: the revelation of God. One evening, I was having my usual nocturnal conversation with my divine Father; and after a while, I found myself in an elevated and finely-focused state, experiencing an intense longing for God in the very deepest part of my own soul. I felt then that my sole purpose in life was to ascend to union with the Divine, in order to be able to knowledgeably praise and glorify God for the benefit of all His children. And I was willing to die in the process, if necessary.¹⁹

“As I prayed for that union, my consciousness was suddenly expanded so that I became aware of myself as all-pervasive, beyond time, and indivisible. In my newly altered awareness, ‘I’ had become aware of my identity with the one cosmic energy and consciousness that constituted this entire universe and all beings in it. There was no duality of Spirit and Matter, of soul and body, however. It was clear that ‘I’ was one undivided Essence that was both consciousness and the energy comprising form. My ‘I’ was seen to be the ‘I’ of every conscious being as well as of every inanimate object within this universe. It is an ‘I’ beyond time and place that fills all spatio-temporal beings with life and awareness, even though I might mistakenly attribute that ‘I’ exclusively to this individual body-brain complex.

“More than that, as the focus of my concentration continued, I could see at a more elevated, subtler level, the unmanifest source, the transcendent Absolute, as the very font of all origination. I say that I saw, but it was not the seeing by a subject of an object, a second; rather, it was a recognition, from that eternal vantage point, of my own transcendent nature, my own true Self. What I saw, I saw through identity with it rather than as a seer separate from the seen.

“In this visionary experience I saw no separate soul—neither my own nor any other; but experienced my identity as the universal and all-inclusive Consciousness-Energy that manifests all this universe of forms, including the form I am accustomed to calling “my own”. Clearly, there was nothing else but the one all-pervading Divinity, with no sense of a separate personal soul-identity. I had not become immobile during this experience but was allowed to write by candlelight my impressions as they occurred. But in reflecting on this experience in the ensuing years, many questions remained. My reason and learning told me that multiple souls exist; yet my visionary
(spiritual) experience told me otherwise. For, in that unitive mystical experience, I had not ‘seen’ a soul, or even the suggestion of a soul. I had known only the indivisible spiritual unity of all existence.

“Now, at last, thanks in part to the reflections of Plotinus, the truth has dawned on me: The soul is not experienced in the unitive vision because the soul is the expericer! It is seeing that which is above it, namely its prior: the creative aspect of God, the Divine Mind, which is its unqualified source, its own true Self, at a higher level of consciousness. It glimpses also That which is prior to the Divine Mind, namely, the Absolute, the One, through the Divine Mind. The individualized soul is that in us which is conscious of limited selfhood; and it is that which is silenced and made transparent, enabling it to experience its identity as the transcendent source, the Divine Mind.

“Individualized Souls

“We are all cognizant that each of us is an individual soul that is distinct and unique in its development and experience, and, in the manifest world, has an apparent “identity” of its own, regardless of its unitive identity with other souls in the one Oversoul. This simultaneous unity and multiplicity is readily acknowledged by Plotinus; but neither he nor any other has been able to satisfactorily explain the manner in which the one Soul becomes a multitude of individualized souls; how Soul, though one and indivisible, is also, at the same time, divisible and manifold, becoming separate, individually responsible, souls. Nevertheless, he does offer an explanation:

“There is one identical Soul, every separate manifestation being that Soul complete. The differentiated souls …issue from the unity while still constituting, within certain limits, an association. …They strike out here and there but are held together at the source much as light is a divided thing upon earth, shining in this house and that, while yet remaining uninterruptedly one identical substance.

“The entity described as “both the undivided Soul and the soul divided among bodies,” is a Soul which is at once above and below, attached to the Supreme and yet reaching down to this sphere, like a radius from a center. Thus, it is that, entering this
[earthly] realm, it possesses still the vision inherent in that superior [indivisible] phase by virtue of which it maintains its integral nature unchanged. Even here [on earth] it is not exclusively the partible soul: it is still the impartible as well…

“The nature, at once divisible and indivisible, which we affirm to be soul has not the unity of an extended thing. It does not consist of separate sections; its divisibility lies in its being present at every point of the recipient, but it is indivisible as dwelling entire in the total, and entire in any part. To have penetrated this idea is to know the greatness of the soul and its power, the divinity and wonder of its being, as a nature transcending the realm of "things."

“Itself devoid of mass, it is present to all mass. It exists here and yet is [still] there, and this not in distinct phases but with unsundered identity. Thus, it is "parted and not parted," or, better, it has never known partition, never become a parted thing, but remains a self-gathered integral, and is "parted among bodies" merely in the sense that bodies, in virtue of their own sundered existence, cannot receive it unless in some partitive mode. The partition, in other words, is an occurrence in body and not in soul.

“That such individualized souls exist is clearly evident to us who know ourselves as separate, individualized, self-governing, units of self-awareness. We may understand that Soul is nothing less than an emanate of the Divine consciousness; and yet, we must also acknowledge that each soul’s perspective is unique. Differences in perspective seem to arise and persist through the accumulation of individual experience, inference, and willful intent. And so, there appears a multitude of souls, united in the Divine Consciousness, but separate in manifestation. Later, we will examine the alternative theory of the Buddha, which suggests that there are no individual souls, but only aggregates of tendencies.

“In Plotinus’ scheme, however, because body-bound souls are uniquely distinct, they are able to formulate desires and set out to fulfill them in the (lower) material world, thereby losing sight of their Divinity. And so, in place of the one Soul, which is truly their common Source and Reality, a multitude of separate selves comes into existence, each driven by its own
independent desires and circumstances, as well as by its false identification with the material body.

“These individualized souls, we must not forget, are manifestations of the Divine. Nonetheless, while inhabiting or being associated with bodies, they pass through various experiences which may serve to forge a strong bond with the material world. However, over time, the indwelling Divinity instructs those ‘individualized souls’ by those very experiences in the errors of their ways and returns them by various and sundry ways to the awareness of their true integral nature as the one Soul, guiding them by the most blessed path to the reformation of their awareness of all-inclusiveness and the restoration of their natural bliss. This is known as ‘the evolution of the soul’.

“According to Plotinus, the Divine Mind, in its infinite wisdom, allows more than one ‘incarnation’ for the soul to traverse this evolutionary path. The soul’s excursion into the material realm is fraught with difficulties and dangers and may bring with it many painful and binding impressions. These must be resolved and released in order for the soul to regain its blissful freedom. And so, the process of soul-evolution may be prolonged and stretched over a number of soul-incarnations. Whatever necessity requires will inevitably find a means for its accomplishment in the evolutionary journey toward truth and freedom.

“Jesus put it well when he said, “You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.” According to this understanding, a man is free insofar as he is cognizant of his essential identity with the Highest and bound when he departs from the knowledge and awareness of his Divinity, identifying with the body/brain complex. He then succumbs to the rule of earthly necessity and is moved willy-nilly by the causative forces inherent in Nature. He has the power, as the Divine Self, to will freely, unencumbered, uncompelled by circumstance; and, for that reason is responsible for his individual actions. All souls are linked by inclusion to the one Soul, and by extension to the Divine Mind; but only he who is cognizant, aware, of his Divine Identity, is truly free.

“Meanwhile, along the way, in the soul’s evolutionary journey, an inescapable justice continually operates. As Saint Paul warned, “Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” Plotinus, acknowledging this same universal law of justice, then
known as *adrastieia*, and today known as “the law of actions, or *karma*”, says:

“No one can ever escape the suffering entailed by ill deeds done. The divine law is ineluctable, carrying bound up, as one with it, the fore-ordained execution of its doom. The sufferer, all unaware, is swept onward towards his due, hurried always by the restless driving of his errors, until at last, wearied out by that against which he struggled, he falls into his fit place and, by self-chosen movement, is brought to the lot he never chose. And the law decrees, also, the intensity and the duration of the suffering while it carries with it, too, the lifting of chastisement and the faculty of rising from those places of pain—all by power of the harmony that maintains the universal scheme.”

“Thus, a man, once a ruler, will be made a slave because he abused his power and because the fall is to his future good. Those who have misused money will be made poor—and to the good poverty is no hindrance. Those who have unjustly killed, are killed in turn, unjustly as regards the murderer but justly as regards the victim, and those who are to suffer are thrown into the path of those who administer the merited treatment.

“It is not an accident that makes a man a slave; no one is prisoner by chance. Every bodily outrage has its due cause. The man once did what he now suffers. A man who murders his mother will become a woman and be murdered by a son. A man who wrongs a woman will become a woman, to be wronged.”

“We humans are, undoubtedly, of a two-fold nature: We are, in essence, identical with the Divine Consciousness, our Divine Self, which assures us of immortality and a free will; we are only secondarily individualized souls, with their accompanying karmic tendencies. We are a combination, a duality, of identities existing together in the one spectrum of Consciousness: we are the Divine Self, and we are also the divinely limited individual soul. Our essence, the one Divine Consciousness, is the only true ‘I’ in all the universe and beyond; It is everyone’s eternal Identity. But, by God’s mysterious Power of illusion, everyone born into this world takes on a limited set of characteristics as well, constituting the limited temporal
identity of each, what we refer to as the individualized soul. According to that soul’s previous history and its corresponding mental tendencies, the characteristics of each soul are made manifest.

“The ‘soul’ is in essence the Divine, but as it appears within the material universe, it manifests both the Divine and the illusory—just as in a dream, we partake of both our true conscious selves and an illusory self. The analogy is exceedingly apt, as in both instances, we retain our fundamental reality, while operating in an illusory, ‘imaged’, reality. The individual soul is, to a great degree, who we experience ourselves to be in this world; and we operate in this life from the past karmic tendencies we embody. However, at a more fundamental level, we are identical with the Divine Self, which comprises, not only our freedom to will and act from a level of consciousness beyond the properties and characteristics of our individualized soul, but comprises the very consciousness by which we, as souls, exist. The past karmic tendencies are very powerful in their influence; and they can lead us where we don’t necessarily want to go, unless we are able to identify with our true nature as the Divine Self and turn those inherent tendencies to Divine purposes.

“Here is Plotinus again, with some pertinent comments on this subject:

“If man were… nothing more than a made thing [whose behavior is determined], acting and acted upon according to a fixed Nature, he could be no more subject to reproach and punishment than the mere animals. But as the scheme holds, man is singled out for condemnation when he does evil; and this with justice. For he is no mere thing made to rigid plan; his nature contains a [Divine] Principle apart and free.\textsuperscript{27} …This, no mean Principle, is… a first-hand Cause, bodiless and therefore supreme over itself, free, beyond the reach of Cosmic Cause.\textsuperscript{28}

“We may indeed identify solely with our limited self as an individualized soul, says Plotinus;

“…[But] there is another [higher] life, emancipated, whose quality is progression towards the higher realm, towards the Good and Divine, towards that Principle which no one possesses except by deliberate usage. One may appropriate [this Higher Principle], becoming, each personally, the higher, the
beautiful, the Godlike; …For every human Being is of a twofold character: there is that compromise-total [consisting of soul conjoined to body], and there is the authentic Man [the divine Self].

