

**THE MYSTIC'S VISION:
ESSENTIAL ARTICLES
OF SWAMI ABHAYANANDA**

Volume Two

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The Essential Articles, Vol. Two

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

—Swami Abhayananda, February 18, 2019

13. ALL THIS IS GOD

(A Collection of Articles from *The Mystic's Vision*
by Swami Abhayananda.

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The Mystical Experience of Nonduality

In the unitive Mystical Experience, a soul becomes united with its eternal Source, and during that experience the soul no longer sees from a soul's perspective but from the perspective of the eternal One. In my own experience, at the height of that mystical union, from that eternal perspective, all had become perfectly clear:

“All may now be told without effort.
Where is there a question?
Where is the temple?
Which the Imperishable?
Which the abode?”

In that divine clarity, though I searched, there could not be discerned, from that limitless perspective, any distinction between the Imperishable Spirit and the so-called temple—the bodily abode—in which that Spirit was said to abide. One Being, indivisible, was seen to comprise all, both form and essence, both body and soul:

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.”

In that mystical clarity, there is no Cartesian dualism, no separation or distinction between body and soul; for everything is seen to be God, everything is seen to be His manifestation, everything is seen to be contained in the one eternal Being.

Which The Imperishable, Which The Abode?

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

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

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

NOTES:

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

Tale of The Two In One

God has always been. As an invisible Spirit, He is unborn and unending. But periodically He likes to take form in order to live multiple embodied lives within a multiformed universe. And, since He is the only Existence, if there is to be a universe of form, it must be produced from Himself. So, periodically, God manifests His own Energy in the form of a concentrated radiation of Light. And, as that Light spreads, it transforms into material wave-particles, which in turn become the many diverse forms that go to make up the physical universe, including all human bodies.

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

A God who possesses two separate and distinct aspects seems a bit fantastic, to be sure; but that is the conclusion reached by nearly everyone who has deeply pondered this question—including those, like myself, who have been graced with mystical vision. In that divine revelation, it is clearly revealed that the one Being constitutes both one's body and one's soul, both one's mind and one's 'physical' substance. There is seen to be only one existent, one contiguous reality identified as 'I', and yet It is *both* Spirit and the Energy that becomes, or rather produces, the illusion of Matter. To give human expression to this duality-in-unity for the purpose of rendering It comprehensible, these two—the invisible Spirit and the form-producing Energy—have been given many different names over the centuries, like *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, *Brahman* and *Maya*, *Shiva* and *Shakti*, *Jahveh* and *Chokmah*, *Haqq* and *Khalq*, *Theos* and *Logos*, *Godhead* and *Creator*, and many other names.

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

The Metaphysics of Duality

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

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

I would like to propose a simple remedy to the confusion that often arises when discussing the absolute Nonduality that underlies the apparent duality: The one Spirit, the Divine Consciousness or Supreme Self, is to be regarded as “God I”; and the Light-Energy that constitutes the material world is to be regarded as “God II”. I feel that, with the implementation of this terminology, confusion will not arise, and it will become clear that there is only God I and God II, and that it is to be recognized hereafter that God, in His dual aspects, constitutes everything that exists.¹

NOTE:

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

Where Is God?

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

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

God, the Divine Mind, is the causal agent for the production of the Energy of which universal matter consists, and so it is natural for us to regard Him as separate from, and other than, the material universe. But this universe—with you and I in it—is co-present with the Divine Mind. Though we use language suggestive of temporal and spatial relations, such as ‘emanated from’, or ‘dwelling within’, we must understand that the material world has no spatio-temporal relationship to the Divine Mind, its noumenal

substratum, but is *co-existent* and *co-present* with It. The Divine Mind is the Ground of which the universe is the figure. The universe is not somewhere outside the Divine Mind, or even “within” It; but is made of It, permeated by It and co-extensive with It.

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

The One is the *only* one. He/It is without a second. Strictly speaking, He has no ‘inside’ or ‘outside’; so, while we may say, figuratively, that all is ‘contained within’ Him, there is really no spatial relationship such as “within” for the noumenal. The Divine Mind, or Creative Power, is the form-creating faculty of the One, but we cannot say that it is “within” Him either. Terms of spatial relationship, such as “within” or “outside of”, are applicable to phenomena, but not to noumena. Nevertheless, the Divine Mind cannot be separated from the One. Can you separate the creative power of your own mind from your consciousness? I don’t think so. Your mind’s creative power is integral to your consciousness. Likewise, the attempt to separate the Creative Power (the Divine Mind, God) from the transcendent Absolute (the One, the Godhead,) is futile. His power of creating is inherent and integral to Him. They are not two. Recall the Biblical dictum: “I am the one Lord. There is no other beside Me.” ³

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

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

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

He is the air in our nostrils and the earth under our feet.
 He is the light of our eyes and the music in our breast.
 He is the bright awareness that lives as you,
 And He is the storied tale your living tells.
 You dance in His firelight; you float on His sea.
 You breathe by His breathing; you move by His joy.
 No matter how far you may gaze into the rolling
 Galaxies cascading above,
 No matter what dark or clownish scenes you dream,
 Or terrestrial landscapes you cross,
 Whether in the depths of the ocean, or on the chilly
 Snow-peaked mountains,
 And even in the abyss of death and darkness,
 You are ever within His close embrace.
 You cannot leave Him, nor scamper from His sight.

For you are in Him as a fish is in the ocean
 Or a bird is in the sky.
 His love surrounds and holds you,
 And He sees all through your eyes.

NOTES:

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

The eighteenth-century philosopher, Immanuel Kant, attempted to alter our modern usage of the word, *noumena*, with his book, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant believed that, even if such immaterial entities as *noumena* existed, there was no reliable sensory or non-sensory human faculty by which they could be apprehended and known. He therefore reassigned the word, *noumenon*, which had long meant a mind or mind-born reality, to mean the signification of a thing—not as it appears to our senses and understanding, but as that thing is *in itself*—thus intending to render the word inapplicable as a useful human term or concept. In fact, Kant only succeeded in proving the sad fact that he himself had not been graced with spiritual vision and was therefore unable to speak knowledgeably on the subject of *noumena*.

2. You will have noticed that I used the words “on” and “upon” to suggest the relationship of the universe and God. That’s because it is almost impossible to avoid words that suggest a physical relationship between them. As illustration of how ill-suited phenomenally-based language is to describe noumenal realities—such as the relationship of the eternal to the temporal—try to come up with a word in the English language that indicates the simultaneous presence of a noumenal and a phenomenal reality existing

in the same place. Shankara called it a “superimposition”; but even that word does not fit the reality perfectly. So, please accept my woefully, but unavoidably, inappropriate language.

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

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

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

Recent Developments In Mystical Theology

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.¹ 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 common 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 protons and neutrons—and 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*, in fact, the entire universe, came from the initial burst of *Light* that we refer to as "the Big Bang".² For empirical scientists, however, 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 radiation')—that almost immediately began converting to material wave-particles.³ Up to the point of that empirical discovery, philosophers speculating on the origin of matter were free to imagine many possible scenarios; but now speculation is dead. Matter is converted light; that is a proven fact. And material particles, when collided at high velocity, convert back into light (photons). Since Einstein, what previously had seemed two different things—energy and matter—were now seen to be one indivisible physical reality with two alternate aspects.

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 an evolute of an original light is one which seems to allow of no possible future refutation. That energy and matter are interconvertible, and that the light-energy of the so-called ‘Big Bang’ of fourteen billion years ago transformed into the quarks and leptons that make up the entire world of matter is a discovery that is so incontrovertible, so uncontestable, as to effectively put an end to all future speculation as to what our world is made of.

And so, for the first time in history, after centuries of philosophical inquiry and intense scientific exploration, we now know with certainty exactly what the material world is made of. Physicists have announced it, astronomers have proclaimed it, and technicians have proven it without a doubt in their laboratories; and yet hardly anyone in the world seems to be aware of the fact that *everything is made of light*. Even those physicists who describe how the primordial photons of light transformed themselves into material particles do not seem to fully grasp the significance of the fact that *everything in the universe is made of light*.⁴

Despite the fact that scientific thinkers believe that that pristine burst of light was a ‘natural’ phenomenon (whatever that means), and spiritually oriented people are certain that the light came directly from God, the fact remains that an unimaginably immense blast of high-energy light flashed at the dawn of time in a nascent universe, and each photon of that light became a matter-antimatter pair that contributed to make the phenomenal universe of form and substance that we live in today, where *everything is made of that light*.⁵

Everyone has heard of the ‘Big Bang’, and of how all forms of energy and all material particles were produced from that initial ‘fireball’ of high-energy photons; and yet, in the minds of many, there is still the burning question: ‘Where did that abundance of light come from?’ Scientists have concluded that the light from which the world of matter is made had to have come from the explosion of an unstable super-dense chunk of matter which they call a “singularity”, while people of religious or spiritual beliefs have understood since the most ancient of times that that light was caused by an act of God.

That the matter that constitutes 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. 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 burst of Light (referred to as 'The Big Bang' or 'The Great Radiance') 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 same God whom we know in our hearts was also the originator and fabricator of the universe and all its living variety.

If we accept that God breathed forth or otherwise manifested from Himself an immense burst of light-energy that possesses 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? ⁶ Somewhere along that chain of evolution, why couldn't God's all-pervading Consciousness manifest as self-awareness in sentient beings in accordance with the Divine intent programmed into that divine light from the very beginning?

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 were produced in its original appearance—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 original 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 electrical charges are not only produced in every particle of matter, constituting its properties, but they also constitute every chemical reaction governing our digestion and metabolism, and every electrical impulse such as the firing of axons in our system of nerves, the firing of neurons in our brain, the beating of our heart, and the blinking of our 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 non-physical support. By some process of selective reasoning, they are able to ignore the question of where that light came from, how it manifested, and how it happened to distribute itself as discreet particles and electrical charges in just the proper “fine-tuned” relationships to produce 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’”. And they ignored the fact 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: for 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 both light-energy and matter in its pre-organic state appear to be both inert and insentient, 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 worshipers of a transcendent-immanent God affirm the principle of a divine “soul”, and stake their lives and actions upon it, living to give expression to the Divine source within them.

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 or what 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 or what else could pervade that universe as Mind, and animate each fully evolved form with a living consciousness? Who or what 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 indwelling 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, and which constitutes the limited mind, or soul, of each individual sentient being; and (2) As the producer of the light-energy that transforms into the material particles that make up the physical universe. So that, with these two aspects of Himself, He constitutes both matter and Spirit, both body and soul; thereby constituting 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 Unity, or Nonduality, in all of Existence. That the one God manifests in these two different ways does nothing to detract from His oneness, His singularity, as is clearly realized in the mystical experience wherein a soul is united in vision with the eternal One.

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 dynamically 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 divine Energy as well as the Spirit, or Soul, continues to exist eternally. It is immortal.

Now, to the question of *how* the Spirit, the Soul, the 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 “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 it. 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 as suggested in Biblical texts, 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 Saint 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 simply 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 dream-stuff responds to our human will, the stuff of this universe, produced from 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 whether such an event had been divinely caused or was simply random? The truth is that *everything* is within His governance. 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, there is 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 nothing to vanquish, nothing to lament, and nothing on which to pride oneself. In Him, and by Him, all is accomplished in an instant.

1. NOTES AND REFERENCES:

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 the world 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 radiation”, a term coined by Ernest Rutherford in 1903.

3. Gamma-rays, or gamma radiation, is radiation that reaches a frequency of at least 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*; and for a more expertly scientific explanation, see Michael Zeilik, *Astronomy: The Evolving Universe*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, ninth edition; pp.470-475.

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. Ried, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Marquette University Press, 1942, 2000; p. 11.)

From our vantage point today, it seems quite amazing how near Grosseteste came to anticipating the astrophysics 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. Many believe, as the respected Biologist, Michael Behe, believes, that the propensity for ‘life’ was pre-programmed into the evolution of matter from the beginning:

“I am not saying the origin of life was simply an extremely improbable accident. I am saying the origin of life was deliberately, purposely arranged, just as the fundamental laws and constants and many other anthropic features of nature were deliberately, purposefully arranged. But in what I’ll call the “extended fine-tuning” view, the origin of life is merely an additional planned feature, culminating in intelligent life. The origin of life is simply closer to the very same goal that the other, more distant anthropic features (laws, chemical properties, and so forth) were also put in place to bring about.” (Michael J. Behe, *The Edge of Evolution*, New York, Free Press, 2008; p. 216.).

Excerpt from The Phenomenon of Light

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

O my God, even this body is Thine own!
 Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,
 Even I, who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters,
 Even I am Thine own.¹

From the initial ‘Great Radiance’ comes all that exists as material objects and all that exists as active forces in the universe today and for all time.

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

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

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

NOTE:

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

This Is The Truth

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

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

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

Look Around You!

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

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

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

* * *

14. METAPHYSICS

From A Mystic's Perspective

by Swami Abhayananda

Dedicated to the Public Domain 3-12-2018

(last revised: 8-21-23)

METAPHYSICS From A Mystic's Perspective

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2. PREFACE

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

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

— Swami Abhayananda

CONSCIOUSNESS

I. Idealism And Materialism

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

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

The materialism of the early Greeks, such as Leucippus and Democritus, on the other hand, tended to regard all of reality as consisting of small indestructible particulate entities, called *atoms*, which aggregated together to form all the varied shapes and individual beings that are perceived through the senses. While materialistic science may be said to have originated with the early Greek philosophers cited above, it had to struggle in the West for many centuries against the strictures of religious doctrine, and only began its cultural ascendancy in the West from the sixteenth century onward, influenced by such philosophers as Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant, and the works and accomplishments of scientists such as Galileo, Isaac Newton, and Johannes Kepler. By the twentieth century, the empirical method, associated with the materialistic viewpoint, had become synonymous with science. From that time forward an emergent ‘scientism’ became the established ‘religion’ of our Western civilization. And, while there were always a few maverick idealists among the ranks of scientists, the vocal majority utterly rejected the slightest hint of mysticism or idealism and held as firm doctrine that the universe came into being and is sustained through “natural,” that is to say, purely *material*, processes.

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

“A ...revolution has occurred in physics in recent years. Its consequences extend far beyond physics, and in particular they affect our general view of the world in which our lives are cast. In a word, they affect philosophy. The philosophy of any period is always largely interwoven with the science of the period, so that any fundamental change in science must

produce reactions in philosophy. This is especially so in the present case, where the changes in physics itself are of a distinctly philosophical hue; a direct questioning of nature by experiment has shown the philosophical background hitherto assumed by physics to have been faulty. The necessary emendations have naturally affected the scientific basis of philosophy and, through it, our approach to the philosophical problems of everyday life. Are we, for instance, automata or are we free agents capable of influencing the course of events by our volitions? Is the world material or mental in its ultimate nature? Or is it both? If so, is matter or mind the more fundamental? Is mind a creation of matter or matter a creation of mind? Is the world we perceive in space and time the world of ultimate reality, or is it only a curtain veiling a deeper reality beyond?¹

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

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

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

The new physics obviously carries many philosophical implications, but these are not easy to describe in words. They cannot be summed up in the crisp, snappy. sentences beloved of scientific journalism, such as that materialism is dead, or, that matter is no more. The situation is rather that both materialism and matter need to be redefined in the light of our new knowledge. When this has been done, the materialist must decide for himself whether the only kind of

materialism which science now permits can be suitably labeled materialism, and whether what remains of matter should be labeled as matter or as something else; it is mainly a question of terminology.

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

What then is Matter? We can easily state what it is not: it is *not* a phenomenal substance made of solid indestructible particles; we know that! But what it *is* is not so easy to say. ‘Mind’, ‘Matter’, ‘Energy’, ‘Space’—these are names we have given to certain elements of this kaleidoscopic panorama of mental and physical perceptions that we experience; but it is no longer possible to say where one begins and the other ends, for it now appears that there is but one indivisible reality—“one system”, as Sir James Jeans describes it—of which Mind and Matter are both ingredients. Scientists today don’t know what to call it, and simply refer to it as “the universal continuum”. Those of a mystic bent do not hesitate to call it “God”, and to say, “We live in God. He is the only one, and He contains everything. He is alive and consciously awake, and everything moves and acts in unison with His will.”

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

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

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

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

The difficulty is that advocates of phenomenally based science not only refuse to acknowledge the validity and relevance of *gnosis*, but do not even recognize the possibility of its existence. Today, Science is still so steeped in the antiquated materialistic perspective (based on a false understanding of what ‘matter’ is) that scientists and, through their influence, “educated” members of the public, routinely regard all those who hold to an idealistic view as unfortunate misguided members of the superstitious, ignorant and uneducated masses. Those who are labeled as *mystics* are held in especial

disdain and are the subjects of frequent ridicule in our materialist-oriented culture. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, colleges and universities around the nation have been instilling this arrogant prejudice in the youth who flock to them for their one-sided technological educations. One has to wonder if we are not due at this time in our history for a return of the cultural pendulum to a fresh idealism, one that is informed by both science *and* gnosis.

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

NOTES:

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

II. Where Consciousness Comes From

For a long time now, the emphasis in Western education has been on physics—on empirical knowledge of physical reality in general and of subatomic matter in particular. This tended to diminish the attention given to the existence of non-material, non-objective aspects of reality, to the

extent that such subjective realities as mind, thought, and consciousness were scarcely regarded as existing at all. Today, however, these subjective realities are not only acknowledged but studied and researched as valid subjects of interest. And since consciousness appears in humans to be primary to thought or mind, various branches of science have focused on discovering the origin of consciousness. At first glance, the circumstantial evidence for the appearance of consciousness in simple life-forms would seem to imply the existence of consciousness going back, at least, to the earliest Paleolithic times. However, some contemporary neurobiologists have reached the conclusion that consciousness only came into existence with the advanced evolution of biological forms and is a product (an epiphenomenon) of complex neural activity in the brain; and that, being a manifestation of a material process, consciousness itself is nothing more than a *material* phenomenon.

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

The overwhelming scientific materialism of the nineteenth century found no place, however, for the *soul*, and presumed to repair the conceptual mind-body split with the belief that all that exists is solely material, including mind; and that such a thing as ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ does not exist. This seems still to be the position of contemporary materialist science. The scientific thesis (though rarely formally expressed) continues to be that there is no

God, no soul, and that mind and consciousness are merely manifestations of the material activities of neurons and synapses in the brain.

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

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

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

Others, more cautious, simply say that:

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

Another says:

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

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

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

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

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

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

...Biological science can readily explain how the properties of a particular type of matter arise from the objective properties of the molecules of which it is made. What

science lacks are rules for explaining how *subjective* properties (consciousness) arise from the properties of objects (interconnected nerve cells). ⁷

As I have stated repeatedly in the past, this search of materialistic science is a misguided one, and can only lead to a dead end; for in order to understand how consciousness arises in biological forms one must put first things first: consciousness does not inexplicably arise from neural activity in the brain; Consciousness is the intrinsic nature of the Divine Mind in which this universe exists, and that very Consciousness is implicit in the entire universal manifestation, being all-pervasive, and therefore naturally becoming evident in the evolutionary development of earth's biosphere. Once we understand that all forms in the universe are manifestations of the one universal Consciousness, we will then be able to better understand our own nature and understand our intimate relationship to the Consciousness of the universal Mind. The acknowledgement of the universality and divinity of our own conscious Self will eventually require a radical transformation in the thinking of all men and women of science which, though it may take centuries in which to unfold, will usher in a truly golden era of Enlightenment.

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

It must one day be universally understood that Consciousness is the primary, the original, reality—beyond time and space, and all manifestation; It is the eternal Ground and Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting its essence—as a dreaming mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting their essence. Consciousness is not contained within matter, nor is it the property of any individual being. It is not produced by any material process; but rather is the underlying Source of all matter and all processes. It is the fundamental nature of Being, the

foundation of the phenomenal universe, the Light of the Projector which flashes its images in the space-time dimension which we know as 'the world'. The projected human images on this screen are unable to perceive that Light, for they are in It and of It. They can only come to know that eternal Consciousness through the gift of a divinely produced revelation by which they will discover that their own consciousness, their soul, is in essence the one Divine Self, the one eternal Consciousness that is the sole Being in all existence.

In that revelation they will realize that the phenomenal universe is made of a primal energy that is radiated or projected by the one Divine Consciousness.⁸ We may find a clue to this understanding by pondering the nature of our own minds, since, as has often been said, we are images of God. Consider the nature of our dreams: the consciousness of the dream-character is really the consciousness of the dreamer, is it not? And what of the body of the dream-character? Is it not a projected image produced by the dreamer's mind, and consisting also of consciousness? By analyzing this clear analogy, one may begin to have a notion of how this universe came to be. But, of course, in order to know it fully, one must realize it for oneself; one's mind must be illumined by the eternal Light itself and drawn into Its hidden depths. To obtain that grace, all men focus their minds on Him through prayer and contemplative longing, and He shines His Light on whom He will.

NOTES:

1. John Searle, professor of philosophy at U.C. Berkeley, quoted by Richard Restak, *Mysteries of the Mind*, Washington D.C., National Geographic, 2000; pp. 71-72.
2. Colin McGinn, *The Mysterious Flame*, quoted in R. Restak, *Ibid.*; p. 85.
3. Jeffrey Satinover, *The Quantum Brain*, N.Y., John Wiley & Sons, 2001; p. 220.
4. Eric R. Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind*, N.Y., W.W. Norton & Co., 2006; pp. 9-11.
5. Kandel, *Ibid.*; p. 377.
6. Kandel, *Ibid.*; p. 382.
7. Kandel, *Ibid.*; p. 381.
8. When God revealed Himself to me, I realized that He breathes the universe into existence and withdraws it again in a repeated cycle. In recent years, after this article was originally written in 2006, I have speculated in

various writings that some fourteen billion years ago the divine breath of the Creator became manifest in time and space as a burst of high frequency electromagnetic energy, or radiation—at levels of intensity in the *gamma* range or above—which scientists currently refer to as ‘the Big Bang’. This theory seems to me a likely one—much more likely than the materialist theories of contemporary science—and is explained at length and in detail in several of my later articles, including ‘The Phenomenon of Light’, ‘How God Made The World’, ‘Recent Theological Developments’, and ‘First Light’—all of which may be found in *The Mystic’s Vision*, Volume One & Two, downloadable at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

III. A Theory of Consciousness

I.

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

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

There is one Consciousness. It is the Consciousness of the One Mind. And every object in this phenomenal universe exists within that one

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

The Divine Mind, which is the source of Consciousness, is beyond time and space, and all manifestation; It is the eternal Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting its essence—as a dreaming mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting their essence. Consciousness is not the property of matter, or of any individual being. It is not produced by any material process; but rather is a Divine stream of Intelligence filling the entire universe. It is the fundamental nature of Being, the foundation of the phenomenal universe, and the light of awareness filling it.

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

The personal consciousness that we regard as our “soul” derives its existence and its inherent bliss from the Consciousness of the Divine Mind in whom it exists. But souls *do* have a semblance of individual existence. While the Divine Mind, the Self, is universal and without characteristics of Its own, It manifests as a multitude of individual psyches,

or souls. Each of these individual souls possesses its own unique characteristics and evolves from birth to birth toward the knowledge and awareness of its one true eternal Identity. The individual soul is therefore a pretended, or imagined, identity of the Self, whose only actual and realizable Identity is the one indivisible Mind.

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

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

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

‘I’ that is. My consciousness is His consciousness. My body, as well as the whole universe, is His manifest form.

I and the Father are one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God, being so close, is easily accessible to us.
He is always within the reach of our call,
Always ready to provide succor in our need,
And the light of wisdom in our times of darkness.
Our own soul is the conduit of this accessibility,
This communication, this succor and this wisdom.

In our own soul, when the chattering of the mind is silenced,
And all our attention is focused on His presence,
There He is found in the very qualities of the soul.
For we are rays from His brilliance,
Diminished only by our unwillingness
To manifest His light.

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

No matter how far you may gaze into the rolling
 Galaxies cascading above,
 No matter what dark or clownish scenes you dream,
 Or terrestrial landscapes you cross,
 In the depths of the ocean, or on the chilly
 Snow-peaked mountains,
 And even in the abyss of death and darkness,
 You are ever within His close embrace.

You cannot leave Him, nor scamper from His sight.
 For you are in Him as a fish is in the ocean
 Or a bird is in the sky.
 His love surrounds and holds you,
 And He sees all through your eyes.

II.

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

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

The Jews, Christians, the Buddha, Shankara, Plotinus—all put the blame for human suffering upon the separative will of the individual. And rightly so,

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

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

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

The separate identity you thought was your own, the body and soul you thought was yours, is in fact God's. There is no yours. That illusory separate

identity, or individual ego, common to all embodied souls, is an extremely subtle and deceptive mirage. It masks the nondual reality, and it is dispelled only by the grace of God. This ego is a veil blinding us to and separating us from the awareness of our true Self, our Godhood; and it is a veil only He, the Divine Mind, can lift.

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

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

NOTES:

1. That we exist in God is not a new idea. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (written circa 500 B.C.E.), the Lord, Krishna, says, "By Me, in my unmanifested form, are all things in this universe pervaded. All beings exist in Me; I do

not exist in them.” (*Bhagavad Gita*: 9:4); and in the Christian scriptures, the apostle Paul says, “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (*Acts* 17:28). The entire universe exists within God. He produces the appearance of universal matter from Himself, within Himself. And while it appears that the Spirit and matter are two substances intermingled, it is all only Himself, and so He remains one Being forever. He empowers the universal appearance within Himself, and the dynamic universe continually evolves to more fully express the glory of His Being.

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

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

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

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

6. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

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

IV. Time And Eternity

Newton believed in an absolute time; one which is always the same for everyone in every situation. Einstein demolished that view by showing that the measure of the passage of time is relative to motion—differing by the variation in motion between two perceivers. Cosmologist, Stephen Hawking, further clarified time’s non-absolute status by noting that “time is just a

coordinate that labels events in the universe; it does not have any meaning outside the space-time manifold.”¹ Indeed, space and time (space-time) only come into existence along with the birth of the universe. Cosmologists assert that around fourteen billion years ago, an incredibly large amount of energy unaccountably burst on the scene and explosively expanded to produce the mass-energy that constitutes this entire universe. In that instant when that energy let loose as the “Big Bang” and began to expand as the plasma that would become particulate matter, space and time also came into existence. Before that, space-time did not exist. To the question, “What was when space-time was not?”, the answer is, “Eternity”.

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

This universal manifestation is superimposed upon Eternity, as a dream is superimposed upon the consciousness of a dreamer. One could say that the temporal universe and Eternity exist in separate dimensions – as the dreamer and his dream-world exist in separate dimensions, levels, or realms of consciousness. Eternity is the highest level of Consciousness; It is experienced by a mind that is intensely and utterly focused and intent upon the Divine. It completely supplants one’s limited individuality, raising one’s awareness to Its own place, and revealing one’s ultimate identity with Itself. This experience of Eternity is very pleasant. It is single, perfect aloneness, blissfully content. It sends forth a new universe in every breath, while in the same alternating breath annihilating the old. It is so simple and unencumbered that it cannot be conveyed in speech. It is the ancient,

unnamed God. It occupies its own place, its own dimension, quite sovereign and alone. The temporal array spewed out in each breath offers no distraction or interruption to the sweetness of Its homogeneous peace. It is its own perpetual delight and satisfaction.

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

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

NOTE:

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

* * *

2. UNIVERSAL CREATION

I. I Have But Breathed—Part One

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

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

"For a long time now, the belief that the universe is simply a random formation of disparate material wave-particles, arising spontaneously in the void of space-time, is a belief that has captured the imagination of the

reasoned men who practice science. But they are mistaken. The Energy that appears as the material wave-particles that constitute this world is neither random nor spontaneous, nor is it produced by natural processes; the world of matter—in fact, everything in the universe—has come from my conscious breath of Light-energy. Periodically, I release an abundance of Light energy, which rapidly transforms into this multiform universe. The last occurrence of this Energy release was around fourteen billion earth-years ago, in what you refer to as ‘the great Radiance’, or ‘the Big Bang’. That Light-Energy exists within Me, and therefore is imbued from the beginning with My own Consciousness. My Consciousness forms and guides the entire evolutionary process of material existence, from the initial gamma radiation to the subsequent production of billions of wave-particles that congregate to become the structured worlds and living forms that are manifested to express my multifaceted being.”²

NOTES:

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

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

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

Nonetheless, the controversy continues: One of the contending advocates, Stanley Sobottka, the late university physicist, was highly enamored of the philosophy espoused by Shankara and more recently by Sri Nisargadatta and his disciple, Ramesh Balsekar, and he embodied that philosophy in his online book, called *A Course In Consciousness* (www.courseinconsciousness.org).

II. I Have But Breathed—Part Two

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

You may not believe that the (italicized) words above are the words of God; you may not believe that the testimonies of the mystics are true; you may not even believe that there are such things as *spiritual* or *mystical* experiences;

but you must admit that the idea that the universe originated through the ‘Divine Manifestation’ of Light is still a tremendously appealing theory.

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

Light (EM radiation) is the medium by which Spirit fills the universe with Matter. That Light is the transformative “substance” that bridges the gap between the Divine Mind and the phenomenal universe. Light is Energy, and Energy (at its highest frequencies) is transformable into material wave-particles. In its initial abundant profusion, that Light expanded as countless colliding photons that literally transformed into quarks and electrons, which then combined to form protons and neutrons, the atoms that are the building-blocks of the stars and planets which comprise our universe. And yet, despite all our advances in scientific knowledge about electromagnetic energy over the centuries, there is still much about light that remains a great mystery to us. On the other hand, the Source of that Light—the Spirit, the Divine Mind—is wholly unknown; It is not an entity or agency that is even recognized by science to exist.

Science is a method of human enquiry that recognizes only empirical—that is to say, demonstrable—evidence, and Spirit is *not* demonstrable by any means that register as sense data. Spirit is wholly noumenon; It is not a phenomenon that can be physically demonstrated. This is why science, to be

science, is unable to investigate the theory of Divine Manifestation as an explanation for the existence of our world, even though it is clearly the most obvious, the most reasonable, explanation for the origin of matter that has been proposed. Those who practice ‘science’ are precluded by their method of enquiry from acknowledging the role of the Divine Mind in the creation of the universe; and that is why science in the twenty-first century is mired in the embarrassing quandary of having to nominate only *material* causal agents for the role of “originator” of the Big Bang. What a shame!

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

NOTES:

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

III. First Light

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

universe, a universe made solely of that First Light.

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

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

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

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

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

IV. The Phenomenon of Light

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

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

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

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

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

Scientists of our contemporary world have not seriously considered this theory, however. The suggestion that the physical cosmos had a 'supernatural' origin, places that origin outside the confines of 'nature' and therefore firmly outside the consideration of empirical science. Rather than positing a spiritual source, or even a radiant energy source, the immediate instinct of scientists is to suppose that there was an original physical entity that somehow 'blew up', scattering matter throughout the length and breadth

of space-time. But, just for the purpose of following out the supernaturally produced Light theory to its logical ends, let us imagine for a moment that in the beginning there *was* a supernaturally produced burst of high-energy light, and examine whether or not the existence of space-time and this material universe could possibly have formed and evolved from that initial Energy burst:

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

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

Light, or electromagnetic radiation, does not consist of matter; that is, it has no mass, but is an insubstantial, though ubiquitous, form of energy. Nonetheless, in its most energetic states, it is convertible into ‘matter’; and *vice versa*. This is due to the now well-known interconvertibility of mass and energy, according to Einstein’s formula: $E=mc^2$. For example, when an electron bound to a nucleus makes a “quantum jump” from a higher energy level (orbital) to a lower one, it gives off that same amount of energy in the form of a photon of light. When an electron and a positron (its antiparticle opposite) collide, they both annihilate in a flash of light (photons). When a proton and an antiproton collide, they are both annihilated in a flash of light (photons). Why are mass and energy interconvertible? No one knows. Apparently, these particles and antiparticles are merely returning to their ‘ground’ state. From light they came, and to light they must return.

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

The entire EM spectrum includes cosmic gamma rays, x-rays, ultraviolet light, the visible spectrum, infrared, microwaves, radar, FM radio, AM radio, and Direct electrical current, ranging in wavelength from 10^{-15} (.000000000000001 meter) to indefinitely long. At one end of the EM spectrum, this charged field vibrates as short transverse waves of very high

frequency; these are the gamma-rays and x-rays. At the other end of the spectrum, wave lengths can be indefinitely long and the frequencies very low; these are the radio and long-wave radio waves. In between the high and low-frequency waves of this spectrum are varying EM wavelengths such as those of visible light. Visible light is but a small portion of the EM spectrum, consisting of wavelengths from 0.4 to 0.7 micrometers (one millionth of a meter)—i.e., about half the length of a bacterium.

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

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

Gamma rays, then, are the highest frequency EM waves known, consisting of the highest energy photons, so far discovered. These waves can originate in the nuclei of atoms and may be released by nuclear explosions. They can also be produced in certain laboratory experiments, for example, by certain radioactive materials, or when a particle and an antiparticle annihilate each other. Conversely, gamma rays are capable of decaying spontaneously into particle/antiparticle pairs, such as an electron and a positron. Gamma rays also exist naturally throughout the cosmos, even showing up in the

formation of terrestrial lightning bolts. In 1997, astronomers using the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory (GRO) satellite, found evidence for a gigantic, diffuse halo of gamma rays around our own Milky Way galaxy that they are currently endeavoring to know more about; and distant cosmic gamma ray bursts appear almost daily to astronomer's telescopes.

Cosmic gamma ray bursts are brief bursts of high-energy light that come to us from up to 12 billion light-years away (in other words, light that was emanated 12 billion years ago). Astronomers have speculated that they are from distant supernovae, giant collapsing stars in the midst of their death-throes; although researchers could find no supernova associated with a 2006 burst observed by NASA's Swift satellite. In March of 2008, the same NASA satellite recorded "the brightest explosion ever seen" when a massive star, 7.5 billion light-years away, collapsed to form a black hole, driving powerful gamma ray jets outward. In September of 2009, another gamma ray burst (designated GRB090902B) produced even higher energies—up to 33.4 billion electron volts or about 13 billion times the energy of visible light.⁴ Such cosmic gamma ray bursts are so energetic that their brightness is equal to the brightness of all the stars of the entire universe combined. One burst of 10 seconds duration can release more energy than the light emitted by our sun in its entire ten-billion-year lifetime.

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

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

We may suppose, further, that what we call *spacetime* is a correlate of light and its innate proclivity for very rapidly spreading itself in all directions. Where there is extension, there is *space*; where there is a sequence of events, there is *time*. And while time and space are relative to the speed of light, light itself, the primary ‘stuff’ of the universe, is the sole constant by which time and space are measured. Like Einstein, we can describe and measure it, but we struggle unsuccessfully to know and understand just what it is.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is by labeling the manifestation of that initial supernatural Energy as ‘natural’, that the rationalizers of materialism justify their simplistic and utterly false view of all existence. The manifestation of that initial Energy is

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

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

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

From the initial ‘Great Radiance’ comes all that exists as material objects and all that exists as active forces in the universe today and for all time. Every exploding star, every movement of gaseous nebulae far-off in space, every object and every motion—including the blinking of your eye, has its source and origin in that initial burst of light. According to the Law of the conservation of mass-energy, the First Law of Thermodynamics, it is an undeviating quantity of Energy. According to this Law: ‘the sum of the mass-energy within a closed system (like the universe) remains constant’. In other words, the total initial Energy of which all material forms and all

manifestations of energy in the universe are constituted, remains always the same total. It means that all that we do and perceive, including our own bodies and its movement, is made of that initial Light, and is nothing else but that original Light produced by and consisting of the Divine breath of God.

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

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

NOTES:

1. Today, however, there are serious doubts among some in the scientific community that a singularity is even a possibility. See “Researchers Show That Black Holes Do Not Exist”, by Thania Benios; in PhysOrg Newsletter for September 24, 2014: <http://phys.org/news/2014-09-black-holes.html>.
2. Arthur Zajonc, *Catching The Light*, N.Y., Bantam Books, 1993; p. 256.
3. *Ibid.*, p. ix.
4. from JPL/NASA (<news:web>, reported in *Physorg Newsletter* at www.physorg.com/news175961092 appearing on 10/28/09).
5. The concept in physics that every particle has an antiparticle with an opposite charge is called “particle symmetry”; and there are also several speculative theories to account for the breaking of this symmetry in the early universe. It is interesting to note that this idea of opposite but symmetrical

pairs is reminiscent of (and possibly related to) the duality experienced in mystical vision whereby all relative states of consciousness are composed of opposites, such as love/hate, ahead/behind, life/death, joy/sorrow, I/Thou, etc. All relative states of consciousness are seen to be composed of these opposites; yet in the mystical experience of Unity, there is a conjunction, or ‘marriage’ of all opposites in the unity of the absolute Consciousness, which transcends (though it is the source of) all relative conscious states.

6. *Bhagavad Gita*, XI.12; Paramahansa Yogananda, *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*, Los Angeles, Self-Realization Fellowship, 1995; vol. II, p. 818.

7. This quark-gluon plasma (QGP), theorized to have been produced in the first few microseconds of the ‘Big Bang’, was recently reproduced at the Brookhaven National Laboratory by colliding gold ions at nearly the speed of light in their Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider, a 2.4 mile-circumference “atom smasher”, thereby creating a “liquid matter” (QGP) at a temperature of “about 4 trillion degrees Celsius”—about 250,000 times hotter than the center of the Sun. (from Brookhaven National Laboratory, reported by Physorg Newsletter, February 15, 2010; www.physorg.com).

8. All this universe, the "scientists" say, is just the result of natural laws. And I would ask them, 'Who instituted those natural laws at the moment "nature" was created?' In return, these scientists ask, 'How could a Mind—even a divine Mind—produce the amount of gamma radiation required to transform into so vast a universe of material wave-particles? How, for that matter, could It produce Light at all?' I do not have the answer to that, but I would ask in return, 'How does your own limited mind produce thoughts and images within itself? Do you think you know? How does your mind produce the actions of your body simply by the power of will? Do you know? Your mind and your body are products of that universal Mind. Who can know *how* It does all that It does?'

9. From Swami Abhayananda, “The Song of The Self”, in *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984.

V. From Light To Universe

Cosmologists and astrophysicists tell us that the temperature of the Cosmic Background Radiation (CBR) throughout the universe is currently 2.7 degrees Kelvin. Extrapolating from that current temperature allows

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES:

1. Michael Zeilik, *Astronomy: The Evolving Universe*, 9th edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; p.471.
2. Antimatter has the same properties as regular matter except that it has the opposite electrical charge. When a particle of matter and a particle of antimatter collide, they annihilate, and, in their place, is an equivalent amount of energy in the form of a photon. From light to matter; from matter to light.
3. If there is magic, it is in the originating Light that can appear now as energy, now as matter. This is the secret of creation; this is how everything in the universe, including our own bodies, was created from the great Light.

VI. Born of His Light

Don't you know that we are born of His light—
 That every elementary particle of matter began as a photon of light?
 Every electron, every quark in the interior of every proton or
 neutron came into being and acquired its properties
 In the transformation of those high-energy photons of light
 Streaming out from the Creator's breath.
 This world and all worlds sparkling throughout the cosmos are made of
 the radiance of God's power,
 A dancing array of His light's many ephemeral forms.
 And we, evolved from His light, are endowed with the presence of
 His eternal Self, and live by His life,
 And love with His love and know with His wisdom.
 We are conscious by His marvelous all-pervading awareness.
 We see by His loving grace, and we sing His praise by His gift of song.

