

# **REVELATIONS**

## **The Progressive Development Of My Mystical Theology**

**An Ebook by Swami Abhayananda  
From The Mystic's Vision**

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## Introduction

This book is a history of the progress of my own spiritual journey as it is reflected in the sequence of my book publications. I feel that, since I have now reached the age of eighty-three, 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.

I will begin by saying that my early life in Indiana was ordinary and unspectacular, but comfortable and happy. I grew up in a family that, I believe, was typical of the period. My father was a simple uneducated man, who worked as a Factory Foreman, and my mother was also a good, kind person, neither of whom possessed a strong urge to obtain learning. I don't think either of them ever read a book. They took pleasure in their children and in gathering with their friends for a few drinks and a game of cards. They also took pleasure in hosting outdoor barbecues in their spacious backyard for friends and family. I was the oddball of the family. I was the reader. I read everything from an early age—Poetry, philosophy, classic novels, popular science—whatever struck my fancy. My family was not religious, and I was repelled by the popular religious thinking of the time during my youth, though I was strongly attracted to the famous rebel philosophers—Plato, Voltaire, etc.

This attraction I attribute to my grandfather on my mother's side. He was the grand patriarch of the family. Having immigrated to this country from Copenhagen, Walter Jensen started a business in Indianapolis called "The Indiana Hog and Cattle Powder Company." He was in possession of a formula for a product—mostly sulfur—that effectively got rid of intestinal worms in hogs and cattle. He became quite successful, traveling about the Indiana countryside, convincing farmers to try his product. But he was also a man of some learning, and had a handsome collection of books, mainly concerned with history and philosophy. But regrettably, I didn't get to know him very well. He died of a heart attack when I was twelve. My grandmother, knowing of my propensity for reading, gave some of my grandfather's books to me. Among them, was a book, popular in its time,

called *The Story of Philosophy*, by Will Durant, which became a catalyst for me.

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. After leaving High School prior to graduating, I joined the Navy Reserves, and served two years as a Seaman aboard a Destroyer Escort based in Pearl Harbor, making periodic cruises to various ports in Japan, Hong Kong, Manila, etc. After being discharged, I worked for a time as a Collector for a small loans company, and also as an ADT inspector. Soon thereafter, I joined a couple of friends in Southern California, where I worked as an electronics inspector in a small firm, later migrating to San Francisco where I worked as a Director's Assistant at KRON-TV and gave much of my free time to reading and frequenting the San Francisco bookshops.

It was not until I reached my mid-twenties that I began reading more widely among the mystics, such as the Zen Buddhists, but I was still immature, and didn't understand much of what I read. 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 well into my twenties, I had passed through an infatuation with the writings of Jack Kerouac, then later with Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, and with 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. It was only when I discovered the nondual philosophy of Vedanta and the writings of some of the modern Indian yogis, such as Swami Vivekananda, Paramahansa Yogananda and Swami Prabhavananda, that I had a real spiritual breakthrough and entered onto the path of Self-realization. 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 at the Santa Clara hospital as an Orderly, and later I worked

nearby at the Los Gatos 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 my book, *The Supreme Self* (with a few later comments added).

\* \* \*



This is the only extant photo of me at that time. It was taken as I was sitting at my kitchen table in my Los Gatos, California cabin in late 1965.



## I. MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

### (*The Supreme Self*)

The details regarding the content of one's mystical experience usually become lost or obscured during the passage of time before 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 was occurring, lending a unique clarity and authenticity to what is more 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, a fold-up card table, and an old refrigerator that served as a mouse-proof food cabinet. 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 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 beautifully 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.<sup>1</sup>

“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.<sup>2</sup>

“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.<sup>3</sup>

“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.<sup>4</sup>

“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. <sup>5</sup>

“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. <sup>6</sup>

“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. <sup>7</sup>

“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*. <sup>8</sup>

“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.<sup>9</sup>

“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.