“The great Vedantic sage, Shankaracharya, taught, “the soul is in reality none other than Brahman” (jivo brahmaiva naparah). And this is true; for, in essence, the soul is identical with the transcendent Source of all, and is supremely, absolutely, free. In its transcendent aspect, it is always free, immutable and unaffected by the bodily conditions or worldly circumstances of individuals. However, when the soul identifies with the conditional, it is bound; it is subject to being carried along in the floodwaters of the archetypal forces of Nature. Only when it knows and identifies with the One, the Divine Self, does it realize and manifest its true freedom. This is the view of Vedanta, and the basis for its concept of “liberation”; and this is the view of Plotinus as well.

“Soul is the essential radiance of the Divine Mind, and individualized souls partake of that same reality, though by their connection to body, they are confined to time and space. These souls, enamored of the material world, become disoriented, bound by their own attachment to matter; but by a deliberate reversal of its intention, an individualized soul is able to look within, examine itself, and ‘see’ its Origin, its higher Self, thereby regaining awareness of its true, eternal identity. Since both Soul and Matter are the emanated products of the Divine Mind, and both consist of the Divine essence, an individual soul inhabiting a body may look within and come to realize that both its conscious self and its material casing consist of the one Divine Mind; that truly he is nothing else but that one eternal Reality.

“Plotinus describes, from his own experience, the vision of a soul turned inward to its own Source:

“Once pure in the Spirit realm, [gazing intently inward toward the Divine Mind] the soul too possesses that same unchangeableness: for it possesses identity of essence. When it is in that region it must of necessity enter into oneness with the Divine Mind by the sheer fact of its self-orientation, for by that intention all interval disappears; the soul advances and is taken into unison, and in that association becomes one with the Divine Mind—but not to its own destruction: the two are one,
and [yet] two. In such a state there is no question of stage and change. The soul, motionless, would be intent upon its intellectual act, and in possession, simultaneously, of its self-awareness; for it has become one simultaneous existence with the Supreme.\(^{30}\)

“Here is no longer a duality but a two-in-one; for, so long as the presence holds, all distinction fades. It is as lover and beloved here [on earth], in a copy of that union, long to blend. The soul has now no further awareness of being in body and will give herself no foreign name, not man, not living being, not Being, not All. Any observation of such things falls away; the soul has neither time nor taste for them. This she sought and This she has found and on This she looks and not upon herself; and who she is that looks she has not leisure to know.

“One Once There she will barter for This nothing the universe holds; not though one would make over the heavens entire to her. There is nothing higher than this, nothing of more good. Above This there is no passing; all the rest, however lofty, lies on the downward path. She is of perfect judgment and knows that This was her quest, that nothing is higher.\(^{31}\)

“The soul wishes to remain forever in that unitive vision,

“But it leaves that conjunction; it cannot suffer that unity; it falls in love with its own powers and possessions, and desires to stand apart; it leans outward, so to speak: then, it appears to acquire a memory of itself [as an individualized soul once again].\(^{32}\)

“My own experience of this unitary vision was identical in all respects with that of Plotinus, and I shared his conclusions; but I had been puzzled regarding souls. There was no soul in my (mystical) vision! There was no soul in that vision because the “soul”, in its vision of its prior, is “taken into unison” with its prior, the Divine Mind, and is made transparent and unaware of itself as something apart. It is the soul that is seeing, experiencing its identity with its source, its subtler Self, as a wave’s sense of individuality might disappear as it becomes aware it is the ocean. Likewise, the soul merged in the Divine Mind doesn’t see any other souls, because in
the Divine Mind all Soul is one; it is only when it becomes embodied that Soul becomes individualized.

“So long as the soul is not caught up in union with the Divine Mind, the soul is inspired from within by an attracting love for God; but when the soul is merged in God, there is no longer the duality of lover and Beloved, but only one blissful Self-awareness. When the soul is ‘merged’ in the Divine Mind, it sees from the vantage point of the Eternal, and no longer sees from the spatio-temporal vantage point. In that sense, the world disappears. But, in fact, the ‘world’ continues to exist; it is just that the soul is seeing it from the inside, as the one Consciousness-Energy. Without the perspective of the ego-self, all duality is annihilated, dissolved in the unitive Identity of the Divine Mind.

“Duality—all duality—comes into existence with the descent of Consciousness from the Divine Mind-identity to the individualized soul-identity; in other words, the inexplicable leap downward in consciousness from the Eternal to the temporal. Then, instead of the one all-inclusive Identity, there are two identities: an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou’. From this initial duality, all other dualities are born: the dualities associated with time and space—such as “now” and “then”, or “here” and “there” or “near” and “far”, “night” and “day”; the dualities associated with personal identity—such as “life” and “death”, “pleasure” and “pain”, “joy” and “sorrow”, “sound” and “silence”, “moving” and “still”; and the dualities associated with possessiveness—such as “mine” and “yours”, “love” and “hate”. All these are born from the establishment of a soul-identity, an ‘I’, separate from and other than the one all-inclusive Mind.33 From that perspective, the soul recognizes that it alone constructs duality:

“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.34

“But when the separate soul-identity is once again merged in the one Divine Mind, even if only temporarily, all these dualities disappear. Time and space also disappear, and all is Eternity once again:

“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.”

“In its vision of the Divine Mind, the soul, now transparent, now ascended in consciousness, experiences its own eternal Self. The soul ‘sees’ now that:  
‘I’ am all-pervading, ‘I’ am the one Consciousness-Energy constituting all minds and bodies and all this universe, wherein all things move together of one accord and by a universal assent; and it exclaims:

“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.”

“And this liberating knowledge, upon which is based the soul’s conviction of its eternal and indivisible identity, remains with it always.

“Material Bodies

“Let us now turn to the question of how our bodies as well as this entire material universe came to be: Here is where we part company with Plotinus. Taking the emanation metaphor to its extreme, he imagined that, like the radiation of light, Soul, reaching the outermost extent of its radiation, lapses into the darkness of non-being, or Matter. Ignorant of the nature of matter, Plotinus engaged in a long series of erroneous reasonings, coming finally to the conclusion that Matter is beyond the fringe of “Being”; it is “indeterminiteness”, “a non-existent”—he even calls it “evil”—though in some other contexts he appears less condemnatory. In his view, the material universe had to have been brought into being by wayward souls, in their outward projections far afield of their source, the Divine Mind. Today, much knowledge has been gathered regarding the origin and constituency of the material universe, both empirically and in mystical
vision; and on both counts the Platonist/Neoplatonist view is rejected as unsatisfactory.

“Science, or empirical knowledge, looks to comprehend the spatio-temporal universe; whereas mystical vision opens up an entirely new realm of experience grounded in the Eternal. The sense-experience of a world of multiple beings in a universe of temporal activity is wholly replaced in the mystical vision by an undivided, non-relational, and timeless realm of pure Identity with the Divine Mind. In this, my own experience was somewhat dissimilar to what Plotinus describes; I found myself suddenly ‘seeing’ from an eternal vantage point. And from that eternal ‘I’, as the Divine Mind, I experienced an emanation going out from Myself, spreading outwardly as the universe of form. It was seen to be projected in a manner similar to the expiration of a breath, and once again withdrawn. In union with the Divine Mind, I experienced this ‘expiration’ and ‘inspiration’ of the Divine breath, as the vapor of my love flew to the four corners of the world, and ‘I’ declared:

“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 universal material manifestation was seen to be contained in and identical with that divine breath, an operation of divine will, so that:

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

“Having seen the world from this portal of eternity, how differently it is seen when viewing it once again from the portal of time and space! My own mystical vision revealed that the Divine Mind ‘breathes’ forth Its own essence in the form of Light, in a cyclic manner, followed by a period wherein that Light-Energy that forms the cosmos is withdrawn, much as in our own human experience a breath is exhaled and alternatively inhaled. From our human perspective, the periods of cosmic manifestation and withdrawal endure for tens of billions of annual revolutions of our earth in its elliptical path around the Sun. But from the perspective of the Eternal, these periods last but the space of a breath.
“Had there been someone to see it from a temporal vantage point, the cyclic initiation of this Divine breath would have been seen to manifest around 14 billion years ago as ‘the Big Bang’ or ‘Great Radiance’ by which the phenomenal universe is produced. At that instant, an immense radiation of high-frequency Energy was released that resulted in the formation of elementary bonding particles of matter, which then formed the stars, galaxies, life forms, and eventually us. That universe of forms is coextensive with and interpenetrated by God’s Spiritual essence manifesting as Soul, which guides and moves everything “together of one accord.” And, since we partake of both the evolutionary Energy and the Consciousness inherent in Soul, we are comprised of, and contain within us, a dual-sidedness: We have both a material and a mental constituency; we are both body (evolved Energy) and mind (Consciousness, or Soul).

“Though these two aspects of our being appear, from the spatio-temporal perspective, to be separate, they are, from the eternal perspective, one. Both Consciousness (Soul) and Energy (Matter) are united in the Divine Mind, the creative Power of God. And together, they constitute all being. At the end of the universal cycle, all material forms revert to Divine Energy, which ceases its transformations and merges into the Divine Mind from which it came. Soul also is retained in its originating source, the Divine Mind. In fact, Soul and the Divine Mind were never two; Soul is merely the Divine Mind in extentia. At the end of Its manifestory cycle, the Divine Mind of the One rests, dormant, prior to projecting once again an apparent universe of conscious souls and forms, another seeming duality upon His/Its eternal oneness.

“In order to consolidate our empirical observations with what has been seen from the contemplative state regarding how the material universe comes to be, we must first demolish some popular myths: Contemporary cosmological science has ingrained in us the idea that this manifest universe is the product of the explosion of an extremely dense speck of condensed matter that just happened to be floating in the eternal void prior to “the Big Bang”. This dimensionless point of infinite density is referred to by physicists as a singularity. The concept of a ‘singularity’ came about as a result of the attempt to mentally run the expansion of the universe in reverse, whereby we see in our imagination, as in the rewinding of a film, this expanded matter brought back into a proximity which at some point becomes an infinite density, compacted into a single point; hence, a ‘singularity’. But that is merely the picture that the imagination offers in its attempt to envision a
reversal of the present universal expansion. It is not necessarily true, however, that our universe actually began as an infinitely dense point.

“Some theorists speculate that perhaps there was no singularity, but instead a quantum vacuum, seething with activity; and the fluctuating activity of the quanta in this vacuum spontaneously produced matter particles, and hence the manifestation of the entire material universe. But this theory leaves open the question of ‘from whence came this quantum vacuum and all these fluctuating quanta?’ just as the singularity theory begs the question of ‘from whence came this singularity?’