Then sing, ye God-born angels of light!
 Raise up your voices to Him whose fabric forms your being and appearance,
 Whose life-pulse fires your heart and breath.
 Remember Him whose goodness molded you, whose love enfolds you,
 Whose existence is the life-stream of your being, and whose
 out-flowing Bliss provides the everlasting joy of your soul.
 Until we wind our way back into His eternal light, sing forth His praise.

3. THEOLOGY

I. Theological Conclusions

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

The Universe

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

But I would submit, there is another, perhaps more accurate, way of viewing the permeation of matter by God's Spirit, not as an “inspiration” or “emanation”, but rather as a ‘containment’: Consider how our own individual consciousness permeates our thoughts and dream-images. Our

thoughts and mental images are permeated by our consciousness because these thoughts and dreams are contained *within* our minds. May we not conclude that, likewise, the Spirit, the all-pervading Consciousness, permeates the universe because the universe is contained *within It*? After all, where else could the creations of a divine Spirit exist but *within* Itself?

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

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

‘But how,’ we must wonder, ‘could so physically substantial a universe be a mere imagination, a Mind-born projection of Thought?’ An answer might be found in the recent results of science’s investigation into the nature of matter. The science of physics, for all its denial of the supernatural reality, has done more in the last one hundred years to dispel the notion of the substantiality of the material world than all the theologians throughout history. During that time, the discoveries of physicists have reminded us of the declarations of the Upanishads that the appearance of matter, i.e., the phenomenal universe, is an illusion, a product of Maya, the creative power of the One (*Brahman*). Contemporary science has shown that the universe

does indeed consist of an Energy that transforms into material particles; but these material particles are really nothing more than submicroscopic electromagnetic impulses, mere ‘points of Energy’, interacting in such a way that the appearance of substance is produced—forming, in other words, an illusory world.

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

Clearly, the atoms of which these perceivable solids consist, are mostly empty space in their interior. In fact, physicists tell us that all of what we call *Matter* is 99.999999999999 percent empty space; the other infinitesimal part seems to be nothing more than energy wavelets and intangible forces. Subatomic wave-particles consist of intangible electromagnetically charged impulses held in proximate “orbits” about one another by invisible forces, so as to form the appearance of much grander substantial entities. And these appearances are multiplied in infinite profusion and variety as if by some magician’s hand, to appear before our eyes as a multitudinous world of objects. And so, this material world, this phenomenal reality of ours, is a marvelous magic show of truly immense proportions!

This Light—these particles and forces—what a marvelous universe they make! How real and substantial it all seems! A burst of Light, and all congeals into a universe of form and color, intelligence and emotion, *sturm und drang*. Time drags the whole process out, making it all seem quite

natural, making it seem, from the perspectives of our individual lives, a long and gradual evolution. But, if we were to see the fourteen billion years of evolutionary history reduced to just a few seconds, it would become clear that it is a Mind-born creation, an instantaneous imagination from beginning to end. From God's eternal perspective, all is accomplished in an instant.

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

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

The One

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

That unborn source of consciousness is beyond time and space, and all manifestation; yet It is the eternal Identity of all that exists. It transcends the universe, while constituting its essence—as a dreaming mind transcends its dream-images, while constituting their essence. Consciousness is not the property of matter, or of any individual being. It is not produced by any material process; but rather is a Divine stream of Intelligence filling the entire universe. It is the fundamental nature of Being, the foundation of the phenomenal universe, and the light of awareness filling it. We are able to know it by following our own consciousness back to its Source, where we are able to discover our original Self. That Self is the One Consciousness. He is the one Source of the material universe, and He is also the life and awareness pervading it. But, of course, we must see Him for ourselves. Our soul/mind must be illumined by the eternal Light itself and drawn into Its hidden depths. To obtain that grace, all men focus their minds on Him through prayer and contemplative longing, and He shines His Light on whom He will.

The Soul

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unfortunately, many believe that this is a truth that applies only to the one unique historical figure of Jesus; but it is a *universal truth*, a truth for all, and

a truth to be realized: *I* am not merely this body, not just this spark of consciousness, nor merely the entire manifested universe; I am the Source of the universe, and the universe itself. I am both the subject and the object. There is nothing else here but I AM. This is realized in the mystic's vision. Listen to what the great Shankaracharya said:

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

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

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

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

two— “I” and “Thou”—is an illusion, a false duality that will be dissolved when the one eternal Identity is revealed.

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

Postscript

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

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

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

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

But now, weeping and laughing are gone.

Night is become day.
 Music and silence are heard as one.
 My ears are all the universe.

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

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

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

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

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

I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged and set in order once again.
 A million worlds begin and end in every breath,

And in this breathing, all things are sustained.”⁸

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

Nevertheless, over these many years, I have undertaken to share the certain knowledge given to me since the day I made that bargain with God. He fulfilled His part of the bargain, and I have endeavored since that time to carry out my promise. I have written many books telling of His presence as the eternal Self of all, and of His greatness and goodness, in the hopes that others might be benefited thereby. Whether or not I have succeeded, I leave to His judgment. I believe that, with this last book, I’ve reached the culmination of my attempts over the years to express this knowledge; I am advancing in age, and besides, there is little more to add. And while it has become evident to me that, in this current Dark Age, there is little interest in what I have to tell, I feel a duty to publish this revealed knowledge in the faith that God will preserve it and bring it to the aid and comfort of the handful of evolved seekers who are to come in a brighter age.

NOTES:

1. Book of Genesis 2:7, Old Testament of the Bible.
2. That the universe is in God is hardly a new idea. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (written circa 500 B.C.E.), the Lord, Krishna, says, “By Me, in my unmanifested form, are all things in this universe pervaded. All beings exist in Me; I do not exist in them.” (*Bhagavad Gita*: 9:4); and in the Christian scriptures, the apostle Paul says, “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (*Acts* 17:28). The entire universe exists within God. He produces the appearance of universal matter from Himself, within Himself. And while it appears that the Spirit and matter are two substances intermingled, it is all

only Himself, and so He remains one Being forever. He empowers the universal appearance within Himself, and the dynamic universe continually evolves to more fully express the glory of His Being.

3. “Large Hadron Collider could reveal our origins”, April 19, 2010 by Roger S. Boyd, copyright 2010 McClatchy-Tribune Information Services; appeared April 19, 2010 in PhysOrg Newsletter, www.physorg.com/news190869267.html.

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

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

p. 58.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 118.1.

7. This truth is attested to by Dattatreya in the *Avadhut Gita*, Ch. 6:14: “If there’s only the limitless One, all is Shiva. How, then, can one distinguish between the perishable and the Imperishable?”

8. This Song of The Self appears in Swami Abhayananda, *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984.

II. The Dual Aspects of God As Male And Female

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

Lao Tze:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the beginning, even nothing did not exist. There was only the Tao. Then something unnamed which did not yet have form came into existence from the *Tao*. This is *Teh*, from which all the world came into being. ...It is in this way that *Teh* created all forms.¹¹

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

from It and is governed by It; It is in all things, but is not identical with things, for It is neither divided nor limited.¹²

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

...Life springs into existence without a visible source and is reabsorbed into that Infinite. The world exists in and on the infinite Void; how it comes into being, is sustained and once again is dissolved, cannot be seen. It is fathomless, like the Sea. Wondrously, the cycle of world-manifestation begins again after every completion. The *Tao* sustains all creation, but It is never exhausted. ... That which gives life to all creation, yet which is, Itself, never drawn upon—that is the *Tao*.¹³

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

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

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

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

place, and was called feminine in contrast to the Creator of the universe, who is masculine.¹⁷

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

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

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

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

Itself, son of Itself. It is both Mother and Father, a Unity, being the Root of the entire circle of existence. ¹⁸

The Divine Mind possesses Its own light of Consciousness which we name 'Soul'; but Soul, being invisible Spirit, requires a substantial and relatively stable world of forms to inhabit; and so, the Divine Mind periodically sends forth a burst of Energy that transforms into the Matter of which the physical universe is constituted. He sends forth this Energy in cycles, first projecting His Light Energy, which transforms into the universe of matter in its four dimensions; and then, at the end of a cycle, withdrawing that universe of matter, time and space back to its source in Him. To us, perceiving this drama from the temporal side, these cycles appear to last for billions and billions of years; but for the soul united in consciousness with the Eternal, the Divine Mind, they are seen to last but the space of a breath.

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

Philo Judaeus:

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

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

Of all the wise philosophers whose discourses I have heard, I have not found any who have realized the one Intelligence, which is distinct from all things ²⁰ and yet pervades all

things.²¹ That Intelligence is One; to know It is to know the Purpose, which guides all things and is in all things.²² Nature has no inherent power of intelligence; Intelligence is the Divine.²³ Without It [the one Intelligence], the fairest universe is but a randomly scattered dust-heap.²⁴

Plotinus:

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

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

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

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

Plotinus was also tripped up in his attempt to understand the nature of Matter by his Platonist concepts. He could only conceive of the world of things as eternal Idea-forms, and so he had to regard Matter as an eternal existent; and yet, in other instances, he saw the material universe as the very outer limits of the radiance of the Divine Mind, where, extending beyond Soul, it fades into utter darkness. Plotinus often equated this

darkness, this extremity of the reach of the Divine, with the world of Matter. Brilliant and insightful as he was, he simply did not have all the facts, and so could not piece together all the elements of manifest existence into a comprehensive and consistent whole.

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

How do these “points” of Energy, these wave-particles that began as “photons”, manage to produce the illusion of form and substance? In their original abundance, they collide, transforming into particles such as electrons, and quarks—which combine to form protons and neutrons, which combine to form atoms; and the atoms combine to form molecules, which combine in vast numbers to form perceptible gases, liquids, and solids in a variety of sizes and configurations. And yet the atoms of which these perceivable solids consist, are mostly empty space in their interior. In fact, all of what we call *Matter* is 99.999999999999 percent empty space; the other infinitesimal part seems to be nothing more than energy wavelets and intangible forces. Subatomic wave-particles consist of intangible electrically charged impulses held in proximate “orbits” about one another by invisible forces, so as to form the appearance of much grander substantial entities. And these appearances are multiplied in infinite profusion and variety as if by some magician’s hand, to appear before our eyes as a multitudinous world of objects. And so, this material world, this phenomenal reality of ours, is a marvelous magic show of truly immense proportions!

Soul is Spirit, and the Divine Energy that becomes Matter is also Spirit; they are both from the Divine Mind, but the two are distinctly different: Soul is noumenon, and Matter/Energy is phenomenon. Obviously, they require distinctly different means of production. Soul, possessing Intelligence, is inherently Divine, emanating from and partaking of the Divine Intelligence. It is an extension or radiance of the Divine Itself. Whereas Matter, woven of Light Energy, had to have been produced

deliberately as an illusion-producing force expressly to produce the appearance of form and substance—it is, as Shankara tells us, Maya, or illusion. Intelligence, or Soul, is a direct extension of the Divine, an emanate of conscious Intelligence identical with its source; and the Energy constituting Matter is of an entirely different kind, transient and lifeless, lacking Intelligence, whose only function is to house the Soul or Spirit. We call this universe-manifesting Energy ‘electromagnetic radiation’ but it may just as rightly be regarded as ‘the power of Maya’.

Shankara (8th century C.E.):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the end of the night of time all things return to my [creative Power, called] *Prakrti*; and when the new day of time begins, I bring them into light. Thus, through my *Prakrti* I bring forth all creation, and these worlds revolve in the revolutions of time. But I am not bound by this vast work of creation. I exist alone,

watching the drama of this play. I watch and in its work of creation *Prakrti* brings forth all that moves and moves not: and thus, the worlds go on revolving.³⁴

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

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

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

The visible world is born of the Invisible; the world of forms is born of the Formless. The creative Energy [*Teh*] is born from the Eternal [*Tao*], and all life forms are born of this creative Energy; thus, all creation evolves into various forms.

...Life springs into existence without a visible source and is reabsorbed into that Infinite. The world exists in and on the infinite Void; how it comes into being, is sustained and once again is dissolved, cannot be seen. It is fathomless, like the sea. Wondrously, the cycle of world-manifestation begins again after every completion. The Eternal [*Tao*] sustains all creation, but It is never exhausted. ... That which gives life to all creation, yet which is, Itself, never drawn upon— that is the Eternal [*Tao*].³⁶

Heraclitus adds his voice to the consensus:

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

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

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

NOTES:

1. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 1
2. *Ibid.*, 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 4
4. *Ibid.*, 52
5. *Ibid.*, 6
6. *Ibid.*, 16
7. *Ibid.*, 21
8. *Ibid.*, 21
9. *Ibid.*, 37
10. *Ibid.*, 51
11. *Chuang Tze*, Ch. 12
12. *Ibid.*, Ch. 8
13. *Chuang Tze*, 22
14. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 45:3:11; *Op.cit.*, p. 106
15. Philo, *De posteritate Caini*, 14-16; Winston, David (trans.), *Philo Of Alexandria—The Contemplative Life, Giants, And Selections*, Ramsey, N.J., Paulist Press, 1981.
16. Philo, *Legum Allegoriorum*, 2:86; *Ibid.*, p. 93
17. Philo, *De uga et inventione*, 50-52, *Ibid.*, p. 93
18. Simon Magus, *Apophysis Megale* (“The Great Exposition”), quoted by Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutatio Omnium Heresium*, VI.8; adapted from Roberts, Rev. A. & Donaldson, J. (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1892; Vol. VI, pp. 208-210.
19. Philo, *De confusione linguarum*, 136-137; Winston, 1981; p. 90.

20. Heraclitus, based on Freeman, K., *Ancilla To The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983; pp. 24-34. Fragment nbr. 108.
21. *Ibid.*, 113
22. *Ibid.*, 41
23. *Ibid.*, 78
24. *Ibid.*, 124
25. *Enneads*, 27:4:2-5; *Ibid.*, p. 118.
26. *Enneads*, 22:6:4; *Ibid.*, p. 184.
27. *Enneads*, 22:6:4; *Ibid.*, p. 184.
28. For details regarding the transformation of electromagnetic radiation into material particles, in this book, see the chapter on “Body”.
29. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*; Prabhavananda, Swami (trans.), *The Crest-Jewel Of Discrimination*, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 59.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 62
31. Svetasvatara Upanishad, V.3.
32. Maitri Upanishad, 6.17.
33. *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapters VIII.17-20.
34. *Ibid.*, Chapter IX, 7-10.
35. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 16.
36. Chuang Tze, Chapter 22.
37. Heraclitus, fragment 88; based on Freeman, K., *Ancilla To The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983.
38. Heraclitus, fragment 30; *Ibid.*

III. Blessedness

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

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

They thought they were individual beings

Alone in the Universe. They didn't understand that one omnipotent Power Fills all creatures and all things; that He alone exists in every form.

If He has not yet revealed Himself in you, pray to Him for His merciful Grace.

Let Him know your loneliness without Him. For truly, without the Knowledge of His eternal presence, you are lost, even if you know it not.

To know Him as your essence, to know Him as your very identity

And breath, will so fill your heart with joy and wisdom

That you will think of Him every moment

And see Him in every thing and event on earth.

You will sing His praise in your heart and delight in the divine beauty

All around you in His world. This blessing is the true Kingdom of God

In which the blessed live forevermore. May He grant this blessing to you.

4. EPISTEMOLOGY

I. Speaking of God

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

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

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

while knowing that there is, in our language, no possible means of referring to [Him] that is truly appropriate.

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

How Do We Know?

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

But such a limited definition of “knowledge” leaves little room for a subjective, non-sensory knowing, such as the self-evident knowledge *I am*; i.e., the knowledge of being conscious. It also does not account for the knowledge of the thoughts and images existing only in the psyche; nor does it account for what we call “spiritual” knowledge. After all, we use the words “I know” to represent an inner certainty based on the various kinds of

evidence to which we have access.; and this may pertain not only to sensory phenomena perceived as objects, but also to mentally perceived phenomena as well as spiritually perceived noumena. “Knowing”, we must admit, is ultimately a subjective and intangible thing, difficult to put one’s finger on. All forms of knowledge—even that we refer to as “empirical knowledge”—exist only as ephemeral conditions within the subjective field of awareness of each individual. And all these kinds of knowledge—empirical, mental, and spiritual—are informed by the kinds of evidence appropriate to each.

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

Now, while the criterion of *empirical* proof is objective evidence limited to sensory experience, the criterion for the ‘proof’ of dreams, imaginations, and other subjective mental phenomena is, not physical vision, but *psychic vision*. This ‘vision’ does not occur through a faculty of sense, but through a faculty of the mind, or psyche, inherent in all, and is subjectively accessible by everyone: this faculty is frequently referred to as ‘the mind’s eye’, a term we use to represent that psychic instrument of vision whereby we “see” the images which we willfully or unwillingly project upon our inner ‘screen’ as “imaginations”. It is by this inner projection that we are able to create, in an

instant, whatever images we desire to enjoy within our own private screenings. In dreams, also, we see subconsciously produced images that our dreaming selves believe to be real while they are being presented to us. Some also claim to experience images in the waking state that are clairvoyant or prescient, or projected from other human sources, living or dead. All these kinds of visual experience are ‘seen’ in the mind’s eye. (*Conceptual thought* seems to be audial, however, rather than visual; bringing up the likelihood of the existence of a physical, mental, and spiritual “ear” as well.)

Spiritual vision is not obtained by means of the physical eyes, or any of the other senses, nor through the imaginative or psychic faculty referred to as “the mind’s eye”; but rather through a yet subtler faculty arising only in the higher reaches of contemplative concentration, which is usually referred to as “the spiritual eye” or “the eye of contemplation”. The spiritual eye “sees”, but without the physical sense of eyesight or the deliberate projection of mindsight. The individual’s interior awareness is lifted beyond his/her mental field of awareness, as well as beyond the awareness of worldly perceptions, as that awareness is transformed into a timeless, spaceless awareness of identity with the limitless and eternal Consciousness from which the universe emanates. In a uniting of the separative individual consciousness with the absolute and eternal Consciousness, one’s awareness transcends, not only the senses and the imaginative faculty, but the sense of self, the egocentric identity, as well, relieving the individual of the sense of a separate identity, as he becomes aware of the all-inclusive One. The individual knows this eternal Consciousness as his own, since there is no longer a separate individual identity by which he can perceive this Consciousness as other.

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

unitive vision. For those who fail of that, there is faith, a trust in the validity of the experience of others.

The unitive 'vision' bears with it a unique kind of clarity, possessing an unmistakable and indelible stamp of truth, that does not accompany the mere physical or psychic kinds of vision. If it fails of the established standard for "knowing", then it must itself replace that standard, for it is the very essence of *knowing*. However, insofar as I know, it is a knowledge that is non-transmittable, and therefore undemonstrable. It may (with difficulty) be verbally described, but that scarcely constitutes the actual 'knowledge' itself. The direct knowledge is obtainable only via the eye of Spirit. It should immediately be added that the unitive vision must never be regarded by its recipient as a matter of pride, for it is not a deed to which the individual may lay claim. Such experience is brought about entirely by the One in whom the individual exists. The individual is not meritorious in experiencing the unitive vision; rather, he is illumined despite himself. He is drawn as if by a magnet to the experience by the power of the greater Self, and, as a dream-character in a dream is dissolved in the waking consciousness of the dreamer, his sense of a separate selfhood (ego) is likewise dissolved in the eternally wakeful Consciousness of the One in whom he lives and moves and has his being. The One alone has absolute being, and alone has the power of self-revelation. It is that One who is seen, and it is that One who sees Himself in that unitive vision. Ultimately, no other may truly be said to exist but that One who exists absolutely and forever.

Many have experienced the unitive vision who have never sought it. It comes, at times, when least expected, during moments of introspective reflection, or when viewing a restful scene, or while feeling especially content or joyful. If the individual so illumined is fortunate, that unitive vision will take up perhaps twenty minutes of his life. But, for the rest of his life, his mind will hover about that vision, as a moth about a flame, in search of a continual clarification of the illuminative understanding obtained in that fleeting vision. It is in this way that he revisits the unitive vision, basking in the contemplation of the One who illumined his heart. There he finds the adoration, the bliss, and the sweet wisdom which that Self revealed to him, ever living and ever new. It is not just a memory, but it is a lasting presence in his life, benefiting him every moment, and also shedding some benefit to

others whom he touches with his words. That vision is a lifelong treasure, filling his mind with a never-failing fountain of love and happiness and the brightest consolations of wisdom. Though to the world he appears empty and alone, he possesses within himself the fullness of the universe, and his solitude is the blissful aloneness of the only One.

NOTE:

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

III. Can We Ever Really Know For Certain?

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

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

have had some experience of the divine in their own lives who will be capable of recognizing the validity or invalidity of a mystic's declarations.

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

IV. The Wonderful Enigma of Being

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

To physicists studying the submicroscopic quantum reality in the early part of the twentieth century, it became apparent that one cannot separate existence (ontology) from knowing (epistemology), for the only means by which we are able to agree among ourselves as to what exists is our sense experience of it. So, for physicists, existence is integrally tied up with knowing—i.e., observing. Likewise, there is no criterion by which to say: ‘the tree fell’, without someone having experienced it through their senses. From the scientific point of view, sensory knowledge, i.e., the confirmation of sight, hearing, smell, touch, etc., is regarded as the only acceptable

criterion of “knowledge”. Knowledge obtained in this way is accepted as *empirical* knowledge. “Empiricism” is defined by Webster’s New World Dictionary as “(1) relying or based solely on experiment and observation [the empirical method] rather than theory; (2) relying or based on practical experience without reference to scientific principles.” In these sentences the sensory nature of “experiment,” “observation”, and “practical experience” is implied and understood.

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

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

We must understand that the ‘superposed’ state is only a procedural necessity of the calculation formula and does not represent an actual (real) condition. We can either accept that we *cannot* know with certainty the location and momentum of an electron, and give up the search, *or* we can go through Schroedinger’s actuarial formula to determine its *probable* location—which turns out to be amazingly accurate in the end. The

formula's procedure does not actually place the electron in many places at once but places it *everywhere* only theoretically as a formulaic requirement. Also, we do not, by observing the actual location of the electron, *cause* it to be at that location, though the procedure makes it appear that our conscious observation is a causal factor. It is only as a process of eliminating its being everywhere at once that we 'collapse' the wave-function and, by perceiving it, 'cause' a wave-particle to be where it really is. And since we cannot know what is actually going on with the particle, but only what we predict and observe, what we observe is therefore our only 'reality'.

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

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

For quite a long time now, the question of whether or not there is a universal reality independent of conscious observation has been seriously asked, not only by physicists, but by philosophers and metaphysicians as well. Is there

really a world out there or does it exist only in our consciousness of it? Empirical science admits only the evidence of the senses, and so we must, if we side with the scientists, grant reality only to what is observable by the senses, or, like the theologians, we must put our faith in the existence of an absolute metaphysical reality that is intangible and undemonstrable.

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

Happily, God has also made *Himself* known to a few of us as the formless reality within us that is eternal and all-pervasive. We have been enabled to know in certainty that one conscious Source and substance of everything that lives as the divine Self of everyone. It is not experienced by the senses and is therefore unknowable by *science*; but it is knowable through an interior revelation in consciousness, or *gnosis*, revealed by divine Grace. That interior revelation reveals that there is a universally all-pervasive Consciousness from which all apparent objects derive.

That Consciousness manifests as a universe of phenomena in a manner that is wavular, in other words, it has a peak and a trough. Therefore, in order for It to manifest as a subjective awareness (you and I), it must also manifest as an objective presence (thou or That). Where there is a subject, there must be an object. Where there is an object, there must be a subject. The two are but opposite sides of the same coin in this wavular manifestation of universal Consciousness. That is simply Its nature. This revelation, this knowledge, this Grace, is granted by God to those whom He finds worthy of it. May He grant it to you!

NOTES:

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

* * *

5. SCIENTIFIC THEORY

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

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

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

In the clarity of that mystical revelation which I experienced, *I* (the one Consciousness) was aware that *I* pervade all existence: “I am in the clouds, and in the gritty soil.” In addition to this, I was unable to discern any categorical separation of my mind and my body. It is a common convention that the body is ‘the temple’ in which the spirit (mind or soul) resides. But, from the vantage of that integral Consciousness, I could see no separate encasement. There was no duality. It was clear that body-mind was not two things, but one—like a figure in a dream, or a mentally projected character in a fantasy, consisting of a unified mental and physical reality. This is not only counter-intuitional, going against our religiously inculcated bias concerning the separation of soul and body at the moment of death; it also

contradicts the conventional Cartesian duality that constitutes the Western philosophical rationale for our conceptual separation of mind and body—and, by implication, our separation of consciousness and matter on a cosmic scale. But the mystical experience reveals that these two are inseparable, one. How is this possible?

It has long been assumed by the scientific community that consciousness is simply an epiphenomenon of the evolving complexity of matter; but eventually the illogic of that assumption became apparent. And today, precedence is being given to the consideration of the supposition that Consciousness is the primary Essence in which and from which the entire universe of Matter evolved. Many theoretical physicists are now convinced that these two long-divided categories of consciousness and matter are in fact integral. And, though there is as yet no empirical proof (aside from mystical experience) to warrant scientific certainty, there is growing inferential evidence to support this supposition.

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

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

NOTES:

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

II. The Cyclic Universe

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

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

This vision of the repetitive nature of universal creation in a cyclic, breath-like manner was first depicted in the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of God) was written ca. 500 B.C.E., as part of a larger work, the *Mahabharata*, (reputedly by the legendary sage, Vyasa), as a dialogue between Krishna (an incarnation of God) and Arjuna on the

battlefield of Kurukshetra. And it is Krishna who, speaking as the Divinity itself, teaches to Arjuna the perennial philosophy, explaining that in His Divine unmanifest state He manifests the entire universe, which he describes as his ‘lower’ nature;² and He manifests this ‘lower nature’, the material universe, in a cyclic fashion, periodically creating, then dissolving it:

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

My own acceptance of this cosmic scenario did not come about from the theories of physicists, nor from the Hindu scriptures, but from my own indubitable vision, a vision granted me by the Divine Self in the transformed state of consciousness during which I experienced the integral Consciousness as my own. In that state, I (The Divine Mind) exhaled the universe in the manner of an outgoing breath alternating with an inhalation in which the universe is then withdrawn back into its source. While immersed in this clear awareness, I wrote: “I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged and set in order once again. A million worlds begin and end in every breath, and in this breathing, all things are sustained.” Since this was said while my individual self was merged with and transparent to the eternal Self, I regard this as the very Word of God.

I. David Bohm’s Implicate Order

I.

For many of us, *reality* is synonymous with the appearance of the physical universe that we perceive through our senses. And yet, in numerous spiritual traditions from antiquity to the present, reality is said to contain at least *three* consecutive layers or levels of subtlety: The subtlest and most primary level is the divine Source—the Absolute, the One, which is eternal, transcendent and undifferentiated; followed by the divine Mind—the noumenal realm of thought forms produced from the One; and lastly, the Material World—the sensually perceived phenomenal realm of space, time, and matter that manifests the thought-forms of the divine Mind. These three levels are similarly described in Platonist, Vedic, and Buddhist literature going back many centuries,¹ and in each of these traditions, it is insisted

that these three levels of subtlety do not constitute three different separate realities but are simply progressive elements of the one conscious Being who is the sole reality. It is also said that our human make-up is a reiteration of that triune cosmic reality; that as conscious beings within the divine reality, we consist of a Divine essence, a mind/soul, and lastly, a physical body. When we draw on our intellect, we are drawing from the level of mind/soul; and when we draw on our inherent strength and eternal wisdom, we draw from the Divine in us, the ultimate source and core of our being.

In more recent times, the twentieth century theoretical physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992), has similarly described the one reality as consisting of these three levels of subtlety, referring to the primary source level as ‘the superimplicate order’ (though he neglects to explicitly define it), the secondary ideational level as ‘the implicate order’, and the last, physical level, as ‘the explicate order’. Bohm approaches this analysis of the physical reality from the perspective of a scientist, though traditionally, the description of reality as consisting of these three levels of subtlety exists only in the mystically derived *metaphysical* systems. Conventional empirical *science* does not ordinarily describe reality in terms of these three causal levels. To do so would entail the acknowledgment of a Divine Source, a supernatural causal agent, which would fly in the face of science’s professed empirical bias. Physics, as an area of scientific study, delves into the microphysical in Quantum physics, but it never allows for the positing of a source of physical reality from outside of the natural (physical) realm; nor does it ever assume an intermediate subtle, ideational, realm. The suggestion of any such invisible causal realm underlying the Material World would contradict the empirical requirements of science.

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

I, for one, having directly experienced that interior subjective (mystical) confirmation, must side with the metaphysical systems (and with David Bohm) in asserting that there is indeed a subtle ideational level of reality ²

underlying and forming the Material World, an integral but non-physical continuum, the origin of which is a yet subtler noumenal dimension, a “super-implicate order” which we may designate as ‘the transcendent Absolute’, or ‘the supreme Cause’.³

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

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

It is well known that words do not adequately represent these subtle levels of reality; rather, these realms are to be *experienced* as real conscious states of being, not simply labeled and defined for purposes of philosophical speculation. Whether the subtle ideational reality underlying the physical reality is called “the Divine Mind”, “*Ishvara*”, “the implicate order”, or anything else, matters but little from the mystic’s perspective. What is of importance is to *experience* that subtle reality, and to experience firsthand the Absolute reality, that unknowable One, who is the ultimate Self of all existence. It is only His gracious gift of that liberating experience that is capable of revealing to us the glorious truth of our ultimate divinity, and of freeing us from the limitations and sorrows attendant upon the false illusory ego.

Having seen into the hidden realm where all is one conscious continuum, and the only identity is that one awareness, I have to declare that underlying this many-formed world of separate distinct entities and personalities is a divine reality in which there is no separateness, but only the one ‘I’ manifest

in and as everything everywhere. How can we know It? How can we experience It? This indivisible continuum can be known by the human intelligence when it is brought by God's Grace to a higher subtler level of consciousness. Only then is it possible to perceive It. There is no other way to know of It or to track Its location. It has no time-space coordinates but is revealed only in the unfathomably clear depths of the divine Mind.

II.

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

-- David Bohm

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

David Bohm (1917-1992) was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on December 20, 1917. His father was a Jewish furniture dealer, but David went to college, receiving his B.Sc. degree from Pennsylvania State College in 1939 and his Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, Berkeley, in

1943. At U.C. Berkeley, he studied with Robert Oppenheimer; and when Oppenheimer went to Los Alamos to work on the “Manhattan Project”, Bohm remained at Berkeley as a research physicist. There, he worked on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotrons and Syndrocyclotrons until 1947, when he took a position as an Assistant Professor at Princeton University, working on Plasmas, Theory of Metals, Quantum Mechanics and Elementary Particles. It was there he met and had regular meetings with Albert Einstein.

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

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

The first part of his book’s title, “*Wholeness*”, was a theme that grew out of his long familiarity with Quantum Physics. Ordinarily, when we seek for causes of isolated events or things, we settle arbitrarily on a preceding local event or state which we designate as the *cause* of the present event or state.

But, as scientific investigations tend to show, the internal web of relationships between events and between things is endless. From the point of view expressed by the mystics, and by David Bohm, isolated things and events are not caused by other things and events but are rather linked in a complex web of relationships within a larger common Whole whose nature in turn determines the nature of those constituent things and events. In other words, the material reality is no longer thought to be the independent bits of which the Whole is constituted, but rather the other way around: the overall condition of the universal Whole governs the functions and interrelations of all constituent parts within the Whole.

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

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

The second part of his book’s title, “*The Implicate Order*,” referred to his suggestion, inspired by the mystic’s vision, that the phenomenal world

“unfolded from an “enfolded order” in a noumenal Source, referring to these two as “the implicate order” and “the explicate order”.

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

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

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

Intelligence, or Divine Ground, something along the lines of the Absolute, or “One”, of Neoplatonism. But Bohm, as a scientist dedicated to the empirical method, seems to prefer to remain wholly noncommittal regarding the nature of any primary supernatural cause.

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

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

If David Bohm experienced at some time in his career such a mystical revelation, I have not been able to find any mention of it in his writings. Nonetheless, his exposition of “The Implicate Order” evinces many similarities to the direct perceptions frequently reported by numerous mystics. In David Bohm’s broad suppositional proposition, causality is seen to reside in the ideational substratum (the implicate order), and then

becomes manifest in all its effusive multiplicity as a universe of time and space (the explicate order). Small-scale causes in the explicate order are deemed irrelevant, as they are merely expressions of an implicit order. And, while this ‘ontological interpretation’ of David Bohm’s is a marvelous restatement of the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of science, merely another speculative philosophy, unprovable (unfalsifiable) by science’s criterion of proof. Bohm’s work remains ground-breaking proof, however, that gnosis is a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. Perhaps other scientists will follow the path he has shown, expanding on his vision, and bringing us closer to a science that corresponds with the declarations of revelation proffered by the gnostics of every generation.⁹

NOTES:

1. For Plato and Plotinus, the three levels of reality were *the One*, *the Divine Mind (Nous)*, and *the physical cosmos*. For the authors of the Upanishads, it was *Brahman/Atman*, *Ishvara/Maya*, and *jagat*. For the Buddhists, it was *Tatatha/Dharmakaya*, *ekachittakshan*, and *samsara*.
2. I use the term, ‘ideational’ to describe the secondary subtle level of reality only because I don’t have a better or more fitting term... It is ‘ideational’ in the sense that it is non-physical, and non-individualized; the separate forms of this ideational reality are perceived (by the divine eye), but they are constituents of a single continuum. That continuum is subtler than physical reality, but we have no acceptable term to describe it, except for ‘spirit’ or ‘idea’. It does not consist of a humanly produced ‘idea’, but a divinely produced ‘idea’. It might be construed as Plato’s ‘Forms’ or David Bohm’s ‘implicate’ order of reality, without individuation or material substance.
3. ‘The transcendent Absolute’ or ‘Supreme Cause’ is the uncreated Source, beyond time and space, the Godhead, the imperceptible and inconceivable Self of all.
4. For references to ‘the Great Radiance’, please see my article, “How God Made The World (6-07-2013)”, or “The Phenomenon of Light (10-15-2014), or “First Light (4-12-2013)” all available at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
5. Bohm, David; quoted in Friedman, Norman, *Bridging Science And Spirit*, St. Louis, Missouri, Living Lake Books, 1994; p. 95.

6. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, “On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory”, London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.
7. (David Bohm, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 172).
8. The mystical experience is frequently referred to as “the unitive experience” because it reveals the identity of the experiencer to be identical with the one all-pervasive reality, i.e., it reveals that ‘I’ and ‘the Father’ are one. This nondual experience occurs because the mystical experience is a revelation of the subtle level of reality, what Plotinus called *Nous*, (the Divine Mind), or what David Bohm calls ‘the implicate order’. Previous to the “unitive experience”, the ‘explicate order’, which had been the experiencer’s former “reality”, appeared to consist of separate individual things and beings in a world of incredible diversity and multiplicity of identities. But now, suddenly awakened to this subtle level of reality, there is but one identity spreading everywhere; ‘I’ am in the clouds and in the gritty soil; ‘I’ am the pulse of the turtle; ‘I’ am the clanging bells of joy. In that implicate order, one ‘I’ is all-pervasive, constituting the one and only identity everywhere.
9. For a first-person account of ‘the mystical’ or ‘unitive’ experience, see my book, *The Supreme Self*, Atma Books, 1984, available as a free PDF document downloadable from: www.themysticsvision.com.

II. The Coincidence of Science and Mysticism

I.

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

Reality, as we all know, is one; and yet it can appear to be divisible into individually distinct and separate perceivable entities or appear as waves on

a single continuum in which there is no separation between subject and object. Back in the 1930's, many were pondering these two 'versions' of reality which physics had discovered were complementary but irreconcilable descriptions of the reality we experience—among them the highly respected mathematician and dabbler in physics, James Jeans (1877-1946). Jeans couldn't help noting that these two complementary versions of reality were radically dissimilar:

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

“The particle-parable, which was first in the field, told us that the material universe consists of particles existing in space and time.

“...The wave-parable ... does not describe the universe as a collection of particles but as a system of waves. ... [In this parable,] the universe is no longer a deluge of shot from a battery of machine-guns, but a stormy sea with the sea taken away and only the abstract quality of storminess left...”¹

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

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

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

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

The Particulate (Dualist) Version of Reality

1. Here, each perceiving subject and each perceived object possesses a unique identity, each individual subject or object being distinct from any other.
2. Here, every perceiving subject and perceived object consists of smaller units, referred to, in sequence, as molecules, atoms, and sub-atomic particles.
3. Here, the consciousness of each subject perceives, in addition to the subject-object duality, a self-created duality of values, emotions, qualities, consisting of pairs, such as like-dislike, happy-sad, pleased-displeased, etc.
4. Here, both subjective and objective events occur within the parameters of time and space. Within these parameters, each perceiving subject (soul?) is born, matures, and eventually dies (perhaps to reincarnate at a later time).

5. Here, the struggle for individual existence sets creature against creature according to the diversity of self-interest and motive. That is the Particle Version of Reality. And now, the ‘version’ of reality into which I shifted during my ‘mystical’ experience:

The Wavular (Nondual) Version of Reality

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

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

On the historic level, such ‘mystical experience’ has been occurring to individuals since the beginning. Though they are “few” in relation to the “many”, nonetheless, thousands, perhaps millions, have known that eternal reality underlying the temporal one. Though it is usually a fleeting

experience, it is the experiential foundation of religion, and the bedrock of idealist philosophy, for these many centuries. The wave-theory of the scientists has been around since the late nineteenth century. Mystical experience and Wave Theory have just never been associated together before. But today marks a momentous occasion. The recognition that the mystical experience provides experiential confirmation of the scientific theory of an underlying wave-based reality signals the long-awaited and undeniable *coincidence of science and mysticism* in our time. Halleluia!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES:

from James Jeans, Aberdeen Address to the British Association For The Advancement of Science, 1934, “The New World-Picture of Modern Physics”. The full text of James Jeans’ 1934 Aberdeen Address may be found at: http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html

2. *Ibid.*
3. See the description of that experience in my book, *The Supreme Self*, available on my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
4. from Frank Close (Oxford professor of Physics), *The Void*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 107.
5. The brilliant physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992) regarded these two ‘realms’—the Wavular and the Particulate—as the “Implicate Order” and the “Explicate Order” respectively. Here is an explication of Bohm’s vision by Michael Talbot:

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

become a seamless and unbroken whole—he calls the *implicate* order.

As we have seen, because everything in the universe is ultimately constituted out of things that exist at this unbroken level, the apparent separateness of objects at our own level of existence is also an illusion. ...Because we are constituted out of the nonlocal level, Bohm feels it is ultimately meaningless to speak about consciousness as having a specific location. It may manifest inside our heads while we function in life, but the true home of consciousness is in the implicate, says Bohm. Thus, consciousness, the great ocean of consciousness that has divided itself up into all human beings, also exists in all things. Despite its apparent inanimate nature, in its own way a rock is also permeated with consciousness. So are grains of sand, ocean waves, and stars.” (from Michael Talbot, *Mysticism And The New Physics*, New York, Penguin Group, 1993; p. 158 [originally published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981].)