(The above passage was excerpted from *The Supreme Self*.)





My cabin in the woods

**NOTE:**

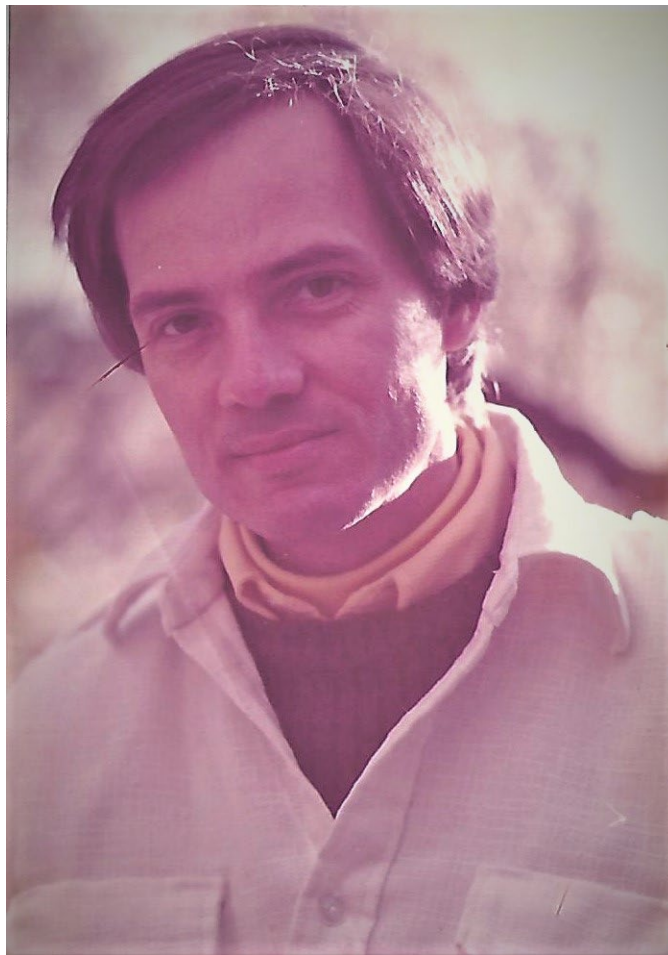
(The reader wishing to read the account of my mystical experience which follows the above quotation, may find the account of my experience in *The Supreme Self*. That book is available as a free downloadable PDF at my website.)

## II. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

*(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 University of California at Santa Cruz in 1970 which I attended. I was very impressed by him and the spiritual energy surrounding him. I read his book, *The Play of Consciousness*, and then wrote to him. He invited me to join him, and 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.

Here is a photo of me taken in Oakland, California, where I was working in Muktananda's ashram in 1977, the year prior to my becoming a Swami.



As a Swami in his service, I taught at the Siddha Yoga New York City ashram for a period of time, and then, in 1979, I was sent to run the ashram in Philadelphia. A year later, I was ordered to be the Director and Lecturer at the Chicago ashram, where I served for another year. After that, I was sent to run a fledgling ashram in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It was there that I discovered that Muktananda was using some of his young female disciples for his own sexual pleasure. I immediately left my post and flew to California where I joined a few of my former Muktananda devotees to confirm the rumors that had reached me in Oklahoma City. I then wrote an open letter to my former colleagues still involved in Siddha Yoga, telling them what I had learned.

It was only after I had left Muktananda and his organization of Siddha Yoga in 1981, that I settled in Fallsburg, New York at the vacation home of an acquaintance from Siddha Yoga that was only a few blocks from the South Fallsburg Siddha Yoga ashram where Swami Muktananda was still living. By growing a beard and remaining out of sight of the nearby ashramites, I managed to live on this property incognito allowing me the privacy and freedom required to fulfill my earlier prayerful promise to God to “speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children.” It was there that I began writing the book that would be titled, *The Supreme Self*, which I published in 1984 under my own publishing imprint of “Atma Books.” By this time, I was in my mid-forties. In that book, I had publicly revealed 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 book, which I titled, *History of Mysticism*.