“Having been graced, in the contemplative state, with a unitive vision of the transcendent Reality, I dismiss both the singularity theory and the quantum fluctuation theory. Rather, it is my contention, my certainty, based on that spiritual revelation, that the universe originated in the eternal Consciousness of God, and was initiated by His Divine Power in the manner of a great Breath of Energy, which transformed as it expanded into a world of material substance. That burgeoning universe of transformed divine Energy was permeated from its beginning by the divine Consciousness in which and of which it was born.

“According to the standard scientific Big Bang model of the origin of the universe, the Big Bang was the explosive expansion of a pre-existent primary state consisting of an ultra-dense concentration of mass-energy. Yet those scientists who accept this model have refused to speculate on where, why, and how such an ultra-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.

“I have to wonder, however, why these scientists so easily accept the idea of a pre-existent singularity but have been so unwilling to hypothesize 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. Is it simply to avoid allowing the possibility of a supernaturally initiated cosmogeny? Is it possible that the Big Bang cosmology of contemporary physics is merely an ideational framework constructed to avoid acknowledging a supernatural Origin and to support instead a materialistic metaphysics?
“Whatever the answer to that question might be, let us now depart from the traditional materialistic model, and make a bold and adventurous enquiry 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: specifically, 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. Rather than positing a spiritual source, or even a radiant energy source, their immediate instinct is to suppose that there was an original phenomenal 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.

“The Phenomenon of Light

“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 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!;” 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.”

“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 indescribable. 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 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 186,000 miles/sec. Space-time is measurable only in relation to the 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 186,000 miles/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=mc². 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 wavular 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 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 $10^{-15}$ (a point with fourteen zeros, and then a one) of a 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 wavular 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 the 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 a gamma ray) 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, consisting of the highest energy photons, so far discovered. These waves 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
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, some of the densely packed, intensely active, high-energy photons spontaneously decayed (transformed) into mass-bearing particles and antiparticles. Spontaneous decay is a common fate of high-energy photons, such as gamma rays. And, while nearly all of the resulting particle/antiparticle pairs created by photon-decay would have been annihilated upon contact with each other, as it happens, there was a slight disparity or “asymmetry” 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.

“Such a real possibility 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 “Great Radiance” 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 Back-ground Microwave Energy that was detected by Penzias and Wilson might be equally cited as evidence for either the ‘Great Radiance’ scenario or the ‘Big Bang’ scenario. However, scientists are extremely reluctant to even consider the possibility of a supernatural source and origin to our universe.

“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 (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!45

“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’ 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 plasma46), 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 all began 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 with certainty. 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 mingled with His own 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 spontaneously-sprouting 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 foolish people that the ‘Great Radiation’ from which the entire universe is formed 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 Soul-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 Soul-Intelligence. The spontaneous congregation and organization of clusters of atoms into molecules is indeed ‘natural’—for a supernatural Essence imbued with Soul-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?”

“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 Energy, and Energy is God’s Light-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 the 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 God’s manifestation; 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.47

“From the initial ‘Great Radiance’ comes all that exists as material objects and all activity 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.

“But there is another existent, isn’t there: the consciousness by which we perceive, by which we are aware, by which we think and reflect and conceive and dream. The living consciousness, by which we know ourselves to exist, is the radiant consciousness of God, which we call “Soul”. It invisibly permeates the material universe, and makes us living beings, enlivened by God’s own Being, linking us by an indissoluble bond to Him, through which we share the one Identity, the one undivided Self.

“The Undivided Self

“In Plotinus’ scheme, Soul is the eternal radiation of the Divine, inhering in an eternal universe. But today we know that the universe is not eternal; it is originated and extinguished in a periodic cycle. We must see, therefore, that in those periods in which there is no temporal universe to inhabit, Soul must either remain confined solely to the intelligible (spiritual) world or remain unmanifest in the Eternal as mere potential. For it stands to reason that, while the Eternal contains in Itself the capability of radiating Itself eternally, It has nothing for Its all-pervasive Soul-essence to permeate until a universe was ‘created’. While Its radiance was there eternally in potentia,
that radiance did not—could not—manifest physically until a universe came into being.

“It is here that we depart from the vision of Plotinus: for Plotinus taught that Soul, emanating from the divine Mind, infiltrates Matter, flowing into it in the same manner as smoke infiltrates a room. But this idea must be challenged. The conscious Spirit is eternally existent; It exists prior to form, even prior to space. Therefore, It has no need to flow into the universe of form. The Divine Mind is eternally present. It is the universe of form, the phenomenal universe, that comes and goes within the field of Consciousness that is the Divine Mind. As a dreamed form arises within our individual mind and then dissolves back into it, so does the universe of form arise from within the one Consciousness, and then is dissolved back into that Consciousness. Plotinus got it wrong: the conscious Spirit does not flow into the universe of forms; that Spirit (the eternal Consciousness) is the very Ground and substance of the universe of forms. The universe and Spirit (the eternal Consciousness) were never separate, never distinct; the universe is ‘made of’ the eternal Consciousness. ‘Matter’ is the projected dream-stuff of the one Consciousness.

“So, it must be acknowledged that the radiation of Divine Consciousness, as Soul, necessarily permeates and pervades the nascent universe at its inception. The Divine Light originates in the one Consciousness, and manifests as a universe of forms within that one Consciousness. That universe is therefore inherently permeated by the divine Consciousness, just as the thoughts of our own minds are permeated with consciousness due to their existence within our conscious minds.

“I firmly believe that, at the initiation of the matter-producing Energy of the “Big Bang”, or “Great Radiance”, God, the one Spirit, the eternal Consciousness, was already present everywhere, and, that all the material bodies that then came into physical existence were permeated by that ubiquitous Consciousness. It is in this way that everyone and everything is ensouled. Clearly, body and soul are of different natures; or put more aptly, nature (body) exists only in the temporal frame; the Divine Consciousness (Soul) is eternal in its nature. They are both of God, but the soul is of the essence of God, the eternal Reality; while the body is merely one form among many in a transient projection of God’s eternal Energy. The unity of body and soul consists in their common origin in the Divine Mind; but they are different in type and in substance, and therefore, they each have an
independent existence. Otherwise, how could soul and body separate, as they are seen to do when the body ceases to function as a viable host?

“It is, of course, the body that “dies”, and not the soul. Soul is just another name for the Divine Consciousness. It is eternal. Body is of a different stuff. It is temporal and has a limited duration. It is formed of Divine Energy, which is itself an eternal propensity of the Divine Mind; but once that Energy is solidified in the guise of matter, it follows the inexorable law of entropy, losing its formal integrity over time. When Soul leaves the body, not only does the consciousness and the life-force depart the body, but also the cohesive principle operative in the physical body departs. The molecular structure of the body breaks down; the atomic structure breaks down, and the matter that once was living tissue dissolves into its elementary constituents, and eventually to dust. This process is commonly experienced and is undeniable. Body, no longer enlivened by Soul, dissolves into its constituent elements, and is absorbed into the surrounding matter, all of which eventually returns to its initial state as divine Energy; while the soul continues to evolve toward awareness of its Divine identity in accordance with the Divine Will.

“So, this entire phenomenal universe exists within God and is ensouled by God; it is a universe made of God’s Light contained in and permeated by His living Field of Consciousness. How do we know that this is so? Many individualized souls have seen, experienced, this truth within their own consciousness in the contemplative state. When the mind is stilled and made receptive to that revelation, the all-pervading Consciousness-Energy reveals itself as the eternal Source of our own awareness, the eternal ‘I AM’, as well as the Source of the Energy that constitutes our bodies and all other matter.

“When I was immersed in the unitive vision, I wondered “Where is the temple (of the body)? Which is the imperishable (soul), and which the abode (the body)?” For there was to be seen no separate body-temple with an imperishable soul within. There was no division to be found at all. In the Divine Mind, all is Consciousness-Energy! It is an inseparable unity, and all of it is imperishable. It is only the various shapes or forms produced by the transformation of Energy into matter, that are so changeable and perishable; but the Source, the Divine Mind, is one, eternal, and indivisible, as is the Energy that It contains as Its Creative Power.
“The duality 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 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 emanated, or radiated, from the Divine Mind. This is why the mystic, 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 Matter. Matter and Soul are both projections of 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. In the end, when the universal cycle comes to an end, the projected Energy of which matter consists and the projected Soul of which individualized souls consist are both resolved back into the one Divine Mind.

“At the end of a universal cycle, the expansion of the material universe is reversed, and matter, as it is compacted, returns to its Energy state, as it existed in the beginning; and is withdrawn back into the Divine Mind. It is ‘the Great Radiance’ in reverse. All souls return to the one Soul and are united in the Divine Mind. The Divine Mind returns to dormancy in the One, and there follows an extensive and refreshing period of rest. Then, again, at Its own pleasure, the One reawakens Its creative Power, the Divine Mind; Soul is once again radiated, and a burst of Energy is once again initiated to produce a bright new expanding universe of life and death. In the Divine Mind, these opposites of life and death never stand apart, of course. There are no opposites in the Divine Mind. So, while body and soul, Energy and Spirit, appear separate and divided at the spatio-temporal level, in the true Self—that is, in the Divine Mind—they are one and the same.

“The Divine Mind, being integral to the One, is beyond time and space, and all manifestation; It is the eternal Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting the essence of the universe—as a dreaming human mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting both the consciousness and the essence of those dream-images. Consciousness is not the property of matter, or of any individual being; it is not produced by any material process; but rather it is the property of the Divine Mind and pervades all matter throughout the universe. The Divine Mind is also the hidden producer of all matter through its cyclic projection of the Divine
Energy. It is dual-faceted: as Soul it is the fundamental nature of conscious Being; as Energy, it is the foundation and essence of the phenomenal universe. We are the evolved manifestations of this Divine activity, capable of knowing the eternal Consciousness by following our own consciousness back to its Divine Source, where we awake to our own eternal Self, beyond time, beyond space.

“Earlier, I stated that we have “two” identities; but, actually, we have three—make that four—identities. Many people identify almost exclusively with the grossest and most evident of these, the transient Energy-based physical body. By virtue of the genes passed down from our parents, this physical body, which determines our manifest appearance as well as our bodily health, is related to our immediate family, and constitutes for many their primary and most prominent identity—as a family member, as son or daughter, and later as father or mother themselves. However, the subtler body, the soul, is closer to our true essence; it is constituted of our own inclinations, tendencies, wishes and dreams, inherited as karma from our previous lifetimes.