* * *

6. NONLOCALITY

I. The Principle of Nonlocality

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

My ‘mystical’ realizations do reinforce the scientific findings of Nonlocality, but they are not the result of empirical investigations; rather, they are the result of a direct clarified *perception* of reality itself. In that direct clarified perception, it was perfectly clear to me that “all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” I saw, in other words, that all that is in the universe is integrally inter-connected and coordinated, so that ‘all things move together of one accord’. This view of physical reality, translated into the terminology acceptable to the scientific community, states that there are no independent causes or effects occurring solely in a local setting, but everything that occurs does so as a result of its existence within an interconnected, inter-related and coordinated web—that is to say, nonlocally. Here is a

particularly well-expressed version of that understanding presented by David Bohm and his co-author, Basil Hiley, in a 1975 article:

The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the 'parts' are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent 'elementary parts' of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum inter-connectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole. ¹

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

While the question of Nonlocality originally arose from the thought-experiment outlined in the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paper which Einstein submitted to Neils Bohr in 1935 in the attempt to prove Quantum Theory incomplete, the technological means to actually perform the empirical tests needed to determine the scientific basis for Nonlocality, proving Bohr correct and Einstein incorrect, did not present themselves until long after Einstein had passed away. In 1964, the theoretical physicist, John Bell, and experimenters Alain Aspect, in 1982, and Nicoluis Gisin, in 1997,

conclusively proved both by theorem and by empirical methods that “Nonlocality” is a scientific fact, and this fact has been universally accepted by the community of physicists throughout the world.

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

The scientific principle of *Nonlocality* simply expresses in an oddly roundabout way the fact that has been known for millennia by the faithful of all religions that we exist within a ‘reality’ imaged forth by the one Divine Mind, and in which everything that occurs is His doing and occurs within Him according to His omnipotent Providence. This being so, the activities taking place within the universe are not dependent upon ‘local’ causes; for there are seen to be no local causes or effects. The source of causation is hidden; it begins with the one Divine Mind and extends in an infinite network of effects throughout the universe to bring His purposes to fruition. We are simply His eyes and ears, His instruments of knowing and exultation, His singers and worshippers, His imagined others. We too are non-local, rooted in the infinite and eternal Cause, and extending throughout the expansive universe as wave-particles of the one living Being. Halleluia!

However, we humans believe strongly that we are independently directed entities, possessing something called “free will.” How, then, can we be considered to be merely “particular and contingent forms within the [interconnected] whole?”

We are merely particular and contingent forms within the Whole as a wave is merely a particular and contingent form within the ocean. But it may be objected that we humans are conscious; a wave is not; therefore, we humans are capable of self-determination, while the wave on the ocean is not. And that is a pertinent distinction: But we must understand that, ultimately, the Whole in which we are contained is one all-pervading Consciousness. And

that this all-pervading Consciousness is the only consciousness there is. You and I only possess consciousness because of the existence of that one all-pervading Consciousness; and if we thereby possess the ability to determine our own actions, we must understand that that determination is made by the one divine Consciousness as it is manifested within these particular, contingent forms.

The One (the Whole) is the only one who truly exists. He is the one who sees, and He is the one who is seen. He is the one who gives, and He is the one who receives. He is the one who thinks, even though that thought occurs in one of His particular and contingent forms. He is doing everything, even if it is done by one of His particular and contingent forms. There is no one else to think or do anything. He is the only One.

NOTES:

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

II. Complementarity

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

They found that ‘Wave-Particle Duality’ is simply the quantum ‘Uncertainty Principle’ in disguise.

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

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

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

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

In other words: If we perform an experiment that allows us to know the *position* of a wave-particle with some certainty, that experiment precludes the accurate knowledge of its *momentum* (velocity times mass); and if we perform an experiment that allows us to have accurate knowledge of the

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

All that we really know is that Matter, in its very tiniest forms, appears to us as either waves or particles. If we ask the question, 'Waves or particles of what?', we are back to the original electromagnetic impulses—elusively invisible forces created, governed, and coordinated by a transcendent Intelligence. That Intelligence that projects the Energy by which the material universe is formed is the same Intelligence, the one divine Consciousness, in which our individual consciousness exists. That one conscious Self, that Lord of the universe, is the ultimate Source of the progression of all causes—both mental and physical. He is the uncaused Cause, existing in Himself alone, remaining unaffected by all this busy world and all our mind-born creativity. And so, all enquiry comes to an end: we, with our material form and our conscious awareness, are projections of the one divine Mind. We consist of Him and live in Him; He is the one reality, our own eternal Self. And He is doing everything.

NOTES:

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

III. Freedom Or Determinism?

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

To physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992), this wave-particle duality indicated that there were two different planes or levels of reality: one invisible and beyond time and space, consisting of a field of spreading waves; and a second derivative plane manifesting in the physical time-and-space universe of particulate matter. The first, the subtle-level plane, he called “the implicate order”; and the second, the physical plane, arising from the former, he called “the explicate order”. He explained the wave-particle duality in terms of these two “orders”, both of which contribute to the appearance of our phenomenal world.²

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

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

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

The notion that we, and everything else in the universe, are either wave or particle depending on our perspective, has not yet sunk into the collective psyche; imagine how difficult it will be for humanity to come to terms with the understanding that, from the universal perspective of the divine reality, we are entirely at the mercy of the universal causal fiat, and that, from our limited soul perspective, we are entirely self-determined and solely responsible for our actions—in other words, that we are *both* the wavular manifestations of the one nondual continuum in the implicate order *and* that we are particulate as individual souls in the explicate order; that our wills are *both* determined *and* free! ³

Mystical experience such as that of my own and others, along with the experimental findings of respected physicists, leads us to acknowledge that

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

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

NOTES:

1. Neils Bohr: "Evidence obtained under different experimental conditions cannot be comprehended within a single picture but must be regarded as *complementary* in the sense that only the totality of the phenomena exhausts the possible information about the objects." This quote is from: "Discussions with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics". In P. Schilpp. *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*; New York, Open Court Publishing, 1949.
2. In the "mystical" experience that occurred to me in November of 1966 (see my book, *The Supreme Self*), I did indeed feel as though I had entered a different dimension, a different reality, from the one experienced ordinarily in which my identity was uniquely my own, separate and distinct from all others. It was as though these two dimensions, or realities, existed alongside

each other, but at uniquely different levels of consciousness, whereas in the one level of consciousness, I played my accustomed role in the physical world of distinct individual beings, and in the other level of consciousness I was omnipresent as a non-physical continuum extending within and throughout all things.

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

3. Ultimately, of course, the one ‘I’ is the sole reality. It is both Determiner and determined. The question of ‘who is determined by whom’ thus becomes moot. From the perspective of the unilluminated soul, the individual is certain that it is capable of willing its actions freely and independently. But when that soul is graced with the realization of its greater Self, it experiences itself no longer as soul but as eternal Self of all—the one Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. And then It knows that It is one, without a second, the One who is the Thinker and the thought, the Actor and the play, the Seer and the seen—all duality vanished like an imagined dream.

IV. All Things Move Together of One Accord

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

Sometimes we forget that all that exists in this world is created and controlled by God. All things do indeed move together in accord with His Divine Will, and assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. This is an unmistakable truth, experienced by the mystic, but I understand that for all others, it is not at all evident, and must remain merely a matter of faith. It is so easy to be misled and to forget the infallibility of the Divine Will, because oftentimes the affairs of the world

appear to our limited vision to be in error, or random, and ungoverned by His just and perfect Will. But time will prove all things right. His evolutionary plan and His vision will be vindicated in the end. Therefore, hold this faith above all: that everything is connected to His purpose, and all is ordered and occurs according to His will. Praise God!

NOTE:

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

7. TELEOLOGY

I. Why Does God Create The Universe?

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

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

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

Plotinus (3rd century A.D.) suggests that God’s Power to create was not the result of a willful act but was a natural and spontaneously produced “Circumradiation.” Here is Plotinus’ explanation of this circumradiation:

Given this immobility in the Supreme, It can neither have yielded assent nor uttered decree nor stirred in any way towards the existence of a secondary. What happened, then? What are we to conceive as rising in the innards of that immobility? It must be a circumradiation—produced from the Supreme but from the Supreme unaltering—and may be compared to the brilliant light encircling the sun and ceaselessly generated from that unchanging substance. ...There [in the One] is the Unity which is the potentiality of

all existence. ...The perfection entails the offspring; [for] a power so vast could not remain unfruitful. ²

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

He [the One] desired: 'May I be many, may I procreate. He performed *tapas* (created heat); and, having performed *tapas*, He created all this—whatever there is. Having created all this, He entered into it. Having entered into it, He became both the manifest and the unmanifest, both the defined and the undefined, both the supported and the unsupported, both the intelligent and the non-intelligent, both the real and the unreal. ³

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

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

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

NOTES:

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

II. Why We Are Here

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

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

But, if you ask me, from a mystic's point of view, there's really nothing in it for Him. He remains blissfully the same, no matter what. So, what's His motivation? Could it be He's simply demonstrating by example the epitome of a perfectly selfless act? Is He giving tirelessly of His blessings, radiating

mercy to every creature, in order to show us the path of blessedness and joy? His own glory is mirrored in millions of Suns throughout the cosmos, and we, in imitation, reflect His intrinsic love in our lives; and we pray: Mercy, Mother, on all Thy children. Mercy, Mother, give mercy to all.

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

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

III. The Purpose of God's Creation

God's purpose has suddenly dawned on me! Since I am He, and He is me, my joy is His joy, and His joy is mine. Isn't it obvious then that the summit of divine evolution comes when God, living and experiencing *as* a human soul in a human body, awakens to the truth that all this is Himself, that He is and has always been the one all-pervading Existence? God gets to experience the joy of this revelation not once, but in billions of different forms over an immense span of time and space. That, I believe, is the hidden purpose of His universal manifestation: to slowly evolve as human souls over lifetimes in utter blindness of ignorance, and then, in a time of

His own choosing, to suddenly awaken each of these beings from within themselves to the greatness and beauty and joyfulness of His own limitless and unfathomable being. In this cosmic game of hide-and-seek, the thrill of enlightenment is multiplied billions of times, and the sudden unveiling of His perfection in billions of souls that turn out to be Himself—*this* is His evolutionary game. This is the answer to the question, 'Why does He do it? What is the purpose of His Creation?' It is for this long prepared and multiply experienced Joy! It is an awesomely involved adventure, a prolonged drama, played out on countless far-flung stages, in countless unsuspecting hearts, each one culminating in Joy—the ever-new and unimaginable Joy of the discovery of one's own unbounded Self. What an exquisitely marvelous and satisfying game He has devised! Praise God!

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

IV. Why We Were Born

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

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

V. Praise God

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It's you and me who lives in that eternal sky
 While playing out our destined roles below.
 Two selves, one vigilant while tossing out the stars,
 The other strutting on this stage of dreams,
 Oblivious to the other, her subtler Self and Source.

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

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

VI. In Praise of God

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

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

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

We gather to give praise to God, not that we might please Him with our devotion, nor to make a show to others of our holy ways. Why, then, should we find pleasure in singing His praise? Is it not out of a pure love that

springs from God Himself and wells up to overflow within us? Is it not His own heart's Love that made us, and that fills our every fiber with a sweet desire? And is it not His inward flame of Love 'round which we, moth-like, dance, yearning to be extinguished in His unifying light?

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, let me ever remember my oneness, my identity, with Thee. For the lover, the Beloved, and the love itself, all are one. And I know: "I am

the Soul of all; I am the Light that illumines the world. I am as pure and vast as the infinite blue sky. I am the Self of all. I am the Self of all.”

VII. Song of Thanksgiving

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

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

O Hari look how wonderful is this story Thou dost tell!
 Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.
 Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is Thine
 And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and breath of life.
 Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing,
 Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light and love
 That bubbles up from Thy unfathomable depths
 Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful thanks.
 O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable Repose,
 Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and beast,
 With purpose known only to Thy own delight.
 And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us from within
 Through adventures great and small to bring us

Happily to our end in Thy boundlessly blissful Self.
 O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama
 Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,
 Frightful predicaments, and uproarious denouements!

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

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

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

8. GOD'S GRACE

I. Amazing Grace

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...There is, O monks, a state where there is neither this world nor any other world, nor is there any Sun or moon. There is neither a coming nor going, nor remaining, nor passing away, nor arising. Without support, without movement, It is the Foundation of everything.” ⁹

And this from a later Chinese Buddhist:

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

corner of the world. It is This we should become aware of and know.”¹⁰

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...It is a knowing of the [eternal] Self restored to its original purity. No doubt we should not speak of *seeing*; but we cannot help speaking in terms of duality, such as “the seer” and “the seen,” instead of asserting boldly that it is the attainment of absolute Unity. In this *seeing*, we neither regard an object nor perceive distinctions; for there are not

two. The man is altered, no longer himself nor belonging to himself; he is merged with the Supreme, sunken into It, one with It. ...Duality exists only in separation; by our holding ourselves apart from It, the Supreme is set outside of us. This is why the vision cannot be described; we cannot separate the Supreme from ourselves to speak of It, for if we have seen something separate and distinct, we have fallen short of the Supreme, which can be known only as one with oneself.

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

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

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

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

“...There is no existence save His existence. ...This means that the existence of the beggar is His existence, and the existence of the sick is His existence. Now, when this is admitted, it is acknowledged that all existence is His existence; and that the existence of all created things, both accidents and substances, is His existence; and when the secret of one particle of the atoms is clear, the secret of all created things, both outward and inward, is clear; and you do not see in this world or the next, anything except God.” ²²

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

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

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

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

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

“Therefore, know your Self, who you are, what is your

identity...²⁹ “He who knows himself knows his Lord;
...indeed, He is his very identity and reality.”³⁰

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

These are the testaments of a few of those to whom God has revealed Himself; perhaps He'll reveal Himself to you as well. It's all about your heart, you know: He's no fool; you must truly come to know that without Him you are nothing, and wholeheartedly offer Him your life and work. If all conditions are just right—if it is your time and place, and He has brought you to His love and Grace, perhaps He'll draw you into His heart and give you a taste of eternal bliss. It's worth a try! Have a talk with Him tonight.

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II. Seeing Is Believing

Our souls are rays of the one Sun, droplets of the one ocean of Joy, images of God's own Self; and when we are ripe for seeing, He opens our eyes: He reveals our true nature, showing us that we are His own Beauty, His own

unlimited Vastness, His own sweet Joy. He shows us who we have always been. It is this experience that prompted the authors of the Upanishads to proclaim, “That thou art”; it is this experience that prompted Jesus to declare “I and the Father are one”, and Mansur al-Hallaj to declare, *an al Haqq*, “I am the transcendent Reality”. It is this experience that provides the self-evident proof of our Divine Ground and ultimate Identity. It is an experience that is accessible, by the Grace of God, to the purified soul, through contemplative introspection.

The soul experiences its “union” with God when He reveals His eternal presence in the soul. This vision is the greatest attainment possible to man, and yet it is not an attainment that can be taught. The reason is that it is not something that can be accomplished by man. A man can only make himself receptive to it, but it is accomplished by God Himself. It is a gift. I am not speaking of the mere intellectual recognition of the fact that the one all-pervading Spirit is the only one who exists; the *experience* of union entails the actual upliftment of the soul to its divine Source, so that it is no longer aware of its separate existence on this earth, but knows itself, for as long as that experience lasts, as God—transcendent to the cosmos and yet the life and conscious Spirit pervading the cosmos. It is a going-out of the limited soul-identity and an awakening to the consciousness of an unlimited, eternal and all-inclusive Identity. All questions are answered in this altered awareness—or rather, they are dissolved away in the sweetness of eternity, an eternity that is realized to be one’s own indubitable Self. Truly, there are no words to describe this ‘awakening’; but it is the foundation of all religion and all philosophy, and the bedrock of all certainty and satisfaction.

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

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

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

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

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

moment, He offers us the choice of turning our intention to Him or to the illusory world:

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

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

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

NOTE:

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

III. The Mystery of God's Grace

It should be clear to everyone that we are not all equally capable of 'knowing' what has been known by the uniquely extraordinary beings who have seen God. Everything depends on our innate inclination, our specialized training, and of course the Grace of God. By "innate

inclination” I mean the soul-driven proclivities and talents constituting the karmic tendencies possessed by each soul. These ‘innate inclinations’ are wholly dependent upon the evolutionary development of our souls, which are, in turn, dependent, not only upon our own wills, but on the gracious direction of God. And so, we must acknowledge that the subtle spiritual knowledge that has been obtained by a few extraordinary men and women is not necessarily available to everyone; there must be a congruence of inclination, training, and God’s Grace, along with an inclination to the practice of meditation, prayer, and contemplation.

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

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

It would certainly be wonderful if one could truthfully and confidently say ‘Do this, and you will experience the unitive vision’, but in spiritual matters there is no direct causal relationship between voluntary acts and revelation such as there is between empirical injunctions, spelling out the conditions of the experiment, and the produced results. ‘Do this, and that will result’ is

sound and dependable advice when we are advising “release the ball, and you will see that it falls to earth”; but not necessarily as truthfully predictive when we are advising “practice meditation, and you will become enlightened”. If it was an easily reproducible experience, it is likely that enlightenment would have been widely accepted as a readily obtainable and commonly repeatable experience by now—which is certainly not the case.

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

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

The ‘causes’ of Grace cannot be discussed, of course; because only the One is privy to the factors that go into its bestowal. However, I am of the opinion, based on my visionary experience, that, in His universe, “all things move together of one accord”, and that many elements come together in the

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

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

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

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

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

Dadu says: I am nothing and can do nothing.
Truly, even a fool may reach Thee by Thy Grace. ²

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

NOTES:

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

IV. My Experience of God's Grace ¹

My little cabin in the redwoods was cool in the summer, but damp in the winter, as I discovered that first winter in '66. The little babbling brook

swelled to a cascading Colorado river in my backyard, and I had to catch water coming down the slope from the road in little waterfalls to get clear water for drinking or cooking. Each night I sat close to the cast-iron cooking stove, with the little side door open so I could watch the dancing blue and gold flames sizzle the oak logs and turn them to glowing ash.

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

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

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

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

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

And I'll be dead and gone forever after.
 O Adonai, just You, just You alone, forevermore.

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

O Adonai, I long to see you!
 All the day my heart is achin'.
 O Adonai, my heart is achin'.
 O where, O where are you?
 Don't leave me here forsaken.
 O Adonai, the day is over.
 Adonai, I'm tired and lonely.
 My tears have dried, and I'm awaitin'
 You; O Adonai,
 You know I love you only.

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

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

Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.
 I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.
 I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless.
 Nor shall I frighten any, for Love comes sweetly and meek.

I shall keep no violence within me,
 Neither in thought nor in deed, for Love comes peacefully.
 I shall bear no shield or sword,
 For the defense of Love is love.
 I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men,
 For love seeks Thee always.
 I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,
 And lift to them Thy countenance,
 For all are powerless before Thee.
 I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,
 Lest Thy light be extinguished by the winds.
 For without Thy light, I am in darkness.
 I shall go free in the world with Thee—
 Free of all bondage to anything but Thee—
 For Thou art my God, the sole Father of my being,
 The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart,
 And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,
 And lean on Thee till the end of my days.

November 18, 1966:

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

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

Then I became very quiet. I sat emptied, but very awake, listening to God’s silence. I balanced gingerly, quakingly, on the still clarity of nothingness. I became aware that I was scarcely breathing. My breath was very shallow, nearly imperceptible—close to the balance point, where it would become

non-existent. And my eyes peered into the darkness with a wide-eyed intensity that amazed me. I knew my pupils must be very large. I felt on the brink of a meeting with absolute clearness of mind. I hovered there, waiting. And then, from somewhere in me, from a place deeper than I even knew existed, a prayer came forth that, I sensed, must have been installed in my heart at the moment of my soul-birth in the mind of God: "Dear God, let me be one with Thee, not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children."

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

O my God, even this body is Thine own!

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

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

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

Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?

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

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

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

Or does a pebble cease to be stone?

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

How can I escape Thee?

Thou art even That which thinks of escape!

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

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

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

I love and create hatred.

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

I am in peace and am fashioning chaos.

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

Standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.

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

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

(But now I am experiencing the transcendent “stillness” of the One, where this alternation, this duality, of which creation is made, is no more. It is a clear awareness that all opposites are derived from the same ONE and are therefore dissolved. Laughing and its opposite,

weeping, are the peak and the trough which have become leveled in the stillness of the calmed ocean, the rippleless surface of the waters of Consciousness. Night and day have no meaning here: All is eternity.)

Music and silence are heard as one.

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

My ears are all the universe.

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

All motion has ceased.
Everything continues.

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

Life and death no longer stand apart.

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

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

(There is no longer a reference “I” that refers to a separate individual entity; there is no longer anything separate to refer to as “Thou.” This one knowing Consciousness, which is I, is all that exists or ever existed. Likewise, there is no “now” or “then”, for time

pertains only to the dream and has no meaning here beyond all manifestation.)

Unless I move, there is no stillness.

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

Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish.

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

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

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

All may now be told without effort.

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

Where is there a question?

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

Where is the temple?

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

Which the Imperishable?
Which the abode?

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

I am the pulse of the turtle.
I am the clanging bells of joy.

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

I bring the dust of blindness.
I am the fire of song.

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

I am in the clouds, and I am in the gritty soil.
In pools of clear water my image is found.

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

I am the dust on the feet of the wretched,
The toothless beggars of every land.

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

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

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

My hands are open—nothing is concealed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A million worlds begin and end in every breath,

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

And, in this breathing, all things are sustained.

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

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

NOTE:

1. This account of my mystical experience is excerpted from Swami Abhayananda, *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984. This book is freely downloadable along with many of my more recent books and articles at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

V. The Gift of Spiritual Vision

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

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

The prayer that precipitated this vision was the prayer of a soul, still caught in the illusion of a separate identity; yet the desire to praise God was God’s desire speaking through the soul, and, in this life, she has no other purpose but to honor that prayerful desire. It permeates this soul, and constitutes her task in this life, her only joy. It may be that she was given no mandate from God to teach; and it was she who asked to be united with Him in order that

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

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

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

into the world of phenomenal awareness. This is the carryover from the transcendent vision to the sensory vision here on earth.

She carries over from that higher realm no intellectual understanding of how a photon operates as both a particle and a wave, or how the force of gravity interacts with the moving earth. Let physicists puzzle over these dusty details; she is content to see her beauteous God in evidence all about her and within her. To abandon that untold treasure of joy to pick and peck amidst the crumbs of reason's paltry scrapings would be but the conduct of a fool. You can have it, you mathematicians and quantum mechanicians! You biochemists and cosmo-theoreticians! It's all been settled and displayed to her utmost satisfaction: Beauty beauty beauty everywhere, and the wine of intoxicating nectar in her cup! What needs she more?

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

* * *

-END of METAPHYSICS-

15. HOW TO KNOW GOD

(Consisting of Articles from *The Mystic's Vision*,
by Swami Abhayananda.

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Mystical Experience

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

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

It seems He has unique plans for each of us, and He brings each of us along the journey's path according to His own design. No one can know how or

when He will lead a person to His presence. You must make your intimate acquaintance with Him entirely by your own efforts within your own consciousness. Needless to say, even your own efforts are prompted by His Grace. So, just follow His inner promptings. Know that He is aware of your desire—in fact, He has initiated it; and He will eagerly meet you in the still of your heart when the time is right. Keep your mind on Him and He will continue to be mindful of you. And, when the time comes, when He has brought you to the purity of heart that is required, then He will bring you into His pure land, and you will be filled with His presence and know unlimited Being.

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

Amazing Grace

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

It is the gracious revelation of one's divine Identity, the soul's sudden realization that it is in God, is made of God, and is nothing else but God. It is this revelatory Grace which was visited on Heraclitus and Lao Tze; and it is the experience of that Grace that enlightened the Buddha, causing him to exclaim "I am Father of myself". It is that interior Grace that revealed to the Upanishadic *rishis* the truth that "Thou art That!" And it is the experience of that Grace that illumined Jesus when he was baptized by the Spirit in the river Jordan, leading him to declare, "I am in God and God is in me. I and the Father are one!" It is the Grace that awakened Plotinus to the unitive

vision of God, and also revealed to Meister Eckhart his oneness with God; it was also that “amazing” Grace that revealed to the Sufi mystic, Ibn Arabi, his own eternal Self; and there are those of us who experience this very special Grace even in these present days.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...There is, O monks, a state where there is neither this world nor any other world, nor is there any Sun or moon. There is neither a coming nor going, nor remaining, nor passing away, nor arising. Without support, without movement, It is the Foundation of everything.” ⁹

And this from a later Chinese Buddhist:

“In learning to be a Buddha, ...man should purify his mind and allow his spirit to penetrate the depths. Thus, he will be able to wander silently within himself during contemplation, and he will see the Origin of all things, obscured by nothing. ...His

mind becomes boundless and formless, ... all-illuminating and bright, like moonlight pervading the darkness. During that absolute moment, the mind experiences illumination without darkness, clarity without stain. It becomes what it really is, absolutely tranquil, absolutely illuminating. Though this all-pervading Mind is tranquil, the world of cause and effect does not cease; though It illumines the world, the world is but Its reflection. It is pure Light and perfect Quiescence, which continues through endless time. It is motionless, and free from all activity; It is silent, and self-aware. ...That brilliant Light permeates every corner of the world. It is This we should become aware of and know.”¹⁰

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

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

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

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

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

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

“In this breaking through [of consciousness], I find that God and I are both the same. Then I am what I [always] was; I

neither wax nor wane, for I am the motionless Cause that is moving all things.”¹⁵

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...There is no existence save His existence. ...This means that the existence of the beggar is His existence, and the existence of the sick is His existence. Now, when this is admitted, it is acknowledged that all existence is His existence; and that the existence of all created things, both accidents and substances, is His existence; and when the secret of one particle of the atoms is clear, the secret of all created things, both outward and inward, is clear; and you do not see in this world or the next, anything except God.” ²²

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

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

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

“It is none other than He who progresses or journeys as you. There is nothing to be known but He; and since He is Being itself, He is therefore also the journeyer. There is no knower

but He; so, who are you? Know your true Reality. ... He is the essential Self of all. But He conceals it by [the appearance of] otherness, which is “you.”²⁶

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

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

These are the testaments of a few of those to whom God has revealed Himself; perhaps He’ll reveal Himself to you as well. It’s all about your heart, you know: He’s no fool; you must truly come to know that without Him you are nothing, and wholeheartedly offer Him your life and work. If all conditions are just right—if it is your time and place, and He has brought you to His love and Grace, perhaps He’ll draw you into His heart and give you a taste of eternal bliss. It’s worth a try! Have a talk with Him tonight.³²

NOTES:

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3. *Isha Upanishad*, I.7; *Ibid*.
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6. *Bhagavad Gita*, 6:18-21; Mascaro, Juan, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1962.
7. *Bhagavad Gita*, 6:23-27; *Ibid*.

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

30. *Ibid.*; p. 153.
31. Landau, Rom, *The Philosophy Of Ibn Arabi*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1959; p. 79.
32. Anyone interested in reading my own account of the unitive experience, simply go to my website: www.themysticsvision.com, and click on the “Read or Download Books” page. There, you will find a listing for my book, *The Supreme Self*. It is in that book that I describe my own experience of “amazing grace”, and this book, as well as my other books, may be downloaded at no charge in a PDF format. Enjoy.

Self-Reliance

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

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

I am a great believer in freedom, and therefore recommend to all spiritual aspirants the path of independence, non-affiliation, and self-rule, which allows freedom to evolve. Even if conforming to the herd appeals to your desire for belonging to a community or for the possible attainment of some measure of authority; resist it; be your own master—even if it means you must deal with some loneliness and struggle. The greatest attainment is freedom—the freedom to give your heart entirely to God within you, and to think and act in accord with the dictates of your own divine Self. At the end

of a long and productive life, nothing will savor so sweetly to you as the satisfaction of being and having been wholly true to your Self.

We Who Have Been Blessed

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

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

Trust In God

It is not entirely agreed upon by humankind that the universe was created and is governed by a single divine Mind, but after centuries of careful examination of the evidence, the great majority of thinking people have accepted this hypothesis as the correct one. As this divine Mind is taken to be unborn and without progenitors, it is also accepted that He has no 'given' name but is referred to by various names according to the language of custom in various regions of the earth. Therefore, He has been called by

many different names, all of which are equally valid for the purpose of communing with Him, since He is ever-present as our very Soul and breath. Some call Him “Lord”, “Hari”, “Adonai”, or “Rahim”. I will refer to Him as “God”, a name said to be of Germanic or Gothic origin, and commonly accepted today by all English-speaking people.

God is not only the Creator and Governor of the universe, He is the Foundation of existence, being both the conscious Ground as well as the substance of the universe, and so comprises both our mind and our body, and all else that exists. All is contained in Him, and partakes of Him, and nothing has Being or existence other than in Him. This being so, we must ask ‘How is it possible for one to connect to God? How does one experience His presence?’ This question is like that of a wave on the ocean asking how it may connect to the ocean; or how it might experience the Ocean’s presence. As a wave is contained in the ocean, we are contained in God, and therefore we are able to know His presence both within and without. What more is there to be said?

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

Reach Out To God

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

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

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

The Path of Divine Love

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

But there is another point of view, which also asks to be heard; this is the view of those who extol the path of Divine Love, or *bhakti*. Those who

follow this devotional path say: “Oh, it is indeed true that your real Identity is the eternal Self, but how can you hope to become aware of that pure and perfect Self without first making your heart and mind pure? First you must foster in your heart the habit of love, and then you may become aware of the One who is unconditional Love.

“Foster in your mind the thought of oneness with all beings; then you may become aware of the One who is Unity itself. Your separative ego, your sense of individuality, keeps you apart from the awareness of the one Self; therefore, humble your ego before the eternal Self in the manner of a servant before his master, or a child before a parent, or a lover before her beloved. Then you will be prepared and able to experience the Infinite, the eternal Self.”

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

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

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

“aspects,” present in everyone to some degree, are necessary to our progress in the spiritual life.

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

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

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

In the Upanishads, we find a description of how the universe came into being: “This world,” it says, “arose from Bliss, lives in Bliss, and will eventually merge back into Bliss.”¹ This word, “Bliss,” is synonymous with the word, “Love.” Love is God. And Love is the universe. The supreme Lord has manifested Himself as this world out of Love. Existence is nothing but the loving throb of the Divine. I have seen that all this universe is the out-flowing radiance of God’s Love. Man, therefore, is nothing but a flame of Love. Within us is the Divine Love that is God. However, if we are not experiencing that Divine Love, we must ask

ourselves how we may discover, experience, and manifest that Love, that Bliss. Those who know, say that Love is attained by loving.

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

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

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

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

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

have the victory over all adversities, and thereby become confident in the power and goodness of God within us.

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

"Give Me your mind and give Me your heart; give Me your offerings and your adoration; and thus, with your soul in harmony, making Me your supreme goal, you shall truly come to Me." ²

And again:

"Only by love can men see Me, and know Me, and come unto Me. He who works for Me, who loves Me, who regards Me alone as his supreme goal, who is free from attachment to all things, and with love for all creation, he in truth comes to Me." ³

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

Philo Judaeus:

"Without Divine grace, it is impossible to leave the ranks of mortality; [but] when grace fills the soul, it is possessed and inspired, ...and hastens to that most glorious and loveliest of visions, the vision of the Uncreated." ⁴...The soul, stirred to its depth and maddened by heavenward yearning, [is] drawn by the truly existent Being and pulled upward by Him." ⁵

Plotinus:

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

St. John of the Cross:

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

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

Dattatreya:

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

Shankaracharya:

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

Sri Ramakrishna:

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

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

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

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

Meditation

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

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

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

NOTES:

1. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3:6.
2. *Bhagavad Gita*, 9:34.
3. *Ibid.*, 11:54.
4. Philo Judaeus, *On Drunkenness*, 145f.; Winston, David (trans.), *Philo Of Alexandria—The Contemplative Life, Giants, and Selections*; Ramsey, N.J., Paulist Press, 1981, p. 152.
5. Philo Judaeus, *Who Is The Heir?* 69f, *Ibid.*
6. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 38:6:22-23; Turnbull, Grace, (Ed.) *The Essence Of Plotinus*; N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1934; p. 199.
7. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame Of Love*, III:26-28; Kavanaugh, K. & Rodriguez, O., (trans.), *The Collected Works Of John Of The Cross*; Wash. D.C., ICS Publications, 1973; p. 620.
8. Dattatreya, *Avadhut Gita*, I:1; Abhayananda, 1992, p. 15.
9. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, III:37; Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1978, p. 112.
10. Sri Ramakrishna; Nikhilananda, Swami (trans.), *The Gospel Of Ramakrishna*, N.Y., Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942; pp. 173-174.
11. *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, III:12.

How To Meditate On The Self

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

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

This, of course, is why the Self is so hard to get a handle on; we are used to tackling the task of “knowing” by focusing on the object to be known, but, in

this case, it is the knowing Subject, which we are attempting to know. It is the Ground, the very Consciousness that is the background of knowing, the Screen, as it were, on which the thought-images appear.

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

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

Now, a great truth is pointed out in this saying of Hanuman’s: namely that our relationship to God, and our spiritual practice as well, is entirely dependent upon how we regard ourselves, upon what we believe ourselves to be. Because there are these different ways of thinking of oneself, there are also differences in the way one might approach God, the eternal Self. Notice that, in the first two ways in which Hanuman identifies himself, there is a separation between the subject and the object of reverence. Whether

identifying himself with the body or the soul, Hanuman regards himself as having a separate identity from Rama. In the one case, he relates to Rama as a servant, and in the second, he relates to Rama as a part to a whole; but in the third case, there is no separation, no relationship: Hanuman sees himself as not different from Rama.

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

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

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

So, what to do? The soul turns all its attention to the Self. It loves the Self

as a child loves its father or mother. It longs for the embrace of the Self as a lover longs for her beloved. It offers all its thoughts and actions in the service of the Self, as a devoted servant offers himself to his master. A soul endeavors to close the gap between itself and its God by setting aside time to think lovingly on the Self. To wash away all other distracting thoughts, it continually sings in its heart its mantra: the name of the beloved Self. It sings songs of love, it prays, it meditates, it languishes, it agonizes, it becomes pathetic.

At last, all the clouds of ego, or error, are dispersed, and the bright light of the Sun shines through; the Self reveals Itself resplendently in the consciousness-sky of the soul; and the soul cries out: “O my God! I am you and you are me! All along, there has only been this one Mind, playing the game of ‘I’ and ‘Thou.’” The ray realizes it is only sunlight, and has never been apart from its true self, the Sun; the thought-image realizes it is nothing but mind and has never been separate from the mind; the wave realizes it is only ocean and has never been separate from the ocean.

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

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

But how, you may wonder, is it possible to experience the Self by the Self? What is one to do with the exuberantly effusive mind? Does one continually repeat in one’s mind, “I am the Self! I am the Self!”? No. The method of mantra repetition is helpful, and even necessary, in the early stages of devotional practice; but, in the path of nondual meditation, it is not helpful. Certainly, repetition of a mantra is the way to occupy the mind and force it

to pay attention to one single thought to the exclusion of all else, but nondual meditation is intended to go beyond the process of thought. The Self is pure Consciousness, absolute Awareness; does it make sense then for one who wishes to experience this awareness to give it a name and call out to it? This is like painting the words, “blank wall,” on a wall in order to reveal the blankness of the wall; or like using black paint to color a house white. The active thought-producing mind is exactly that which stands in the way of your awareness of the Self. To use it to produce even more thought-forms is not the way to become aware of the Self. It is like flashing more and more words on a screen instructing you to look only at the screen until the screen cannot be seen at all.

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

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

Concentrate on this process and think of nothing else. Aspire to lift your consciousness to the crown of the head, while breathing in with the sound,

So, and out with the sound, *Ham*. This is the famous *Hamsah* mantra, which is sounded as *So-ham*. The phrase, *So-ham*, consists of two Sanskrit words: *Sah*, “That,” and *aham*, “I am.” Let its meaning permeate your awareness as you rise into the light at the crown of your head. Become aware, “I am That!”

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

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

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

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

"One who has drunk of the nectar of Self-awareness may say whatever he likes; his silent contemplation remains undisturbed. His state of actionlessness remains unaffected—even though he performs countless actions.¹ Whether he walks in the crowded streets

or remains sitting in his room, he is always at home. His “rule of conduct” is his own sweet will. His meditation is whatever he happens to be doing.”²

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

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

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

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

"Everything is contained in the being of God. If a desire for the Master-servant relationship arises, it is God alone who must supply

both out of Himself. Even the devotional practices, such as repetition of God's name, faith and meditation, are not different from God. Therefore, God must worship God with God, in one way or another."

3

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

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

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

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

Second, have a regular place in which to meditate where it's quiet and you will be undisturbed. Sit in a comfortable position. Yogic texts recommend various postures, but always insist on a straight spine, so that the subtle

energy (*prana*) may flow freely to the head.

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

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

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

Meditation

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

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

1. **NOTES:**

1. Jnaneshvar, *Amritanubhav*, 9:20-21; Abhayananda, 1989, p. 207.
2. *Ibid.*, 9:31, 34; p. 208.
3. *Ibid.*, 9:38-41; p. 209.
4. *Ibid.*, 9:35-36; pp. 208-209.
5. *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, 3:12.

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

(Excerpted from *The Supreme Self* by Swami Abhayananda.
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“Of all the means to liberation, devotion is the highest.

“To seek earnestly to know one’s real nature—this is said to be devotion.” ¹

—Shankaracharya, *Vivekachudamani*

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

“Having attained it, he desires nothing else, he strives for nothing else. Having realized that supreme Love, a man becomes as if intoxicated; he delights only in his own intrinsic bliss.” ²

—Narada, *Bhakti Sutras*

1. THE APPEARANCE OF DUALITY

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

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

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

However, there are some other religious traditions, which seem to practitioners of devotion to be entirely alien to religion altogether, as they only profess to seek knowledge of the Self. Such traditions, like the yogic,

the Vedantic, and the Buddhist, in their esoteric form, are Nondual; that is, they take as their starting point the non-difference between the individual's identity and the Cosmic Identity. Their practice is intended to uncover or reveal the underlying unity of the individual self and the universal Self. Put a little differently, they seek to reveal the Divine Identity inherent within us all.

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

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

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

At the mental, conceptual, level, the love of God, with all its moods and bargaining, is quite a different thing from the meditation on the Self, which

is quiet, empty, unwavering, and keenly discriminative. It is only when one reaches to a level of nonverbal sweetness, high above the bustling commerce of the mind, above the conniving of the intellect, and the self-involvement of the soul, that the two paths become single, united in a common stream of upward-flowing joy which knows no separation, knows no duality of kind or purpose.

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

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

I knew, intellectually, that the duality between "me" and "God" was an artificial one. I knew that to take the attitude of love for God required a sort of pretense of "two-ness;" but the very existence of the active mind demanded such a relationship. In order to disengage my mind from its aimless wandering and to focus it on the eternal Silence, I had to have a point of focus, and that point of focus was that infinite Intelligence which I addressed as "Hari." Yes, I knew that this ego-self was included in and inseparable from that greater Self, but I also knew instinctually that, if I was to truly *know* the eternal Truth directly, I had to turn away from conceptual

knowledge and concentrate with all the yearning of my soul on that pure and silent Awareness that lived beyond the active mind.

For me, it was love that ushered in the knowledge of the eternal Self; it was love that erased the sense of individual selfhood, allowing the true Self to be revealed. Previous to that unitive revelation, I sought God as a servant, as a soul at the feet of my Lord and Creator, feeling the delicious yet still distant presence of His love and guidance within me. “I” was this separate person, living in the wilderness, and “He” was the Divine Source of all, to whom I prayed, and who I sought to know through submission to His Will and through the continual remembrance of His presence in and as the world about me.