Here is a selfie photo taken in 1986, while living in that South Fallsburg hideout during the time I was writing *History of Mysticism*. That book was published in 1987.



There were many other 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 comradeship, 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 ever- one, beyond time.”<sup>1</sup> “He can be seen indivisible in the silence of

contemplation,” said the author of the Mundaka Upanishad.<sup>2</sup> “There man possesses everything; for he is one with the ONE.”<sup>3</sup>

“About five hundred years later, another, a young prince named Siddhartha, who was to become known as the Buddha, the enlightened one, sat communing 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!”<sup>4</sup> 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, communing 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.<sup>5</sup>

“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 bundarika*, 15:21; Radhakrishnan, S.,  
*Indian Philosophy* (Vol. I), London, Geo. Allen & Unwin, 1962,  
p. 600.
5. New Testament, Book of *John*:10:30

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### III. THE NONDUAL PERSPECTIVE (*The Wisdom of Vedanta*)

After writing *History of Mysticism*, I concentrated on finishing my Jnaneshvar book. Jnaneshvar, a thirteenth century mystic-poet, was an important figure in Swami Muktananda's world. Muktananda often referred to his earlier life as Raja Ramadev Rao, who had been a king during the lifetime of Jnaneshvar, and he had even been mentioned in one of Jnaneshvar's books. During the time that I was 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 my book about him, I needed to research and write the biographical portion. It was during this research that I was to learn much more, not only about Jnaneshvar, but about the previous life and times of my guru as well.

I was still 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 State University of New York (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, near Olympia.

It was during this time in Washington state that my interest focused almost exclusively 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 I called it *Plotinus: The Origin of Western Mysticism*. I published this book in 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 Siddha Yoga, and many of the ideas which formed the basis of my developing philosophy are

contained therein. *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 16<sup>th</sup> 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*, *Taittiriya*, *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 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman, Plotinus, or the 13<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 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. <sup>1</sup>

“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.)

#### NOTES:

1. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*; Prabhavananda & Isherwood, *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, Vedanta Press, 1978, pp. 112-113.

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## IV. THE BLENDING OF MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE

### (*The Divine Universe*)

In 1992, still living in Washington state, I published two books simultaneously as a statement of the co-equal importance of devotion and Self-knowledge; those books were *Thomas á Kempis: On The Love of God* and *Dattatreya: Song of The Avadhut*. Both of these books had been written 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, I took up residence on the Treasure Coast in October of 2002. I continued to work as a Certified Nursing Assistant through various Healthcare Agencies, taking various assignments in institutions as well as private homes. And in my spare time, I pursued my interest in writing about my mystical experience. 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, and I feel that it is an important book, containing much that is still significant and highly relevant today. Here are some excerpts from *The Divine Universe*:

#### “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 eternal 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 ascendancy 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.), Anaximander (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 descendants. 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 enthrall 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 unilluminated 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! <sup>1</sup>

“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.<sup>2</sup> 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 unilluminated 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." (This quote is by Amir Aczel from 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

### *(Reflections On The Soul)*

Back in 2007, when I wrote *The Divine Universe*, I was bursting with the notion of the world having been exploded into existence by the Creative Power of God, His Divine Energy. I had not addressed, however, the nature of that Creative Energy. It hadn't yet dawned on me that the original "Energy" of which the universe is manifested 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 overwhelming likelihood clearly dawned on me. The theory that the Energy that created the universe was Light-Energy was 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 enlargement of 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 Creative Light-Energy of God, which constituted our universe, innately contained the organizing Consciousness of God within it, and I came to the new conclusion that, while they were both Divine, the Light-Energy was distinct from the Spirit, or Soul, and of a different nature, though their Divine origin was the same. The conventional wisdom since Biblical times had held that the life-giving Spirit 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, since only God existed, and therefore an 'infusion' of Consciousness to guide the organization of matter was never required. The material universe, created and existing *within* God, *within* the eternal Consciousness, was thereby already imbued with Consciousness. This, it should be recognized, was an important distinction that would (or should) negate the old Judaic concept of God's breathing His Spirit into man, and forever revolutionize modern theology.