“Soul breathed into the nascent universe, with one Will pervading all matter, molds the material world to its ends, and so, each individual soul enters into the Energy-based setting which God has prepared for it and that is appropriate to its individual purposes. Each of these souls is made of the breath of God—is His essence individualized. Our subtler and most significant identity—what we might call our “causal” body—is of course the Divine Mind, the Creator. He is our true and eternal Self. We may count the fourth, the One, as our “supercausal” identity. But we have a great deal of evolution ahead of us in order to become aware of that ultimate identity. Nonetheless, it is clear that that is where the evolutionary energy inherent in us is leading us.

“We are made of the Consciousness and Energy of God. 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 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 nameless 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 light, “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.”

“Unfortunately, many 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. Here is 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’.

“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 Creative Power], 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.”
NOTES:

7.  Maximus of Tyre, *Diss.*, XI.9-10
11.  Ibid., 9:6:10; p. 221.
13.  *Ibid.*, Sermon 6; p. 188.
16.  *Rig Veda*, x.129.1
21.  *Ibid.*, 47:1; p. 76
24.  *Rig Veda*, x.129.2-5
25.  *Enneads*, V.1.4-8: *The Three Initial Hypostases*
28.  Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 1
29.  *Ibid.*, 1
30. Ibid., 4
31. Ibid., 52
32. Ibid., 6
33. Ibid., 16
34. Ibid., 21
35. Ibid., 21
36. Ibid., 37
37. Ibid., 51
38. Chuang Tze, Ch. 12
39. Ibid., Ch. 8
40. Chuang Tze, 22
43. Philo, Legum Allegoriorum, 2:86; Ibid., p. 93
44. Philo, De uga et inventione, 50-52, Ibid., p. 93
48. Ibid., 113
49. Ibid., 41
50. Ibid., 78

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VI. THE DUAL ASPECTS OF GOD
(The publication of Body And Soul)

Body And Soul was published in 2011 and was, in many ways, simply a reformulation or rearrangement of the ideas presented in my previous book, Reflections On The Soul. It was written to reiterate and accentuate the information that appeared in Reflections On The Soul, without the focus of attention being so much on the works of Plotinus. Here are a few relevant excerpts from Body And Soul:

“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 conclusions, my theories. Having looked at the question of the Body-Soul duality from the perspective of several religious and philosophical traditions going back millennia, now, let’s attempt to look at this question from another, entirely new, perspective:

“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. Early philosophers, including Plato and Plotinus, held that the One “emanated” or “radiated” the Divine Mind, which in turn “emanated” an all-pervading Soul. They described the Divine Soul as permeating the material universe as light 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 “infusion” of Spirit, but rather as a ‘containment’ by Spirit: 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, 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?  

“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—is within God. But habit inclines us rather to think that ‘God 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, and 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.

“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—other than consciousness—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 intrinsically permeated by that conscious Divine Mind—just as our own thought-forms are permeated by our own conscious minds in which those thought-forms are created and exist.

“‘But how,’ we might wonder, ‘could so substantial and physical 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 has transformed into material wave-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? They spontaneously transform 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. 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.”

“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 99.9999999999999 percent empty space; the other infinitesimal part seems to be nothing more than energy wavelets and intangible forces. Subatomic wave-particles consist of intangible electro-magnetically 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 an amazing universe they make! How real 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 each of the fourteen billion years of evolutionary history reduced to a mere second each, 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 millions 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 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 One, the unlimited Consciousness in which It exists. For the Divine Mind is not an entity separate from the One; it is the functioning power of the One, operating within the One, and lending being, consciousness and bliss to all that arises from it. However, of the One—also designated as the Void, Brahman, the Tao, the Godhead—we cannot speak. It is beyond even our ability to imagine.
“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, or “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 seen It speak of It as ‘the Father’.

“That source of consciousness is, in fact, 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.

“We are able to know it by following our own individual consciousness back to its Source, where we are able to discover our original Self. 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 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 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 into likeness with the One, and it is imbued with bliss as a result of that proximity of 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 God, 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 both the subtle Soul, containing life and consciousness, and the Energy constituting gross Matter, are together contained within the Divine Mind. This is why the mystic, 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 Matter. Matter and Soul are both contained within 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.

“We are made of the Consciousness and Energy of God. 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 Him. For, just as a dream-person looking within to enquire who he is would discover that he is in fact the dreamer, so do we, enquiring within, discover that we are the limitless Mind 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.  

Unfortunately, many 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’.  

“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. 5

“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 indivisible Identity is revealed.

“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.

“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?

“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.”

“These words were written during the time I was drawn into union with the Mind of the Creator and reflect the transformation from a dualistic perspective to an utterly unitive one. These words of mine are, therefore, His words. For these many years afterward, I have enjoyed an enhanced sense of the Divinity within me and surrounding me; but I have not 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.”

NOTES:

1. This is asserted by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita: 9:4: “By Me, in my unmanifested form, are all things in this universe pervaded. All beings exist in Me; I do not exist in them.”
5. Ibid., p. 118.

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VII. IN HIM WE LIVE
(The publication of Mystical Theology)

The book, Mystical Theology, was written in an effort to summarize my metaphysical perspective, and to offer a unified statement of my most mature conclusions. It was published as an ebook in 2012. It was never produced in print. Here are a few excepts from that little book:

“Recent Developments

“Over the centuries since the time of Plotinus, many others have also experienced the unitive vision of God, but our metaphysical understanding has changed very little. What has changed is our understanding of the origin and nature of the material world. Ancient Greek thinkers found the subject too daunting, and simply accounted for the existence of the material world by positing an unoriginated sea of Chaotic matter, which the divine Thought (Logos, Sophia, Psyche) then permeated, bringing organization and life into it by its power. But the last few centuries of our current era have seen a worldwide focus on the discovery of the secrets of nature, most especially through the study of physics and astronomy.

“In the twentieth century, Hubble’s discovery that the universe is expanding led to the formulation of the concept of a definite beginning to our universe approximately fourteen billion years ago, and Einstein’s realization that energy and matter (mass) are interconvertible gave a solid explanation for the manner in which the universe of matter came into being, and impelled science into the forefront of a rare advancement in our philosophical understanding.

“Most of us, when asked, “What is matter made of?” would answer, “It is made of elementary wave-particles, such as quarks, which constitute all hadrons (such as protons and neutrons); and all leptons (such as electrons and neutrinos). But if we were asked, “What are these various particles made of?”, we might answer, “No one knows.” However, that would be incorrect. Physicists know very well that all these wave-particles are made of energy—electromagnetic energy—or more succinctly, light-energy. All matter, and therefore the entire universe, came from the initial burst of Light that we refer to as “the Big Bang”. The question of where that universe-
originating light-energy came from, however, is still a controversial matter of opinion.

“Clearly, there was a sudden immense burst of electromagnetic energy where prior to it there had been nothing; and that energy coalesced into the wave-particles that make up our material world. Philosophers can no longer hold to the notion of an eternal universe; there was a creation moment, and the ultimate ‘stuff’ of the universe is now revealed: it was light—an inconceivably large burst of high-frequency light (which we refer to as ‘electromagnetic energy’)—that almost immediately converted to material wave-particles.\(^3\) Up to the point of that empirical discovery, philosophers speculating on the origin of matter were free to imagine many possible scenarios; but now speculation is dead. Matter is converted light; that is a proven fact. And material particles, when collided at high velocity, convert back into light (photons). What previously had seemed two different things—energy and matter—were now seen to be one.

“Though so much of what passes as ‘science’ today is merely the passing fashion of the moment or a speculative theory that can never be substantiated, the current understanding among scientists that all matter is the evolute of an original light is one which seems to allow of no possible future refutation. That energy and matter are interconvertible, and that the light-energy of the so-called ‘Big Bang’ of fourteen billion years ago transformed into the quarks and leptons that make up the entire world of matter is a discovery that is so incontrovertible, so uncontestable, as to effectively put an end to all future speculation as to what our world is made of.

“And so, for the first time in history, after centuries of philosophical inquiry and intense scientific exploration, we now know with certainty exactly what the material world is made of. Physicists have announced it, astronomers have proclaimed it, and technicians have proven it without a doubt in their laboratories; and yet hardly anyone in the world seems to be aware of the fact that everything is made of light. Even those physicists who describe how the primordial photons of light transformed themselves into material particles do not seem to fully grasp the significance of the fact that everything in the universe is made of light.\(^4\)

“And, despite the fact that scientific thinkers believe that that pristine burst of light was a ‘natural’ phenomenon (whatever that means), and spiritually
oriented people are certain that the light came directly from God, the fact remains that an unimaginably immense blast of high-energy light flashed at the dawn of time in a nascent universe, and each photon of that light became a matter-antimatter pair that contributed to make the phenomenal universe of form and substance that we live in today, where everything is made of that light.⁵

“Everyone has heard of the ‘Big Bang’, and of how all forms of energy and all material particles were produced from that initial ‘fireball’ of high-energy photons; and yet, in the minds of many, there is still the burning question: ‘Where did that abundance of light come from?’ Scientists have concluded that the light from which the world of matter is made had to have come from the explosion of an unstable super-dense chunk of matter which they call a “singularity”, while people of religious or spiritual beliefs have understood since the most ancient of times that that light was caused by an act of God.

“That the matter constituting this physical universe was produced by an initial high-energy burst of Light around fourteen billion years ago is accepted by the entire scientific community; the empirical evidence for this conclusion is formidable and incontestable. And physicists and cosmologists of integrity have declared that this is as far as science can reach, that to extrapolate farther back than that would be nothing more than conjecture and supposition—certainly not science. Nonetheless, some scientists have reached beyond the empirical evidence into the realm of unfounded speculative theory and have declared that the cause of that burst of Light was the explosion of a submicroscopic speck of matter that existed prior to the manifestation of the universe, a speck that contained all the mass of the universe within it. And often this is declared with a straight face.

“On the other hand, those who have experience of God’s presence, regard science’s discovery that an ancient originating Light was the source of the entire material universe to be a delightful confirmation of the Divine Creation that has been famously heralded by the wise of long ages past. It is clear, however, that neither the speculation of the theoretical scientists nor the tradition of the religions is subject to incontrovertible proof; we can only weigh the two positions and see which seems to us the more credible.

“Can we really accept that a tiny rock is the ultimate creative Force from which sprang the entire vast living universe? Or perhaps the tiny rock is not the Creator, but rather the Creator, having decided to make a universe, first
put the whole thing into a tiny speck, and then had it all burst forth somehow. Did life exist in the rock prior to its existence in the universe, or did life spontaneously arise once the rock exploded? Well, you see how difficult it would be to defend such an originating principle. But such difficulties do not arise if we assume that the God whom we know in our hearts was the originator of the universe and all its living variety.