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

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

However, long after the destruction of my beloved *Imitation of Christ*, I came to see that, even after the realization of the eternal Self, there persists the stubborn habits of thought and the convincing sense of bodily separateness and individuality; and it is that false individuality (ego) which necessitates the re-establishment of the dualistic relationship with the true Self. So long as that ego exists, the duality of “I” and “Thou” exists; and so, the devotional relationship between the soul and God goes on. And the occasions when the ego is dissolved in God, and Unity alone reigns, are few

and far between. It seems that the Self, the One, insists on taking the role of both God and devotee in order to enjoy the relationship of loving soul to loving God. Whether we like it or not, the One will not be denied the enjoyment of playing this game of duality with Himself; and so, there is no way to avoid this dualistic drama of devotion.

I had been shown that the consciousness that lived in this body, the consciousness that animated the thoughts arising as wisdom, and moved this body and all bodies—that consciousness was, and had always been, the one Consciousness that filled all things. I was not merely the wave; I was the Ocean. But the wave continued to exist! I was not simply the Ocean; I was the wave as well. I was a *jnani*, but I was still a *bhakta* as well.

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

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

Frequently, the clear realization dawns within me that there are not two, but only I AM. And at such times I embrace the nondual attitude expounded by the *jnanis*. At other times, I am the humble servant of God, trembling in His Light, asking only to fulfill the service I have pledged to my merciful and gracious Lord. These two paths, though they seem so contrary one to the

other, are both necessary and true from their own perspectives. The unitive view is, of course, the truth, the final and only Truth. And yet, the world-illusion has its own sort of reality, as it is produced by God, and the appearance of a separate identity also has its own ephemeral reality by God's design.

To say, "I am God," as Mansur al-Hallaj did, is offensive to the *bhakta*, for it denies the separate existence and fallibility of the individual soul; and to say, "I am the servant of God," does not satisfy the *jnani*, for it asserts a duality where none in fact exists. I am convinced that, if we are to speak truly and to live realistically, it is necessary to embrace *both* attitudes, and to relinquish the logic, which begs for an either/or approach to identity. The greatest contemplatives who ever lived, having pondered this quandary, have come to the same conclusion, and have taken a position, which defies categorization into one classification or another.

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

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

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

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

hear that perfect blending of the devotion of the *bhakta* and the unitive knowledge of the *jnani*:

O brothers, the love of God is sweet!
Wherever I go, I offer salutations to the Lord;
Whatever I do is an act of worship to Him.
In sleep, I reverence Him; I bow my knee to no other.

Whatever I utter is His Name;
Whatever I hear reminds me of Him.
Whatever I eat or drink is to His honor.
To me, society and solitude are one,
For all feelings of duality have left me.
I have no need to practice austerity,
For I see Him smiling everywhere
As the supreme Beauty in every form.
Whether sitting, walking or performing actions,
My heart remains pure, for my mind remains fixed on God.
Says Kabir: "I have experienced the divine state
Beyond joy and suffering, and I am absorbed in That."
O brothers, the love of God is sweet! ⁴

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

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

...One may purchase a necklace, earrings, or a bracelet—but it is only gold, whichever one receives. One may gather a handful of ripples—but it is only water in the hand. ... Likewise, the sensible universe is only the vibration of the Self. ...There is

really no action or inaction; everything that is happening is the sport of the Self.

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

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

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

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

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

...This spontaneous natural devotion cannot be touched by the hand of action, nor can knowledge penetrate it. It goes on without end, in communion with itself. What bliss can be

compared to this? This natural devotion is a wonderful secret. It is the place in which meditation and knowledge become merged.

...O blissful and almighty Lord! You have made us the sole sovereign in the kingdom of perfect Bliss. ...We are Yours entirely. Out of love, You include us as Your own, as is befitting Your greatness. ...Would the scriptures have extolled You, if, by sharing it with Your devotee, Your unity were disturbed? O noble One! It is Your pleasure to become our nearest and dearest by taking away from us our sense of difference from You. ⁵

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

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

THE SONG OF LOVE

Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.
I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.
I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless;
Nor shall I frighten any,
For Love comes sweetly and meek.

I shall keep no violence within me,
Neither in thought nor in deed,
For Love comes peacefully.
I shall bear no shield or sword,
For the defense of Love is love.

I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men,
For love seeks Thee always.
I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,
And lift to them Thy countenance,
For all are powerless before Thee.

I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,
Lest Thy light be extinguished by the winds;
For without Thy light, I am in darkness.

I shall go free in the world with Thee—
Free of all bondage to anything but Thee—
For Thou art my God, the sole Father of my being,
The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart;
And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,
And lean on Thee till the end of my days.

THE SONG OF THE SELF

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

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

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

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

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

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

I am the pulse of the turtle;
 I am the clanging bells of joy.
 I bring the dust of blindness;

I am the fire of song.
 I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil;
 In pools of clear water my image is found.

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

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

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

2. THE ULTIMATE UNITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

God is always accessible to us as our own Self. We have only to quiet the mind to become aware of our eternal Identity. And even when we are active in the world we are continually in His presence. If we can refine our vision and become aware of the dual-sidedness of our own nature, we will then be able to see that not only are we the Self, but everything around us is also the

Self. The subject is the Self; the object is the Self. Truly, no matter who or what I see or speak to, it is really only my own Self. If we could really grasp the truth of this, what a revolution would occur in our thinking and behavior!

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

Just as a chess-player retains the awareness that the antagonism between him and his opponent is merely a temporary game of role-playing, and that, at the end of the game, both the red and the black pieces will be thrown into the same box—in the same way, one who has clearly experienced the unbroken Whole retains the knowledge of the ultimate Unity, and sees the play of subjects and objects as the ongoing pretense or play of the one Self in whom all contraries must finally merge.

This is why, after more than fifty years since His revelation to me, I cannot forget Him: He is always in my thoughts; His name is sounded in my mind at every moment, and I see Him around me in every form, in every activity. When I walk, I walk in His presence in great gladness; when I sit, I sit in the awareness that all is perfect, all is His glorious play. I play out the role He has given me to play, and I watch Him in all His other forms playing out the roles destined for those souls: the mother, the businessman, the sports hero, the physicist, the druggist, the doctor, the artist.

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

There is nothing else here but the Self. Whether appearing as the *seen* or perceiving as the *seer*, nothing else exists besides

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

3. DEVOTION AND GRACE

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

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

It is of this Love that Sri Ramakrishna sang:

How are you trying, O my mind, to know the nature of God?
 You are groping like a madman locked in a dark room.
 He is grasped through ecstatic love.

How can you fathom Him without it?
 When that Love awakes, the Lord,
 Like a magnet, draws to Him the soul. ⁷

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

Consider the great Shankaracharya's final message to the disciple in his *Vivekachudamani* ("The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination"):

Gurus and scriptures can stimulate spiritual awareness, but one crosses the ocean of ignorance only by direct illumination, *through the grace of God*. ⁸

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

Another Tantric scripture, the *Tantraloka*, states:

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

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

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

Among the Christian mystics, we find complete agreement on this issue; Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, says: "You would not seek Him at all, O soul, nor love Him at all, if you had not been first sought and first loved."¹⁰ And Meister Eckhart acknowledges: "It is He that prays in us and not we ourselves."¹¹

The Blessed Jan Ruysbroeck concurs:

Contemplation places us in a purity and radiance which is far above our understanding, ...and no one can attain to it by knowledge, by subtlety, or by any exercise whatsoever; but he whom God chooses to unite to Himself, and to illumine by Himself, he and no other can contemplate God.¹²

We find the same agreement among the Sufi mystics, the Hindus and the Buddhists. It is always so—always. And though the attempt is often made by charlatans to translate the description of the mental state of the mystic at the time of his experience of unity into a sort of "method" or "scientific technique" for the attainment of God, no one has ever claimed that the following of such a technique has actually produced the advertised result. For, by themselves, the practices of shallow breathing, fixed stares, and

cessation of thought, will never produce the experience of unity. This experience comes only by the Will of God. Nanak, the great founder of the Sikh tradition, acknowledging this truth, wrote:

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

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

Omniscient God, it is by Thy grace alone that I have been
blessed with vision of Thee.
Thou knowest all; what can I say?
All-knowing God, I can conceal nothing from Thee.
I have nothing that deserves Thy grace.
No one can reach Thee by his own efforts;
Thou showest Thyself by Thine own grace.
How could I approach Thy presence?
By what means could I gain Thy favor?
And by what powers of mind or body could I attain to Thee?
It hath pleased Thee in Thy mercy to take me under Thy wing.
Thou alone art the Beginning and the End;
Thou art the Creator of the three worlds.
Dadu says: I am nothing and can do nothing.
Truly, even a fool may reach Thee by Thy grace. ¹⁴

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

When He draws the mind to Himself, the mind becomes still automatically. It is not necessary to attempt to still the mind by austere practices or artificial methods. The body becomes still, the mind becomes still when the heart is yearning sincerely for Him alone. Everything happens very naturally by His

grace. One begins to begrudge the mind any thought other than the thought directed to God. And with the aim of centering the mind continually on Him, one begins to sing His name in the inner recesses of the mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The point I wish to make is that the time of peak receptivity, the time of grace, is short; and should be cherished and utilized with care. Once that unmistakable awakening has occurred, find some time to enjoy a period of solitude with God. You will learn more in such moments than in a thousand congregational lectures. Forge your link with God, and He will lead you to Himself. He will draw you to love Him, for He Himself is that Love that has awakened in you as love for God. He will draw you to seek Him in prayer and in silent longing, for He is your own heart. Follow, and you will reach Him. Draw near to Him in the silence of the night and He will reveal Himself to you as your very deepest Self, your eternal Identity.

There are some who feel the need to follow closely in the shadow of some great spiritually aware personage in order to learn to live in harmony with their own Divinity; but they should be wary of surrendering their own innate intelligence in service to another, however holy he or she may seem. Teachers are often necessary, and their Divinity is worthy of honor; but dependence on another is full of danger and is to be avoided. Depend upon God; it is *His* grace you seek, and the awakening of Love within your own heart. *That* is the only fee for entrance into the kingdom of God.

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

NOTES:

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3. Ruysbroeck, Jan, *The Sparkling Stone*, X
4. Kabir, adapted from Shastri, H.P., *Indian Mystic Verse*, London, Shanti Sadan, 1941; p. 49.
5. Abhayananda, Swami, *Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works Of The Celebrated Thirteenth Century Indian Mystic-Poet*, Olympia, Wash., Atma Books, 1989, 1994; *Amritanubhav*, IX: 1, 7, 12, 13, 15, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 49, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 65, 67, 70, 71.
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7. Nikhilananda, Swami (trans.), *The Gospel Of SriRamakrishna*, New York, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942.
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10. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On The Song Of Songs*, Sermon LXXXIV.4.
11. Blackney, R.B., *Meister Eckhart, A Modern Translation*, New York, Harper & Bros., 1941; p. 109.
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13. Singh, Trilochan, *et al.*, (eds.), *Selections from The Sacred Writings Of The Sikhs*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1960; p. 42.
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17. THE MEETING OF HEART AND MIND¹

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

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

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

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

One of the great devotional scriptures of the Vedantic tradition, the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, states: "The essence of all yoga consists in withdrawing the mind from the objects of sense and fixing it on God alone." Continuing, it says, "The mind must be engaged in one thing or another: if it meditates on

sense-objects, it becomes worldly; if it meditates on God, it becomes Divine.”

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

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

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

The 19th century saint, Sri Ramakrishna, was fond of bringing out this truth in his conversations and his songs. Here is one such song:

“How are you trying, O my mind, to know the nature of God?
 You are groping like a madman locked in a dark room.
 He is grasped through ecstatic love.
 How can you fathom Him without it?
 And, for that love, the mighty yogis practice yoga from age to age.
 Then, when love awakes, the Lord, like a magnet, draws to Him
 the soul.
 It is in love’s elixir only that He delights, O mind!
 He dwells in the body’s inmost depths, in everlasting Joy.”

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

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

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

You see, in the experience of the One, there’s no place for two; one of the two must go. Whether your focus is on God or on the Self, you must

transcend the (illusory) separate self, the ego. The path of love, says Kabir, is too narrow for two to travel; the ego must yield to the Beloved. “Very subtle,” he says, “is the path of love! There, one loses one’s self at His feet. There, one is immersed in the joy of the seeking, plunged in the depths of love as the fish in the depths of the water. The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord’s service. This, Kabir is declaring, is the secret of love.”

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

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

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

behold a hundred thousand souls dancing toward the deadly sword of his love!”

This is a recurrent theme among the devotional poets of the Sufi tradition. Kabir, whom I quoted a moment ago, asks of the devotee:

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

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

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

You see, Sri Ramakrishna understood that, so long as this universe exists, the apparent duality of soul and God exists. Until such time as God merges the soul into Himself, both of these exist. We are the absolute Consciousness, to be sure; but we are also His manifested images. We are Brahman, but we are also (imaginings within His) Maya; we are Shiva, but we are also Shakti; we are the universal Self, but we are also the individualized self. It is foolish not to acknowledge both sides of our nature. Failing to do so only leads us into great conflicts and difficulties. If we deny and neglect the existence of the soul, asserting only, “I am the

one pure Consciousness,” the active soul will rise up and make us acknowledge its presence. The only way to lead the soul to the experience of its all-pervasiveness is to teach it love for God, to transform it into Divine Love. The soul that goes on expanding its power to love eventually merges into absolute Love and awakes to the truth that it *is* Love.

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

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

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

“It is by crying and pining for Him that the One is found. In times of adversity and distress as well as in times of well-being and good fortune, try to seek refuge in the One alone. Keep in mind that whatever He, the All-Beneficent, the Fountain of Goodness, does, is wholly for the best.

“He alone knows to whom He will reveal Himself and under which form. By what path and in what manner He attracts any particular person to Himself is incomprehensible to the human intelligence. The path differs for different pilgrims. The love of God is the only thing desirable for a human being. He who has brought you forth, He who is your father, mother, friend, beloved and Lord, who has given you everything, has nourished you with the ambrosia streaming from His own being—by whatever name you invoke Him, that name you should bear in mind at all times.

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

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

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

“It is necessary to dedicate to the Supreme every single action of one’s daily life. From the moment one awakes in the morning, until one falls asleep at night, one should endeavor to sustain this attitude of mind. ... Then, when one has sacrificed

at His feet whatever small power one possesses, so that there is nothing left that one may call one's own, do you know what He does at that fortunate moment? Out of your littleness He makes you perfect, whole, and then nothing remains to be desired or achieved.

“The moment your self-dedication becomes complete, at that very instant occurs the revelation of the indivisible, unbroken Perfection, which is ever revealed as the Self.”

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

Meditation

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

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

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

“What I live for, Thou art. My only desire, Thou art. The sole fulfillment of all my dreams, the treasure for which my soul yearns, Thou art. O God of my soul, blood of my heart, let me not forget Thee for a single moment! O God of gods grant me this boon that I may ever remember Thee who art

my soul's support and strength and let me love Thee and praise Thee ever in my heart!"

The Secret of Natural Devotion

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

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

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

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

Or as a slab of gold might become
Articles of jewelry
For the sake of beauty.
Just so, the one pure Consciousness becomes
The enjoyer and the object of enjoyment,

The seer and the object of vision,
Without disturbing Its unity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even one who has attained wisdom

May appear to become the enjoyer
 Of the sense objects before him.
 But we do not know
 What his enjoyment is like.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He does not allow room
 For either remembering or forgetting.
 For this reason,

His behavior is not like that of others.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The temple, the idol, and the priests—
 All are carved out of the same stone mountain.
 Why, then, should there be devotional worship?

[Or why shouldn't there be devotional worship?]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It goes on without end,

In communion with itself.
What bliss can be compared to this?

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE:

1. The above articles are from *The Mystic's Vision*, Volume One, and may be found online at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

18. SING THE NAME OF GOD

A Compilation of Articles from The Mystic's Vision

by Swami Abhayananda

Dedicated to the Public Domain 2-25-2020

Haripatha: Sing Hari

In addition to his major metaphysical works, *Jnaneshvari* and *Amritanubhav*, Jnaneshvar (1271-1296) composed a number of devotional songs as well. In them, he sings of his inner experiences and of his love of God and his Guru, Nivrutti. One such collection of songs is Haripatha, or “Sing Hari,” in which he utilizes a traditional poetic form to extol the practice of the repetition of the name of Hari, an endearing name for God.¹ These songs, presumed to have been written during Jnaneshvar’s years at Pandharpur, are sung to various melodies in Maharashtra to this day, in their original Marathi.

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

Haripatha

I.

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

The authors of the Vedas and the various scriptures
 Have all proclaimed this path with their arms upraised.
 Jnanadev says: chant Hari's name.
 The Lord will then become your slave,
 Just as Krishna became the servant of the Pandavas,
 As Vyasa, the poet, has so excellently told.

II.

In all the four Vedas, Hari's praise is sung.
 The six systems of philosophy, and the eighteen Puranas
 Also sing Hari's praise.
 Just as we churn curds for the purpose of getting butter,
 Likewise, we churn the Vedas, philosophies, and the Puranas
 For the purpose of tasting the sweet butter of Hari.
 Hari is the goal; the rest is mere tales.

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

III.

This insubstantial universe, this web
 Of interacting qualities (*gunas*),
 Is but His superficial form.
 His essence is the formless 'I'
 Which is always the same,
 Unaffected by the interplay of the qualities.
 If you discriminate in this way, you will understand
 That the continual remembrance of Hari
 Is the supreme goal to be attained.
 Hari is both the Formless and the changing forms.
 Remember Him, lest your mind wander idly away.

He, Himself, has no form.
 He cannot be seen.
 He cannot be bound to a single form.

He's the Source of all forms,
 Both the animate and the inanimate.
 Jnanadev says: Rama-Krishna, the Lord,
 Has pervaded my mind.
 He is all I meditate on.
 Blessed is this birth!
 I seem to be reaping infinite fruits
 From the good deeds I performed in the past.

IV.

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

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

V.

You may perform the rites of sacrifice,
 Or follow the eight-fold path of yoga,
 But neither will bring you to peace.
 These are only tiresome activities of the mind,
 And usually bring only pride.
 Without true, heart-felt love for God,
 You'll not attain knowledge of Him.
 How is it possible to experience union with Him

Without the Guru's grace?
 Without the discipline of *sadhana*,
 He cannot be attained.

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

VI.

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

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

VII.

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

How can those who are ceaselessly gossiping
 Ever attain the vision of God?
 Jnanadev says: That which lives
 As the Self of everyone and everything is my only treasure.
 That is Hari.
 It is He alone I adore.

VIII.

If our minds incline us to the company of the saints,
 Then we'll acquire the knowledge of God.
 Let your tongue be ever chanting His name.
 Let your hunger be ever for Him.
 Even Shiva, who is absorbed in His own Self,
 Loves to hear the repetition of God's name.
 Those who single-mindedly chant His name
 Will realize Him and be freed from duality.
 They'll revel forever in the awareness of Unity.
 Those lovers of God who drink the nectar of His name
 Enjoy the same sweetness that yogis enjoy
 When their Kundalini Shakti awakes.

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

IX.

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

Unless the Guru sweeps away the sense of duality,
 How could he who has no knowledge

Relish the sweetness of chanting God's name?
 Jnanadev says: Repetition of the Lord's name
 Is really a meditation on Him.
 By chanting Hari's name,
 All illusion is dissolved.

X.

You may take a bath
 In the confluence of the three holy rivers,
 You may visit all the sacred pilgrimage places.
 But if your mind does not always rest
 In the name of the Lord,
 All your efforts are in vain.
 He is very foolish who turns away
 From remembrance of God's name.
 When the soul is drowning in misery,
 Who else but God will rush to its aid?

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

XI.

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

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

Jnanadev says: All-powerful is my Hari.
 Even the Upanishads

Have failed to express His greatness.

XII.

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

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

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

XIII.

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

When one attains to God,
 All miraculous powers are also attained.
 But of what use are these powers by themselves
 Without the bliss of *samadhi*?
 In such a case, they are only obstacles

To one's progress on the path.
 Jnanadev says: I have become supremely fulfilled
 In the continual remembrance of Hari.

XIV.

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

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

XV.

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

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

XVI.

It is an easy thing to chant the name of God,
 Yet they are few who chant His name
 With full awareness of its power.
 Whoever has attained the experience of *samadhi*
 By chanting His name
 Has acquired all the miraculous powers as well.

If you unfailingly commit yourself
 To chanting His name,
 Then miraculous powers, intellectual brilliance,
 And a disposition toward righteousness,
 All will be yours.
 Thus, will you cross the ocean of illusion.
 Jnanadev says: The Lord's name has become
 Engraved on my heart.
 Because of this,
 I see Hari, my Self, everywhere.

XVII.

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

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

XVIII.

One who reads the scriptures devotedly,
 Who repeats Hari's name,
 And keeps company with no one but Hari,
 Attains heaven.
 He earns the merit of bathing in all the holy rivers.
 But piteous is he who chooses

To indulge his mind in its wandering ways.

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

XIX.

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

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

XX.

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

For one who chants the name of God,
Neither yoga nor the ritual of *yajna* is needed.
The injunctions of duty do not pertain to him.
He transcends all illusion.

Jnanadev says: No other practices,
Or rituals, or rules of conduct are necessary
For one who chants the name of Hari with love.

XXI.

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

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

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

XXII.

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

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

“It is greater than that of the sky above.”

XXIII.

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

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

XXIV.

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

Do not become conscious of your position and your wealth,
Your family lineage, or your virtuous acts.
All these considerations produce only pride.
Hasten only to sing Hari’s name with great love.

Jnanadev says: Hari pervades my mind and my meditation.
I feel every moment that I'm living in Him.

XXV.

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

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

XXVI.

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

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

XVII.

There is no pleasure as sweet as His name.
All the scriptures declare
That it's the secret to be attained.
So, do not spend even a moment
Without enjoying the nectar of His name.
This world is only a superficial play.

It is only an imagination, after all.
 Without the remembrance of Hari,
 It's only a futile round of births and deaths.

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

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

NOTES:

1. This 'Haripatha' by Jnaneshvar is from Swami Abhayananda, *Jnaneshvar: The Life & Works of The Celebrated 13th Century Indian Mystic-Poet*, Atma Books, Olympia, Wash., 1989; pp. 221-234. If you would like to own this book, you may freely download it in PDF format from the "Downloads" page on my website at www.themysticsvision.com.

The Object of Our Love

Everyone knows that the form is transient and impermanent, while the essence is unchanging and everlasting. We see this clearly as we note the inevitable changes in our own bodies and note as well the constancy of our inner divinity as we age. And yet, it seems that in our popular culture we tend to value the individual over the universal essence of which the individual is but a form. We proudly announce our love for this or that particular person, though the truth is that who we are in love with is God, manifest in the form of a human being. It is only God's beauty that attracts us and fills us with love and longing. If we attribute that lovability to the individual person, we are soon disillusioned and disappointed, as the beauty and perfection of which

we have become enamored sadly turns out to be marred by human imperfection and is subject to old age, death and dissolution. Therefore, we must acknowledge that it is God's eternal beauty that we have fallen in love with, for He alone is capable of inspiring our love and He alone is worthy of being the object of our love.

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

When You Sing The Name of God In Your Heart

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

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

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

The caller recognizes suddenly from whence the song arose
And turns his attention to the "I" from whom all "I's" derive.

The consciousness that seeks His embrace
Is conscious of itself, above the breathing, beneath the song,
And finds, amazed, the One it sought.

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

This eternal breathless sky of Mind
Is the Source of breath and song.
The seeker and the One who's sought
Reveal that they are one.

Remembering God

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

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

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

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

Japa: The Remembrance of God

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

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

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

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

Eknath lived from 1548 to 1609 C.E. When he was still a young boy, he heard a voice speaking to him in his meditation, which said, “Go to Devgiri Fort!” Now, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this Fort had been a glorious castle, the center of a great kingdom, but now it was merely ruins. And when Eknath went there and searched among the ruins, he found living there the man who was to become his Guru, whose name was Janardan Swami. Under the tutelage of Janardan, Eknath became a great yogi, and later wrote many wonderful works.

One day, during his adult years, while he was meditating, Eknath saw in his meditation a vision of Jnaneshvar, a great saint who had lived three centuries before him in the same region. Jnaneshvar, who had entered his tomb alive at the age of twenty-five, was seen in this vision sitting in his tomb at Alandi, where a root from a nearby tree had encircled his neck and was choking off the prana in his still-living body.

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

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

***Haripatha* ("Sing The Name Of God")
by Eknath Maharaj**

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

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

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

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

5. That mouth is a rat-hole, which does not sing the name.
 That tongue is a viper that lives therein.
 That unscented speech is the shriek of a witch.
 That life is accursed. In hell suffering awaits.
 Not wife, or wealth, or children, but only Hari, can save you.

In your final journey, you'll travel alone.
 Therefore, while living, seek the company of the saints.
 Through such company, you'll at last be united with God.

Says Eknath, "These two syllables, *Ha* and *ri*,
 Have saved millions; it is this I continually sing."

6. Blessed is that mother whose child loves the name.
 Such love is the fruit of good deeds in past lives.
 In a life without God, what good fruit can there be?
 The whole essence of Vedanta is in *Ha* and *ri*.
 This song of God's name is sufficient to man.
 Not yoga, nor *yajna* (ritual), nor *puja* (worship) does he need.

The cream of *sadhana* is the singing of the name.
 Says Eknath, "All is accomplished by singing Hari!
 He who sings the name is ever free, a knower of Brahman.
 Therefore, sing Hari! Hari!"

7. Your human body is the reward of good deeds,
 But unless it's used to increase love for God,
 Alas, O man, it will totter to doom.

O fool, learn the secret of extinguishing all karma,
And thus hasten the dawn of your unending good.

Your fervent desire to sing the Divine name
Is the reward you have earned from your countless past lives.
Whether a king or a beggar, a prince or a thief,
He who does not fill his mouth with the name [of God] fills it with
dust.
Says Eknath, "Sing Hari; Liberation will come!"

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

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

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

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

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

One who sings every day the holy name of God,

Brings blessings upon his parents and family as well.
 But those whose minds are reeking of lust, anger and greed
 Cannot reap the full fruit of singing the name.
 Says Eknath, “The singing of the name is my secret:
 I’ve revealed it to you; now please sing Hari’s name!”

13. Sing Hari when you give, and Hari when you get.
 Sing Hari when you’re happy, and Hari when you play.
 Sing Hari when you’re chanting, while you eat, and
 while you work.
 Sing Hari when you’re by yourself; sing Hari in a crowd.
 Sing loudly Hari’s name when you find you’re in a brawl.
 When your life is giving out, sing Hari’s name aloud.
 Sing Hari when you’re pounding grain,
 When you sit, and when you rise.
 Says Eknath, “In the forest, or in the marketplace—
 Wherever you may be, keep singing Hari’s name!”

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

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

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

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

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

21. Both the world outside and the world within
 Will delude you, unless you see Hari in them.
 Yajnavalkya, Shuka, Datta, and Kapila
 Attained knowledge of Hari and remained united with Him.
 Dear ones, come close: cling fast to Hari's name.
 His name is the boat to cross over this sea.

There's no need for fear! By resorting to the name,
 Countless saints have drowned in bliss, and thus were fulfilled.
 Says Eknath, "I've opened a market that's unique:
 My entire stock I offer you, and everything is free!"

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

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

24. Sing Hari as you talk, and as you move about.
 Sing Hari while you play as a child.
 Sing the name of Hari; all your wishes will come true.
 You'll hold Brahman, like a fruit, in your palm.
 Sing Hari when you're standing, and when you're sitting down.
 Sing Hari as you witness the game Existence plays.
 Sing Hari when you're in your chair,
 and when you're in your bed.
 With every single bite of food, keep singing Hari's name.
 Sing Hari at the end of day, and Hari in the morning.
 Sing Hari when you march to war, and Hari when alone.
 Sing Hari when you're in trouble; cling to Him with love.
 Sing Hari when you're wandering, or when you're doing chores.

Sing Hari when you're giving, and Hari when you get.
 Sing Hari as you move along, with every single step.
 Sing Hari in your homeland, and when you're far away.
 Sing Hari in the day and night, and always be awake.
 Sing Hari when alone, and in the crowded streets.
 Sing Hari when your last breath leaves—
 Sing Hari and be free.
 Performing duties, taking pleasure, or while you're earning wealth,
 Sing Hari's name, and all desires will surely be fulfilled.
 Sing Hari for your own delight, and for the good of all.
 Sing Hari to reach Brahman, even when you feel no love.
 O sing the name of Hari: Liberation will be assured.
 "Hari is my only treasure!" Remember this, and sing.
 Sing "Hari! Hari!" joyfully; He's the origin of all bliss.
 Says Eknath, "Please sing Hari, whether in a crowd or in the solitary
 woods;
 Within you and without—no matter when you are,
 There's no one else but Hari! He's sporting everywhere!"
 This song of fourteen stanzas is, indeed, the *Gayatri*.¹
 Those who sing it save themselves, and their ancestors as well.

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

Meditation

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

subside, and see the dawning Sun, triumphant, rise reflected on a tranquil sea.

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

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

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

* * *

19. PERFECT NONDUALISM:

The Philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism

(from *The Mystic's Vision*, Vol. I
by Swami Abhayananda; last revised 5-2-2019)

Perfect Nondualism—Part One

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

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

Shankara asserted that the phenomenal world produced by Ishvara's *maya* was *mithya*, "illusory" or "unreal". The phenomenal universe, said Shankaracharya, is an *adhyasa*, a "superimposition", upon Brahman. This statement is not extraordinary in itself, but what is extraordinary about Shankara's philosophy is that he stated that the superimposition of the world upon Brahman was an act of Ishvara's Maya produced through the individual minds of those perceiving the world. For Shankara, "Brahman remains eternally infinite and unchanged. It is not transformed into this universe. It simply *appears* as this universe to us, in our ignorance. We superimpose the apparent world upon Brahman, just as we sometimes superimpose a snake upon a coil of rope." ¹ According to Shankara, "There is no reality independent of our knowing minds." "The apparent world," he said, "is caused by our imagination, our ignorance. It is not real. It is like seeing the snake in the rope. It is like a passing dream." ² In other words, according to Shankara, there is no objective world; there is only the world that exists in our minds and that we individually invent.³

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

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

It is clear, however, that Shankara could not have anticipated the eventual development of evolutionary theory, which put a serious crimp in his theory

of superimposition. In Shankara's time no one even imagined that humanity had *evolved* over time from more primitive species. Insofar as Shankara and his contemporaries knew, humans had existed forever; and had always been around to imagine a world. Like the author of *Genesis*, he was ignorant of the fact that, prior to around two and a half million years ago, there were no humans. And if the world could only be 'imagined' by a human being, then not even an imaginary world existed prior to the time empirically determined to be the time when the lower animal species evolved to the human species. If the present evidence for the evolutionary history of the universe—from its beginning to the development of *homo sapiens*, including astronomical observations, geological strata, fossils, etc.—indicates an actual historical reality, then it tells of a world that never existed, since there was no one (a human) around at that time to imagine it.

If Shankara's theory were correct, it would mean that we, as well as the first humans, imagined a world whose past stretched far beyond its original imagining. We imagined the geological strata that told of a more ancient past, and we imagined a universe where the light from galaxies distant in time told, not of an objective reality, but of a merely imagined past. The history of our universe, according to Shankara, never occurred—except in the minds of the first humans, i.e., all the empirical evidence for the antiquity of the world was simply deceptive and illusory.

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

When these 'Young Earth Creationists' were confronted with the cosmological and geological evidence for a much more ancient past, they countered that the universe and the earth were created around 6000 years

ago with all the false indications of an older cosmological and geological past built into it, even though that past never actually occurred! In other words, the evidence for a more ancient universe and planet earth was divinely fabricated. However, this implied a devious and deceitful Creator God, which ultimately could not be considered as acceptable.

And so, as it turns out, it is not so easy to explain away empirical evidence. We are forced to choose between a speculative metaphysical theory and the evidence of our reason and senses. Is there really a world out there or does it exist only in our consciousness of it? Another way of thinking about this question is to ask: ‘Did the one Divine Mind create this illusory universe around 14 billion years ago, or is it created independently by each of us daily in our own conscious minds?’ This is a question which each of us must answer for ourselves. What do *you* think?

A second objection to Shankara’s theory arose as well. His terminology was regarded as unfortunate by many, as it seemed to imply a *real* duality between God and the world. If there is something superimposed, some reasoned, it must be something *other* than Brahman.

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

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

And again:

The universe is truly Brahman, for that which is superimposed has no separate existence from its substratum. Whatever a deluded person perceives through mistake is Brahman and Brahman alone. The silver imagined in mother-of-pearl is

really mother-of-pearl. The name, “universe”, is superimposed on Brahman; what we call “the universe” is [really] nothing but Brahman. ⁴

While Shankara never intended to imply by the use of his word, “superimposition”, that there was something other than Brahman superimposed on Brahman, that unfortunately, is what arises in the minds of some when they hear this word, “superimposition”. Some objected vigorously to his terminology. For example, a 13th century Maharashtran saint, by the name of Jnaneshvar, objected to the notion of superimposition as an implication of duality, and attempted to clarify the doctrine of Nonduality in the following passage from his book, *Amritanubhav*, “The Nectar of Mystical Experience”:

When it is always only the one pure Consciousness seeing itself, why postulate the necessity of a superimposition? Does one superimpose the sparkle on a jewel? Does gold need to superimpose shininess on itself? ⁵ A lamp that is lit does not need the superimposition of light; it is resplendent with light. Likewise, the one pure Consciousness is resplendent with radiance. Therefore, without obligation to anything else, He easily perceives Himself. ⁶

... Whatever form appears, appears because of Him. There is nothing here but the Self. It is the gold itself which shines in the form of a necklace or a coin; they, themselves, are nothing but gold. In the current of the river or the waves of the sea, there is nothing but water. Similarly, in the universe, nothing exists or is brought into existence that is other than the Self. Whether appearing as the seen, or perceiving as the seer, nothing else exists besides the Self. ⁷

Perhaps it is impossible to adequately express in words the differentiation between the eternal Consciousness and its creative Energy without making it appear that they are two separate things. This would seem to be the case, since every time one mystic gives expression to his vision, another mystic takes exception to the way it is described, and tries his own hand at it, only to have another mystic come along somewhere down the line who takes issue with *his* terminology. In any case, Shankara’s writings gave rise to

many misunderstandings, and to clear up some of these misunderstandings of terminology, some mystics living in the northern state of Kashmir, in the 9th century C.E., including a seer named Vasugupta (ca. 950 C.E.), devised their own interpretation of the philosophy of Nondualism, which they called *Kashmir Shaivism*.

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

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

another tradition may say it. The reality is that language, by its very nature, is imprecise; and it is only the sage who knows the Truth by experiencing It directly who may really be said to know the Truth.

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

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

The Pratyabijna philosophers say that, from *spanda* comes the bifurcation into *aham* and *idam*, subject and object. While Kapila’s Sankhya spoke of these two aspects of the One as Purusha and Prakrti, and Vedanta speaks of these two as Brahman and Maya, Kashmir Shaivism speaks of them as *prakasha* and *vimarsha*. *Prakasha* is the conscious light, the witness-Consciousness, the “subject” aspect of Paramashiva. *Vimarsha* is Its power of self-manifestation, i.e., the “object” aspect of Paramashiva. Thus, inherent in the process of manifestation is this Self-division of Paramashiva into conscious subject and phenomenal object; from this initial polarity, all other dualities, including manifold souls, come into being. And, according

to the Kashmir Shaivite philosophy, while there is never anything but Paramashiva, the souls thus created by this Self-division experience a limitation of their originally unlimited powers. As stated in the *Pratyabijnahridayam* of Kshemaraj, “Consciousness Itself, descending from Its universal state, becomes the limited consciousness of man, through the process of contraction. Then, because of this contraction, the universal Consciousness becomes an ordinary human being, subject to limitations.”

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

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

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

Evolution is the reverse transmutation of an effect into its cause. Paramashiva, or Brahman, or Chit-Shakti, has “involved” Himself in the form of gross matter, and through the human form, must “evolve” back to Himself.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Final realization is possible only when the complete nature of the Self is realized. Though there might be release after death, there can be no release in life unless the universal Self is grasped through the intellect. Indeed, the equanimity in the experience of worldly enjoyment and in the experience of Unity is what truly constitutes the liberation of the soul, while living. ... The individual who identifies with the Self and regards the universe to be a sport and is always united with it, is undoubtedly liberated in this life.¹⁰

And this is reiterated in the *Spanda-karika*:

This entire universe is a sport of universal Consciousness. He who is constantly aware of this truth is liberated in this life, without doubt.¹¹

Perfect Nondualism—Part Two

Long before the emergence of Kashmir Shaivism, the religion of devotion to the one ultimate Reality as *Shiva* was widespread in India. Scholars recognize images of Shiva from antiquity going as far back as the Harappan civilization and the civilization of Mohenjo-daro (ca. 2500 BCE). Then, after the Aryan incursion around 2000 BCE, the priest-authors of the Vedas popularized the names of *Brahman* and *Vishnu* as the deity. Later, Kapila (ca. 9th century BCE) introduced the philosophy of Sankhya, which referred to the universal conscious Spirit as *Purusha*. Then, about five centuries later, we find the Svetasvatara Upanishad (400-200 BCE) first extolling the Divine as the Vedic *Brahman*, then as the indigenous *Shiva*, and then as the *Purusha* of Sankhya philosophy, all in the same work—thereby helping to spread the understanding that God is one, though referred to by many names. In fact, much of the theology succinctly expressed in this early devotional Upanishad can later be found in the teachings of Kashmir Shaivism—especially the repeated declaration that there is *nothing else* here but God. This should not be surprising, however, since all those who are graced with the vision of the divine Self, naturally speak of it in very much the same way.

In studying the scriptures of Kashmir Shaivism, we can't help recognizing that, while the Kashmiri sages who lived in the 9th or 10th centuries did not possess our modern understanding of the natural world, their spiritual vision nonetheless possessed a universal validity. At the same time, the writings of these few mystics living in this common time and place—Vasugupta, Somananda, Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, and Kshemaraj—are distinctly personal expressions of their own unique experience and proclivities and must not be regarded as a single monolithic entity called 'Kashmir Shaivism'.

The philosophies of Advaita Vedanta and of Kashmir Shaivism both appeal strongly to our spiritual instincts, but we must ask 'which of these two philosophies—Shankara's version of Advaita Vedanta or Kashmir Shaivism—is seen to be validated in the actual experience of the inner revelation of the Self? When the truth is revealed, is the universe and all that's in it seen to be a mere mental illusion, or is all seen to be the very manifestation of God?' I can only speak for my own 'mystical' experience, in which the very first words from my mouth were "O my God, even this body is Thine own!" In that experience, my consciousness was the

Consciousness of God, and 'I' was seen to be in the clouds and in the earth; 'I' was realized to be the life-pulse of all creatures, the resounding bells of inner joy and the fiery intensity of song that bursts from the human heart. Everything—even this being I call 'I'—is made of God. All was seen to be an endless continuum of divine Being; and I experienced that infinite Consciousness as my own. The universe is arguably an illusion, a sequence of appearances, formed at the subatomic level by electromagnetic impulses; but the underlying cause and substance of these electromagnetic impulses is the divine Consciousness that is God.

I saw, in my spiritual vision, that it is the small egoic sense, the personal 'I', that creates the interior illusion of duality, that invents the mental opposites of I and Thou, love and hatred, peace and unrest, happiness and sorrow, while in truth there is only the one undivided reality. I saw that the Creator breathes forth the vast universe and then withdraws it again in a repetitive cycle of becoming and ending, and that all things move together of one will in an intricately coordinated universe. In retrospect, my own experience ¹ seems to fit more comfortably into the view expounded by the Kashmir Shaivite philosophers than into Shankara's version. And my experience of the eternal Self occurred decades before I even heard of Kashmir Shaivism. All in all, the precepts of the Kashmir Shaivite philosophers seem to me more representative of the actual experience of the Self than Shankara's.