Here are a few excerpts from *Reflections On The Soul*:

### **“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 phenomenal substance consisting 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.”<sup>6</sup>

“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...”<sup>7</sup>

“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, and 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, breathes 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.<sup>8</sup>

“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.<sup>9</sup>

“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.”<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

“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,”<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

“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.<sup>14</sup>

“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.<sup>15</sup>

“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.<sup>16</sup>

“What we do not understand is the *hard problem* of consciousness—the mystery of how neural activity gives rise to subjective experience.<sup>17</sup> ...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).<sup>18</sup>

“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.<sup>19</sup>

“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 *experiencer*! 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

“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...<sup>22</sup>

“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.<sup>23</sup>

"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.”<sup>24</sup> 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<sup>25</sup>

“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.<sup>26</sup>

“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.<sup>27</sup> ...This, no mean Principle, is... a first-hand Cause, bodiless and therefore supreme over itself, free, beyond the reach of Cosmic Cause.<sup>28</sup>

“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].<sup>29</sup>

“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.<sup>30</sup>

“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.

“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.<sup>31</sup>

“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].<sup>32</sup>

“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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

“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.<sup>35</sup>

“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.<sup>36</sup>

“And this liberating knowledge, upon which is based the soul’s conviction of its eternal and indivisible identity, remains with it always.

(From this point, the book goes on to describe the means by which God produced the material universe, which may be discovered in the pages of *Reflections On The Soul*. This book is available as a downloadable PDF from my website, The Mystic’s Vision [[www.themysticsvision.com](http://www.themysticsvision.com)].)

**NOTES:**

6. *Ibid.*, 6:23-27.
7. Maximus of Tyre, *Diss.*, XI.9-1
8. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 38:6:22-23; MacKenna, Stephen (trans.), *Plotinus: The Enneads*, London, Faber & Faber, 1956; p. 199.
9. *Ibid.*, 30:3:8; pp. 113-114.
10. *Ibid.*, 38:6:35; p. 204.
11. *Ibid.*, 9:6:10; p. 221.
12. Meister Eckhart, Treatise A.2, Colledge E. & McGinn, B. (trans.), *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, Ramsey, N.J., Paulist Press, 1982; p. 222.
12. *Ibid.*, Sermon 6; p. 188.
14. Meister Eckhart, Sermon 18, Blackney, Raymond B., *Meister Eckhart, A Modern Translation*, N.Y., Harper Torchbooks, 1941; p. 181.
15. Meister Eckhart, Sermon 23, *Ibid.*, p. 206.
16. *Rig Veda*, x.129.1
17. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 25.
18. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 44:5:15-16; MacKenna, Stephen (trans.), *Plotinus: The Enneads*, London, Faber & Faber, 1956; pp. 162-163.
19. *Ibid.*, 49:5:13; p. 162
20. *Ibid.*, 26:3:4; p. 101
21. *Ibid.*, 47:1; p. 76
22. *Ibid.*, 30:3:10; p. 116
23. Meister Eckhart, Sermon 27, Blackney, Raymond B., *Meister Eckhart, A Modern Translation*, N.Y., Harper Torchbooks, 1941; pp. 225-226.
24. *Rig Veda*, x.129.2-5
25. *Enneads*, V.1.4-8: *The Three Initial Hypostases*
26. Taittiriya Upanishad, II.6.1, Swami Nikhilananda, *The Principal Upanishads*, N.Y., Dover Publications, 1963, 2003; p. 269.
27. Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Heresium* VI.29.5ff. Roberts, Rev. A. & Donaldson, J. (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1892; Vol. VI.
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