“If we accept that God breathed forth or otherwise manifested an immense burst of light-energy that contains in it the capacity and propensity to ‘evolve’ into wave-particles in time and space, constituting the elements of our universe, then why couldn’t He have similarly predisposed the resulting matter to produce living bodies by a further evolutionary development? And why couldn’t those first primeval living bodies, such as bacteria and eukaryotes, be predisposed to evolve further into larger creatures, such as fish and fowl, mammals, primates, and eventually humans? Somewhere along that chain of evolution, why couldn’t consciousness and self-awareness emerge as well from the initial predisposition programmed into that divine light from the very beginning?

“Such a scenario lends credence, not only to a theistic interpretation of evolutionary history, but justifies a naturalistic interpretation as well. For, from the theistic perspective, the divine Creator’s initial act brings about each emergent quality of that evolution from light to life and intelligence; and from the ‘naturalist’ perspective, every step of universal evolution occurs in a natural causal sequence, seemingly without any extraneous input. It has to be said, however, that a light such as that, with so many inherently emergent long-term evolutionary developments, would have to have come from a divinely omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent source; of that we must be certain.

“How could we possibly doubt that that Light is a miraculous energy that proceeds from the power of God? At its highest frequencies—such as that produced in its original appearance that we call ‘the Big Bang’—it has the ability to convert to electrically charged wave-particles that make up the atoms of every known or unknown substance that has existed through time, and provides the energy of every known or unknown invisible force or field of force appearing in the universe at both the microscopic and the macroscopic level. That is to say that, not only did that Light produce all the matter in the universe, but it produced the force of gravity, the so-called weak and strong forces that bind matter into cohesive entities, and all the
electric and magnetic forces that exist in every wave-particle and produce so many effects on earth and beyond.

“These electric charges are not only produced in every particle of matter, constituting its properties, but also constitute every chemical reaction governing your digestion and metabolism, and every electrical impulse such as the firing of axons in your system of nerves, the firing of neurons in your brain, the beating of your heart, and the blinking of your eye. Everything—every visible or invisible thing and every perceivable or imperceptible variety of energy owes its existence to that initial Light. How can we believe, as some scientists profess to believe, that the Light, containing in its potentiality an entire universe such as this one, is the result of a random accident?

“And yet, in the view of some materialistic scientists, this efficient mechanism of matter-energy interactions provides evidence that every bit of the functioning of man and the universe can be accounted for without the need to postulate a supernatural origin or underlying spiritual support. By some process of selective reasoning, they are able to ignore the question of where that light came from, and how it happened to distribute itself as discreet particles and electrical charges in just the proper “fine-tuned” relationships to form so inconceivably complex a cosmos of form and awareness.

“Be that as it may, it is certain that any physical or metaphysical theory framed in the twenty-first century must begin with the certain premise that the origin of all matter is light—regardless of whatever one might speculate was the cause of that burst of light. And, even if it had not been revealed to every enlightened soul that the material world is a manifestation of Divine energy, if we were to apply the rule of Ockham’s razor, which suggests that we shave away unnecessary assumptions, the simplest and most obvious attributable cause of that burst of light is the Divine Creator. The assumption that the explosion of an unstable and super-dense chunk of matter (a singularity) was the cause is simply an unwarranted, irrational, and unjustified supposition.

“But those of a materialist bent could scarcely be expected to concede that that Light came from a supernatural Source; they could be expected rather to fight against this notion with all the powers of their imagination. “The light resulted from the explosion of a single densely compacted speck of matter,”
they said; “a ‘singularity’”. Nevermind that it was now necessary to explain where that came from. For these people, that was the end of the line. Their position is reminiscent of the dismissive attitude of those people who held that the world was supported by a giant turtle, and who, when asked ‘What supports the turtle?’ answered, “It’s turtles all the way down.”

“Today, it is common knowledge that all wave-particles of matter were born from the high-frequency (EM) energy released in the ‘Big Bang’ event of fourteen billion years ago; and that it was those wave-particles that evolved into the stars, our world, and all that we know as matter and energy. However, an important question arises: ‘Did the qualities of life and consciousness exist intrinsically in the light-energy and in the wave-particles that arose from it [as many scientists believe], or was there an infusion or suffusion of a divine consciousness into that primordial matter that served to purposely organize and arrange those wave-particles toward the presently evolved state of life and consciousness that we know and experience today?’ And what should we call such a principle? Anaxagorus called it “Thought”; Heraclitus, and later Philo, called it “Logos”; the author of The Wisdom of Solomon called it “Sophia”, or “Wisdom”; Plotinus called it “Psyche”, or “Soul”.

“No matter what word we use to denote this principle, it is necessarily a divine, consciously governing and organizing Spirit akin to the “Thought” or “Will” of God, acting in and through all the sensible universe. There are no other alternatives: either that initial Light itself was and is purposeful, living and conscious, or that purposeful living consciousness acts within and through that light but is distinct from it. And since light-energy and matter in its pre-organic state seem to be inert and not alive, we must assume that they are also not conscious, nor do they intrinsically contain the seed of consciousness. It would seem, therefore, that we are forced by the evidence to conclude that an invisible living consciousness operates within and throughout the material universe, guiding its operations, advancing its evolution, and bringing Its own life and consciousness to light in the living creatures appearing on at least one planetary body orbiting the star we call the Sun.

“Philosophers and sages from the beginning of time have declared that, in addition to the light from which all ‘things’ are made, there must be a conscious deliberate force at work in the world that functions as the organizing principle of design, and as the source of life and awareness—a
conscious force which has been referred to as “spirit” or “soul”. Materialists deny that such a universal principle exists—even though by doing so, they tend to deny the existence of their own intelligence; while the mystics, seers, and all the worshippers of a transcendent/immanent God affirm the principle of a divine “soul”, and stake their lives and actions upon it, living so as to give expression to the Divine source within them.

“It is commonplace knowledge—and among those who have experienced the Divine Mind it is certain knowledge—that the Creator God is the active emanate of a yet higher, inactive Source known as the “Godhead”. But of that higher Source we cannot speak; It is beyond linguistic description, and even beyond rational conception. The Upanishads call It \textit{Brahman}; Buddhists call that ultimate Source the “Void”; the third century Roman mystic-philosopher, Plotinus, simply referred to It as “the One”; and Lao Tze called It “the Tao”:

“Before heaven and earth existed, there was something unformed, silent, alone, unchanging, constant and eternal. It could be called ‘the Source of the universe’. I do not know its name and simply call it ‘Tao’.

“And Chuang Tze, commenting on the words of Lao Tze, said:

“If you want to know the Tao, said Lao, give a bath to your mind; wash your mind clean. Throw out all your sage wisdom! Tao is invisible, hard to hold, and difficult to describe. However, I will outline It for you: The visible world is born of the Invisible; the world of forms is born of the Formless. The creative Energy [409ol] is born from Tao, and all life forms are born of this creative Energy; thus, all creation evolves into various forms.

“...Life springs into existence without a visible source and 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.\(^7\)

“It is \textit{that}—the One, the Tao, Brahman, the Void, from which the active
Creator-God—called \textit{Brahma} by the Upanishads, \textit{410ol} by Lao Tze, \textit{Nous}
(the Divine Mind) by Plotinus—was born. How do we know this? Because
those whose minds have ascended to that transcendent Self have seen It,
have experienced It, and have spoken of It. Without a creative Power, that
One would simply remain in Its own blissful eternity without the means to
create. But It produced from Itsel an entity to serve as Its executive Power
of Creation, so It could create, even while remaining in Its blissful eternity,
Its eternal blissfulness.

“Though we cannot speak of the Godhead, except to say that It is the Source
of the active Divine Power that we refer to as ‘God’, or ‘the Creator’, we \textit{are}
able to speak of this active Creator-God, who is the producer of the
phenomenal universe. When the soul of the mystic is uplifted to union, it is
to the Creator-God that she is united. And yet, in that union with the
Creator-God, she “sees” God’s Source as well. And though she is not \textit{united}
\textit{with} the Source, she perceives that Source, that ‘Godhead’, as the ultimate
Ground of existence, her ultimate origination, her ultimate Self.

“God, the Creator, derives His own eternal Being from the One, His source.
It is He who has created this universe. He transcends the material universe
and yet is present as an immanent conscious force within it. As Spirit, He is
above and beyond our world; and yet He produces this spatio-temporal
world from Himself, and acts as a conscious force within the temporal
universe. We are reminded by this knowledge that He is unlike any other
thing that we are aware of—but one. The only other instance of such a
bifunctional entity is the human mind (or soul), which both transcends its
thought productions and dream productions, and yet acts as a conscious (or
subconscious) force within those thought and dream productions. In this, it
would seem, the human mind is patterned after the eternal Mind. And
because, The Divine Mind is the source and essence of the human mind (or
soul), the two are linked in such a way that the human mind is capable of
ascending to the Divine Mind and recognizing its own identity with It.

“Let me illustrate this with a recounting of my own experience: I
experienced the revelation of God when I was twenty-eight, living in an
abandoned cabin in the mountains of Santa Cruz, California. I had gone
there, inspired by the prompting Spirit of God within me, in the hope of meeting with Him in the solitude of the forest. On one November night, I sat in that darkened cabin by the woodstove, gazing into the burning embers through the stove’s grating, and longing for God’s visitation. As my mind became solely fixed, and my breath subsided, I entered into the eternal Consciousness, and knew for the first time the secret of my own being.

“I will not tell all the details of this revelation, for I have done so elsewhere on numerous occasions; I wish only to tell of one element of my vision which is pertinent to what follows: It was toward the end of that ‘vision’ that I viewed the breathing out of the universe, and, being at that moment identical with the Divine Mind, 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.

“The only visual impression I currently retain is of a vast amount of indescribable ‘stuff’ flying outward, expanding into the surrounding void. Shortly thereafter, my mind returned to my place in time, and I collapsed, exhausted, on my bed.

“That was in 1966, and I’ve had many years to contemplate the meaning of my experience and the words written by the light of a candle during its occurrence. Since that time, I have written extensively about that revelation and its meaning; for it has been, over these years, my deep desire to reconcile that vision with the picture of reality portrayed by the empirically-based sciences, and to come to some fully satisfying conclusions about the origin and nature of this universe in which we live.

“I confess that I did not see in my vision an originating flash of light resembling what is described as “the Big Bang”. I was only conscious of the “breathing out” of the expanding matter that constitutes the universe. It is only by inference that I conclude that that original light, which scientists say transformed itself into the material particles forming the expanding universe, is synonymous with what I experienced as the Creator’s outgoing breath. What I saw was seen from an eternal vantagepoint; and what to timebound eyes would require billions of earth-years to capture in its entirety, was reduced to a mere exhalation and inhalation of a moment’s passing.
“I cannot doubt the authenticity of this vision in eternity, though it was a compressed, or encapsulated vision. It was the Divine Mind, or Brahma, or God, from whom that breath arose, and this breathing of the universe was shown to me as it occurred and recurs. It is to that unerring vision that I must reconcile any account that scientific theorists may give of that universal beginning. The assumption by theorists that the original state of the universe was squashed into a single point of super-dense material is an unwarranted assumption; rather, I believe that assumption is the product of the attempt to mentally reverse the present expansion of the universe to its ultimate logical extreme: a single compressed point of origin. But that single point of ultimate compression calculated by mathematicians, is merely an erroneous projection of the imagination.