I also find the Kashmir Shaivite description of the role of Grace in one's spiritual *sadhana* to fit more accurately with my own experience. *Sadhana* is the period of one's spiritual journey in search of the Self. And, in many ways, the *sadhana* of Kashmir Shaivism is similar to the *sadhana* of Vedanta: it consists of self-effort and Grace. Self-effort is in the form of learning about the Self, contemplating the knowledge gained, and meditating on the Self. It is a self-effort toward Consciousness; but Self-realization comes of Grace. There is nothing to be done to receive it, but to be true to the Self, to give our purified hearts to the communion with God within. In this way, we prepare ourselves for Grace.

Every great spiritual teacher, including Jesus, taught that one realizes God through His Grace alone. This may be verified in the Christian scriptures; for example, when Jesus was asked by some of his disciples, "Who, then, can enter the kingdom of God? (in other words, "Who can realize the Self?)," Jesus replied, "For man it is impossible; but for God all things are possible." ² He was saying, in other words, 'Don't ask me how to know

God. It can't be done by you or me or anyone! It is God Himself who makes Himself known. Only He has the power to reveal Himself.' What we can do is to open our hearts and minds, our souls, to receive the light of His Grace; and this alone is the skill, the art, if you will, that we must acquire. The giving of His gifts is entirely in His hands. If anyone can dispute this of his own experience and has the power to experience the Self at his own whim and convenience, I have yet to hear of such a person.

The philosophers and sages of Kashmir Shaivism hold exactly this same view; furthermore, they hold that this Grace is absolutely undetermined and unconditioned. As it is stated in the *Tantraloka* of Abhinavagupta: "Divine Grace leads the individual to the path of spiritual realization. It is the only cause of Self-realization and is independent of human effort." If it were dependent upon some conditions, it would not be absolute and independent Grace. Grace is the uncaused Cause of the soul's release. What appears at first glance to be a condition of Grace, is, in reality, a consequence of it. For example, devotion, which may seem to bring Grace, is, in fact, the result or gift of Grace. In the Kashmir Shaivite tradition, the Absolute is said to carry on the sport of self-bondage and self-release of His own free will; and the postulation of conditions or qualifications would be against that doctrine of free will. This position is made clear in the *Malini Vijaya-vartika*:

The learned men of all times always hold that the descent of grace does not have any cause or condition but depends entirely on the free will of the Lord.

And, again, in the *Paramartha Sara*:

Throughout all these forms, it is the Lord who illumines His own nature. In reality, there is no other cause of these manifestations except His freedom, which alone gives rise to both worldly enjoyment and Self-realization.

Here, the question may arise that if Divine Grace has no regard for the merit and demerit of the recipients, does it not amount to an act of partiality on the part of God? How is it that He favors some individuals by bestowing His Grace and disfavors others by keeping it away from them? And the answer is that Grace is operative all the time for all individuals. The difference in the descent of Grace is really the differences in the receptivity of the individual souls, each of whom evolves at his own unique pace. Moreover,

this problem does not have much significance in the Nondualist philosophies of Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism; because it is the Absolute Himself who appears first as bound, and then as liberated, owing to His own free will. He cannot be accused of partiality, since it is only Himself whom He favors or rejects.

As for self-effort, this is accomplished by our inherent power of will. Shakti, the Divine power of will, exists in us in a limited form. This will, which we possess, is the faculty by which a person decides upon and initiates action. Fickleness of mind flutters and weakens the will power; and conversely, a strong desire and one-pointed longing strengthens it. But too many desires and hankerings after many objects, and aimless running about in pursuit of sense-pleasures dissipates the creative energy, the will power. As one clear-minded sage said, “A definite purpose of action, backed by a strong will, is a sure way to success in any endeavor. Therefore, minimize your desires, make a deliberate choice, and focus the whole energy of your will power in that particular direction, and you will never miss your goal.”

The will of a person may be made to flow in two different, and opposite, directions: outwardly, toward secular worldly goals, or inwardly, toward spiritual goals. If one wishes to concentrate one’s energy toward spiritual goals, then the creative energy, the will, must be diverted from its normal outward-flowing course; by closing all such outlets in the form of worldly desires, one at last attains the state of desirelessness. Then, it is possible to turn the mind inwardly to the Self and attain spiritual knowledge.

It is the desires for worldly objectives that distract one from the attainment of spiritual objectives. But, for one who is established in the pursuit of spiritual goals, worldly gains have little charm, and the necessary duties one must perform in the world take on a spiritual significance. To such a person, every act on the worldly plane is a service to the Lord, in the fulfillment of His will, and a stepping-stone for the upward progress toward spiritual enlightenment.

Therefore, when the objective, or outward, trend of the will is checked, and is given a turn in the opposite direction, the “involved” Shakti begins its evolutionary journey; and, instead of experiencing a poverty of Shakti, a person begins to expand his or her powers, and to feel greater energy, intelligence, increased abilities and an expanded sense of well-being and completeness. Turning in the direction of its source, the mind begins to

sense its identity with the Self, the pure and all-perfect Consciousness of the universe. This is the beginning of the evolution from the human to the Divine.

Now, if it were an easy thing to revert the flow of the will from worldly to spiritual objectives, everyone would be able to manage it. But it is not easy. The mind is totally deluded by the amazing and wonderful appearance spread out before it; and, unaware that it is all its own projection, it reaches out eagerly for satisfaction and pleasure from the ephemeral and empty mirage. Intellectually acquired knowledge helps us to recognize the mirage for what it is—but still, old habits must be overcome. And that is not an easy task. To subdue the habits of nature, instilled by long practice and conviction, to subdue the old outgoing tendencies of the mind, requires great effort. This is known as *tapasya*.

To understand what *tapasya* is, we must understand that it is *Shakti*, the Divine Energy, which manifests as our minds and bodies and their various activities. And, frequently, we expend that Energy in thoughtless and frivolous ways, and thus remain listless and groggy through much of our lives. But, if we could learn to conserve our natural *Shakti*, then we could reap the benefits in the form of greater physical and mental energy, and a clearer awareness of the blissful Self, our eternal Identity. *Tapasya*, which literally means, “making heat,” is the restraint of the outgoing tendency of the mind and senses, which conserves and heats the *Shakti*. The *Shakti*, turned inward, then begins to nourish and invigorate the brain and the whole body, expanding one’s natural powers as well as one’s consciousness.

Here are some of the traditional methods of *tapasya* that help to conserve and evolve the *Shakti* toward its source, *Shiva* (the Self):

- (1) *Mantra repetition*: This conserves the *Shakti* by subduing the wandering mind and the *prana* and focusing the attention on God within.
- (2) *Devotional singing*: This heats the *Shakti* through emotion and elevates the awareness toward God. It is a form of devotional meditation that brings joy and satisfaction to the heart.
- (3) *Concentration of the mind*: By deep thought, attention, study, or meditation, the *Shakti* is concentrated and focused, and the mind becomes subtle and clear.
- (4) *Surrender of the fruits of actions*: This relieves the mind of futile exertions, conserving the *Shakti* and retaining the steadiness of the mind.

(5) *Eating properly, moderately and regularly:* It is the *Shakti* which is the central regulator of the mind and body; it preserves the heat and cold of the body and distributes the effects of various foods and drinks to the different parts of the body, not only through the bloodstream, but through the nerve currents as well. The choice of a proper, moderate, and regular diet is therefore of great importance.

(6) *Continence:* When the *Shakti* has been given an evolutionary turn and begins to flow inward and upward instead of outward through the senses, there is an accumulation of heat in the region near the base of the spine. It is there the *Shakti* gathers and creates the heat which causes it to rise. Much of that heat is transferred to the sexual glands, causing an increase in stimulation there. If one allows that energy to be expended frivolously in sexual indulgence, one loses a great portion of one's *Shakti*. But if it is conserved, it rises, and is absorbed into the body and brain, resulting in greater bodily vigor and luster, as well as greater mental power. This is a practice recommended for *brahmacharis* or *sannyasins* (monks). Married men and women, of course, are exempt from this kind of *tapasya*; for such as these, normal moderation is best.

(7) *Longing for liberation:* Most important, for conserving and increasing the *Shakti*, is a strong aspiration toward, and longing for, liberation. Such aspiration is synonymous with the love of God, for such love is nothing more than a drawing of the heart toward the clarity and joy of absolute Truth. Such aspiration or love will draw the Grace of God and will focus the energy upward toward the seat of Consciousness and will be a strong counteractive to mental inertia and dullness.

According to the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, there are three different levels of spiritual practice; these levels, or methods (*upayas*), are: *anava upaya*, which is practice on the physical and sensual level; *shakta upaya*, which takes place on the mental, intellectual, level; and *shambhava upaya*, which engages the will and the intuition, and is on the astral or soul level. There is a fourth *upaya*, which is not really a practice at all, but an established awareness of the Self, and is therefore known as *anupaya*, or "no practice." This conceptual division can be simplified somewhat if we simply say that we exist on four levels: "the physical," "the mental," "the astral or soul-level" and "the spiritual." Our activities in pursuit of the Self take place on each of these progressively subtle levels and become increasingly effective as we reach to increasingly subtler levels of activity.

Without doubt, we are all complexly constituted of body, mind, soul, and Spirit. Indeed, all is Spirit, but that Spirit manifests in a progressively more tangible manner as soul, as mind, and as body. According to the subtlety of our awareness, we identify ourselves most predominantly with one or another of these levels of our reality. Normally, we are aware of ourselves as a mixture of several of these elements; but one or another aspect of ourselves is usually a predominant focus. For example, the athlete focuses predominantly on his or her physical fitness and measures his or her competency according to the abilities and qualities of the physical body. It would be foolish to say that the mind plays no part in such a person's awareness, but it is clear that much of the attention of that person's awareness is on their physical well-being and skills. This is true also of those people who labor in the so-called "lower" echelons of trades requiring physical exertion and manual dexterity. We see this body-orientation much more exaggerated, of course, in the animal realm, where physical instinct predominates to a much greater degree, and the mental realm is little developed.

The person who identifies predominantly with the mind gives less attention to the physical body, and more attention to the comprehension and structuring of ideas. That person's focus is on exploring their understanding of ideas, mental task-accomplishments, and the comprehension of their world. They may be "intellectuals," or merely normal goal-oriented and career-oriented people. The more mentally developed may become writers, scientists, scholars, or technological experts; others comprise the vast majority of businessmen, teachers, white-collar workers, etc. Again, let me stress that, for most of us, there is a complex mixture of physical, mental, and soul-qualities at work in our lives, and none of these is omitted in our overall awareness; and yet, it is also certain that there is clearly a *predominant* focus on one or another of these aspects in each of our lives by which we may be "typed" in various ways.

The person who identifies predominantly with the soul is a person who has become opened to the subtler level of reality. Such persons are governed by a sense of the underlying unity of life, and strive to give expression to qualities of love, kindness, and compassion in their lives, with a strong sense of their purpose as a nurturing and inspiring presence in the world. Such people may become religious leaders, doctors, or crusaders for the social welfare. They are aware, not only of the tools they possess in the way of physical and mental abilities but are motivated to use these God-given tools

to benefit others and to lead the world toward peace and brotherhood. The individualized "soul" is that conglomerate of deeply ingrained qualities, evolved over many lifetimes, which makes up the character and purpose of an individual; and the person who identifies with the soul is one whose greatest emphasis is on perfecting the qualities of wisdom and love and on manifesting their own unique destiny in a way which will better themselves and all mankind. There is in the soul a clearer awareness of one's source in Spirit, and so with those who identify with the soul there is a strong desire to manifest that unifying Spirit, and to draw ever nearer to awareness of their own ultimate Being.

That ultimate Existent is the Spirit. The Spirit is that unmanifest Source from which all beings manifest. It is the unqualified Ground of all existence, which, in Itself, transcends all manifestation. It has been spoken of as pure Consciousness and Bliss; It has been spoken of as Brahman, God, or the supreme Self of all. It is that eternal Self with which the saints—the most evolved human beings—identify. They see that the body, mind, and soul are transient elements of their being, and that the One Spirit is their unchanging and eternal Identity. And they hold to their identification with that, paying but passing attention to the demands of body, mind, and soul. They realize that these have but a transient existence and will go on, by the operation of natural laws, but that they do not constitute their true Essence nor their purest happiness.

Those who identify with the Spirit, the eternal Self, find little to attract them to physical, mental or soul activity and accomplishments. Rather, they seek, and find, their greatest happiness and contentment in the awareness of their pure Being, beyond body, mind or soul. Such as these have no established place in the world; they are beyond the world of other men and women. Their vocation is to live in close union with God, and, though they may be regarded as monks, renunciants, or simply as societal outcasts, they serve as emissaries of the Divine. They act, to be sure. They are not without thoughts. Their souls have become expanded to include all souls in the One in whom they subsist, and their actions and thoughts derive from their Identity as the all-inclusive One; and, though their value is not recognized by the people of the world who are busily engaged in their own self-involved thoughts and activities, such people give clarity and light to the world, and serve as magnets to draw others to the all-gratifying Truth which exists within them all.

In the ancient world of Vedic India, this rudimentary division of peoples was translated into a set of classes or "castes," and was recognized as a natural fact of life; but as time went on, these stratifications of society became calcified into rigid air-tight compartments into which one was born and from which there was no escape. What had been an observation of natural evolution became an inflexible societal stratification based on racial and familial association. This was, of course, a distortion and corruption of what had been a keen observation of the varied levels of human awareness. That observation—that people do indeed fall roughly into several broad "types" according to the evolution of their awareness—remains, nonetheless, a valid one.

Recall how, in the Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, asks Hanuman, his monkey-servant (representative of the individualized soul), "How do you regard me?" And Hanuman replies, "When I regard myself as the body, I am your servant; when I regard myself as the mind, I am a part of you; and when I regard myself as the spirit, the Self, you and I are one." Note that Hanuman's realization became more subtle and closer to the absolute Truth as he went from identification with the physical body to the mind, and from the mind to the Spirit. From the perspective of Kashmir Shaivism, all our efforts toward personal growth and Self-realization manifest on one or another of these levels of reality. At the grossest level, we identify with the body; we regard ourselves as the servant of God, as His instrument; we perform physical acts: acts of service, ritual worship, Hatha yoga postures, the sounding of mantras, etc. These are necessary and beneficial practices, but they are at the gross physical level only; we must go deeper toward the subtle if we are to reach God.

The next level of activity is the mental. Here, we perform many practices: we study the scriptures and other writings of the realized saints; we do mental worship, such as prayer, or the mental repetition of the name of God; we continually attempt to refine our understanding and remind ourselves inwardly of the truth of the Spirit. And here, at this stage where we identify with the mind, we come to regard ourselves as a spark or a ray from the one Sun, which manifests and illumines the world. All is seen as God, and we are a part of Him.

Then, on the soul level, the activity is very subtle; we may also call it the level of consciousness. It is simply the constant alertness to reject any obscuration of conscious awareness. It is the jealous guarding of the pure

Consciousness that is the witness, the Self. At that level, there is no duality of I and Thou, mine and Thine; there is only *I AM*. Notice that each one of these levels of activity leads to the next, subtler, level. For example, when you do physical acts of service, or worship, this brings with it the mental level of service or worship, as our concentration deepens. Or, if we repeat the name of God on the physical level, such as when we chant aloud, that physical repetition brings with it, by sympathetic resonance, the mental awareness of the name, and we find that we're repeating the mantra on the mental level as well. The idea, of course, is for our worship, our prayer, our meditation, to reach to deeper and deeper levels of subtlety, becoming a transforming force to recreate us at the spiritual level.

Practice at the mental level is superior, of course, to mere physical action, because it is by the transformation of our mind that we truly become transformed into Divine beings. As Krishna said to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "The Self is realized by the purified mind!" This is also what Jesus taught when he explained that it was the pure in heart who would see God. Also, we have seen what great emphasis is placed on the mental practice of Self-knowledge by the great Shankaracharya, who said, "The practice of knowledge thoroughly purifies the ignorance-stained mind, and then that [intellectual] knowledge itself disappears, just as a grain of salt disappears in water."

Shankara's analogy can be easily understood by one whose concentration on the knowledge, "I am pure Consciousness," leads the mind, through concentrated effort toward understanding, and eventually to perfect mental quietude, and the direct experience of pure Consciousness. Through one-pointed concentration on this one thought, "I am not merely this body, this mind; I am the Absolute; I am pure Consciousness," one goes beyond thought and attains the thought-free state. It is in this way that the mental practice leads to the subtler level of spiritual practice. The story of king Janaka and Ashtavakra is a good illustration of this:

King Janaka was sitting one day on the riverbank, repeating his mantra aloud. In a loud, powerful voice, he repeated over and over *So-ham, So-ham, So-ham*; "I am That! I am That! I am That!" Then, along came his guru, Ashtavakra, who sat on the opposite bank. Observing that king Janaka was involved in the physical practice of mantra-repetition, with maybe a touch of mental practice thrown in, Ashtavakra decided to elevate king Janaka's practice. So, he began to shout aloud, "This is my water bowl!

This is my staff!” And, as he did so, he alternately lifted each of the items mentioned. Ashtavakra continued this for a long time, shouting at the top of his voice, “This is my water bowl! This is my staff!”

Soon the king’s mantra-repetition was disrupted, and he quickly became annoyed. Finally, he could take it no more, and he shouted across to Ashtavakra, “Hey, why all this racket? I know those things belong to you; who says they’re *not* yours?” And Ashtavakra shot back, “And who says you are *not* the Self?” Immediately king Janaka’s mind ceased its activity and became absorbed in the silent awareness that he *was* the Self and didn’t need to go on engaging his lips or his mind in repeatedly asserting it. In other words, by the grace of his guru, his mental practice merged into the soul’s awareness of its identity with the Self.

This practice does not call into play either the body or the mind, but rather what we would call simply, “the will.” It is the practice of keeping a willful check on the impulses of the mind, and a willful retention of pure awareness, with a sense of identification with the one all-pervasive Consciousness. It is, in other words, a direct soul-awareness through the effort of will. In its highest stage, this subtle practice becomes no practice at all. It simply remains spontaneously, habitually. It is the state of consciousness which the Zen Buddhists call the state of “No-mind,” which Vedantists refer to as *sahaj samadhi*, “the natural state of unity,” and Kashmir Shaivites refer to as *anupaya*.

To explain how one level of practice leads to a subtler level, let’s take, as an example, the practice of mantra repetition. You may begin by just repeating it on the physical level. And, even on this level, the sound-vibrations have a certain effect on you, instilling peace and a sense of well-being. Then, you begin to reflect on its meaning. Now, it is no longer just a sound; it’s a meaningful thought: *So-ham*. The mind translates the sound into “I am That; I am the one Self.” That is the mental practice. You repeat the mantra on the mental level with an awareness of its meaning. Then, as you begin to sense the reality of it, as you begin to experience it, you transcend the mantra, and hold yourself poised in the thought-free state. That’s the level of soul-awareness, and is very close to the awareness of Spirit, or the Self. When, eventually, this awareness deepens, one loses all sense of body, mind, or soul, and, transcending all practice, becomes immersed in the awareness of the Self.

Now, to make all this really clear, here are some sample practices from each of these three levels derived from an ancient scripture of Kashmir Shaivism, one of the *agamas*, called *Vijnana Bhairava*, which is said to be a distillation of an earlier text called *Rudrayamala Tantra*, passed down from Shiva himself. “Bhairava” is another name for Shiva, the Lord, the Self. And “Vijnana” means supreme awareness, or knowledge. And it takes the form of a dialogue between Shiva and his consort, Shakti.

In this imaginary dialogue, Shakti asks Shiva to explain His true nature and the practices by which he can be known; and Shiva then details 112 different practices, utilizing those from each of the three levels we’ve discussed. First, we’ll hear of some of the physical practices, some of which have to do with the subtle breath, the *prana*, or the visualizing of inner lights and sounds. Listen to some of the practices Shiva recommends to Shakti. You might like to try them out as I mention them to you:

The breath is exhaled with the sound, *Ham*, and inhaled with the sound, *Sah*. Thus, the individual soul always recites the mantra, *Hamsah* (or *So-ham*, “I am That!”). ³

Prana goes upward (with the inhalation), and the *apana* goes downward (with the exhalation). This is the expression of the creative Shakti. By becoming aware of the two places where each originates, experience absolute fulfillment. ⁴

There is a momentary pause, when the outgoing breath has gone out, and there is a momentary pause when the ingoing breath has gone in. Fix your mind steadily on these places of pause, and experience Shiva. ⁵

Always fix your mind on those places where the breath pauses, and the mind will quickly cease its fluctuations, and you will acquire a wonderful state. ⁶

In the *Bhagavad Gita* (4:29), Krishna says, “Some yogis, devoted to *pranayama* (the control of the *prana*), offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath into the incoming breath, and the incoming into the outgoing, restraining the course of both.” It is this very practice that is being spoken of here in the *Vijnana Bhairava*, which goes on to say:

When the in-breath merges with the outgoing breath, they become perfectly balanced and cease to flow. Experience that state and realize equality. ⁷

Let the breath remain balanced and let all thoughts cease; then experience the state of Shiva. ⁸

That's enough practices on the physical level; let's move on to the mental practices. Here, we enter into the realm of ideas. These practices deal entirely with formulated intellectual knowledge. Shiva says to Shakti:

Concentrate your mind on whatever gives you satisfaction. Then experience the true nature of supreme satisfaction. ⁹

Meditate on yourself as a vast, cloudless sky, and realize your true nature as Consciousness. ¹⁰

Becoming detached from the awareness of the body, meditate on the thought, "I am everywhere!" and thus experience joy. ¹¹

Hold this thought in your mind: 'All the waves of the various forms in this universe have arisen from me—just as waves arise from water, flames arise from fire, or rays from the Sun.' ¹²

Contemplate with an unwavering mind that your own body and the whole universe are of the nature of Consciousness and experience the great awakening. ¹³

Contemplate your body and the whole universe as permeated with Bliss. Then experience yourself as that Bliss. ¹⁴

And then we come to the practices involving the soul; these are at a yet subtler level of consciousness. Here, you don't have to think at all. You need only to become aware, focusing on that clear, thought-free awareness that is your soul, an individualized manifestation of the Self. Shiva says:

Observe the arising of a desire. Then immediately put an end to it by reabsorbing it into That from which it arose. ¹⁵

What are you when a thought or desire does *not* arise?
Truly, the one Reality! Become absorbed in and identified with
That. ¹⁶

When a thought or desire arises, detach yourself from the object
of thought or desire, and witness the thought or desire as a
manifestation of your Self, and thus realize the Truth. ¹⁷

The same conscious Self is manifest in all forms; there is no
differentiation in It. Realize everything as the same One and
rise triumphantly above the appearance of multiplicity. ¹⁸

When under a strong impulse of desire, or anger, greed,
infatuation, pride, or envy, make your mind steady and become
aware of the Reality underlying the mental state. ¹⁹ Perceive
the entire universe as a magic-show, or as forms painted on a
canvas, or as so many leaves on a single tree; and becoming
absorbed in this, experience great happiness. ²⁰

Leaving aside your own body for the time being, contemplate
your Self as the consciousness pervading other bodies, and thus
become all-pervasive. ²¹

Free the mind of all supports, without and within, and let no
thought-vibration take form. Then the self becomes the
supreme Self,
Shiva. ²²

At the onset or culmination of a sneeze, or at the moment of
fright, or deep sorrow, or at the moment of a sigh, or while
running for your life, or during intense fascination, or extreme
hunger, become aware of Brahman. ²³

What cannot be objectively known, what cannot be held in the
mind, that which is empty, and exists even in non-existence:
contemplate That as your Self, and thus attain realization of
Shiva. ²⁴

Meditate on yourself as eternal, all-pervasive, the independent Lord of all; and, thus, attain That. ²⁵

About *anupaya*, the ultimate state beyond all practice, there is really nothing one can say. It is the reversion of the soul to its universal Source. In such a state, one is on a pathless path, beyond the bodily, mental or astral levels. Immersed in God-awareness, there is no more striving, for there is nothing more to attain. There is no action, no thought, no individual awareness. There is only the pure Bliss of the Self.

Here is what Jnaneshvar, the 13th century yogi, says in his *Amritanubhav* about such a state:

One who has attained this wisdom may say whatever he likes; the silence of his contemplation remains undisturbed. His state of actionlessness remains unaffected, even though he performs countless actions. Whether he walks in the streets or remains sitting quietly, he is always in his own home. His rule of conduct is his own sweet will. His meditation is whatever he happens to be doing. ²⁶

Such a knower of the Self lives in perfect freedom. You too, by utilizing all these practices—of the body, the mind and the soul—can attain eventually to that (fourth) state. As you meditate, just sit quietly; let the mind be still and become aware of the Self. If you can't do that immediately, then take the help of the mantra, the name of God, the name of the Self. Reflect on its meaning. Identify with that One. And if you cannot do that, at least practice on the physical level: repeat the mantra with the in-breath, and again with the out-breath. Let it carry you to the awareness that you and your beloved God are one.

NOTES AND REFERENCES FOR PERFECT NONDUALISM, PART ONE:

1. from the Introduction to Shankara's *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda & Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, Calif., Vedanta Press, 1947, 1975; p. 12.

2. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, III:16; Swami Prabhavananda and C. Isherwood, *Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; pp. 70-71.
3. This philosophy of Shankara's has resurfaced in our current day in the philosophy of Sri Nisargadatta and his disciple, Ramesh Balsekar.
4. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood; Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 73. In order to illustrate the process of 'superimposition', Shankara utilizes several examples:
A person might see a piece of rope lying on the ground and think that it is a snake. In such a case, that person is said to 'superimpose' a snake on the rope. Or, one might be walking by a field at night, and imagine that a wooden post is a man standing in the field; in such a case, one is said to have 'superimposed' a man on the post. Another example Shankara offers is that of a person seeing a piece of an oyster shell—what is known as 'mother of pearl'; but he imagines that it is a piece of silver. He is said to have 'superimposed' the silver on the mother of pearl. All of these examples are intended to be analogous to the superimposition by the *jiva* of a world of objects upon what is really Brahman. And, while it's easy to see how one could mistake one form for another, such as mistaking a post for a man, or a rope for a snake, or a piece of shell for silver; Brahman is formless. How, then, could one mistake Brahman for a universe of forms? The analogies do not stand up to scrutiny. Shankara *does* distinguish between a personal illusion (*pratibhasika*) and a universal, or collective, illusion (*vyavaharika*); but, according to Shankara, in both cases, it is the individual *jiva* who is responsible for the creation and maintenance of his own illusory perception.
5. Jnaneshvar, *Amritanubhav*, 7:165, 166; Swami Abhayananda, *Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works, etc.*, Olympia, Wash., Atma Books, 1989; p. 186.
6. *Ibid.*, 7:170, 171; p. 187.
7. *Ibid.*, 7:235-237, 240; pp. 193-194.
8. *Ishvara Pratyabijna-vimarshini*
9. *Tripurarahasya*

10. Kshemaraj, *Pratyabijnahridayam*

11. *Spandakarika*, 3:3

NOTES AND REFERENCES FOR PERFECT NONDUALISM, PART TWO:

1. See the account of my personal experience in Swami Abhayananda, *The Supreme Self*, downloadable at www.themysticsvision.com, or in the excerpt from that book, "My Enlightenment Experience", presented as the first article in the Fourth ("God's Grace") Section of *The Mystic's Vision*, Volume One.

2. Jesus, *The New Testament of the Bible*, Luke, 18:18; Matthew, 19:16.

3. *Vijnana Bhairava*, 155.

4. *Ibid.*, 24.

5. *Ibid.*, 25

6. *Ibid.*, 51.

7. *Ibid.*, 64.

8. *Ibid.*, 26.

9. *Ibid.*, 74.

10. *Ibid.*, 92.

11. *Ibid.*, 104.

12. *Ibid.*, 110.

13. *Ibid.*, 63.

14. *Ibid.*, 65.

15. *Ibid.*, 96.
16. *Ibid.*, 97.
17. *Ibid.*, 98.
18. *Ibid.*, 100.
19. *Ibid.*, 101.
20. *Ibid.*, 102.
21. *Ibid.*, 107.
22. *Ibid.*, 108.
23. *Ibid.*, 118.
24. *Ibid.*, 127.
25. *Ibid.*, 132.
26. Jnaneshvar, *Amritanubhav*, 9:20, 21, 31, 34; Swami Abhayananda, *Jnaneshvar: The Life & Works of The Celebrated 13th Century Indian Mystic-Poet*, Olympia, Wash., 1989, 1994; pp. 207, 208.

* * *

20. MY TRANSLATIONS

**(from *The Mystic's Vision* by Swami Abhayananda.
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I. SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD

Vedanta, which means ‘the end of the Vedas’, refers to the ancient Hindu scriptures called the *Upanishads*. The Upanishads were written by numerous anonymous authors at various times, from around 800 B.C.E. to well into the Current Era. One of the most highly respected and honored of these is the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, guessed to have been written around 400 B.C.E.:

Svetasvatara Upanishad Verse Translation by Swami Abhayananda

Part One:

1. Hari Om. Seekers of Brahman enquire:
‘What is the Cause of the universe? Is it Brahman?
Why are we born? What upholds our lives?
And where do we go after life on earth?
O knower of Brahman, what compels us to exist
In this world of joys and sorrows?’
2. ‘Is it Time, or Nature, or Fate, or merely Chance?
Is it the Elements? Or perhaps the Soul itself is the Cause.
All these others exist only for the sake of the Soul.
But, since the Soul is under the sway of joys and sorrows,
It cannot, therefore, be the ultimate Cause.’
3. Then, through deep meditation, these seekers realized
That the power of God is the ultimate Cause.¹
Though hidden by, and existing within His own effects,
It is the Lord alone, who rules all those other sources—
Such as Time and the individual Soul.
4. They saw the Wheel of existence,² which has a single rim
Covered by a three-layered tire.³
This Wheel has sixteen parts,⁴ fifty spokes,⁵
Twenty spoke-connectors,⁶ and six eight-part divisions.⁷
It binds with a single rope,⁸ that goes in three directions,⁹
And whose illusion arises from two causes.¹⁰
5. Or [the world-illusion may be likened to] a River with five currents,¹¹

Made turbulent and meandering by the five elements, ¹²
 And lashed into waves by the five organs of action. ¹³
 This River has its origin in the mind,
 Which produces the five kinds of perceptions. ¹⁴
 It has five whirlpools; ¹⁵ its rapids are the five miseries. ¹⁶
 It has fifty branches, ¹⁷ and five dangerous obstructions. ¹⁸

6. Within this Wheel, in which all of us live and seek rest,
 The swan-like soul wanders restlessly.
 It thinks it's separate and far from God,
 But by His Grace, it awakes to its identity with Him.
7. I sing of Brahman—the subject, the object, the Lord of all.
 He's the immutable Foundation of all that exists.
 Those souls who realize Him as their very own Self
 Are freed forever from the need for rebirth.
8. The Lord is the Support of both aspects of Reality:
 He is the Imperishable and the perishable, the Cause and the effect.
 He takes the form of the limited soul, appearing to be bound,
 But, in fact, He is forever free.
9. The Lord appears as Creator, and also as the limited soul.
 He is also the Energy which creates the appearance of the world.
 Yet He remains unlimited and unaffected by these appearances.
 When one knows that Brahman, then that soul becomes free.
10. The forms of the world fade like clouds in the sky.
 But the Lord remains ever-One and unchanged.
 He is the Ruler of all worlds and all souls.
 Through meditation on Him, and communion with Him,
 He becomes known as the Self, and from illusion one is freed.
11. When the Lord is known, then a man's soul is free.
 He'll never need to know sorrow or birth again.
 Through devotional love, he'll rise to the highest state,
 And rest forever in the bliss of God.
12. These three: the soul, the world, and the Lord of all,

Are nothing else but the one Brahman.
 It's Brahman alone who exists as everyone and everything.
 Beyond Brahman, the Self, there is nothing to know.

13. Though it can't be seen, fire is latent in the wood.
 It's born as a flame when the wood is rubbed.
 Like the fire, the Atman, the Self, is concealed within man.
 By the power of meditation on OM, it becomes revealed.
14. Man, in this analogy, is like a piece of wood.
 And meditation on OM is the means to kindle the flame.
 When a man experiences the heat of meditation,
 The truth of the Self, like a flame, is born.
15. Just as oil is in seeds, and butter is in milk,
 As water is in riverbeds, and fire is in wood,
 So is the one Self concealed in all selves.
 To those who seek It earnestly, It becomes revealed.
16. That Self is in everything, just as butter's in milk.
 Through self-enquiry and *tapasya*, it becomes revealed to man.
 That Self is the Brahman of whom I sing!
 That Self is the Brahman of whom I sing!

Part Two:

1. May the light of the shining Sun
 Join our minds and our hearts to God.
 May He also support our lives
 By filling our bodies with Light from above.
2. With His blessings, and by His Light
 We'll join our hearts and our minds to God.
 We'll surely reach to the highest state
 By earnest effort and faithful meditation.
3. May the Sun grant this boon to me:
 Let my mind and my senses be fixed on God.
 Direct them inward, and thereby reveal,
 By means of inner knowledge, that radiant One.

4. Surely it would be of benefit to everyone
To make such a prayer to the lordly Sun,
For he is the witness of everyone.
He grants his gifts to deserving men.
5. O senses—and O gods who rule each one!
I offer this prayer to the Lord, our Source:
Let me be one with Thyself, O God.
May my song be heard by Thy own dear sons!
6. Let me surrender to the fire within.
Let me make offerings to the prana in me.
May I drink the nectar of Bliss within.
Let this be my ritual worship of Thee.
7. O man, serve God by the light of the Sun.
Serve Him who engendered this whole universe.
In deep meditation, become one with Him.
Then you'll no longer feel bound by the fruits of your works.
8. A wise man should sit with his body erect.
With his head, neck and shoulders aligned.
He should turn both his mind and his senses within.
Then, by God's trusty boat, he'll cross over this world.
9. A yogi should see that his prana's controlled.
His breath should flow softly and evenly.
It is then that the mind may be held and made calm,
Just as a wild horse may be controlled by its reins.
10. A yogi should sit in a place that's confined,
Where no sounds and no sights tend to distract the mind.
It should be a place free of wind, and of smoke,
A place that is level, comfortable and pure.
11. When yoga is practiced, the light of the mind
May take the form of the Sun, or of fire.
One may also see images of snowflakes within,
Or fireflies, or lightning, a gem, or the moon.

12. The fire of this yoga consumes everything,
And purifies each of the elements within:
Fire, water, earth, air, and the ether as well.
Then a yogi becomes free from birth, illness, and death.
13. The signs of perfection in yoga, it's said,
Are lightness of body and bodily health,
A complexion that's clear, and a voice that is sweet,
A naturally sweet fragrance, and freedom from desire.
14. Just as gold, which is contained in the ore,
Becomes manifest when all dross is burned away,
A yogi, in whom God is revealed,
Knows that he's one with the Self, and he sorrows no more.
15. When a yogi beholds the true nature of God,
He discovers the Light of his own inner Self.
He is one with the unborn, unchangeable Lord,
And thus, he becomes free from all limiting bonds.
16. When that Lord, who pervades every world,
First gave birth to activity, He manifested Himself as creation.
It's He alone who is born in this world.
He lives within all beings; He exists everywhere.
17. To that effulgent Lord who's in fire and in oceans,
Who lives as this world, who's in plants and in trees—
To that Lord let us sing! Give all glory to Him!
To that Lord let us sing! Give all glory to Him!

Part Three:

1. He is the One who rules all of us.
His omniscient Power rules all of the worlds.
Though He is continually creating and dissolving,
He remains unaffected, ever-One and unchanged.
Those sages who know Him have passed beyond death.
2. Those who have known Him say that,
While manifesting all worlds by His Power,
He always remains One and unchanged.

He lives as the one Self within everyone.
 He's the Creator and Protector to whom all beings return.

3. He has eyes everywhere and mouths everywhere.
 Everywhere are His arms and His feet.
 The wings of all birds, and all men's arms are His own.
 Both the heavens and the earth belong to Him.
4. May Shiva, the omniscient Lord of the world—
 The Creator of gods and Bestower of powers,
 The One who supports all this vast universe—
 Endow me with a mind whose vision is clear!
5. O Shiva! Thou indwelling, joy-giving Lord!
 Be gracious and look upon us with Thy love.
 Grant us Thy glance and Thy favor, O Lord.
 Dispel all our evil! Dispel all our fear!
6. O Shiva! Thou indwelling, joy-giving Lord!
 Do not let loose Thy pain-bearing arrows!
 Thou art our Protector; protect us, O Lord.
 Do not give injury to man or the world!
7. He is greater than the world; He's beyond what's perceived.
 Though He lives within man, He has no limits or bounds.
 When a man realizes that Lord who pervades everything,
 He knows, in that moment, his own deathless Self.
8. I know that one Self who shines like the Sun
 Through all the deep folds of the darkness within.
 This knowledge gives freedom from death and from fear.
 It's the sole means to the attainment of life's highest goal.
9. The whole universe is filled with the Self.
 There is nothing other or greater than Him.
 There is nothing smaller or larger than Him.
 He stands all alone, like a glorious tree.
10. Though He lives within the world, He stands far beyond it.
 He has no form; nor has He any blemish or pain.

Those who have known Him have passed beyond death,
But, until a man knows Him, he suffers in pain.

11. All faces are His; all men's heads are His own.
All necks are His necks; He's in everyone's heart.
He pervades everything; He's known as 'the Lord'.
He's the compassionate Master who's found everywhere.
12. He is the great Self, the Purusha.
He's the Lord who creates, preserves, then destroys what He's made.
From within men, He inspires them to be good, to be pure.
He's the one Ruler, the immortal Light within all.
13. The Purusha, who's no bigger than a thumb, is the Self.
He has made His abode in the hearts of all beings.
The mind, which reflects knowledge, can know Him within,
And those who have known Him have passed beyond death.
14. With thousands of heads, eyes and feet,
The Purusha is greater than the world and all space.
He contains all that is or was, and all that shall be.
He's the undying Lord of all creatures that live.
15. He has hands everywhere, and feet everywhere.
Everywhere are His heads and His eyes.
His faces are everywhere, and everywhere are His ears.
Everything that exists is contained within Him.
16. Though He, Himself, has no senses, all senses are His.
He tastes all the pleasures of life through their use.
He's the Lord and Ruler of all that exists.
To all beings that live, He's the only Refuge.
17. The Self is the Swan who rules the whole universe
And everything in it that's moving or still,
But when He resides as the Spirit in man,
He flies through the senses to sense-objects outside.
18. Without hands, He holds, and without feet, He runs.
He sees without eyes, and He hears without ears.

He knows everything through men's minds, but no one knows Him.
He's called 'the Origin', 'the One', 'the Highest', 'the All.'

19. That one conscious Self, the smallest of the small
And the largest of the large, is in everyone's heart.
The wise, by the Grace of God, become free
When they see in themselves that majestic Self
Who's beyond all desires.
20. I know the Immortal! The Origin! The Lord!
The Self of all beings who pervades everything!
All those who have known Him agree:
He's beginningless, endless, and eternally free.