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## VI. THE DUAL ASPECTS OF GOD (*Body And Soul*)

*Body And Soul* was published in 2011 and was, in many ways, merely 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? <sup>1</sup>

“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.” <sup>2</sup>

“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 99.999999999999 percent empty space; the other infinitesimal part seems to be nothing more than energy wavelets and intangible forces. Subatomic wave-particles consist of intangible 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.”<sup>3</sup>

“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’.<sup>4</sup>

“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.<sup>5</sup>

“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.”
2. “Large Hadron Collider could reveal our origins”, April 19, 2010 by Roger S. Boyd, copyright 2010 McClatchy-Tribune Information Services; appeared April 19, 2010 in PhysOrg Newsletter, [www.physorg.com/news190869267.html](http://www.physorg.com/news190869267.html).
3. Saying of Jesus, in *The Gospel of Thomas*, 77.
4. Shankaracharya, *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda & Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 58.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

## VII. IN HIM WE LIVE

### (*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. Therefore, this book contains a good deal about my longtime perspective on astrology. Those chapters on astrology later made up the better part of my later Article: “The Astrologer’s Vision.” It was never produced in print; rather, it was published as an ebook in 2012. Here are a few excerpts 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.<sup>1</sup> 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”.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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*.<sup>4</sup>

“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*.<sup>5</sup>

“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 *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’<sup>6</sup>

“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 [Teh] is born from Tao, and all life forms are born of this creative Energy; thus, all creation evolves into various forms.

“...Life springs into existence without a visible source and 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.<sup>7</sup>

“It is *that*—the One, the Tao, Brahman, the Void, from which the active Creator-God—called *Brahma* by the Upanishads, *Teh* by Lao Tze, *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 Itself 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 *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 *united 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.”

“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.”*

## 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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## VIII. REWRITING HISTORY

(Enlightened Christianity: *The Story of Jesus, The Mystic*)

In 2012, at the age of seventy-four, I retired from my work as a Certified Nursing Aide and Home Health Care employee. It was then that I was able to give all of my time to the creation of a website called “The Mystic’s Vision” ([www.themysticsvision.com](http://www.themysticsvision.com)), where I began posting my books online for free downloading. (Here is a studio photo of me in 2012)



Additionally, at that time, I dedicated all of my writings, past and current, to the Public Domain, renouncing all benefits of copyright. I had not intended to produce any more books, but in 2016 I offered to my online readers a two-volume collection of the brief excerpts from my writings that had accumulated on my website, which I titled, “The Mystic’s Vision, Volume One and Two”. Then, in January of 2019, I gathered some of these writings together under twenty-six separate topics and published them online as “*The Essential Articles of Swami Abhayananda, Volumes One and Two.*” It is these “*Essential Articles*” that I regard as containing the complete and comprehensive expression of my Mystical Theology. In September of that same year, I offered a collection, containing a briefer version of my ideas, which I entitled “Thoughts of A Mystic.” Later, in March of 2020, I added a third volume of “*Essential Articles of Swami Abhayananda.*” And in July, of 2020, I added a fourth volume, entitled “*Supplemental Articles of Swami Abhayananda.*”

One of the major ideas put forward during the period of 2018-2020 is the recognition of the primary significance of mystical experience in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and the derailing of the significance of that mystical experience by the founders of the Christian church. Though I had explained that notion in the Chapter on Jesus in *History of Mysticism*, published in 1987, I later amplified on it in the Article entitled “Enlightened Christianity: The Story of Jesus, The Mystic” that appears in *The Essential Articles of Swami Abhayananda*, Vol. One.

From 2020 to 2023, I wrote very little and most of that comprised a page on my website called “The Nonduality Page,” in which I elaborated on the philosophy of Nonduality as I understand it.

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