“That the universe began in a sudden burst of light is unquestioned; but that light did not burst forth from a “singularity” into which all the matter of the universe had been compressed. Rather, that initial abundance of light burst forth from another kind of ‘singularity’: the energy potential of the eternal Mind, who is both the universe’s Creator and the universal Soul pervading it. Who else could produce an Energy that transforms itself into substantial forms as material particles along with the purposeful forces required to establish such a universe? Who else could pervade that universe as Mind, and animate each fully evolved form with a living consciousness? Who else could fill the universe with His own Consciousness, imbuing living beings with distinct identities and an individualized self-awareness?

“Clearly, that eternal Mind that we call ‘God’ is the source and power of all that is. He has produced all these bodies and their evolutionary developments from His all-powerful light; and He is the inner Soul permeating all matter which we identify within ourselves as ‘I’. Indeed, all is He, and all glory is His. What else might we imagine exists? Who else might we imagine ourselves to be?

“All the material universe and all the forces operating within it are evolved from His outspreading light, breathed forth nearly fifteen billion years ago. Yet this immense burst of light-energy would have remained but a teeming chaotic mass, random and lifeless, without His conscious direction, without His in-dwelling Spirit. His manifestation of a material universe is plainly evident to us; but His guiding Spirit is subtle and hidden from our view. We may infer the existence of that subtle Spirit by observing Its effects in the
universe and in ourselves; but It is known directly and with certainty only when He reveals Himself as our inner Self.

“So, as I hope I have made evident, there are two different ways in which the one Creator-God manifests: (1) As the Mind, Spirit, or Soul that permeates all matter as Consciousness, and which constitutes the limited mind, or soul, of each individual sentient being; and (2) as the Creative Power that produces the light-energy that transforms into the material wave-particles that make up the physical universe.

“With these two aspects of Himself, He constitutes both matter and Spirit, both body and soul; thus, He constitutes all that exists. Though some might object philosophically to what appears to be a dualistic perspective, I would point out to those objectors that, since both the substance of the material universe and the indwelling Mind, or Spirit, both derive from one and the same supreme Being, there is, in fact, no duality, but rather an undeniable Nonduality—or, if you prefer, a Unity. That the one God manifests in these two different ways does nothing to detract from His integrated singularity.

“There is one other issue I wish to resolve: and that is whether the light-energy that the Creator produces to form the material universe is His own substance or a second substance other than Himself. I maintain that the great burst of light-energy which formed the vast universe is a projection of His own power and is therefore identical with His own essential Being. He did not borrow some other substance to make the physical cosmos; from where would He borrow it? No; He breathed forth that active light-energy from Himself. Though the universe is not synonymous with the supreme Consciousness, it is a projection of His inherent power and does not belong to any other category than Himself. It emanates from Him and is therefore of His Being.

“Both the light-energy that transforms into the material universe and the indwelling Spirit, or Soul, derive from the same Divinity; and yet they are not the same. They are different in quality and characteristics and are distinct and obviously separable from one another. The forms that evolve from His light-energy are subject to entropy and dissolution. They appear for a brief time; and when those material forms cease to function as viable entities, the indwelling Spirit departs. The forms of His light-energy are therefore transient and subject to decay and dissolution; while the Spirit, or Soul, continues to exist eternally. It is immortal.
“Now, to the question of how the Spirit, the Soul, or Divine Consciousness ‘permeates’ the material world: Some ancient philosophers posited a *pneuma* that the Creator breathed into man exclusively, constituting the human soul; others suggested that the Divine Consciousness fills the entire universe as a numinous and all-pervading intelligence. Accumulated evidence—both from empirical and mystical sources—supports the latter premise. An all-pervasive Consciousness may be inferred from the “fine-tuning” effects evident throughout the cosmos, though such an all-pervading Intelligence remains undetected by our technological instruments. It is witnessed directly, however, by the human mind, or soul, during what we call “mystical” experience.

“During the so-called “mystical” experience, the individual mind (or soul) is drawn into union with God, the Divine Consciousness, and perceives through and as that Divine Consciousness, seeing from the perspective of that Divine Consciousness. While seeing from God’s perspective, the all-pervasiveness of the Divine Mind is experienced and known. In such awareness, that Divine Consciousness is revealed to the soul as both the initiator of the Creative Act of universal manifestation *as well as* the living Spirit pervading that universal manifestation. Though this knowledge (*gnosis*) is not what we consider to be ‘empirical’ knowledge, it *is* experiential knowledge. It is knowledge obtained from a transcendent perspective and carries a certainty for the experiencer far above any mere temporal knowledge.

“‘Very well,’ you may say; ‘but just how does the Divine Consciousness pervade the material universe? How can I picture it or form a conception of it?’

“I don’t believe it can be pictured, since that Divine Consciousness is an invisible and noumenal reality. But we can conceive of it by way of analogy: He is present within this world as our individual consciousness is present within our thoughts and dreams. Our thoughts and dreams are within our minds; and because of that, they are permeated by our own consciousness. In this same way, God is present within us, and within this world, because this world exists within Him.

“This universe, fostered by His light, exists *within* Him. He is all-encompassing. When the “Great Radiance” of God’s light burst forth as an
expanding universe of time and space, of substance and form, where must that ‘Radiance’ have occurred? It had to have occurred in the Mind of God! Where else could you put a universe when there is nothing outside of that Divine Mind, when nothing exists or can exist but that all-encompassing Mind?

“And so, without the need for an “infusion” of the spark of life and consciousness, this world, by virtue of its presence in the Mind of God, is naturally and effortlessly suffused with His living presence. And what we speak of as the ‘soul’ of individuals is simply the embodied expression of His all-encompassing conscious presence. The inclusion of the universe within the Divine Mind obviates the need for an infusion of God’s presence as ‘soul’, since His Life and Consciousness are inherently the very Ground, substance, and support of the world, and constitute its very being. It is this realization that prompted St. Paul to declare, “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

“So some people speak of “intelligent design” in the universe, as though God were similar to a human craftsman or architect who had thought out and prepared a blueprint prior to building the universe. But a little reflection on the nature of God reveals that He is neither a maker of blueprints nor a builder. What He is is an unfathomable Intelligence, the all-pervading Mind in which the universe exists, and by whose power it operates. God does not stand apart from the universe, like a builder fashioning a building; He does not “fine-tune” the universe as an object separate from Himself; rather, the universe exists within the Mind of God, and every single speck of it is controlled and coordinated by His will.

“Though we have given names to all the various forces comprising our universe, such as ‘electromagnetic fields’, the ‘force of gravity’, the ‘strong’ force, and the ‘weak’ force; all these are simply manifestations of the cohesion inherent in His Mind-born creation. We have also named the material particles mysteriously formed from His light, such as ‘quarks’, ‘protons’, and ‘electrons’; but these also are but the evidence of the scintillating effusion of His imagination. Only in these last centuries have scientific investigators come to understand just how inconceivably evanescent and indescribable these sub-microscopic particles really are.

“As the stuff of our dreams responds to our human will, the stuff of this universe, produced from Himself, within Himself, responds to His will.
And, since He transcends the confines of space and time, those evolutionary changes that, from our human perspective, require eons for their accomplishment, He accomplishes in an instant. Because His Consciousness is all-pervading, all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. What appears to our eyes to be random and uncaused is, in fact, the unfoldment of His will.

“Consider: If an invisible and omnipotent Mind caused the decay of one particle of uranium and left a second particle intact, would it not appear to those witnessing it that what had occurred was the random spontaneous decay of a particle? And if that same invisible and omnipotent Mind caused a gene in a strand of DNA to mutate, would it not appear to those examining that DNA that what had occurred was the random mutation of a gene? How would one be able to distinguish such a Divinely-caused event from a random one? All is occurring within that one Consciousness. He has only to breathe, and a million worlds begin and end; and in this breathing, all that is contained within this universe is nourished and sustained.

“This body that you regard as your own is actually His—as pebbles are the earth’s, as waves are the ocean’s. In accord with His purpose, the sun daily stirs the waters of your heart, and the vapor of your love flies to the four corners of the world; while at night the moon stills you, and the cold darkness is your bed. All is in accordance with His design. He is the life-pulse of every creature; and when the clanging bells of joy exult within you, it is His joy; the fire of song that inspires you is also His. Even the obscuring dust of unknowing that blinds us to His presence is brought by Him. He is in the clouds and in the gritty soil; and if you bend over a pool of clear water, you may see on the water’s surface the reflection of His face.

“How does He pervade every particle of this universe? He is the Mind from which the universe took birth, and the universe exists within Him. All is contained in Him. In Him, there is no I or Thou, no now or then. In Him, life and death are undifferentiated. And that transcendent deathless Self is our eternal identity. So, you see, there is truly nothing to vanquish, nothing to lament, and nothing on which to pride oneself. In Him, and by Him, all is accomplished in an instant.”

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416
NOTES:

1. Of course, not everyone agrees with the notion of a material universe. Some believe it was never created. Since there is no way to prove the existence of the universe outside of our mental perceptions of it, every few centuries someone frames the theory that the entire physical universe has no actual being outside that interior perception, that it exists solely in the human mind. It is a theory that has been postulated by the eighth century Indian mystic-philosopher, Shankara; by certain Buddhist philosophers; by the Eighteenth-century English philosopher, George Berkeley; and by certain popular modern thinkers. But it is a theory that is at once contradicted by the fact that man (*homo sapiens*) did not exist prior to two million years ago—modern humans (*homo sapiens sapiens*) did not exist until around 200,000 years ago; and life, even in its most rudimentary stage, did not exist on this planet prior to around four billion years ago. However, the universe itself is around fourteen billion years old—clearly older than man—and therefore could not have been *originated* in the mind of man, or in the consciousness of any living creature, since the nature of time does not allow an effect to precede its cause. The only continuous consciousness capable of producing the appearance of the universe is that of the eternal Mind of God. Therefore, the theory of a humanly subjective production of the phenomenal universe will not be considered here.

2. According to the current scientific evidence, around fourteen billion years ago the universe was created by a great burst of light that some call “the Big Bang” and others prefer to call “the Great Radiance”. In order to produce an entire universe as vast as this one, that light had to have been at the highest end of the energy spectrum. The most energetic light in the electromagnetic spectrum is that with the highest frequency, and shortest wavelength; that radiation is referred to as “gamma-rays”, a term coined by Ernest Rutherford in 1903.