Part Four:

1. Though producing the whole universe, He remains unaffected.
He never changes, but remains as He was.
Without ever revealing His purposes,
He creates all these worlds, and then withdraws them again.
May that effulgent Self enlighten our minds!
2. He is fire, He is the Sun; He is wind, He's the moon!
He's the stars, the mountains, the rivers and seas!
3. Thou art woman and man! Thou art the old and the young!
It is Thou alone, Lord, who hast taken all these forms!
4. Thou art the blue bee; Thou art the green parrot.
Thou art the dark clouds, the four seasons, the seas.
Thou art the birthless and limitless God
Who hast given birth to all worlds and all souls.
5. Unborn Nature, ¹⁹ with her *gunas*, gives birth to all forms.
Countless unborn souls seek pleasure in Nature's array,
But the unborn Self, who creates both Nature and souls,
Lives apart from Its creations, in eternal Freedom and Bliss.
6. The Self and the soul are like two birds, though one.
They have the same name, and they're in the same tree.
But, while the soul tastes and enjoys the sweet fruits,

The other eats not; He's the Witness, the Self.

7. The soul, through enjoyment, forgets it's the Self,
And, feeling bewildered and helpless, it moans.
But, when it realizes it's the glorious Lord all adore,
It forgets all its previously felt grief.
8. Of what use then are the Vedas to one who has seen
That Brahman in whom the Vedas and all gods are contained?
He knows the eternal Essence of which all souls are made!
And by knowing that, he possesses a true and eternal joy.
9. All the scriptures, all worship and sacrifices,
All *tapasya* performed in the future or past,
And also the Vedas, are born of Brahman's Power.²⁰
It's His net that entangles, and it's He²¹ who's ensnared.
10. The world and all souls take on form by His Power.
He, the great Lord, is governing everything.
The whole universe, and all objects within it,
Are only constituents of His manifest Being.
11. By knowing that One who exists as the world—
That One in whom everyone is born, to whom everyone returns—
By knowing that Lord, the Bestower of Grace,
Our adorable God, one attains supreme peace.
12. May Shiva, the Creator of the gods and their powers,
The omniscient Support of the world,
He who gives birth to all space and all time,
Endow us with wisdom and clarity of mind!
13. To that Lord, who is King of all gods and all worlds,
The Ruler of all creatures on two legs or four,
To that blissful and effulgent Lord whom we love,
Let us give all our worship and serve only Him.
14. He is the Creator of all forms—all's contained within Him.
Universal chaos surrounds Him, yet He's ever unmoved.
He's the undivided One who pervades everything.

By knowing that One, man attains the supreme peace.

15. He is the Possessor and King of the whole universe,
Concealing Himself in the hearts of all beings.
From there, He inspires all the sages and gods.
By knowing that Lord, man himself becomes free.
16. As cream is in milk, that one Self is in all.
Subtle and hidden, He pervades everything.
One who knows that radiant God who is Bliss
Becomes released from the bonds of this world.
17. He is the Self-revealed Creator and Pervader of all.
He dwells as the Self in the hearts of all beings.
He's revealed by discrimination, renunciation, and knowledge.
Those who know Him are freed from the bondage of death.
18. When His Light dispels the dark ignorance of man,
Both existence and non-existence vanish; day and night disappear.
Brahman, and Brahman alone, is all that exists.
From His light comes the Sun and the wisdom of man.
19. The mind cannot grasp Him, either with or without form.
We call Him 'Great Glory', but there's no image of Him.
He can be seen, not with eyes, but within by the mind.
All those who have seen Him are eternally free.
20. O unmanifest Lord, grant refuge to me!
O Rudra, Protector, keep watch over me!
Do not, in Thy anger, destroy us or our homes.
Spare us and our children, we beg Thee, O God!

Part Five:

1. In that infinite Brahman, who is eternally One,
Both ignorance and knowledge exist.
With one, a man seeks the world; with the other, he seeks God.
But He who contains them is neither one, nor the other.
2. He's beyond both knowledge and ignorance.

He's the Governor and Dispenser of our every thought.
 He controls all beings as their single Source,
 And He knew the end of creation at the moment of its birth.

3. He manifested this universe as a spider manifests its web,
 And, in time, He'll withdraw it into Himself again.
 He created all these forms; He pervades all bodies and senses.
 He's the One in all, the great Lord of all beings.
4. As the Sun's radiance illumines the East and the West,
 The North and the South, above and below,
 So does the Lord, the adorable One,
 Illumine and control all that He's made.
5. He is the Cause and Controller of the ways of all things.
 He ripens and brings to fruition all things on the earth.
6. To those who seek Him in scriptures, He is hidden.
 But He's revealed to those sages who become one with Him.
7. Every soul is impelled to act by the power of Nature.
 It sows actions and reaps the fruits of those actions.
 Continually assuming new forms and new qualities,
 The soul continues to wander on the paths of life.
8. The soul is small, but it shines like the Sun.
 It possesses a will and the sense of 'I.'
 Because of its identification with the intellect,
 That perfect Self appears separate, weak, and of little worth.
9. The wandering soul may be compared
 To a hair, divided a hundred times,
 Then again divided by a hundred more,
 And yet that soul has no finite bounds.
10. It is not female, nor is it male,
 Nor is it something in between.
 The soul becomes identified with
 Whatever body it dwells within.

11. Desiring fruits, the embodied soul
Attains its goals, and then becomes attached.
Experiencing pain, it learns, and in this way, grows,
As a body grows by taking food and drink.
12. The embodied soul, by virtue of its various actions,
Adopts new forms, either subtle or gross.
And, according to the knowledge and desires it possesses,
It assumes a new body to enjoy the world.
13. But once it knows the infinite Lord—
The Creator and Pervader of all life's forms,
That One who remains unmoved, while all is in motion—
That soul is released from all its bonds.
14. Those souls who know that effulgent Lord—
The One realized by the pure of heart,
The Creator, Destroyer, and Cause of all—
Those souls are freed from embodied life.

Part Six:

1. Some people believe that the world is caused
And controlled by natural laws or by the passage of time.
Such deluded people are truly foolish.
The universe moves by the will of God.
2. The one Consciousness that pervades this universe
Is the Author and Witness of the laws and of time.
The elements obey the omniscient Lord.
Ponder this, O learned and knowledgeable men!
3. A yogi who works, but renounces the fruits of his work,
Who practices discipline, and serves his teacher,
Attains, by virtue of the habits he acquires,
The soul's Liberation, the highest goal.
4. One who performs all his actions in service of God,
Who releases all claim to the fruits of his work,
Comes to know himself as the one Self of all,

And is finally freed from all actions in time.
 By transcending all delusion, he's released from past actions,
 Though the already-ripened fruits of past actions must be received.
 But when, in time, even these are exhausted,
 The yogi becomes free; he attains the Divine.

5. The Lord is the sole Origin, the Source, in which all is united.
 That One remains undivided, beyond countless eons of time.
 Liberation is attained when a man knows that Lord,
 The Father of all, who abides in the heart.
6. All this universe sprouts from Him.
 He is the Root of the entire vast tree of creation.
 Living within all, He's the Bestower of all good.
 Liberation is attained when a man knows the Lord.
7. We know the supreme Self, the Lord of all lords—
 The God of all gods, the King of all kings,
 The Imperishable behind the perishable world that He made—
 The Self-revealing, adorable, Lord of the world.
8. He has no body or organs or limbs; He's not like anything else that exists.
 Scriptures cannot describe Him and speak only of His Power.²²
 He's able to do anything that He wills.
 His Power is boundless, and He knows everything.
9. He is ruled by no other; there's no Lord over Him.
 He has left not the slightest trace by which He can be found.
 He, Himself, is the Cause and the Lord of all lords.
 He was fathered by none and is governed by none.
10. May that Lord, like a spider concealed in its own web,
 Whose threads form the fabric of this world—
 May that Lord who is hidden by His own veiling Power,²³
 Unite us in Brahman, release us in Him!
11. The non-dual resplendent Lord resides
 As the Self in all creatures and all things.
 He impels all to action and witnesses all.

While pervading everything, He remains ever free.

12. He controls everyone as their innermost Self.
He's the one Seed from whom innumerable sprouts have arisen.
Only those who see Him within themselves
Obtain the gift of eternal Bliss.
13. He is the Eternal within the temporal, the Infinite within form.
He's the One within many who grants all desires.
Only those who see Him within themselves
Obtain the gift of eternal Peace.
14. In Him, there's no Sun, no moon, and no stars.
Within Him there is no lightning or fire.
Because of Him, the Sun, the moon, and the stars all shine.
Their light comes from Him; He's the Light of all lights.
15. There is nothing in this universe but the Self, the 'I AM.'
Like a flame, He lives in the hearts of all beings.
The only way to pass beyond death is to know Him.
There's no other means, and there's no other End.
16. He is the only support of the soul and the world.
He is the sole Cause of both bondage and liberation.
He is the Creator, the Knower, the Self of all things.
All good comes from Him. He's the omniscient Lord.
17. He is the Controller of everything in this world.
Bondage and Liberation are given by Him.
He, the deathless Protector of everyone,
Is the Ruler of all. To whom else might you turn?
18. As one who seeks Liberation, I take refuge in Him,
The Revealer of the Self, the Giver of all knowledge,
The Creator of Brahma, who, at the beginning of time,
Gave expression to true Knowledge,²⁴ and shared it with men.
19. When a man shall be able to roll up the sky like a rug,
Then suffering will end without knowledge of the Lord.

20. He is One, without actions or parts,
Remaining serene, like a flame whose fuel is exhausted.
He is ever blameless, and unattached to the world.
For all men, He is the supreme bridge to Immortality.
21. Svetasvatara, by the grace of the Lord,
And by his *tapasya*, has realized God.
He's therefore proclaiming this knowledge to men,
This knowledge that's cherished by sages and saints.
22. The knowledge of God, the one supreme Truth,
Has been proclaimed in every age, and in every *yuga*.
It should only be given to the pure of heart.
It may certainly be given to a disciple or a son.
23. When given to one who is wise,
And who has love for God and for his teacher,
These truths will surely give Light to his soul.
They'll surely give Light to his soul.

NOTES:

1. 'The power of God', original Sanskrit: *devatma shakti*.
2. (The verses 4 and 5 from the first section appear to be interpolations, perhaps by priestly copiers who wanted to insert their own traditional lists of metaphysical categories as metaphors in this Upanishad. It is easy to see that these two verses are very incongruent with the rest of the Upanishad and are unlikely to be from an enlightened soul such as Svetasvatara. Nonetheless, we offer these traditional interpretations): 'The wheel of existence' refers to the spinning universe.
3. 'Three-layered tire' is the three *gunas*: *rajas* (the principle of activity), *tamas* (the principle of restraint), and *sattva* (the principle of wisdom).
4. 'Sixteen parts' is the five elements, five organs of perception, five organs of action, and the mind.
5. 'Fifty spokes' is the five kinds of misperception (ignorance, self-love, attachment, hatred, and clinging to life); twenty-eight disabilities, nine inversions (or opposites) of satisfaction, and eight inversions of perfections (*siddhis*).
6. 'Twenty spoke-connectors' is the ten organs and their corresponding objects.

7. 'Six eight-part divisions' is the eight aspects of *Prakṛti*: akasha, air, fire, water, earth, mind, buddhi, and I-consciousness, plus the eight bodily substances (*dhatus*): skin, cuticle, flesh, blood, fat, bone, marrow, and semen; plus the eight supernatural powers (*siddhis*), the eight attitudes (*bhavas*): righteousness, knowledge, renunciation, majesty, unrighteousness, ignorance, non-renunciation, and poverty; plus the eight gods: Brahman, Prajapati, deities, gandarvas, yakshas, rakshashas, pitris, and fiends; plus the eight virtues: compassion, forgiveness, absence of malice, purity, spontaneity, goodness, liberality, and absence of desires.
8. 'A single rope' is the binding rope of love.
9. 'The three directions' of love are love for (producing) children, love of food, and love of the heavenly worlds.
10. 'Illusion arising from two causes' is the illusion that the body is the Self, which arises from both virtuous action and sinful action.
11. 'River with five currents' is the world-illusion with the five organs of perception: the ears, nose, tongue, skin, and eyes.
12. 'The five elements' are earth, air, water, fire, and ether (*akasha*).
13. 'The five organs of action' are: the hands, feet, tongue, and the organs of procreation and evacuation.
14. 'The five kinds of perceptions' are: taste, hearing, vision, touch, and smell.
15. 'The five whirlpools' are the objects of the five senses.
16. 'The five miseries' are: resting in the womb, being born, growing old, becoming ill, and dying.
17. 'The fifty branches' are unknown. Some say they refer to a category in Sankhya philosophy.
18. 'The five dangerous obstructions' are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life.
19. 'Unborn Nature' is *Prakṛti* in the original Sanskrit.
20. 'Brahman's Power' is originally His *Maya*, the power of world-manifestation.
21. The net of Maya is His Power, and yet 'He', in the form of the jiva, becomes ensnared in the net of Maya.
22. 'Speak only of His Power'; in other words, since the unmanifest Brahman cannot be described in words, scriptures speak mainly of His manifested appearances, produced by His Power of Maya.
23. 'His own veiling Power' refers again to His Maya, His manifestory Power.
24. 'Gave expression to true knowledge' refers to His imparting of the Vedas.

II. THE SECRET OF NATURAL DEVOTION

(Adapted from Jnaneshvar's *Amritanubhav* in
Abhayana's *Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works of
The Celebrated 13th Century Indian Mystic-Poet, 1989*)

Jnaneshvar, a casteless orphan, was one of the most brilliant poets, sublime mystics, and fascinating figures in all of Medieval Indian history. At an age when most men have scarcely begun their life's work, Jnaneshvar (Gyan-esh-war), who lived from 1271 to 1296, a mere span of twenty-five years, had ended his; but not before having built an everlasting monument to his memory in the written masterpieces he left behind. In so few years, he had established a legacy that was to revitalize his culture, his language, his religious tradition, and make a place for himself as an enduring presence in the hearts of his countrymen for all time. The following is from Chapter Nine of *Amritanubhav*:

Just as a nose might become a fragrance,
Or ears might give out a melody
For their own enjoyment,
Or the eyes might produce a mirror
In order to see themselves,

Or as flowers might take the form of a bee,
Or a lovely young girl might become a young man,
Or a sleepy man might become
A bed on which to lie,

As the blossoms of a mango tree
Might become a cuckoo bird,
Or one's skin might become
Malayan breezes,
Or tongues might become flavors,

Or as a slab of gold might become
Articles of jewelry
For the sake of beauty,
Just so, the one pure Consciousness becomes
The enjoyer and the object of enjoyment,

The seer and the object of vision,
Without disturbing Its unity.

A Shevanti flower bursts forth
With a thousand petals.
Yet it does not become anything
But a Shevanti flower.

Similarly, the auspicious drums
Of ever new experiences
May be sounding,
But in the kingdom of Stillness,
Nothing is heard.

All of the senses may rush simultaneously
Toward the multitude of sense objects,
But—just as, in a mirror,
One's vision only meets one's vision—
The rushing senses only meet themselves.

One may purchase a necklace,
Earrings, or a bracelet.
But it is only gold,
Whichever one receives.

One may gather a handful of ripples,
But it is only water in the hand.

To the hand, camphor is touch,
To the eye, it's a white object,
To the nose it is fragrance.
Nonetheless, it is camphor, and nothing but camphor.

Likewise, the sensible universe
Is only the vibration of the Self.

The various senses attempt to catch
Their objects in their hands—
For example, the ears
Try to catch the words.

But as soon as the senses
 Touch their objects,
 The objects disappear as objects.
 There's no object for one to touch.
 For all is the Self.

The juice of the sugarcane
 Is part of the sugarcane.
 The light of the full moon
 Belongs to the full moon.

The meeting of the senses and their objects
 Is like moonlight falling on the moon,
 Or like water sprinkling on the sea.

One who has attained this wisdom
 May say whatever he likes.
 The silence of his contemplation
 Remains undisturbed.

His state of actionlessness
 Remains unaffected,
 Even though he performs countless actions.

Stretching out the arms of desire,
 One's eyesight embraces
 The objects she sees.
 But, in fact, nothing at all is gained.

It is like the Sun
 Stretching out the thousand arms
 Of his rays in order to grasp darkness.
 He remains only light, as before.

Just as a person, awakening to
 Enjoy the activity of a dream,
 Finds himself suddenly alone.

Even one who has attained wisdom

May appear to become the enjoyer
 Of the sense objects before him.
 But we do not know
 What his enjoyment is like.

If the moon gathers moonlight,
 What is gathered by whom?
 It is only a fruitless
 And meaningless dream.

There is really no action or inaction.
 Everything that is happening
 Is the sport of the Self.

The undivided One
 Enters the courtyard of duality
 Of His own accord.
 Unity only becomes strengthened
 By the expansion of diversity.

Sweeter even than the bliss of liberation
 Is the enjoyment of sense-objects
 To one who has attained wisdom.
 In the house of *bhakti* (devotional love),
 That lover and his God
 Experience their sweet union.

Whether he walks in the streets
 Or remains sitting quietly,
 He is always in his own home.

He may perform actions,
 But he has no goal to attain.
 Do not imagine
 That, if he did nothing,
 He would miss his goal.

He does not allow room
 For either remembering or forgetting.
 For this reason,

His behavior is not like that of others.

His rule of conduct is his own sweet will.
 His meditation is whatever
 He happens to be doing.
 The glory of liberation
 Serves as an *asana* (seat cushion)
 To one in such a state.

God Himself is the devotee.
 The goal is the path.
 The whole universe is one solitary Being.

It is He who becomes a God,
 And He who becomes a devotee.
 In Himself,
 He enjoys the kingdom of Stillness.

The temple itself is merged
 In the all-pervasive God.
 The motion of time
 And the vastness of space
 Are no more.

Everything is contained in the Being of God.
 If a desire
 For the Master-disciple relationship arises,
 It is God alone who must supply both out of Himself.

Even the devotional practices,
 Such as *japa* (repetition of God's name), faith and
 meditation,
 Are not different from God.

Therefore, God must worship God
 With God, in one way or another.

The temple, the idol, and the priests—
 All are carved out of the same stone mountain.
 Why, then, should there be devotional worship?

[Or why shouldn't there be devotional worship?]

A tree spreads its foliage,
And produces flowers and fruits,
Even though it has no objective
Outside of itself.

What does it matter if a dumb person
Observes a vow of silence or not?
The wise remain steadfast in their own divinity
Whether they worship or not.

Will the flame of a lamp
Remain without light
If we do not ask her to wear
The garment of light?

Is not the moon bathed in light
Even though we do not ask her
To wear the moonlight?

Fire is naturally hot.
Why should we consider heating it?

A wise person is aware
That he, himself, is the Lord.
Therefore, even when he is not worshiping,
He is worshiping.

Now the lamps of action and inaction
Have both been snuffed out,
And worshiping and not worshiping
Are sitting in the same seat,
And eating from the same bowl.

In such a state,
The sacred scriptures are the same as censure,
And censure itself
Is the same as a sweet hymn of praise.

Both praise and censure
 Are, in fact, reduced to silence.
 Even though there is speech,
 It is silence.

No matter where he goes,
 That sage is making pilgrimage to God.
 And, if he attains to God,
 That attainment is non-attainment.

How amazing
 That in such a state,
 Moving about on foot
 And remaining seated in one place
 Are the same!

No matter what his eyes fall upon
 At any time,
 He always enjoys the vision of God.

If God Himself appears before him,
 It is as if he has seen nothing.
 For God and His devotee
 Are on the same level.

Of its own nature,
 A ball falls to the ground,
 And bounces up again,
 Enraptured in its own bliss.

If we could watch
 The play of a ball,
 We might be able to say something
 About the behavior of the sage.

This spontaneous, natural devotion
 Cannot be touched by the hand of action,
 Nor can knowledge penetrate it.

It goes on without end,

In communion with itself.
What bliss can be compared to this?

This natural devotion is a wonderful secret.
It is the place in which meditation
And knowledge are merged.

O blissful and almighty Lord!
You have made us the sole sovereign
In the kingdom of perfect bliss.

How wonderful
That You have awakened the wakeful,
Laid to rest those who are sleeping,
And made us to realize
Our own Self!

We are Yours entirely!
Out of love,
You include us as Your own,
As is befitting Your greatness.

You do not receive anything from anyone,
Nor do You give anything of Yourself to anyone else.
We do not know how You enjoy your greatness.

O noble One!
It is Your pleasure
To become our nearest and dearest
By taking away from us
Our sense of difference from You.

III. NIRVANASATKAM

The philosophy of Nondualism states that, just as every wave arising in the sea is nothing but ocean, and just as every clod of dirt is nothing but earth, so, in the same way, every object and every conscious soul is nothing else but the one all-pervading universal Consciousness. This philosophy is founded on the experiential realization that occurs when that eternal Self becomes revealed in the depths of one's soul. Otherwise, we remain ignorant of our true nature. The reason for our ignorance is that, at birth, that Consciousness becomes associated with the individual physical body that is born, and from that time forward we tend to identify as a separate individual person. We are limited not only by the illusion of separateness, but we are also limited by the karmic conditions under which we are born, as well as by the characteristics we acquire through our current life-experiences.

These limitations obscure, but cannot alter, the fact that the underlying being and true identity of every one of us is that one universal and indivisible Consciousness who is the Creator and Sustainer of this multi-formed phenomenal universe. It is He who lives as every conscious form, and it is He alone who is the identity of all that exists. And yet, no matter how hard we try to know that eternal Self through the reasoning mind, we cannot know It; the direct awareness of that Self eludes us. We can reduce all existence to two: 'I' and 'Thou'; but the further reduction to one, to the nondual Self, is something only *He* can do. When, however, by the grace of God, these two do in fact become one, contrary to our expectations, it is not 'Thou' who remains standing, but 'I' who inevitably stands alone as the sole Reality. This is why all the sages and seers to whom that eternal Self has revealed Itself have declared that "I and the Father are one; in truth I am He!"

Here is a song by the eighth century Indian sage, Sri Shankaracharya, called *Nirvanasatkam*, in which he tells of the unitive knowledge that came to him through his realization of the Self. Subsequent to that realization, he no longer identifies with any of the modifications of Consciousness with which we ignorantly tend to identify; rather, he declares over and over that He is the absolute Reality, *Chidananda* (Chit and Ananda; eternal Consciousness and Bliss; he is the one divine Self, traditionally referred to as 'Shiva':

Nirvanasatkam (On The Eternal Reality)

**Song by Sri Shankaracharya,
translated into English by Swami Abhayananda**

1. I am neither mind, nor intellect, nor ego.
I am not the senses of taste, smell, or vision.
Not water, nor fire, nor earth, nor the ether,
I am *Chidananda*.¹ I'm Shiva. I'm Shiva.
2. I am not the *prana*, nor its five kinds of movement,
Nor seven gross components, nor five subtle bodies.
I am neither speech nor the organs of action.
I am Chidananda. I'm Shiva. I'm Shiva.
3. I am not the feeling of pride, nor of envy.
Neither pleasure, nor duty, nor wealth belong to me.
I am not attachment, nor greed, nor delusion.
I am Chidananda. I'm Shiva. I'm Shiva.
4. I'm neither evil nor good; I'm neither pleasure nor pain.
Nor mantra, nor temple, nor *yajna*, nor Veda.
I am neither food, nor the one who consumes it.
I am Chidananda. I'm Shiva. I'm Shiva.
5. I have neither death nor concern, nor vocation,
Nor mother, nor father; no birth have I taken.
I'm neither Guru, nor *shishya*,² nor friend, nor a brother.
I am Chidananda. I'm Shiva. I'm Shiva.
6. I'm beyond every form and beyond all conception.
I am everywhere, but beyond sense-perception.
I am not detachment, nor am I salvation.
I am Chidananda. I'm Shiva. I'm Shiva.

NOTES:

1. *Chidananda*: Sanskrit word, made up of *Chit* (Consciousness) and *Ananda* (Bliss); synonymous with the eternal Reality.
2. *shishya* is "disciple."

IV. SOME SANSKRIT CHANTS:

The Universal Prayer

Durjanah sajjano bhūyāt
sajjanah śāntim-āpnuyāt
Śānto mucyeta bandhebhya
muktaś-cānyān vimocayet

Svasti prajābhyah paripālayantām
nyāyena mārgena mahīm mahīśāh
Go-brāhmanebhya śubham-astu nityam
lokāh samastāh sukhino bhavantu

Kāle varsatu parjanya
prthivī śasya-śalinī
Deśo' yam ksobha-rahito
brāhmanāh santu nirbhayāh

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu nirāmayah
Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu
ma kaścid-duhkha-bhāg-bhavet

Sarvas-taratu durgāni
sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu
Sarvah kāmān-avāpnotu
sarvah sarvatra nandatu

Svasti mātra uta pitre no astu
svasti gobhya jagate purusebhyah
Viśvam subhūtam suvidatram no astu
jyogeva drśyema sūryam

OM śantih śantih śantih

English translation of The Universal Prayer:

May all of the wicked return to good.
May all who are good obtain true peace.
May all who are peaceful be freed from their bonds.
May all who are free set the others free.

Blessings upon all the people on earth.
May all the world's rulers uphold what is right.
May only good fortune befall everyone.
May all the world's creatures obtain happiness.

May the rain fall when the earth is thirsty.
May all the storehouses be filled with grain.
May everyone here be free from harm.
May all who are good be free from fear.

May everyone know a life of joy.
May everyone live a life of health.
May everyone see only good in this world.
May everyone soon be released from pain.

May everyone overcome all their woes.
May everyone see only good in this world.
May everyone realize all their desires.
May everyone everywhere be glad.

May our mother and father be blessed.
Blessings upon every creature on earth.
May our works flourish and aid everyone.
And long may our eyes see the sun.

OM. Peace, peace, peace

Prayer To Hari

Twameva mātā ca pitā tvameva
 Tvameva bandhūśca sakhā tvameva
 Tvameva vidyā dravinam tvameva
 Tvameva sarvam mama deva deva

Dūra karo duhkha darada saba
 Dayā karo bhagavān
 Mana mandira mem ujjvala ho
 Terā nirmala jnān

Jisa ghara mem ho āratī
 Charana-kamala chita lāy
 Tahām hari vasā kare
 Jyota ananta jagāy

Jahām bhakta kīrtana kare
 Bahe prema dariyā
 Tahām harī śravana kare
 Satya loka se āy

Saba kucha diyā āpa ne
 Bhemta karūn kyā-nāth
 [Namaskāra kī bhemta karūn
 Jodūn maim dono hāth] (Repeat these two lines)

OM pūrnamadah pūrnamidam
 Pūrnāt pūrnāmudacyate
 Pūrnasya pūrnāmādāya
 Pūrnamevāvaśisyate

OM śantih śantih śantih

English translation of the Prayer To Hari:

Thou art my Mother, my Father Thou art.
 Thou art my brother, my friend Thou art.
 My wisdom Thou art, all my wealth Thou art.
 Thou art my all, O God of gods!

Let all our anxious sorrows depart.
 Mercy, we beg, Bhagawan.
 Enlighten me with Thy wisdom's glow
 And fill this mind's abode with Light.

Everywhere in homes where Thou art served with love,
 Everywhere Thy lotus-feet adored:
 In that place, Hari, Thy radiant glory dwells,
 Shedding Light everywhere.

Where Thy bhaktas sing their songs to Thee,
 Where love flows like streams of rain.
 In that place, Hari, from Thy high abode,
 Thou dost listen to the strains of love.

Every good thing Thou has given free to me.
 What, O Lord, may I give unto Thee?
 Please accept this heart which I offer Thee
 In these folded hands of mine (Repeat verse)

Thou art ever perfect and complete.
 This world, arising from Thy perfection, is also perfect.
 Yet should this perfect world be withdrawn by Thee,
 Thy perfection would still remain the same.

OM. Peace, peace, peace.

Song To Shiva

Namo'stvanantāya sahasra-mūrtaye
 sahasra-pādā'ksi śīroru-bāhave
 Sahasra-nāmne purusāya śāśvate
 sahasra-kotī-yuga-dhārine namah

OM viśvataś-caksuruta viśvato-mukho
 viśvato-bāhur-uta viśvatas-pāt
 Sambahubhyām dhamati sam-patatirair
 dyāva-bhūmi janayan deva ekah

Nānā-sugandha-puspāni
 yathā-kālobdhavāni ca
 Puspāñjalim mayā dattam
 grhāna paramesvara

Ityesā vānmayī pūjā
 srīmacchankara-pādayo
 Ārpitā tena deveśah
 prīyatām me sadā-śivah

Yad-aksaram padam bhrastam
 mātṛā-hīnam ca yad bhavet
 Tat-sarvam ksamyatām deva
 prasīda paremeśvara

OM saha nāvavatu
 saha nau bhunaktu
 Saha vīryam karavāvahai
 tejasvi nāvadhītām-astu

Ma vidvisāvahai
 OM śāntih śāntih śāntih

English translation of the Song to Shiva:

I bow to Thee, O Shiva, of many thousand forms.
 with thousands of heads, feet, eyes, thighs and arms.
 With thousands of names, Thou art forevermore One.
 Through thousands of ages, I bow to Thee, my Lord.

OM. Thy eyes are everywhere, everywhere Thy mouths.
 Everywhere Thy arms reach out, everywhere Thy feet.
 Thine the wings of birds, Thine the arms of men.
 Both heaven and earth belong to Thee, O God.

Many sweet flowers I offer Thee,
 Many-scented and newly blown.
 From these two hands this small bouquet
 please receive, O Lord supreme!

This short song of love I sing
 At Thy feet, O Shankara;
 By it, may the Lord of gods,
 Sadashiva, be pleased with me.

If I've wrongly sung some words,
 Or mispronounced one syllable,
 All these lapses please forgive,
 And pardon me, O greatest Lord.

OM. Lord, protect us as one.
 Nourish us, O Lord, as one.
 Let us flourish in Thy strength as one.
 let our knowledge, O Lord, be changed to light.

Lord, change our hate to love.
 OM. Peace, peace, peace.

* * *

21. SCIENCE AND GNOSIS

from *The Mystic's Vision* by Swami Abhayananda.

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I.

The word, *science*—from the Latin *scientia*, as well as the word, *gnosis*—from the ancient Greek, mean “to know”, but the knowledge each describes is different. Each kind of knowledge has a long and well documented history: Science has developed over the centuries through the positing of rational theories and the rigorous accumulation of physical data, modifying its position as reason, observation and data dictate. Gnosis is also based on experience, but it is experience that is extra-sensual, supra-rational, and wholly subjective, or personal. Science is confirmed by evidence derived from empirical observation; gnosis is confirmed by evidence derived from introspective revelation. Science pertains to knowledge of the gross, material world; gnosis pertains to knowledge of the subtle, spiritual foundation of the world.

Scientists, for example, have determined, through theory, reason, and observation, that the universe of time and space began as an immense burst of high-frequency energy, referred to as “the Big Bang”. Scientists have determined over the past century or so that at some point, about 14 billion years ago, an enormous amount of energy suddenly appeared, expanding and transforming into mass-bearing particles that collectively formed our phenomenal universe. Those scientists have even determined the temperatures and rate of acceleration of this energy in the first few seconds and minutes of its release, and they have cataloged the material particles which were created as this energy cooled and solidified. They are also convinced that, prior to this “big bang”, nothing else existed—not space, not time, not matter; but only this concentrated (electromagnetic) energy in a potential and pre-material state. It was only as these highly energized wave/particles of light interacted and collided, that they were transformed into material wave/particles, which then became the fundamental components of the universe.

Physicists and cosmologists have further determined that, approximately ten billion years after the ‘Big Bang’ (four and a half billion years ago), remnants of an exploding star, or supernova, within this expanding universe, condensed into our solar system; and that sometime during the next few hundred million years, single-celled organisms bearing a molecule called DNA emerged on planet Earth; that these microbes then evolved, resulting in a prodigious display of living creatures, including *Homo sapiens*, who emerged fairly recently, that is to say, in the last 200,000 to 150,000 years. To this broad scientific theory, gnostics (mystics) have no objection, as it is consistent with the knowledge obtained through gnosis. But it doesn’t go far enough if we are interested in knowing the true beginning i.e., where did this initial energy come from? Science is forever barred from providing an answer to this question, as science, by definition, is limited to empirically demonstrable or replicable (material) phenomena only. But gnosis is able to provide the answer to this question; for gnostics have “seen” that the Source of all energy is noumenal—that is to say, ‘of Mind’. “Noumenon” is derived from the Greek word, *Nous*, “the Divine Mind” of Platonist philosophy, and was later defined in Kantian terms as “a thing in itself, unable to be known through perception, but postulated as the intelligible ground of a phenomenon.” That intelligible ground is unknowable by science, but knowable by gnosis. Gnosis alone is capable of determining the reality of the Divine Mind (*Nous*) from which all noumena and phenomena arise.

Gnosis is possible only with the elimination of the ego-mechanism by which a person’s awareness is limited to that of a separate individual identity. This ego-mechanism is a subtle mental obscuration that structures a (false) identification with the biological and psychological processes of individuation. Thus, instead of being aware of the real I-identity that is universal Consciousness, one is restricted to a false artificial identification with the individual’s biological and psychological processes. The eternal Consciousness, which is essentially one, thereby becomes perceived in the awareness of the individual as a separate ‘me-identity’ integrally associated with a specific material body. However, this ego-mechanism, present in all beings, may be dispelled in humans by an interior revelation that we can only regard as ‘divine Grace’. It is a sudden interior illumination that reveals to the human awareness that it is part and parcel of the one eternal Consciousness, the origin and substratum of all individuated consciousness.

This ‘mystical’ experience of expanded awareness has occurred in numerous individuals throughout history. Some of the best known in the Western world are Jesus, the Buddha, Plotinus, Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross; but there are many more. They have described this experience of the revelation of the one eternal Consciousness variously as “the union with God”, “the extinction of the ego (*nirvana*, *samadhi*)”, “enlightenment”, “the entrance into the kingdom of God”, or the “mystic marriage of the soul and God.” However, all these experiences are synonymous and identical. The accumulated evidence for the occurrence of such a transcendence of the ego and the subsequent emergence into the awareness of and universal identity with the eternal Consciousness is overwhelming. It seems to me that it is time for science to acknowledge the existence of such “revealed” knowledge, and to accord it the status of *gnosis*, while attempting to reconcile its own findings with the view of reality put forward by the gnostics.

Little can be learned objectively about the obscurative and limiting ego-mechanism under which we all suffer, for its proper means of study is subjective. The elimination of the obscurative and limiting effects of the ego-mechanism can only be accomplished by an introspective focus – whether by means of a dualistic devotional practice or by intense self-examination. Examples abound of representatives of both introspective methods having obtained the ego-transcending results, revealing to them the Divine Mind, or God, through divine Grace.

But science, to its detriment, does not acknowledge this fact; indeed, science does not even acknowledge the possibility of gnosis. Whatever is outside the purview of empirical science is regarded by its representatives as either nonexistent or simply unworthy of study. This is where the difficulty of reconciling science and gnosis begins. It is much like the position of some Middle Eastern countries who hold that reconciliation with the country of Israel cannot occur since they do not recognize the right of Israel to exist. If there is to be reconciliation between science and gnosis, gnosis must be acknowledged as a specific and valid means of human knowledge.

One has difficulty imagining that scientists will ever accept the declarations of mystics as science; and they needn’t. But as human beings interested in comprehending the whole of reality, they would do well to accept them as gnosis, as providing information through an alternate and complementary

mode of knowledge that is essential along with science to a complete understanding of reality. The alternative is to remain forever locked in the mystery of a partially known and wholly incomprehensible universe. Both of these two areas of knowledge, science and gnosis, must be acknowledged as valid means if we are to have a comprehensive overview of reality. As Albert Einstein once noted, “Science without religion [gnosis] is lame; religion [gnosis] without science is blind.” This is more than merely a vague platitude; it is an insightful recognition that there are two distinct modes of knowledge, each of which, without the other, is incomplete, and both of which are required in order to comprehensively describe all aspects of the total reality.

The question then arises, “who speaks for gnosis?” or “what statements constitute true gnosis from among those statements by the many pretenders to gnosis?” And this is, perhaps, where the true difficulty lies. The answer is that it is the true mystics who speak for gnosis; it is the statements by those who have truly “seen” into the noumenal reality that constitute gnosis. And how do we separate out the true visionaries from the pretenders and from the many vastly diverse belief systems which presently circulate? Unfortunately, there is no easy or foolproof answer to that question. But, in gnosis as in science, there is a consensus among recognized authorities (mystics) on which we may rely. In my book, *History of Mysticism*, I have discussed the views of many such recognized mystics and shown that, despite the differences of language and culture, mystics throughout history have unanimously agreed on the elements of the noumenal reality.

For so many centuries, science and gnosis have remained exclusive of one another, and have tread separate paths, scarcely acknowledging one another. And yet there must be an end to this divisive isolationism. How long shall scientists pretend that the subtler mode of knowledge simply does not exist? In the past, religious faiths have often been in doctrinal opposition to the conclusions of science and have had to adapt over time to the scientific view. The Copernican revolution, Galileo’s observations, the Darwinian revelations, and many other scientific pronouncements, were resisted by the establishments of religious faith, and were many long years in being accepted and assimilated by them; but gnosis has never had a quarrel with science. It has simply not been acknowledged as a means of knowledge existing apart from religious faith.

How can the revelations of Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross, and others in the Western mystical tradition simply be ignored? These few have been greatly multiplied and fortified by the addition to our knowledge of the lives and teachings of the great mystics of the Eastern traditions. Have they not all taught of the noumenal Source? And have not all, after their linguistic differences were accounted for, presented identical accounts?

These two camps, science and gnosis, have vied with one another over the centuries for the mind of the populace. And, for the past several centuries, science has been in the ascendancy in this war of ideals and has dominated the attention of all within Western civilization. While I acknowledge the necessity of both of these two modes of knowledge, and have a deep love for science, I am a gnostic, not merely by conviction, but by experiential familiarity; and so, I have long felt it necessary to clearly present the knowledge I have obtained through gnosis in a way that is beneficial to everyone dedicated to the discovery of the subtle foundations of existence.

II.

The basic elements of the Eastern worldview are also those of the worldview emerging from modern physics. ...Eastern thought—and, more generally, mystical thought—provides a consistent and relevant philosophical background to the theories of contemporary science; a conception of the world in which man's scientific discoveries can be in perfect harmony with his spiritual aims and religious beliefs.

-- Fritjof Capra,

When Fritjof Capra's book, *The Tao of Physics*, was first published in 1975, many found the above statement an amazingly encouraging and promising insight. Conservative scientists, however, found it hogwash. The idea that mystical vision (gnosis) bore any resemblance to the findings of empirical scientific investigation, or that the two could in any way be reconciled was, to these scientists, a laughable proposition. I think that position needs to be reexamined. Science needs gnosis, and gnosis needs science.

Gnosis is generally regarded as belonging to the province of religion. But it is important to distinguish between 'religion' and 'religious faith'.

"Religion" is a word derived from the Latin *religare*. *Ligare* means "to tie

or bind”; its meaning is reflected in such derivatives as “ligament” and “ligature”. It is interesting to note that the word, *yoga*, “to yoke”, has a similar meaning. *Religare* means to “re-tie, re-bind.” The word, *religion*, which refers to ‘the re-connecting or re-uniting of the soul to God’, is in fact the inner realization or experience of the inseparable unity of the soul and God, the knowledge (*gnosis*) of the truth that “I and the Father are one.” Religious faith, on the other hand, is nothing more than a belief possessed by a group of individuals that certain premises are true regarding God, His human historical representatives, and His purposes. Religious faith may be possessed by anyone, but religion—in the sense of the realization of unity—is something that is attained by only a few spiritually gifted souls. True “religion”, therefore, is a spiritual revelation that comes only to those few who earnestly seek union with God; it is a gift of Grace. It may be called “enlightenment,” “the mystic marriage,” “the vision of God,” or any number of other words or phrases. It is recognized by all religious faiths as a supernatural revelation of Truth that goes far beyond any and all doctrines or beliefs of religious faith.