3. Gamma-rays, or 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). Since energy and mass are interconvertible ($E=mc^2$), energy converts to mass, and mass converts to energy. In that immense “fireball” at the beginning of time, trillions upon trillions of photons of gamma radiation collided, and each of these photons converted to a particle-antiparticle pair. So long as the energy of the photon is equal to or
exceeds the mass of the particles produced, this conversion occurs. The reverse process also occurred: for example, the mass of an electron-positron pair equals 1.02 MeV (million electron volts); when such a pair collides, it is annihilated, and, in its place, are two photons of at least 0.51 MeV each. In “the Great Radiance”, particle-antiparticle creation and annihilation were occurring at once on a grand scale. A full explanation of this process in the creation of the material universe may be found in my earlier book, Body And Soul.

4. The medieval English philosopher, Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253) theorized that primeval matter was expanded to form the universe by the impetus of light. But he had not the benefit of the knowledge introduced much later by Einstein that light and matter are alternate forms of the same thing. Regarding light and matter as two distinct categories, he understood that light, since it “diffuses itself in every direction,” provides a likely medium for the extension of matter in all dimensions:

Thus light, which is the first form created in first matter, multiplied itself by its very nature an infinite number of times on all sides and spread itself out uniformly in every direction. In this way it proceeded in the beginning of time to extend matter which it could not leave behind, by drawing it out along with itself into a mass the size of the material universe. (Robert Grosseteste, On Light, trans. From the Latin by Clare C. Riedl, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Marquette University Press, 1942, 2000; p. 11.)

From our vantage point today, it seems quite amazing how close Grosseteste came to an anticipation of the cosmological theory that only emerged seven hundred years after him. His theory influenced his Oxford student, Roger Bacon (1214-1292) as well, though both still held to an Aristotelian cosmology consisting of spheres within spheres. Neither could guess that it was the light from the Divine that actually transformed or converted into the material particles that constitute the universe of form, and which, through its expansion, gave birth to space and time.

5. When gamma radiation photons collide, they convert to matter, becoming a particle-antiparticle pair, such as a proton and an antiproton, or an electron and a positron. These two members of a symmetrical pair possess opposite electric charges, and annihilate upon contact, turning back once again to light (photons). One would expect that, this being the case, every matter-
antimatter pair would have annihilated over the course of time, and that consequently there would be no material universe. However, there is a material universe. And so, we must assume there was an asymmetry that found its way into this process, sparing approximately one matter particle in every 10 billion produced, which matter particles now constitute what is our material universe. Why and how this asymmetry should exist, however, has not yet been explained.

6. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 1

7. *Chuang Tze*, 22

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**POSTSCRIPT**

It was also around this time (2012, when I was 74 years of age) that I stopped working as a Home Health Aide and devoted myself to creating my website, “The Mystic’s Vision” ([www.themysticsvision.com](http://www.themysticsvision.com)). Here, I offered all of my previously published books as free downloads, as well as some articles excerpted from my earlier published writings and some more recently written material. Years later, I would gather some of those articles into more extensive topical collections which were then offered for reading or downloading from my website. Additionally, I dedicated all of my writings, past and current, to the Public Domain, renouncing all benefits of copyright.

Currently, as of February, 2019, I feel that I have very little in the way of additional useful material on Mystical Experience to offer, and I am essentially retired from public service, though I intend to continue posting my website for as long as possible.

Swami Abhayananda
Some I Met Along The Way

As I was walking toward my home, I came upon three men. The first man I saw was lying helpless on the ground and weighted down with a large tangle of chains. “Throw off your chains,” I said to him; “stand, and be free, as your immortal soul intends you to be.”

“I can’t stand,” he said; “perhaps you can help me.” And, attempting to aid in his release, I took hold of one of the chains and lifted it. “Hold on,” cried the man; “would you take from me the knowledge of my sinfulness, and leave me unremorseful? I would rather bear the weight of this chain,” he said. And so, letting go of that chain, I grasped another chain and began to lift it from him.

“O please,” cried the man, “would you take from me the faith in my savior, who was not made, but begotten of God, as Light from uncreated Light, Himself become man so that man might become ‘God—would you take away from me the Way, the Truth, and the Life?’” I loosened my hold on that particularly heavy chain and began to tug on another.

But, as I attempted to lift the chain, it was as though I was causing the man injury and pain, for he cried out, “O sir, that is the holy religious tradition to which I have vowed allegiance, and to which my soul is bound. I would as soon die as remove that chain! I gently placed the chain back in its place on his chest and stood upright.

“No one has wrapped you in these chains but yourself,” I told him; “and you alone can remove them. I’m sorry that I cannot rid you of them, but I will leave you with these words that may give you some guidance: Like the one you call your savior, you are God’s own Life in human form. God is your true savior, and He lives within you as you. Therefore, rise up, and throw off your chains.” And then, after so addressing him, I saluted him and continued on my way.
The second man I encountered was armed to the teeth with rifles and handguns, bullets and knives. “Why are you so heavily armed?” I asked him; “and who are you fighting?”

“I am a warrior of Allah,” said the man, “and I am the slayer of the godless infidels!”

“What godless infidels?” I asked.

“Those who do not worship Allah,” he said.

“But do not all men have the right to choose the path that they will take?” I asked, in an attempt to reason with him.

“I am simply following the mandate of the prophet,” said the man. “He has written, ‘Kill those who join other deities to Allah, wherever you shall find them. But if they shall convert, … then let them go their way.’” And again: ‘Say to the infidel, if they desist from their unbelief, what is past is forgiven them. But if they return to it, …fight then against them to the end, until the only religion left is Allah’s.’

“All religions already belong to Allah,” I said to him, “whether He is called Allah, Hari, Yahveh, God, or Shiva; for all these names refer to the same Creator and Lord recognized as the universal Spirit dwelling within everyone.”

“You are mistaken,” the man insisted. “The God they worship is not the same as the God we worship.”

“But how,” I asked him, “is it even possible for there to be more than one Creator, more than one all-pervasive Spirit?” But I could see that this line of reasoning was having no effect, and so I took another tack: “The spiritual quest is not the pursuit of a worldly victory for a particular sectarian ideology,” I said; “it is not a pursuit that is advanced by physical conquest at all. The spiritual quest is an interior pursuit of the direct inner revelation of God as one’s own divine Self.” And when we do come to know Him, we realize that He can never be limited to any single name, concept, or form.”

“Are you not aware that there are many different religions?” he asked me.
And I replied, “Yes, of course, there are many superficial differences among religious traditions: the various items of faith, the various rules and rituals, are distinctly different in each religious tradition, but so what? They arose in different times and places, in different cultures with different customs, and were written in different languages; so, it is only natural that they would be different. Let them be! If your faith and your rituals help you to become aware of the Divine within you, adhere to them, and let others adhere to their own. God has made us innately free: we are free to choose our own scriptures, our own ideas, and our own ways of worshiping, so long as by doing so no one is harmed. It is incumbent upon us to leave others to choose their own ways as well. God has given each man and woman the ability to see things from their own individual perspective and by the light of their own intellect.”

For a moment, the man had nothing to say, and so I continued, “Each of us is given a mind capable of thought and judgment and self-rule; each of us is a manifestation of the Divine, possessing the God-given freedom of independent choice. Honor that gift—and give voice to it. In this current period of time, it is crucial to establish this truth on earth for all to share, along with the mandate of ‘Do no harm’. May Allah bless everyone with the possession of this wisdom.”

But the warrior of God was having none of it, and he pushed me away threateningly, and so I continued on my way.

The third man I met was in a mechanized wheelchair; he was noticeably crippled in body, and his face was drawn by his disease into a frightening grimace. He had witnessed my encounter with the other two men, and he came right up to me and said, “Do you not see that those men are deluded who place their faith in a God who doesn’t exist?”

“Oh, but He does exist!” I replied; “He is existence itself.” But this only brought forth a tortured laugh from the man in the chair.

“Well, my friend,” he said; “you may believe what you like, but science makes God unnecessary. This world is but a speck of dust in a random array of similar specks of dust in an endless extension of space. I have investigated and found only emptiness. There is no God, no invisible ruling hand, no bearded archetype upholding this cosmic accident, but only the
inexorable play of the laws of physics in a dazzling yet meaningless universal display.”

“You are mistaken,” I told him; “I don’t know why God has chosen to keep your mind in darkness and has not illumined your mind with His gracious presence. I only know that He has revealed Himself in me and has left no doubt that all this universe is His manifestation. I have seen the glory and grandeur of God, and how everything in His universe works in unison with everything else in the great unity of His mind. And I have known beyond the slightest doubt, that I am nothing else but God’s manifest appearance in this world. He is the entire ocean of existence of which I am but a single wavelet. Contrary to your opinion that God doesn’t exist, the truth is that nothing else exists but God. It is He who has inspired me with His own thought to sing His praise with His own voice so that all His children might know Him and know His infinite joy.”

“You cannot prove to me that God exists,” he said; “and I cannot prove to you that He does not exist. But know this: the origin of this universe can be convincingly explained by the laws of science, without recourse to the theory of divine intervention.”

“No, there is no proof of God,” I said, “—except for the sublime proof that is His revelation within the soul, which you seem not to have experienced. You have my condolences. But be aware that it is never too late: He is ever capable of illuminating your mind with the revelation of His presence. But you must be receptive to the possibility. You must open your mind and your heart to God if you wish to know Him.”

“My dear sir,” he sternly addressed me, “I am a man of science and I rely on science and the powers of my intellect to investigate the nature of the cosmos; I do not rely on fairytales.”

“Very well,” I said; “I wish you well.” And I bade him “Good day,” as we parted company.

Such were the three men I met on my way, each of whom was deluded in his own way and suffering terribly from his mistaken views. But what could be done? There’s an old saying that ‘you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.’ These days it seems that hardly anyone is willing to drink of the ‘water’ I’m offering. So, while I’ve been privileged to praise
God for so long, it’s probably time for me to reduce my activities, leaving the lifting of chains and reasoning with the unreasonable to those who are younger and more capable. Besides, I have faith that God, who is ever in charge of the unfolding of His creation, will bring all good souls home to His infinite Bliss in His own time and in His own way. May His Name be praised!

NOTES:
1. Quran, IX:5, 6.
2. Quran, VIII:39, 40. Also II:191-193. This scriptural doctrine of ‘conversion or death’ was no doubt a highly expedient factor in the rapid expansion of Islam throughout the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent from the 7th to 13th centuries. But today it is only the relatively few radical Islamic fundamentalists who regard this doctrine as still valid. They have adopted this policy as the foundation of their current universal jihad aligned against the entire rest of the world. But, I have it on good authority that for the great majority of all Muslims, this doctrine is considered to be a remnant of an antiquated past and no longer a valid or relevant portion of Islamic scripture.
3. “The spiritual quest is an inner pursuit of the direct inner revelation of God as one’s own divine Self.” Some of the greatest mystics of the Islamic tradition (known as ‘Sufis’) were followers of this spiritual quest—mystics such as Hasan al-Basri, Rabī’a Adawiyya, Dhu’n-Nun, Beyizid Bistami, Abu’l-Husayn an-Nuri, Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj, Muhammed ali Ibn Arabi, FakhruddinIraqi, and Jalaluddin Rumi, the account of whose lives and teachings may be found in Abhay ananda, History of Mysticism, Atma Books, 1987 (freely downloadable at the download page of my website: www.themysticsvision.com.)

Can You Not See?

Is there anyone who cannot see that the organizations of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, etc., are simply instruments for separating people into enclaves of partisans, instead of bringing diverse partisans together in the love of God? We have separated ourselves into what are in fact political camps, each with its own limited perspective on life's meaning and history; and we call that 'religion'. Do we really think this mockery is 'religion'?

It appears that we want everyone to know that we are totally committed to
the ideals and tenets of your own club, and that those tenets expounded by other clubs are simply wrong, perhaps criminal, and definitely despicable. And the members of each of the different clubs holds the exact same opinion regarding the other clubs. Has it ever occurred to you that you are all wrong? Religion, by its very definition, is all-inclusive, recognizing that all beings are included in God's all-enfolding creation, governance, and providence. It's not about that historical person who is your favorite religious representative and who you are convinced is Divinity incarnate; it's about the all-inclusive Divinity of each of us; it's about bridging the separation between yourself and God, and eventually coming to know the two as one.

Are we all insane? Are we unable to broaden our parameters? Can't we learn to see from the all-encompassing perspective of God, the one all-pervasive Spirit? Our opinion regarding the divine status of this or that historical personage is not important. It is the direct knowledge of God that is important! So, what if Jesus attained that knowledge? How has that changed what you have attained? At a sports event, all the partisans of the home team stand up and give each other high-fives whenever their team scores. But I've always wondered, what did the people in the stands have to do with it? Why are they so proud of themselves? And, likewise, why are those who regard themselves as followers of Jesus, or Muhammed, or Krishna, or Buddha so proud of themselves?

So, you are a Christian! So, you are a Muslim! Have you known that one Spirit who contains, includes, and watches over all of you—Christian, Jew, and Muslim alike? Grow up! As a society, you are currently in a shameful state! You profess to love the fellow club-members who are on your team, and you congratulate yourselves that you are members of so prestigious a club, but you hate the members of the other club, the other party—even though you know next to nothing about them. What a lovely religion! You seem to have no clue whatsoever!

My dear brothers and sisters, I have encouraged you and attempted to inspire you for lo, these many years. And all the while I have grown older, until I am scarcely able to urge you on. I so want you to know God, to receive His bountiful Grace, but, as you must know, I can only lead you to the water; whether or not you drink of it is entirely in His hands.

But please know that I have nothing to apologize for. I have told you
nothing but the truth, I have shown you the path. I have rooted for you all the way. If you have not yet been the beneficiary of His Grace, I regret it, but I have not led you astray. The prize is there within your reach. It is eternally there within you. I can only pray along with you that the Lord will reveal it to your soul!

A Pertinent Question

In the first century, a young Jewish man named Jesus declared to his companions that he had experienced a divine revelation. Today, nearly everyone has heard the story of Jesus' revelation; but here’s a question you’ve probably never considered: ‘If you had been a neighbor of Jesus in those days in which he lived way back in the 1st century, do you think you would have believed his story?’ You can’t really know for sure, of course, but do you think that, having known him as a sensible young man, his story would have seemed credible to you? Imagine yourself sitting with him and listening as he told of the remarkable experience he had while attending a baptism ceremony at the river Jordan with John the Baptist. Would you have believed him? Would you have believed that he had experienced the divine revelation that he was ‘in God and God in him, and that all this world was the kingdom of God’? Would you believe that this young man had truly experienced that he and God, the Father, were one?

Would you have said, “Well, I have heard of people having such a personal experience of God; and what you describe seems to be a true experience. You are certainly very fortunate”? Or would you have said, “Jesus, my boy, you’ve experienced a hallucination. But nothing to worry about; it was probably just something you ate.”

What if, instead of Jesus, it was someone you know today who experienced such a revelation, would you believe them? What if it was your brother? And what if you had never before heard of anyone having such an experience? It is almost certain that Jesus’ brothers and sisters had never heard of such experiences either and were incredulous at hearing of Jesus’ revelation. No doubt, they, as well as his parents, regarded him sadly as deluded. But, today there is no excuse for such ignorance! It is high time that you and all religious people became educated regarding such spiritual experiences. Learn what you need to know: You can start by reading my two books, The Supreme Self, which tells the story of my own spiritual
experience, and *History of Mysticism*, which is a documented and reliable history of some of the people throughout the ages who have also known such a spiritual experience, many of whom, like Jesus in the first century, suffered greatly due to the widespread ignorance and narrow-mindedness of the people at the time.

**The Culture of Secrecy**

There is so much to be learned about our human nature from the famous mystic-teachers of the past, and yet, over the years, the subject of the human experience of the Divine has always been shrouded in secrecy. In ancient Greek and Roman societies, those rare and subtle 'mystical experiences' were regarded as belonging exclusively to members of the secret 'mystery' schools. Teachings about mysticism or mystical experience could be found only among the Adepts and initiates of those secret schools.

Even as late as the 3rd century of the Current Era, the mystic-philosopher, Plotinus, repeated the ancient warning that matters relating to mystical experience were "Not to be told, not to be written." The obvious reason for this is that, in the hands of the unlearned, the uninitiated, mystical knowledge is very likely to be misinterpreted and misrepresented, and those who spoke of it ran the risk of being persecuted by the ignorant. In those times, as well as today, one would certainly be ill-advised to bandy such mystical knowledge about in the public marketplace, as a certain young Palestinian mystic of the first century learned, much to his great chagrin.

Though the interior experience of Plotinus (third century) was identical to that of Jesus, Plotinus was acutely aware that he could not openly announce his mystical experience to the commoners of Rome; rather, he spoke of his own mystical experience with only a few close students of philosophy, and his circle was very exclusive and very secret. Even to this day, only the few, the advanced elite among spiritual seekers, are able to access, appreciate, and find joy in the great spiritual wisdom of Plotinus. And yet, it seems to me, that there is so much benefit to be had by the entire society through an open sharing of spiritual knowledge by those to whom it is revealed, and so much loss accrued to the whole society without it, that I believe the benefit of sharing this knowledge by those who have experienced it greatly outweighs the risk of its corruption by the foolish or its danger to the one who shares it.
Great, liberating knowledge is not to be hidden and relegated to whispers behind doors because of the fear of recriminations from religious fanatics. The more it is shared, the more accepted it will become, and understanding will increase in even greater circles, expanding to benefit more of those who would, otherwise, suffer in the dark and lonely blindness of ignorance. Hasn't the world done that for long enough?

The Conspiracy of Ignorance

Mysticism is a revolutionary ideology. It was revolutionary in the times prior to Jesus, and it is still revolutionary. It goes against the complacency of the followers of traditional religious orthodoxy and is therefore always regarded as 'the enemy' by the ignorant majority. For this reason, every influential mystic, from Heraclitus onward, has been persecuted and denounced by the representatives of the established religious tradition.

Today, as ever in the past, that ignorant majority is predominant. As always, they are content to remain oblivious to the past and to the great and lasting legacy of both the ancient and recent mystics and their revelations; and they blindly strike out against any effort to educate them. Such entrenched ignorance can only be vanquished one person at a time, and too often any real progress in understanding comes only after an entire generation dies off and is replaced. It is true that ignorance is an affliction affecting individuals, but when that ignorance becomes the acceptable norm, it must be regarded as a conspiracy, a universal conspiracy of ignorance.

In fact, this conspiracy of ignorance has existed as part of the human legacy for thousands of years, and has always had the support of the “respectable” institutions and persons who rule this world from the centers of government power, from the pulpits of churches, mosques and temples, from the universities and all of the schools, from the newsrooms throughout the world, and from all of the purveyors of public information, permeating all society and influencing all the ordinary people on the street; in short, this conspiracy is made up of and includes all of you.

A conspiracy of ignorance requires complicity from everyone and can only be countered by the willingness to honestly consider extraordinary new information, and to accept that information where it is universally and
unassailably valid. I only ask that you investigate with an open mind the many declarations by countless honorable people regarding the ‘mystical experience’ that occurred in them, weigh their testaments, and draw your own conclusions. The evidence is staggeringly immense; people from all over the globe, from every historical period, have given testimony of a common interior experience of eternal Being that is transpersonal and all-inclusive.\footnote{If you wish to learn more about the great mystics of times past and their unwavering message, read my \textit{History of Mysticism}. It is available in PDF format for free download at: \url{www.themysticsvision.com.}} Such a revelatory vision may go by the name of “mystical experience”, “spiritual experience”, or any number of other labels, but it is undeniably a God-given revelation of the underlying spiritual nature of this universe and everything and everyone in it.

Once realized and understood, the knowledge conveyed by the mystics will transform your world and refashion your life and the lives of all of us. Once the unanimous declarations of the mystics, who are the seers of our spiritual reality, are accepted as real and true, the truths revealed may be assimilated into our daily lives and given a central place in our thoughts and in our intellectual communications. The great mystical truths must become acknowledged and announced from the centers of power, from the pulpits, from the newsrooms, from the classrooms, and from all of us, if the world is to be truly revolutionized by the truth of our spiritual reality. Stand with me, brothers and sisters; boldly take your stand against the universal conspiracy of ignorance! Do whatever you can to let people know the liberating message of the mystics. Spread the word!

\textbf{NOTE:}
1. If you wish to learn more about the great mystics of times past and their unwavering message, read my \textit{History of Mysticism}. It is available in PDF format for free download at: \url{www.themysticsvision.com.}

\section*{A Greater Truth}

Divine revelation is real. God-realization is real. Please understand that Jesus was not the only one who was visited by Grace, not the only one to know his own divinity and announce it to the world. The revelation of truth that dawned in Jesus has dawned in others and has dawned in me. The same truth that Jesus announced I have announced. It is a truth that \textit{must} be heard—if not today, then tomorrow. It is the greatest of truths, and it \textit{will} be heard. So, open up your minds, my friends and countrymen: A greater truth than you have ever known or imagined is dawning—once again!
I may appear a solitary figure paddling against the tide, but I am not alone. I am one among many thousand souls who have known the Father of all souls. Our combined voices will one day overtake the current and turn the creeping tide, for we have His truth behind us and within us, and we have His uplifting hands to carry us forward. We cannot be stopped. And one day you must join us. We are truth and we are legion, and our voices are His own.

* * *

-End of Volume Two-