Religious faiths are many; they are based for the most part on ideational interpretations of historical events. Religion, in the sense of *gnosis*, is neither ideational nor historical; it is beyond both time and the vagaries of the mind. Religion, by definition, seeks only the realization of one’s unity with God, the revelation of the Eternal. Religious faith seeks intellectual certainty and temporal satisfaction, and always falls short of both. *Religion* brings certainty of the Truth; religious faiths bring conviction, but they are fallible, each one contrary to another. See how the various religious faiths hold disparate views, each holding its own founders as well as its followers to be uniquely endowed with a cosmic and historical significance. Jews consider themselves to be “the chosen of God”; Christians regard their founder to be “the Son of God,” and themselves to be “saved” by that irrational belief. Muslims regard Muhammed to be “the Messenger of God,” and his written words to be unerring and sacrosanct; Hindus regard Krishna to be an incarnation of God, and honor as sacred the rituals handed down in the Vedas; Buddhists worship the Buddha and his teachings as the preeminent and exclusive guide to enlightenment.

These are all examples of religious faith. Each is contrary to the other, and each regards its own followers as the only “true believers.” However, among the followers of each of these religious faiths, there are a few who have known “religion” or *gnosis*, i.e., who have experienced the unitive

reality, and known their identity with the One. Such seers have existed and exist today among each of these religious faiths, attesting to a true “religion” that transcends as well as includes all religious faiths. Religion always fosters compassion, forbearance, and the recognition of the interconnected unity of all life. Religious faith is capable of promulgating absurdities; it is susceptible to ignorance and is capable of fostering activities directly contrary to the teachings of religion. In these recent days we have seen just how far afield such activities and absurdities can lead the followers of the religious faiths.

Scientists generally do not acknowledge that the noumenal Source of all manifestation is knowable; but there have been gnostics—myself among them—who have testified to their direct experiential knowledge of the noumenal Source, which they declare to be eternal. When the Eternal is revealed, they say, it is as though a grain of sand had shed its “grain-ness” and become aware of its “sand-ness”. “I am sand,” such a grain might proclaim; “I cover all the shores of the world.” Or, it is as though a speck of foam, thrown up by a crashing wave, suddenly shed its identity with its tiny form and became aware “I am the vast ocean. I am the fathomless deep!” When a man searches deeply enough within himself, his identification with a single form dissolves away, and he realizes his universal identity: “I am all life; I am all this universe!” And then, focused intently upon this new vision, he sees even more deeply into himself, and he realizes that he is the formless and eternally living Consciousness which, while remaining unmoved and unchanged, continuously whole and unaltering, spews forth all this moving, changing panoply of universal form, as a man’s mind creates a fantasy dream-world within itself.

Throughout history there have been a few who have declared that they have obtained mystical vision. Their testaments have been remarkably similar and explicit regarding the ultimate Source of the manifested universe. Among these few, the most authoritative on the subject of cosmogony (the origin of the universe) are the authors of a number of Upanishads, the author of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Shankara, Plotinus, and Meister Eckhart; although there are many others who may be considered authoritative regarding other specific aspects of the mystical vision.

The mystic is gifted with a visionary experience that comes to him without his knowing how. His consciousness is elevated during a rare moment of contemplation whereby his awareness reaches to a noumenal level beyond his normal experience, and at once he is privy to an egoless state in which the transcendent reality becomes evident. There are a couple of levels to this mystical experience: at first, he is aware of the absence of ownership of his body. The previous sense of an individual identity is gone, and he sees that his body is not the possession of an individuality but belongs to the one current of existence which is universal, an ocean of conscious energy in which all things and beings exist. He sees his body as a wave on that ocean, as a configuration of energy within a sea of energy, related to the universe as a pebble is to stone, as the mountains and valleys are to the earth.

He feels that, in being divested of an ego— that is, of an individual identity, he is now seeing himself and the world correctly for the first time; as though the veil of an illusory ego had been lifted, and now he is seeing truly and without the obfuscation of an erroneous orientation. He is like a wave on an infinite ocean, or like a golden trinket melted in a vat of gold. For a wave, the subsuming reality is the ocean; for a golden trinket, the subsuming reality is gold; for the individual consciousness, the subsuming reality is the one all-pervading Consciousness. No longer separate, his identity is merged into the larger substratum. If he entered this state from a state of prayer, there is no longer a deity, no longer an “I”; for, without the duality of “I” and “Thou,” neither exists. He sees that former dualistic relationship as a product of the ego-mind’s duality-producing habit. But now, all dualities are vanished. Not only is there no “I” or “Thou”, neither is there a now or then, for time is also transcended in this eternal state.

Dualities are judgments from a distinct individual reference point, and without that egocentric reference point, dualities do not exist. Without the ego, there is only the timeless universal sea of existence, a vast ocean of conscious energy. Without the ego, where is love and hate? Where are peace and unrest, the heights and the depths, weeping and laughing? Without an ego, there is no life and death, no night or day, no music or silence, no motion or stillness. These all require a point of identity, and without that illusory perspective, there is only the one universal existence. When what *is* is the one divine energy doing everything, where is pride or regret? Furthermore, where is the distinction between body and soul? There is no division in this one conscious energy; it is homogeneous. There is only

one. And this one existence is conscious, autonomous, and integrally coordinated.

This is the first stage in the mystical experience. When the ego-sense falls away, one is aware only of the creative energy that manifests as the phenomenal universe and all its constituent parts. The mystic witnesses this revealed universal energy, not as a subject perceiving an object, a second; he perceives it as himself. There is only One, and It is I. And as this awareness increases, a new clarity dawns as he reaches the second and ultimate stage of this introspective journey and realizes: 'I am not just this creative flux; I am the Source of this creative power. I am the eternal Consciousness from which this outflow of energy is born.' This eternal Consciousness is primary to the creative energy, lying just above it, and is its Source. There is no higher. And It is known as one's true Self, the one transcendent and noumenal Reality behind all universal manifestation.

That Self is Eternity. It is perfectly alone. It is perfect Consciousness and Bliss. There is nothing one can predicate of It. Yet, from that eternal Self a creative Energy fountains forth; from It, time and space and the endless universe pours forth and returns in the same manner as breath flows out and returns in the case of a human being. It is a cyclic ebbing and flowing of the creative energy of the One which bursts into being like an exhaled breath, expanding and spreading, only to be reversed as in an inhalation, extinguishing what had previously been produced. The mystic experiences this as occurring from himself, since he is united, at one with, the One.

My own mystical experience came suddenly, opening to me the initial awareness that I, my bodily self, was integral to the universal ocean of energy which is this cosmos. (For a description of the circumstances leading to this experience, please see my book, *The Supreme Self*.) I realized that I was not a separate being in the world, but a wave on that ocean of God's activity, and belonged to Him (the one Existence) and existed in Him. My sense of an individual identity (the ego) had vanished, and I was seeing my existence from the true perspective of one without a separate and distinct vantage point amidst the vast creative flux. As my vision expanded, I became aware of my deeper identity as the unmanifest Source of all manifestation, the one Consciousness, the sole Origin of all being. Whatever separate identity I had when I entered that experience had become transparent and vanished in the dawning awareness of myself as the eternal

Consciousness Itself. I knew my true identity as the original One from whom all is derived; I was the unchanging and eternal Consciousness. Yet I was also aware of the cyclical outflow from Me of the universal array, in a motion similar to the exhalation and inhalation of a breath. From the vantage of Eternity, it seemed that the creation and dissolution of the universe took place in the space of a leisurely breath. And its expansion and contraction could be seen in its entirety, as one might watch a balloon repeatedly expand and contract as one breathed into it.

Reflecting on this experience, it was clear that while the Eternal, the transcendent Absolute (which we will hereafter refer to as “the Godhead”) is, in Himself, beyond all activity, while His Creative Power (the Divine Mind, or *Ishvara*) produces a universe of form and activity. The Creative Power of God (called in other traditions *Nous*, *Logos*, *Prakriti*, *Maya*, *Shakti*) is not different from God. It is His Power of Creation and is in no way separate from Him. While He remains entirely alone in His transcendent purity and unchangeability, He projects the cosmic drama by His own inherent Power.

When we try to imagine such a dual state of being, we cannot, because, for us, such a paradoxical state is unimaginable. But, for the divine Self, the absolute Ground, or “Godhead”, such a paradoxical condition exists. In Himself, He is empty of thought or activity, pure Consciousness unmarred; and yet, He effortlessly “projects”, “emanates”, or “breathes forth” an *Energy* which transforms itself into an inconceivably complex universal drama in which stars explode, civilizations rise and fall, and human beings evolve to know within themselves their own Source and Creator. And then, the entire expanding cosmos reverses its expansion and is drawn back into its unmanifest state, once again residing as pure potential in the pure Energy of the Creative Power of God. This cycle of creation/dissolution repeats itself endlessly. Yet, throughout this cosmic evolution and involution, He remains One, eternal, in His own Bliss.

While I have seen most clearly that the universe is “breathed out” by the great Consciousness, I have not seen into the particulars of it, but have seen only the wholeness of it from the perspective of Eternity. In that vision, the expansion and contraction of the universe occurs in the space of a breath. All those billions of earth-years required for the genesis, expansion, and subsequent reabsorption of the universe are crammed into an eternal overview which does not observe the tiny interactions of small particles, but

rather sees the entirety only as a momentary universal expansion and contraction. Individual lives are not seen; the rising and falling of civilizations is not seen; the nativity and death of stars is not seen. From the vantage point of Eternity, it is like watching the spraying out of a breath, and its subsequent withdrawal. The details of its enactment are not seen, but only its broad-scale occurrence.

So, clearly, I cannot explain in anything remotely similar to scientific language the details of that appearance and disappearance of the universe. Its Source is, of course, the one eternal Consciousness (which we may refer to as “the Godhead”). He is eternal (He does not live in Eternity; He *is* Eternity), which means He is beyond time and space; and yet, He produces a universe of time and space, which, though it is not Himself, is a product of Himself, as our own breath is a product of each of us. It is a universe produced from Himself, since there is nothing else besides that One from which it could be composed. This universe, of which we are a part, appears to us as substance, but, as science has shown, it is a tenuous substance at best, made as it is of God-stuff, of divine Light. It is produced from the one Eternal, unmanifest, absolute Consciousness, and has but a transitory existence. After it is reabsorbed back into the Eternal, it is sent forth once again in what is apparently an interminably repeated cycle of becoming and dis-becoming, expanding and contracting.

My ultimate vision was one of identity with the Eternal, the original transcendent Source and ultimate being. I was able to see also, as mentioned above, the outflow and influx of the universal cosmos, but nothing of its manner of evolution. Some others may have direct knowledge of the subtle realms proceeding from the Creative Power of God, which in turn produces the material universe; but I do not. I wish very much that I could provide some insight into the process of this activity, but I cannot. His secret method will have, for the time being, to remain His secret. I can shed no light on the transformation from God-energy to formative “matter”, and so I am unable to definitively deflate the pride of the present-day physicists, with their hadrons and leptons and quarks of many colors.¹ Suffice it to say that, ultimately, all must be traced back to Him. Is it His play? His compulsion? His involuntary reflex? I cannot shed any light on His motivation or his purpose; except to say it seemed to me to be an expansion of His love or joy. I only know that I am His appearance, made of His light, and, for one brief space of time/eternity, He revealed Himself to me, and made me know that

my existence is His existence. That is all I know, and probably all I shall ever need to know.

NOTES:

1. In recent years, after this article was originally written in 2006, I have speculated in various writings that the divine breath of the Creator became manifest in time and space as a ‘Great Radiation,’ a sudden powerful burst of high frequency electromagnetic radiation—at frequency levels in the *gamma* range or above—an occurrence which scientists refer to as ‘the Big Bang’. That high-frequency electromagnetic radiation, or light, then spontaneously transformed into wave-particles that in turn aggregated to produce all the material forms that constitute our universe. This theory seems to me much more likely than the theories of a material origin of the universe put forward by contemporary science. It is explained at length and in detail in several of my later articles and book publications, including ‘The Phenomenon of Light’, ‘How God Made The World’, ‘Recent Theological Developments’, and ‘First Light’—all of which may be found in my collection of articles entitled “The Mystic’s Vision” at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.

How Science Got It All Wrong

Though it may be surprising to some, there is no scientific theory of the ultimate source of the universe. Science, and in particular, that branch called ‘physics’, takes an ‘I don’t know’ attitude to questions about an ‘ultimate source’, and holds that nothing is known about what happened prior to ‘the Big Bang’ of fourteen billion years ago heralding the ‘beginning’ of time, space and the material universe. As to what sparked (caused) ‘the Big Bang’, there is no consensus theory among scientists; but there is a tacit assumption by the scientific and academic community that, whatever it was, it was solely ‘material’; and that from that material source all else spontaneously evolved. ‘All else’ includes all life, human consciousness and intelligence, and all things mental—though no one has suggested any possible manner in which any of these could have spontaneously evolved from matter. Despite the many inconsistencies and overall implausibility of Science’s assumptions, its materialistic bias has permeated our secular

society, and greatly molds and influences the ideology and temper of our times.

Mystical Theology, in opposition to Science, holds that the fundamental origin of this universe is the universal Consciousness, or God. In fact, mystical theologians say, it is not possible to conceive of a universal beginning without the original existence of that beginningless Consciousness. Nothing could exist or come into existence, they say, without a Source that is capable of creating and containing all matter and all energy, while transcending these in Itself. Nothing in this universe could exist or come into existence, they say, without a Source that is capable of creating and encompassing both time and space, and yet is itself neither. And while Science's materialistic account of the universe's origin does not provide for the sudden spontaneous production of life and human consciousness, Mystical Theology's account does.

Before 'the beginning' was The Beginningless. That eternal Consciousness produced from Itself a sufficient amount of form-producing energy (at the Big Bang) to fashion an expanding and evolving universe containing many worlds; and all were made of and contained in that one Consciousness. Life, human consciousness, and intelligence arose therefore quite naturally within this living, conscious, universe. And, since all is made of Consciousness and all is coordinated in one conscious Whole, all things move together of one accord; and assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. The quantum interconnectedness evidenced throughout the universe is clearly explained in the account of a universe of Consciousness proffered by Mystical Theology, and though this phenomenon of interconnectedness is recognized by the representatives of materialistic science as "entanglement," there is no plausible explanation for it in their scientific account of reality.

Let us hope that, in future years, the current advocates of materialistic Science begin to consider the possibility that the more plausible Theological paradigm is the correct one, and some of their current mysteries and conundrums will be immediately solved thereby, and the universe as it truly is, will begin to make sense to them.

Mystical Experience As Future Science

I find it interesting that the mystical realizations that occurred to me in 1966 are now showing up in Western civilization's developing scientific view of the universal reality! Here are a few of the revelations in that mystical experience that are presently being formulated as emerging elements of the scientific paradigm:

I. Complementarity Of Identity

The term, *complementarity*, as coined by Niels Bohr, refers to the wave-particle duality of quantum physics: that light/matter may appear as either wave or particle, depending on the experiment designed to measure it. It appears now as a wave, now as a particle—but it does not appear as both at the same time. And yet, to frame a *complete* definition of the structure of light or matter, both wave and particle are required. Thus, they are considered *complementary*. This characterization is carried over in the definition of the absolute Consciousness, as It contains a similarly dual nature. It is revealed in mystical experience that, in a manner very similar to the complementarity of wave and particle, the universal undifferentiated Consciousness (God) and the individual mind/body (Soul) are complementary states of the same indivisible reality. In other words, we—you and I—are both the one universal Consciousness and the limited individual consciousness; we can experience ourselves now as one, now as the other—but not both at the same time. Mystical experience is possible only because of that complementarity, as mystical experience is nothing more nor less than the transition from one state of consciousness to its complementary state.

This nondual view of the one reality is solely a metaphysical one at this time. It has long been a feature of Eastern metaphysics, but it seems certain that, in the course of time, this view will become accepted on a broad cultural scale, even in the sciences. Mystical experience is the empirical (albeit subjective) proof of this complementary view. It is the experiential basis for the Vedantic expression, “I am That”, and, once experienced, is the foundation of certainty in the mind of the experiencer. In my own case, this experience began with the realization that:

O my God, even this body is Thine own!
Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,

Even I who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters—
Even I am Thine own.

Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?
Do the mountains and the gulfs cease to be of the earth?
Or does a pebble cease to be stone?
How can I escape Thee?
Thou art even That which thinks of escape!

...I am the pulse of the turtle;
I am the clanging bells of joy.
I bring the dust of blindness;
I am the fire of song.
I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil;
In pools of clear water my image is found...¹

II. The Inseparability of Mind And Body In The One

In the clarity of that mystical revelation which I experienced, *I* (the one Consciousness) was aware that *I* pervade all existence: “I am in the clouds, and in the gritty soil.” In addition to this, I was unable to discern any categorical separation of my mind and my body. It is a common convention that the body is ‘the temple’ in which the spirit (mind or soul) resides. But, from the vantage of that integral Consciousness, I could see no separate soul encased in a body. “Where is the temple?” I exclaimed; “Which the Imperishable? Which the abode?” But there was no duality. It was clear that body and mind were not two realities, but one—like a figure in a dream, or a mentally projected character in a fantasy, consisting of a unified mental and physical reality. This is not only counter-intuitional, going against our religiously inculcated bias concerning the separation of soul and body at the moment of death; it also denies the conventional Cartesian duality that constitutes the Western philosophical rationale for our conceptual separation of mind and body— and, by implication, our separation of consciousness and matter on a cosmic scale. Clearly, from the vantage point of phenomenal existence in time and space, the body and soul are separable and distinct. But the mystical experience reveals that, in the eternal Divine Spirit, in the nondual Reality, these two are inseparable, indistinct. How is this possible?

It is possible because the Divine Spirit, as universal Consciousness, constitutes all individualized souls, and, as the Creative Power, constitutes the entire universe of forms, including all bodily life-forms. All souls and all bodies, therefore, are constituted of, and are indistinguishable in, the indivisible One.

For long it had been assumed by psychologists that consciousness was an epiphenomenon of the evolving complexity of matter; but eventually the illogic of that assumption became apparent. Today, precedence is being given to the consideration of the supposition that Consciousness is the primary Essence in which and from which the entire universe of Matter evolved. Many theoretical physicists are now convinced that these two long-divided categories are in fact integral.

III. The Cyclic Universe

There has been much speculation and inference in recent years concerning the origin of the cosmos, but little in the way of scientific evidence, or certainty. In recent years, Cosmologists have proposed a theory sometimes known as the 'Cyclic' or 'Oscillating' Universe Theory. A number of scientists, including Albert Einstein, were enamored of this theory, but it eventually came to be regarded as flawed. This was because the theory posited by physicists was a purely physical system, governed by purely physical laws required to restart the 'Big Bang' after each 'Big Crunch'. But, of course, the Source of the universe is not physical, but noumenal, not to mention omnipotent.

The Divine Mind is not limited to a reliance on the laws of physics to recreate the universe; It creates in accord with Its own will. That Divine Mind is alive and conscious throughout the universe and beyond the universe; and It remains so when the universe is withdrawn. It is not some insentient mechanical force. It is the Inventor of mechanical force; and It is the Intelligence of which our own meager intelligence is but a limited facsimile, possessing but a hint of the power, living clarity, alertness, and efficacy of the universal Mind. It is He who, of His own will, breathes forth an immense and brilliant light capable of becoming a universe of form.

The vision of the repetitive nature of universal creation in a cyclic, breath-like manner was first depicted in the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of God) was written ca. 500 B.C.E., as part of a larger work, the Mahabharata, (reputedly by the legendary sage, Vyasa), as a dialogue between Krishna (an incarnation of God) and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. And it is Krishna who, speaking as the Divinity itself, teaches to Arjuna the perennial philosophy, explaining that in His Divine unmanifest state He manifests the entire universe, which he describes as his ‘lower’ nature;² and He manifests this ‘lower nature’, the material universe, in a cyclic fashion, periodically creating, then dissolving it:

At the end of a cycle, all beings, ... enter into My *Prakriti* [Creative Power], and at the beginning of a cycle, I generate them all again. Controlling My own *Prakriti*, I send forth, again and again, all this multitude of beings, helpless under the sway of maya (the power of illusion).³

My own acceptance of this cosmic scenario did not come about from the theories of physicists, nor from the Hindu scriptures, but from my own indubitable vision, a vision granted me by the Divine Self. In the transformed state of consciousness during which I experienced the integral Consciousness as my own, *I* (Universal Consciousness) exhale the universe in the manner of an expanding breath alternating with an inhalation in which the universe is then withdrawn back into its source. While immersed in this clear awareness, I stated: “I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged, and set in order once again. A million worlds begin and end in every breath, and in this breathing, all things are sustained.” I regard these as the authentic words of God.

IV. Non-Locality

The common-sense view of the world accepts the principle of *Locality*: this means that objects are only directly influenced by their immediate (local) surroundings. This includes the possibility that an action at one point may have an influence at another point, if something in the space between the points, such as a field, mediates the action. To exert an influence, something, such as a wave or particle, must travel through the space between the two points, to carry the influence. But *Non-Locality* is a developing scientific view that has come about through the hard-won conceptual battles between the great intellects of the twentieth century, Bohr, Einstein, Heisenberg,

Born, Schrödinger, etc. My ‘mystical’ realizations, on the other hand, were the result of a direct clarified *perception* of reality itself. In that direct clarified perception, it was perfectly clear to me that “all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” I saw, in other words, that all that is in the universe is integrally coordinated in and by a single will, so that ‘all things move together of one accord’. This view of physical reality, translated into the terminology acceptable to the scientific community, states that there are no independent causes or effects occurring solely in a local setting, but everything is interconnected, coordinated universally—that is to say, non-locally. Here is a particularly well-expressed version of that understanding presented by David Bohm and his co-author, Basil Hiley, in a 1975 article:

The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the ‘parts’ are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent ‘elementary parts’ of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole. ⁴

...Ultimately, the entire universe (with all its particles, including those constituting human beings, their laboratories, observing instruments, etc.) has to be understood as a single undivided

Whole, in which analysis into separately and independently existent parts has no fundamental status.⁵

The question of the existence of non-local causation originally arose from the thought-experiment outlined in the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paper in which Einstein entered into his historical debate with Neils Bohr in 1935 in the attempt to prove Quantum Theory incomplete. However, the technological means to actually perform the empirical tests needed to determine the scientific basis for non-locality, proving Bohr correct and Einstein incorrect, did not present themselves until long after Einstein had passed away. In 1964, the theoretical physicist, John Bell, and experimenters Alain Aspect, in 1982, and Nicolus Gisin, in 1997, conclusively proved both by theorem and by empirical methods that “non-locality” is a scientific fact, and this fact has been universally accepted by the community of physicists throughout the world.

Nonetheless, there remains a wide gulf between the direct ‘mystical’ knowledge of reality and a conceptual scientific knowledge based on empirical proofs. The mystical experience is a direct revelation of the living Self who is the source and director of the universal array. It is not a linguistically framed theory of universal mechanics, but rather a living confirmation of the one Divine Mind who both contains and *is* everything that exists, including all of us. No amount of familiarity with or proficiency in the understanding of the theorems of quantum physics is capable of producing that direct knowledge.

The scientific principle of *Non-locality* simply expresses in an oddly roundabout way the fact that has been known for millennia by the faithful of all religions that we exist within a ‘reality’ imaged forth by the one Divine Mind, and in which everything that occurs is His doing and occurs within Him according to His omnipotent Providence. Of course, the activities taking place within the universe are not dependent upon ‘local’ causes; there are no local causes or effects. Causation begins with Him and extends in an infinite network of effects throughout the universe to bring His purposes to fruition. We creatures are simply His eyes and ears, His instruments of knowing and exultation, His singers and worshippers, His imagined others. We too are non-local, rooted in the infinite and eternal Cause, and extending

throughout the expansive universe as wave-particles of the one living Being. Halleluiah!

NOTES:

1. For a complete account of my own ‘mystical’ experience, see my book, *The Supreme Self*, Winchester, U.K., O Books, 2006; or download it from my website at: www.themysticsvision.com.
2. *Bhagavad Gita*, VII.5; Swami Nikhilananda (trans.), *The Bhagavad Gita*, New York, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1944, 1987; p. 83.
3. *Bhagavad Gita*, IX.7, 8; *Ibid.*, p.103.
4. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, “On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory”, London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.
5. Bohm, David, *Wholeness And Implicate Order*, London, Routledge, 1980.

Mystical Experience And David Bohm’s Implicate Order (8-26-2016, revised 1-9-2021)

I

Science—empirical observation—tells us that we live in a universe of material phenomena—stars, planets, nebulae, gas clouds, black holes, and all that is manifest to the human senses. But the mystic’s vision (Gnosis) reveals that, at a subtler, more primal level, we are living in a universal Consciousness in which every individual constituent is interconnected.

That universal Consciousness is an integral noumenon underlying the phenomenal universe and is the Creative Source and substance of all that we experience as the material universe and its contents, including our bodies and all the objects in our environment.

That universal Consciousness is the sole primary reality, and It is therefore also our primary identity. What we know as the phenomenal universe of time, space, and individual forms exists only as an appearance projected within and upon the one universal Consciousness.

This phenomenal universe, existing as it does, as a projected appearance within the universal Consciousness, is thereby imbued with, permeated by, and identical with the all-pervading universal Consciousness.

Each and every one of the separate constituents of this phenomenal universe are participants in that universal Consciousness and operate in accordance with the will of that universal Consciousness. In other words, as I observed while in a state of union with the universal Consciousness, “All things move together of one accord. Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.”

But for many of us, *reality* is synonymous with the mere phenomenal appearance of the physical universe that we perceive through our senses. And yet, in the metaphysics of numerous sacred spiritual traditions from antiquity to the present, *reality* is understood to consist of at least *three* consecutive layers or levels of subtlety. These metaphysical systems invariably describe the *subtlest* primary level as:

1. **The One.** This is the divine Source of all, the Absolute, the universal Consciousness that we refer to as “the Godhead.” It is eternal, noumenal, inactive, transcendent to the phenomenal creation, undifferentiated, and ineffable. That is followed by:

2. **The Divine Mind.**¹ This is **the One’s Creative Power**, and It is integral to and never separate from **the One**. It is the Creator of the universe that we refer to as “God.” Periodically, **The Divine Mind** breathes forth the Light (the Great Radiance or ‘Big Bang’) that becomes manifest as time, space, and the material elements that make up this evolving world of form, including the bodies of all creatures. And then, periodically, after a great period of time has elapsed, the Divine Mind absorbs that Light back into Itself, and that cycle of manifestation and reabsorption continues to repeat itself indefinitely.

3. **Soul.** Plotinus envisioned **Soul** as an emanate of **The Divine Mind**, but **Soul** is in fact the all-pervasive field of Consciousness—**the One**—as It pervades and permeates the forms that have been created within It by Its own *Creative Power*, the Divine Mind. It is **the One** as **Soul** that imparts Its Life and Intelligence to individual human forms by virtue of their presence within It, rendering them composites, consisting of both Matter and Mind/Spirit, both body and soul, both phenomenon and noumenon.

These three levels of subtlety are similarly described in Platonist and Vedic literature going back many centuries, ² and in each of these traditions, the three levels of are said to exist, not as separate entities, but integrally and simultaneously. We, in our human make-up, are said to be a reiteration of that triune cosmic reality: As conscious beings within the one Divine Reality, our identity consists simultaneously of (1) a Divine essence—thanks to the all-pervasive universal Consciousness, (2) an individualized mind/soul by virtue of the individuation of forms produced by the Divine Mind, and lastly, a physical body. Hence, the universal Consciousness is the ultimate source and core of our being; we are also manifest on a subtle level as souls; and we are manifest in the phenomenal world as separable physically embodied individuals.

In recent times, the twentieth century theoretical physicist, David Bohm (1917-1992), has similarly described the one reality as consisting of these three levels of subtlety, but he does so with some newly coined terms. He refers to the primary divine Source, the universal Consciousness, (“the One” of Neoplatonism, or “Brahman” of Vedanta) as “**the Superimplicate Order.**” The secondary level (corresponding to “the Divine Mind” in the above scheme) he refers to as “**the implicate order,**” and the last, physical level (corresponding to the phenomenal universe in which souls are manifest as embodied beings), he refers to as “**the explicate order.**”

Bohm approaches this analysis of reality from the perspective of a scientist, a Quantum Physicist, though traditionally, the description of reality as consisting of these three levels of subtlety exists only in the mystically derived *metaphysical* systems. Conventional empirical *science* does not ordinarily describe reality in terms of these three causal levels. To do so would entail the acknowledgment of a Divine Source, a supernatural and noumenal causal agent, which would fly in the face of science’s professed empirical bias.

Physics, as an area of scientific study, delves into the microphysical in the study of Quantum physics, but it has never allowed for the positing of a source of physical reality from outside of the natural (physical) realm; nor does it ever assume a subtle intermediate ideational realm. The suggestion of any such invisible or supernatural causal realm underlying the Material World would flatly contradict the empirical requirements of science.

So, as we can see, science does not provide a clear conception of the original causal Source of the universe, and yet it *does* provide a means for the objective confirmation of its materialist theories through empirical proofs. Metaphysics, on the other hand, with its three-leveled causal progression, *does* posit a plausible Source for the manifest universe, though it does not provide any *objective* confirmation through empirical demonstrations, but only a convincing *subjective* confirmation through what is known as “mystical experience.”

I, for one, having directly experienced that subjective (mystical) confirmation, must side with the metaphysical systems (and with David Bohm) in asserting that there is indeed a subtle ideational level of reality³ underlying, forming, and supporting the Material World. It is an integral but non-physical continuum, the origin of which is a yet subtler noumenal dimension, a “Superimplicate Order” which we may regard as ‘the transcendent Absolute’, ‘the One,’ or ‘the universal Consciousness.’⁴ If we accept that the three metaphysical levels of subtlety do indeed exist as simultaneous constituents of our Reality, we have to ask, ‘How is that three-leveled constituency compatible with the traditional scientific theory of the origin of the universe by means of the Great Radiance (the Big Bang)?’⁵ It is a question that reminds us of the unfathomably complex mystery faced by anyone attempting to comprehend the Divine creation. In the sudden universal manifestation known as ‘the Big Bang’ or ‘Great Radiance’, God’s inherent Creative Power did not manifest simply as matter-bearing Light but, clearly, was suffused in some manner with divine Consciousness. The fact that Life and Consciousness appears in creatures evolved from that Light gives indication that the wave-particles which constitute the material constructs of that budding universe had to be permeated and ordered by a noumenal Intelligence, a subtle-level dimension, not particularized, but wavular, continuous, and conscious. And yet, how can we comprehend it?

Who indeed can begin to imagine the complex wizardry of the Divine Mind in forming and constituting this amazing extravaganza that is our universe? The poor human mind is helpless to conceive it. In the past, religious writers have suggested that God imparted His breath, and thereby His Consciousness, directly into the mouths of the original humans, thus giving them a living soul; others suggested that it seemed more likely that God’s Spirit was in some way imparted to *all* of Creation. But there has never been a concurrence of opinion as to how this was accomplished.

But here's an explanation that should be considered: Let us agree to assume that the divine Thought produced by the Divine Mind, which manifested as The Great Radiance—that burst of divine Light which became our phenomenal universe—occurred *within* the all-pervading Consciousness that is the Absolute One. And because that spreading universe is *within* that divine Consciousness, it is evident that the entire universe is thereby permeated and wholly governed by that divine Consciousness, just as the thoughts existing within our own individual minds are pervaded and governed by the consciousness of those minds. Such an evident explanation obviates the need to invent any further machinations by which God may have imparted Life and Consciousness to His Creation. Also, it is a solution that is clearly born out in St. Paul's statement, "In Him we live and move and have our being."

We may readily accept and acknowledge that we consist of the above mentioned three levels of subtlety, but it is well known that words do not adequately represent these subtle levels of reality, rather, these realms are to be *experienced* as real conscious states of being, not simply labeled and defined for purposes of philosophical speculation. Whether the subtle ideational reality underlying the physical reality is called "the Divine Mind", "*Ishvara*", "the implicate order", or anything else, matters but little from the mystic's perspective. What is of importance is to *experience* that subtle reality (*the implicate order*), and to experience firsthand its source, the One, the Absolute Ground (the Superimplicate Order), who is the ultimate Self of all existence. It is only His gracious gift of that liberating mystical experience that is capable of revealing to us the glorious truth of our ultimate divinity, and of freeing us from the limitations and sorrows attendant upon the false illusory sense of a separate isolated identity.

Having been gifted by God with divine vision and having seen into the hidden realm where all is one conscious continuum, where the only identity is that one all-inclusive Consciousness, I have to declare that, underlying this many-formed world of separate distinct entities and personalities, is a Divine Reality in which nowhere is there any separateness, in which there is only the one 'I' manifest in and as everything everywhere. How, then, can we know It? How can we experience It? This indivisible continuum of Consciousness can be known by our human intelligence only when we are brought by God's grace to a higher subtler level of consciousness. Only then is it possible to perceive It. There is no other way to know It. It has no

time-space coordinates but is revealed only in the unfathomably clear depths of the Divine Mind.

II.

“Relativity and, even more important, quantum mechanics have strongly suggested (though not proved) that the world cannot be analyzed into separate and independently existing parts. Moreover, each part somehow involves all the others: it contains them or enfolds them.... This fact suggests that the sphere of ordinary material life and the sphere of mystical experience have a certain shared order and that this will allow a fruitful relationship between them.” ⁶

--David Bohm

According to the mystics who have seen into the nature of reality, the one absolute Consciousness is the Source and Cause of all phenomena, manifesting the universe by Its Creative Power in a manner similar to the way an individual consciousness projects a thought within itself. This Divine Thought contains implicit within it the entire design and evolution of the universe, from its initial coming into being to all the refinements and transformations necessary in the process of its ultimate evolutionary development. And since that Divine Thought is projected in a field of Consciousness, that Thought is itself permeated by Consciousness, lending consciousness to all its elements.

Science does not recognize such a scenario as tenable but relegates the visionary knowledge of the mystics to the category of speculative metaphysics. However, one brave scientist stepped forward to acknowledge the possibility that the mystic's vision could provide a basis for a true and consistent scientific worldview; his name is David Bohm.

David Bohm (1917-1992) was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on December 20, 1917. His father was a Jewish furniture dealer, but David went to college, receiving his B.Sc. degree from Pennsylvania State College in 1939 and his Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1943. At U.C. Berkeley, he studied with Robert Oppenheimer; and when

Oppenheimer went to Los Alamos to work on the “Manhattan Project”, Bohm remained at Berkeley as a research physicist. There, he worked on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotrons and Syndrocyclotrons until 1947, when he took a position as an Assistant Professor at Princeton University, working on Plasmas, Theory of Metals, Quantum Mechanics and Elementary Particles. It was there he met and had regular meetings with Albert Einstein.

In 1949, during the repressive McCarthy era, Bohm was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and he was asked to testify against Robert Oppenheimer who was being accused of Communist sympathies. Bohm refused to testify and was thereafter tried and acquitted. But the damage had been done; he was fired from his position at Princeton University, and he was unable to find work in this country. He then moved to Brazil where he taught briefly at the University of Sao Paulo. He also taught for a brief time in Israel before moving to Bristol, England in 1957. In 1961, he became professor of physics at the Birkbeck College of the University of London, and remained there for the next 30 years, writing and publishing his several books: *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics* (1957), *The Special Theory of Relativity* (1966), *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980), and *Science, Order and Creativity* (1987). David Bohm died in 1992.

In the 1950's David Bohm was widely considered one of the most talented and promising physicists of his generation. But his primary work from the 1950's to the 1990's—the ongoing development of his “causal interpretation” (which he later referred to as an “ontological interpretation”) of quantum mechanics as an alternative to the standard ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’—was met with dismissive hostility by the majority of the world physics community. In his attempt to provide a scientific formulation of quantum physics consistent with the mystic's vision of a Divine source from which our world becomes manifest, Bohm presented his ‘ontological theory’ in a book entitled, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*.

The first part of the title of Bohm's book, “*Wholeness*,” reflects a theme that grew out of his long familiarity with Quantum Physics. It is ordinarily true that, when we seek for causes of isolated events or things, we settle arbitrarily on a preceding local event or state which we designate as the *cause* of the present event or state. But as scientific investigations into the

Quantum reality tend to show, the internal web of relationships between events and between things is endless. Not only from the point of view of Quantum mechanics, but also from the point of view expressed by the mystics, isolated things and events are not caused by other things and events but are rather linked in a complex web of relationships within a larger common Whole whose nature in turn determines the nature of those constituent things and events. In other words, the material reality is no longer thought to be the independent bits of which the Whole is constituted, but rather the other way around: the overall condition of the universal Whole governs the functions and interrelations of all constituent parts within the Whole.

Here is how Bohm and his co-author, Basil Hiley, explained this understanding in a 1975 article:

“The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the ‘parts’ are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent ‘elementary parts’ of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole.”⁷

The second part of Bohm's book's title, "*The Implicate Order*," refers to his unconventional suggestion, inspired by the mystic's vision, that the phenomenal world is "unfolded from a subtler 'enfolded order'"—in other words, from an underlying noumenal Source. He refers to that noumenal Source as "the implicate order" and he refers to the phenomenal world manifested by that noumenal source as "the explicate order."

According to his theory, *the implicate order* is an invisible substratum containing the archetypal template for the emergence and dynamic unfoldment of both matter and consciousness, much the way an individual's mind is the archetypal template of conscious thoughts produced from it. And in his wonderfully lucid writings Bohm endeavored to explain in the context of quantum mechanics how the *explicate order* (this perceived phenomenal universe) has its source in and unfolds from an (invisible) implicate, or enfolded order. The implicate order produces from itself the explicate order, and the explicate order manifests as the phenomenal reality.

Bohm theorized that, in the implicate order, all things—matter as well as consciousness, body as well as mind—are integrally interconnected in a way that transcends space and time. This is because the implicate order is a noumenal substratum resembling a transcendent Thought-matrix which generates, forms, and organizes the constituents of the explicate order. These constituent elements, or quanta, appear wavelike until they are observed; that is, witnessed by a conscious observer. Then they appear to those observers as particulate, i.e., as individualized 'entities.' Bohm suggests that this wave/particle complementarity can be explained by the implicate-explicate order duality: The *implicate order* is one indivisible continuum, a noumenon consisting of waves; but the *explicate order* is perceived by the human consciousness as congregates of particulate, individualized elements, such as electrons, protons, etc. This, he suggests, is the basis for the well-known wave-particle duality.

Together, the implicate order and the explicate order comprise what Bohm regards as *the holomovement*, which he describes as "the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders".⁸ From the point of view of the mystic, the One, the transcendent Absolute, is the supreme Source (the ultimate Cause), and it is the divine Mind (the implicate order), which is the active causal principle of

the Absolute One. But in David Bohm's ontological theory, nowhere is there any indication of a primary origin for this "undivided flowing movement". He does suggest, however, that the ultimate source of the *holomovement* might include a "superimplicate order", which in turn may result from a "super-superimplicate order", and so on indefinitely. In his theory, Bohm does not explicitly define these possible primary causal orders, but he suggests that, ultimately, underlying all noumenal implicate orders, there must presumably be an Origin, an eternal Intelligence, or Divine Ground, something along the lines of an Absolute, the "Brahman" of Vedanta, or "the One", of Neoplatonism. But Bohm, as a scientist dedicated to the empirical method, seems to prefer to remain wholly noncommittal regarding the distinct nature of any primary supernatural cause.

For the mystic, informed by direct visionary experience, the perceivable phenomenal world is the manifestation of the Creative Energy of God. That Creative Energy (which Plotinus called *Nous*, "the Divine Mind") is the Source of all phenomenal manifestation. The One, the all-pervading Consciousness, is inherently implicit in Its Creative Energy. It fills all animate and inanimate beings, to varying degrees according to their evolution, with Its own Consciousness and Joy. Thus, the manifested beings, who are the evolutes of Its Creative Energy, are able to know within themselves Its being, Its freedom, Its Consciousness, Its Joy. They are able, by the power of God's Grace, to transcend the limitations of the egocentricity imposed on them in the process of manifestation and are able to ascend to the very Consciousness of God, knowing Him as their own original and authentic Self.

In that mystical ascension to the Divine Mind (*the implicate order*), the manifest souls are able to perceive the perfection of the universal manifestation in which all created things are linked in a wonderful unity of being and becoming.⁹ Like the atoms in a cresting wave, or in the flowering of a rose, they are participants in a synchronous dance of movement toward their intended evolutionary culmination. How vast and perfect in every way is their dance! It is indescribably wonderful! In the mystic's vision, the unfolding of the universe and all that unfoldment entails is seen to be a coordinated and integrated presentation wherein "all things move together of one accord;" and wherein "assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain."

If David Bohm experienced at some time in his career such a mystical revelation, I have not been able to find any mention of it in his writings. Nonetheless, his exposition of “The Implicate Order” offers many similarities to the direct perceptions frequently reported by many well-known mystics. In David Bohm’s broad suppositional theory, causality is seen to reside in the ideational substratum (the implicate order), and then becomes manifest in all its effusive multiplicity as a universe of time and space (the explicate order). Events in the explicate order are merely manifest expressions of an implicit noumenal order. And, while this ‘ontological interpretation’ of David Bohm’s is a marvelous restatement of the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of conventional science, merely another speculative philosophy, unprovable (unfalsifiable) by science’s criterion of proof. Bohm’s work, however, is ground-breaking proof that gnosis is indeed a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. Perhaps other scientists will follow the path he has shown, expanding on his vision, and bringing us closer to a science that corresponds with the declarations of the gnostics of every generation.¹⁰

NOTES:

1. To many, the notion of a distinction between the Absolute Ground (the One, Pure Consciousness) and the Creative Power (the Creator, the Divine Mind) seems to be a false distinction, establishing a Duality between The Godhead and God, which is nonexistent. But it is, in fact, a necessary distinction, not only from a logical theological standpoint, but from an experiential standpoint as well. Given that we are made in His image, I think we can get a sense of this distinction by examining our own conscious makeup, wherein our ever-present substratum of conscious awareness and our creative faculty of thought-production, though interrelated, are nevertheless distinguishably separable from one another.

Likewise, the Godhead, which is the Ground and Source of all activity, is itself inactive, and is sometimes referred to as “pure Consciousness.” Its active, Creative Power, is The Divine Mind, or God, and is sometimes referred to as “the Creator.” They are two, but they are one. They are one, but they are two. This is why, in every metaphysical description from every religious tradition, these two are distinguished by separate names: Purusha-Prakriti, Brahman-Maya, Shiva-Shakti, Tao-Teh, Jahveh-Chokmah, Theos-

Logos, and on and on. The distinctive nature of these dual aspects of Divinity requires recognition of the unique and separate nature of each.

2. For Plato and Plotinus, the three levels of reality were *the One*, *the Divine Mind (Nous)*, and *Soul*. *The physical cosmos* was produced by *the Divine Mind*. For the authors of the Upanishads, the three levels of reality were *Brahman/Atman*, *Ishvara/Maya*, and *jiva*. For the Buddhists, it was *Tatatha/Dharmakaya*, *ekachittakshan*, and *samsara*.
3. I use the term, 'ideational' to describe the secondary subtle level of reality that Bohm calls "the implicate order" only because I don't have a better or more fitting term... It is 'ideational' in the sense that it is non-physical, and non-individualized; the separate forms of this ideational reality may be perceived (by the divine eye), but they are constituents of a single continuum. That continuum is subtler than physical reality, but we have no acceptable term to describe it, except for 'spirit,' 'soul,' or 'idea'. It is not a humanly produced 'idea', but a divinely produced 'idea'. It might be construed as equivalent to Plato's 'Forms' or David Bohm's 'implicate order' of reality, containing no individuation or material substance.
4. 'The transcendent Absolute,' 'Supreme Cause,' or 'universal Consciousness,' is the uncreated Source, beyond time and space, the Godhead, the imperceptible and inconceivable Self of all.
5. For references to 'the Great Radiance', please see my article, "How God Made The World (6-07-2013)", or "The Phenomenon of Light (10-15-2014), or "First Light (4-12-2013)" all available at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
6. Bohm, David; quoted in Friedman, Norman, *Bridging Science And Spirit*, St. Louis, Missouri, Living Lake Books, 1994; p. 95.
7. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, "On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory", London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.
8. David Bohm, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 172.
9. The mystical experience is frequently referred to as "the unitive experience" because it reveals the identity of the experiencer to be identical with the one all-pervasive Reality, i.e., it reveals that 'I and the Father are one.' This nondual 'mystical' experience occurs because it is, in fact, a revelation of the subtle level of reality, what Plotinus called *Nous* (the Divine Mind), or what David Bohm calls 'the implicate order.' Previous to the "unitive experience", the 'explicate order', which had been the experiencer's former "reality", appeared to consist of separate

individual things and beings in a world of incredible diversity and multiplicity of identities. But now, suddenly awakened to this subtle level of reality (the implicate order), there is but one identity spreading everywhere; 'I' am in the clouds and in the gritty soil; 'I' am the pulse of the turtle; 'I' am the clanging bells of joy. In that implicate order, one 'I' is all-pervasive, constituting the one and only identity of everything everywhere.

10. For a first-person account of 'the mystical' or 'unitive' experience, see my book, *The Supreme Self*, Atma Books, 1984, available as a free PDF document downloadable from: www.themysticsvision.com.

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22. EXEMPLARY SCIENTISTS: JAMES JEANS AND DAVID BOHM

(from *The Mystic's Vision* by Swami Abhayananda.
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I. JAMES JEANS

Homage To The Visionary Scientist, James Jeans

When I was a young man in the late 1940's and early 1950's, many paperback books on popular science were published and were available at my local drugstore perched on revolving wire racks, usually priced around 35 cents. There I was able to find, not only anthologies of the great philosophers, but also the latest books popularizing the scientific theories of George Gamow, Sir Arthur Eddington, James Jeans, and others.

One of the first acute observers to see the 'writing on the wall' implied in the observations of early twentieth century physics was British mathematician and astronomer, James Jeans (1877-1946). Long before it became evident to his peers, Jeans understood that Einstein's equations equalizing energy and matter meant that the material universe was nothing more than congealed light. In his book, *The Mysterious Universe*, published in 1931, he wrote:

The tendency of modern physics is to resolve the whole material universe into waves, and nothing but waves. These waves are of two kinds: bottled-up waves, which we call matter, and unbottled waves, which we call radiation or light. If annihilation of matter occurs, the process is merely that of unbottling imprisoned wave-energy and setting it free to travel through space. These concepts reduce the whole universe to a world of light, potential or existent, so that the whole story of its creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in the six words: "God said, '*Let there be light*'." ¹

But the recognition that the material world was born of light was not the extent of Jeans' extrapolations on the revolutionary discoveries of physics in the early twentieth century. In that same book, he suggested that

“Recent scientific discoveries show that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality. *The universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.* Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as *the creator and governor of the realm of matter*— not of course our individual minds, but the Mind in which the atoms (out of which our individual minds have grown) exist as thoughts.”²

“...The terrestrial pure mathematician does not concern himself with material substance but with pure thought. His creations are not only created by thought but are pure thought. ... And the concepts which now seem to be fundamental to our understanding of nature ... four-dimensional space, a space which expands forever; a sequence of events which follows the laws of probability instead of the laws of causation; all these concepts seem to my mind to be structures of pure thought. To my mind the laws which nature obeys are less suggestive of those which a machine obeys in its motion than those which a musician obeys in writing a fugue, or a poet in composing a sonnet. ... If all this is so, then the universe can best be pictured, although still very imperfectly and inadequately, as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker.”³

“If the universe is a universe of thought, then its creation must have been an act of thought. Indeed, the finiteness of time and space almost compel us, of themselves, to picture the creation as an act of thought. ...Modern scientific theory compels us to think of the creator as working outside time and space; which are part of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvas. ... Indeed, the doctrine dates back as far as Plato: ‘Time and the heavens came into being at the same instant, in order that, if they were ever to dissolve, they

might be dissolved together. Such was the mind and thoughts of God in the creation of time.””⁴

Jeans had framed a new/old scientific paradigm—one in which the universe of time and space was the product of Thought, and the Thinker was transcendent to the Thought. But Jeans was a product of the long-enduring tradition of Western philosophical and religious dualism in which God and His Creation (Spirit and Matter, Thinker and Thought) were distinct and separate entities; and he was scarcely able to escape this old way of thinking, and to clearly enunciate the implications of this radical paradigm. Here, he suggests that the Thinker/Creator is *outside* the Thought/Creation in the same way that an artist is *outside* his canvas. He fails to realize that, just as in the case of our personal minds the thoughts exist *within* our minds, so must the universal Thought exist *within* the Divine Mind. The Thinker transcends the Thought, to be sure; but He is not “outside of” or separate from the Thought, but rather encompasses the Thought/Creation and fashions it in accordance with His own Will.

Then, in 1934, when Jeans was the President of the British Association For The Advancement of Science, he delivered an Address to that Association in Aberdeen, Scotland, entitled “The New World-Picture of Modern Physics”, in which he explained more fully his position. Here is an extensive excerpt from that lecture:

“When geography cannot combine all the qualities we want in a single map, it provides us with more than one map. Theoretical physics has done the same, providing us with two maps which are commonly known as the particle-picture and the wave-picture. It is perhaps better to speak of these two pictures as the particle-parable and the wave-parable.

“The particle-parable, which was first in the field, told us that the material universe consists of particles existing in space and time. It was created by the labors of chemists and experimental physicists, working on the basis provided by the classical physicist. Its time of testing came in 1913, when Bohr tried to find out whether the two particles of the hydrogen atom could possibly produce the highly complicated spectrum of hydrogen by

their motion. He found a type of motion which could produce this spectrum down to its minutest details, but the motion was quite inconsistent with the mechanistic determinism of the Newtonian mechanics. The electron did not move continuously through space and time, but jumped, and its jumps were not governed by the laws of mechanics, but to all appearance, as Einstein showed more fully four years later, by the laws of probability. Of 1000 identical atoms, 100 might make the jump, while the other 900 would not. Before the jumps occurred, there was nothing to show which atoms were going to jump. Thus, the particle-picture conspicuously failed to provide an answer to the question ‘What will happen next?’

“The wave-parable serves this purpose; it does not describe the universe as a collection of particles but as a system of waves. The universe is no longer a deluge of shot from a battery of machine-guns, but a stormy sea with the sea taken away and only the abstract quality of storminess left— or the grin of the Cheshire cat if we can think of a grin as undulatory. This parable was not devised by Heisenberg, but by de Broglie and Schrödinger. At first, they thought their waves merely provided a superior model of an ordinary electron; later it was established that they were a sort of parable to explain Heisenberg’s pseudo-electron.

“In this way we have the two co-existent pictures—the particle-picture for the materialist, and the wave-picture for the determinist. When the cartographer has to make two distinct maps to exhibit the geography of, say, North America, he is able to explain why two maps are necessary, and can also tell us the relation between the two; he can show us how to transform one into the other. He will tell us, for instance, that he needs two maps simply because he is restricted to flat surfaces—pieces of paper. Give him a sphere instead, and he can show us North America, perfectly and completely, on a single map.

“The physicist has not yet found anything corresponding to this sphere; when, if ever, he does, the particle-picture and the wave-picture will be merged into a single new picture. At present some kink in our minds, or perhaps merely some ingrained habit of thought, prevents our understanding the universe as a consistent whole.

“The old physics imagined it was studying an objective nature which had its own existence independently of the mind which perceived it— which, indeed, had existed from all eternity whether it was perceived or not. It would have gone on imagining this to this day, had the electron observed by the physicists behaved as on this supposition it ought to have done.

“But it did not so behave, and this led to the birth of the new physics, with its general thesis that the nature we study does not consist so much of something we perceive as of our perceptions; it is not the object of the subject-object relation, but the relation itself. There is, in fact, no clear-cut division between the subject and object; they form an indivisible whole which now becomes nature. This thesis finds its final expression in the wave-parable, which tells us that nature consists of waves and that these are of the general quality of waves of knowledge, or of absence of knowledge, in our own minds.

“Let me digress to remind you that if ever we are to know the true nature of waves, these waves must consist of something we already have in our own minds. Now knowledge and absence of knowledge satisfy this criterion as few other things could; waves in an ether, for instance, emphatically did not. It may seem strange, and almost too good to be true, that nature should in the last resort consist of something we can really understand; but there is always the simple solution available that the external world is essentially of the same nature as mental ideas.

“Again, we may begin to feel that the new physics is little better than the old— that it has merely replaced one determinism by another. It has; but there is all the difference in the world between the two determinisms. For in the old physics the perceiving mind was a spectator; in the new it is an actor. Nature no longer forms a closed system detached from the perceiving mind; the perceiver and perceived are interacting parts of a single system. The nature depicted by the wave-picture in some way embraces our minds as well as inanimate matter. Things still change solely as they are compelled, but it no longer seems impossible that part of the compulsion may originate in our own minds.

“What remains is in any case very different from the full-blooded matter and the forbidding materialism of the Victorian scientist. His objective and material universe proved to consist of little more than constructs of our own minds. To this extent, then, modern physics has moved in the direction of philosophic idealism. Mind and matter, if not proved to be of similar nature, are at least found to be ingredients of one single system. There is no longer room for the kind of dualism which has haunted philosophy since the days of Descartes.

“The old particle-picture which lay within the limits of space and time, broke matter up into a crowd of distinct particles, and radiation into a shower of distinct photons. The newer and more accurate wave-picture, which transcends the framework of space and time, recombines the photons into a single beam of light, and the shower of parallel-moving electrons into a continuous electric current. Atomicity and division into individual existences are fundamental in the restricted space-time picture, but disappear in the wider, and as far as we know more truthful, picture which transcends space and time. In this, atomicity is replaced by what General Smuts would describe as ‘holism’: the photons are no longer distinct individuals each going its own way, but members of a single organization or whole— a beam of light.

“The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the electrons of a parallel-moving shower. The biologists are beginning to tell us, although not very unanimously, that the same may be true of the cells of our bodies. And is it not conceivable that what is true of the objects perceived may be true also of the perceiving minds? When we view ourselves in space and time we are quite obviously distinct individuals; when we pass beyond space and time we may perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life. It is only a step from this to a solution of the problem which would have commended itself to many philosophers, from Plato to Berkeley, and is, I think, directly in line with the new world-picture of modern physics.”⁵

Then, in his book, *Physics And Philosophy*, published in 1942, Jeans continued explaining this concept of a Mind-based universe which, he felt, was the inescapable conclusion to be derived from the newest discoveries in physics. Here are a few excerpts from that book:

“A ...revolution has occurred in physics in recent years. Its consequences extend far beyond physics, and in particular they affect our general view of the world in which our lives are cast. In a word, they affect philosophy. The philosophy of any period is always largely interwoven with the science of the period, so that any fundamental change in science must produce reactions in philosophy. This is especially so in the present case, where the changes in physics itself are of a distinctly philosophical hue; a direct questioning of nature by experiment has shown the philosophical background hitherto assumed by physics to have been faulty. The necessary emendations have naturally affected the scientific basis of philosophy and, through it, our approach to the philosophical problems of everyday life. Are we, for instance, automata or are we free agents capable of influencing the course of events by our volitions? Is the world material or mental in its ultimate nature? Or is it both? If so, is matter or mind the more fundamental? Is mind a creation of matter or matter a

creation of mind? Is the world we perceive in space and time the world of ultimate reality, or is it only a curtain veiling a deeper reality beyond?"

Mechanical Explanations of Nature

"Explanations which introduce tactile ideas— forces, pressures and tensions— are of course dynamical or mechanical in their nature. It is not surprising that such explanations also should have been attempted from Greek times on, for, after all, our hairy ancestors had to think more about muscular force than about perfect circles or geodesics. Plato tells us that Anaxagoras claimed to be able to explain the workings of nature as a machine. In more recent times Newton, Huygens and others thought that the only possible explanations of nature were mechanical. Thus in 1690 Huygens wrote: 'In true philosophy, the causes of every natural phenomena are conceived in mechanical terms. We must do this, in my opinion, or else give up all hope of ever understanding anything in physics.'

"Today the average man probably holds very similar opinions. An explanation in any other than mechanical terms would seem incomprehensible to him, as it did to Newton and Huygens, through the necessary ideas— the language in which the explanation was conveyed— not being in his mind. When he wants to move an object, he pulls or pushes it through the activity of his muscles, and he cannot imagine that Nature does not cause her movements in a similar way. Among attempted explanations in mechanical terms, the Newtonian system of mechanics stands first. This was supplemented in due course by various mechanical representations of the electromagnetic theories of Maxwell and Faraday. All envisaged the world as a collection of particles moving under the pushes and pulls of other particles, these pushes and pulls being of the same general nature as those we exert with our muscles on the objects we touch.

“We shall see later in the present book how these and other attempted mechanical explanations have all failed. Indeed, the progress of science has disclosed in detail the reasons why all failed, and all must fail. Two of the simpler of these reasons may be mentioned here.

“The first is provided by the theory of relativity. The essence of a mechanical explanation is that each particle of a mechanism experiences a real and definite push or pull. This must be objective as regards both quantity and quality, so that its measure will always be the same, whatever means of ‘measurement’ are employed to measure it just as a real object must always weigh the same whether it is weighed on a spring balance or on a weighing-beam. But the theory of relativity shows that if motions are attributed to forces, these forces will be differently estimated, as regards both quantity and quality, by observers who happen to be moving at different speeds, and furthermore that all their estimates have an equal claim to be considered right. Thus, the supposed forces cannot have a real objective existence; they are seen to be mere mental constructs which we make for ourselves in our efforts to understand the workings of nature.

“...A second reason is provided by the theory of quanta. A mechanical explanation implies not only that the particles of the universe move in space and time, but also that their motion is governed by agencies which operate in space and time. But the quantum theory finds, as we shall see later, that the fundamental activities of nature cannot be represented as occurring in space and time; they cannot, then, be mechanical in the ordinary sense of the word.

“In any case, no mechanical explanation could ever be satisfying and final; it could at best only postpone the demand for an explanation. For suppose— to imagine a simple although not very likely possibility— that it had been found that the pattern of events could be fully

explained by assuming that matter consisted of hard spherical atoms, and that each of these behaved like a minute billiard-ball. At first this may look like a perfect mechanical explanation, but we soon find that it has only introduced us to a vicious circle; it first explains billiard-balls in terms of atoms, and then proceeds to explain atoms in terms of billiard-balls, so that we have not advanced a step towards a true understanding of the ultimate nature of either billiard-balls or atoms. All mechanical explanations are open to a similar criticism, since all are of the form 'A is like B, and B is like A'. Nothing is gained by saying that the loom of nature works like our muscles if we cannot explain how our muscles work. We come, then, to the position that nothing but a mechanical explanation can be satisfying to our minds, and that such an explanation would be valueless if we attained it. We see that we can never understand the true nature of reality.

The Mathematical Description of Nature

"In these and similar ways, the progress of science has itself shown that there can be no pictorial representation of the workings of nature of a kind which would be intelligible to our limited minds. The study of physics has driven us to the positivist conception of physics. We can never understand what events *are* but must limit ourselves to describing the pattern of events in mathematical terms; no other aim is possible— at least until man becomes endowed with more senses than he at present possesses. Physicists who are trying to understand nature may work in many different fields and by many different methods; one may dig, one may sow, one may reap. But the final harvest will always be a sheaf of mathematical formulae. These will never describe nature itself, but only our observations on nature. Our studies can never put us into contact with reality; we can never penetrate beyond the impressions that reality implants in our minds.

“Although we can never devise a pictorial representation which shall be both true to nature and intelligible to our minds, we may still be able to make partial aspects of the truth comprehensible through pictorial representations or parables. As the whole truth does not admit of intelligible representation, every such pictorial representation or parable must fail somewhere. The physicist of the last generation was continually making pictorial representations and parables, and also making the mistake of treating the half-truths of pictorial representations and parables as literal truths. He did not see that all the concrete details of his picture— his luminiferous ether, his electric and magnetic forces, and possibly his atoms and electrons as well— were mere articles of clothing that he had himself draped over the mathematical symbols; they did not belong to the world of reality, but to the parables by which he had tried to make reality comprehensible. For instance, when observation was found to suggest that light was of the nature of waves, it became customary to describe it as undulations in a rigid homogeneous ether which filled the whole of space. The only ascertained fact in this description is contained in the one word ‘undulations’, and even this must be understood in the narrowest mathematical sense; all the rest is pictorial detail, introduced to help out the limitations of our minds.

“...To sum up, physics tries to discover the pattern of events which controls the phenomena we observe. But we can never know what this pattern means or how it originates; and even if some superior intelligence were to tell us, we should find the explanation unintelligible. Our studies can never put us into contact with reality, and its true meaning and nature must be forever hidden from us.” ⁶

Sir James Jeans was indeed a visionary scientist in that he was able to see a truth that few others had seen, and he made that truth credible to others through his lucid writings. The mystic’s vision confirms and verifies that truth which Jeans came to solely through physics and philosophy, enabling

us all to enthusiastically extol the fact that the Great Mind is indeed “*the creator and governor of the realm of matter*”, and proclaim that Divine Mind in which we live and move as the one and only reality to be adored as our own divine Self.

NOTES:

1. Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*, New York, Macmillan Co., 1931, pp. 83-84.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 158
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.
5. James Jeans’ 1934 Aberdeen Address may be found at:
http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html
6. James Jeans, *Physics And Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1942, may be found at:
http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/Jeans_Part_I.html

II. DAVID BOHM

David Bohm’s Implicate Order

Relativity and, even more important, quantum mechanics have strongly suggested (though not proved) that the world cannot be analyzed into separate and independently existing parts. Moreover, each part somehow involves all the others: i.e., contains them or enfolds them... This fact suggests that the sphere of ordinary material life and the sphere of mystical experience have a certain shared order and that this will allow a fruitful relationship between them.¹

--- David Bohm

According to the mystics who have seen into the nature of reality, the one absolute Consciousness—whom we usually refer to as ‘God’—is the Source and Cause of all phenomena, manifesting the universe by His Creative Power in a manner similar to the way an individual mind projects a thought.

This Divine Thought contains implicit within it the conscious Intelligence of the Source; and implicit in it also is the entire design and evolution of the universe, from its initial coming into being to all the refinements and transformations necessary in the process of its ultimate evolutionary development. Science does not recognize such a scenario as tenable and relegates the visionary knowledge of the mystics to the category of speculative metaphysics. However, one brave scientist stepped forward to acknowledge the possibility that the mystic's vision could provide a basis for a true and consistent scientific worldview; his name is David Bohm.

David Bohm (1917-1992) was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on December 20, 1917. His father was a Jewish furniture dealer, but David went to college, receiving his B.Sc. degree from Pennsylvania State College in 1939 and his Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1943. At U.C. Berkeley, he studied with Robert Oppenheimer; and when Oppenheimer went to Los Alamos to work on the "Manhattan Project", Bohm remained at Berkeley as a research physicist. There, he worked on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotrons and Syndrocyclotrons until 1947, when he took a position as an Assistant Professor at Princeton University, working on Plasmas, Theory of Metals, Quantum Mechanics and Elementary Particles. It was there he met and had regular meetings with Albert Einstein.

In 1949, during the repressive McCarthy era, Bohm was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and he was asked to testify against Robert Oppenheimer who was being accused of Communist sympathies. Bohm refused to testify, and he was thereafter tried and acquitted. But the damage had been done; he was fired from his position at Princeton University, and was unable to find work in this country. He then moved to Brazil where he taught briefly at the University of Sao Paulo. He also taught for a brief time in Israel before moving to Bristol, England in 1957. In 1961, he became professor of physics at the Birkbeck College of the University of London, and remained there for the next 30 years, writing and publishing his several books: *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics* (1957), *The Special Theory of Relativity* (1966), *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980), and *Science, Order and Creativity* (1987). David Bohm died in 1992.

In the 1950's David Bohm was widely considered one of the most talented and promising physicists of his generation. But his primary work from the 1950's to the 1990's—the ongoing development of his “causal interpretation” (which he later referred to as an “ontological interpretation”) of quantum mechanics as an alternative to the standard ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’—was met with dismissive hostility by the majority of the world physics community. In an attempt to provide a scientific formulation of quantum physics consistent with the mystic's vision of a Divine source and manifestation of our world, Bohm presented in his book, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, his fully developed theories.

The first part of his book's title, “*Wholeness*”, was a theme that grew out of his long familiarity with Quantum Physics. Ordinarily, when we seek for causes of isolated events or things, we settle arbitrarily on a preceding local event or state which we designate as the *cause* of the present event or state. But, as scientific investigations tend to show, the internal web of relationships between events and between things is endless. From the point of view expressed by the mystics, and by David Bohm, isolated things and events are not caused by other things and events but are rather linked in a complex web of relationships within a larger common Whole whose nature in turn determines the nature of those constituent things and events. In other words, the material reality is no longer thought to be the independent bits of which the Whole is constituted, but rather the other way around: the overall condition of the universal Whole governs the functions and interrelations of all constituent parts within the Whole.

Here is how Bohm and his co-author, Basil Hiley, explained, in a 1975 article, this understanding:

“The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the ‘parts’ are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of

analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent ‘elementary parts’ of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum inter-connectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole.”²

The second part of his book’s title, “*The Implicate Order*”, referred to his suggestion, inspired by the mystic’s vision, that the phenomenal world “unfolded from an “enfolded order” in a noumenal Source, referring to these two as “the implicate order” and “the explicate order”.

According to his theory, *the implicate order* is an invisible substratum containing the archetypal template for the emergence and dynamic unfoldment of both matter and consciousness, much the way an individual’s mind is the archetypal template of conscious thoughts produced from it. And in his wonderfully lucid writings Bohm endeavored to explain how the *explicate order* (this perceived phenomenal universe) has its source in and unfolds from an (invisible) implicate, or enfolded order. The implicate order implicitly contains the explicate order, and the explicate order explicitly manifests the implicate order.

Bohm theorized that, in the implicate order, all things—matter as well as consciousness, body as well as mind—are integrally interconnected in a way that transcends space and time. This is because the implicate order is a noumenal substratum resembling a transcendent Thought-matrix which generates, forms, and organizes the constituents of the explicate order. Quanta appear wavelike until they are observed; that is, witnessed by a conscious observer. Then they appear to those observers as particles, i.e., individualized ‘things’. Bohm suggests that this wave/particle complementarity can be explained by the implicate-explicate order duality: The implicate order is one indivisible continuum consisting of waves; the explicate order is perceived by the human consciousness as particulate, individualized.

Together, the implicate order and the explicate order comprise what Bohm regards as *the holomovement*, which he describes as “the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”.³ In the mystic’s vision, the origin of the Whole (the ultimate Cause), is found to reside in the divine Mind (the implicate order), and in principle in its causal precedent, the transcendent Absolute Being. But in David Bohm’s ontological theory, nowhere is there any indication of a primary origin for this “undivided flowing movement”. However, he does suggest that the ultimate source of the *holomovement* might include a “superimplicate order”, which in turn may result from a “super-superimplicate order”, and so on indefinitely. In his theory, he does not explicitly define these possible primary causal orders, but ultimately, underlying all noumenal implicate orders, there must presumably be an Origin, an eternal Intelligence, or Divine Ground, something along the lines of the Absolute, or “One”, of Neoplatonism. But Bohm, as a scientist dedicated to the empirical method, seems to prefer to remain wholly noncommittal regarding the nature of any primary supernatural cause.

For the mystic, informed by direct visionary experience, the perceivable phenomenal world is the manifestation of the creative Energy of God. At the root of that creative Energy is the divine Source (what Plotinus called *Nous*, “the Divine Mind”), whose ultimate root is the “One”, the ineffable Absolute that is the Godhead. It is the Divine Mind that extends Itself by way of Its Creative Energy to the entire universe. The Divine Mind is inherent and implicit in Its own Energy, and so It fills all animate and inanimate beings, to varying degrees according to their evolution, with Its own Consciousness and Joy. Thus, the manifested beings, who are the evolutes of Its Energy, are able to know within themselves Its being, Its freedom, Its Consciousness, Its Joy. They are able to transcend in mind the limitations of the egocentricity imposed on them in the process of manifestation and ascend in consciousness to the very being of God, knowing Him as their own original and authentic Self.

In that mystical ascension to the Divine Mind (which Bohm refers to as *the implicate order*), the manifest beings become able to perceive the perfection of the universal manifestation in which all created things are linked in a wonderful unity of being and becoming.⁴ Like the atoms in a cresting wave, or in the flowering of a rose, they are welded together in a

synchronous dance of movement toward their intended evolutionary culmination. How vast and perfect in every way is their dance! It is indescribably wonderful! In the mystic's vision the unfolding of the universe, and all that unfoldment entails, is seen to be a coordinated and integrated presentation wherein "all things move together of one accord;" and "assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain."

If David Bohm experienced at some time in his career such a mystical revelation, I have not been able to find any mention of it. Nonetheless, his exposition of "The Implicate Order" evinces many similarities to the direct perceptions frequently reported by numerous mystics. In David Bohm's broad suppositional proposition, causality is seen to reside in the ideational substratum (the implicate order), and then becomes manifest in all its effusive multiplicity as a universe of time and space (the explicate order). Small-scale causes in the explicate order are deemed irrelevant, as they are merely expressions of an implicit order. And, while this 'ontological interpretation' of David Bohm's is a marvelous restatement of the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of science, merely another speculative philosophy, unprovable (unfalsifiable) by science's criterion of proof. Bohm's work remains ground-breaking proof, however, that gnosis is a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. Perhaps other scientists will follow the path he has shown, expanding on his vision, and bringing us closer to a science that corresponds with the declarations of revelation proffered by the gnostics (mystics) of every generation.

NOTES:

1. Bohm, David; quoted in Friedman, Norman, *Bridging Science And Spirit*, St. Louis, Missouri, Living Lake Books, 1994; p. 95.
2. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, "On The Intuitive Understanding of Non- Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory", London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.
3. (David Bohm, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 172).
4. The mystical experience is frequently referred to as "the unitive experience" because it reveals the identity of the experiencer to be identical with the one all-pervasive reality, i.e., it reveals that 'I and the Father are one.' This nondual experience occurs because the mystical

experience is a revelation of the subtle level of reality, what Plotinus called *Nous*, (the Divine Mind), or what David Bohm calls ‘the implicate order’. Previous to the “unitive experience”, the ‘explicate order’, which had been the experiencer’s former “reality”, appeared to consist of separate individual things and beings in a world of incredible diversity and multiplicity of identities. But now, suddenly awakened to this subtle level of reality, there is but one identity spreading everywhere; ‘I’ am in the clouds and in the gritty soil; ‘I’ am the pulse of the turtle; ‘I’ am the clanging bells of joy. In that implicate order, one ‘I’ is all-pervasive, constituting the one and only identity everywhere.

* * *

23. Complementary Perspectives

by Swami Abhayananda

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I. The Coincidence of Science And Mysticism

In the field of physics, the dispute over whether light was particulate or wavular continued to play out over several centuries. Newton asserted that light was particulate; Faraday and Maxwell showed that it was wavular. Plank and Einstein showed that it was particulate; DeBroglie and Schrödinger showed that both light and matter (electrons) were wavular. Eventually, Neils Bohr attempted to settle the matter by declaring that light and matter appear to be either wavular or particulate, depending on how you measure them; and he declared them to be “complementary” perspectives, each contributing to the total information about light and matter.¹ This became known as the ‘Copenhagen interpretation’ since that’s where Bohr’s institute was located; and this notion of ‘complementarity’ was eventually adopted by the majority in the physics community.

As a result, today we have become somewhat accustomed to the picture of the world presented to us by modern physics which asks us to accept that the world consists of either particles or of waves—depending on how we decide to analyze it. Suffice it to say that, in some experiments both light and matter prove to be particulate; and in some experiments both light and matter prove to be wavular. This empirical ambiguity is so prevalent in the field of physics that we now refer to the constituents of both light and matter as “wave-particles” or “wavicles”; and the phrase “wave-particle duality”, despite the clearly contradictory nature of the term, is commonly heard, though few seem to understand what it means.

Reality, as we all know, is one; and yet it can appear to be divisible into individually distinct and separate perceivable entities, or it can appear as waves on a single continuum, in which there is no distinction between subject and object. Back in the 1930’s, many were pondering these two ‘versions’ of reality, which physics had discovered were complementary but irreconcilable descriptions of the reality we experience—among them the highly respected mathematician and dabbler in physics, James Jeans (1877-

1946). Jeans attempted to explain in a picturesque way why both of these two complementary versions of reality were required:

“When geography cannot combine all the qualities we want in a single map, it provides us with more than one map. Theoretical physics has done the same, providing us with two maps which are commonly known as the particle-picture and the wave-picture. It is perhaps better to speak of these two pictures as the particle-parable and the wave-parable.

“The particle-parable, which was first in the field, told us that the material universe consists of particles existing in space and time.

“...The wave-parable ... does not describe the universe as a collection of particles but as a system of waves. ... [In this parable,] the universe is no longer a deluge of shot from a battery of machine-guns, but a stormy sea with the sea taken away and only the abstract quality of storminess left...”²

“The old particle-picture which lay within the limits of space and time, broke matter up into a crowd of distinct particles, and radiation into a shower of distinct photons. The newer and more accurate wave-picture, which transcends the framework of space and time, recombines the photons into a single beam of light, and the shower of parallel-moving electrons into a continuous electric current. Atomicity and division into individual existences are fundamental in the restricted space-time picture, but[they] disappear in the wider, and as far as we know more truthful, picture which transcends space and time. In this, atomicity is replaced by ... ‘holism’: the photons are no longer distinct individuals each going its own way, but members of a single organization or whole— a beam of light.

“...And is it not conceivable that what is true of the objects perceived may be true also of the perceiving minds? When we view ourselves in space and time, we are quite obviously distinct individuals; when we pass beyond space and time, we may perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life.”³

It suddenly struck me, in reading Jeans' description of the Wavular version of reality, that this is a description of 'the mystical experience' that occurred to me in my cabin in the woods in 1966.⁴ At that time, I had experienced a shift in consciousness from what I regarded as the 'normal' version of reality consisting of numerous distinct objects into another, unfamiliar, version of reality in which subject and object are one. But what does that even mean? What is 'another version of reality'? Is there more than one reality? You see, there has been no vocabulary other than that of spirituality with which to describe the Nondual reality in which one finds oneself in this so-called 'mystical' experience—until now. Perhaps we must look to the vocabulary of the physicists to comprehend and explain it!

In order to understand these two complementary ways of viewing the universe from the perspective of the scientists, let's look at the characteristics, the qualities, of these two 'versions' of reality and see in what ways they differ. First, the Particulate, or 'corpuscular' version:

The Particulate (Dualist) Version of Reality

1. Here, each perceiving subject and each perceived object possesses a unique identity, each individual subject or object being distinct from any other.
2. Here, every perceiving subject and perceived object consists of smaller units, referred to, in sequence, as molecules, atoms, and sub-atomic particles.
3. Here, the consciousness of each subject perceives, in addition to the subject-object duality, a self-created duality of values, emotions, qualities, consisting of pairs, such as like-dislike, happy-sad, pleased-displeased, etc.
4. Here, both subjective and objective events occur within the parameters of time and space. Within these parameters, each perceiving subject (soul?) is born, matures, and eventually dies (perhaps to reincarnate at a later time).
5. Here, the struggle for individual existence sets creature against creature according to the diversity of self-interest and motive.

That is the Particle Version of Reality. And now, the 'version' of reality into which I shifted during my 'mystical' experience:

The Wavular (Nondual) Version of Reality

1. Here, only *one* limitless continuum of Consciousness exists, containing within It all phenomena, including one's own body, consisting of waves in the continuum.
 2. Here, all wavular phenomena consist of and are manifestations of the one continuum, having no distinct identity of their own.
 3. Here, consciousness experiences itself as that one continuum. There is only the One, with no division anywhere.
 4. Here, what is experienced is one's eternal Self. Time and space do not exist. All that occurs is the correlation and natural evolution of the waves of the one integrated continuum.
 5. Here, all the wavular phenomena move together of one accord, one coordinated harmony, one impetus.
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In 1966, when I was sitting in my cabin before the fire in the stove, I was experiencing 'reality', as all of us normally do, from the perspective of a distinct individual existing *within* the phenomenal universe of time and space. But, following my prayer, I entered into this 'mystical' experience. When my mind entered into that unfamiliar realm of awareness, I was suddenly seeing from the perspective of the one eternal consciousness from whom the world of time and space is projected and sustained. There was no difference between who I was and that one eternal consciousness. And there was no difference between who I was and the world. One consciousness pervaded and constituted all. It was clear to me then, and remains clear to me now, that the ability to make that shift in awareness does not lie within my control. And for that reason, I am compelled to regard its occurrence as a matter of divine Grace. Nonetheless, I believe that we are endowed with the ability to either cooperate with that grace or to turn our backs on it.

On the historic level, such 'mystical experience' has been occurring to individuals since the beginning. Though they are "few" in relation to the "many", nonetheless, thousands, perhaps millions, have known that eternal reality underlying the temporal one. Though it is usually a fleeting experience, it is the experiential foundation of religion, and the bedrock of idealist philosophy, for these many centuries. It was no doubt that very experience occurring to Jesus twenty centuries ago that led him to declare, "I and the Father are one." The wave-theory of the scientists has only been around since the late nineteenth century. Mystical experience and Wave

Theory have just never been associated together before. But today marks a momentous occasion. The recognition that the mystical experience provides experiential confirmation of the scientific theory of an underlying wave-based reality signals the long-awaited and undeniable *coincidence of science and mysticism* in our time. Halleluia!

II. Are There Two Versions of Reality?

Not only is wave-particle duality a recognized property of light (electromagnetic radiation), but the contemporary Quantum theory implies that “Wave-particle duality is a property of all matter as well. The electron, which we think of as a particle, is really a quantum bundle of an ‘electron-field’ which acts with wave-like properties.”⁵ However, we humans regularly perceive our macroscopic world (which is made of the microscopic world) not as a Wavular (Nondual) *Field*, but as multiple Particulate (Dualistic) entities. Yet these two perspectives (or ‘parables’) are vastly dissimilar, one having its basis in an eternal sub-reality, and the other occurring as its gross manifestation in a spatio-temporal version of reality that only came into being fourteen billion years ago with ‘the Great Radiance’.

As anyone can see, neither of these two quite different ‘versions’ of the one reality are remotely similar to the other, though they are complementary versions of the same reality. How can this be? Most of us experience the Particulate (Dualist) version of reality every day. It is our ‘normal’ view of the world. But few of us, it seems, actually experience the “Spiritual” or Wavular (Nondual) version even for a few minutes of a lifetime. Nevertheless, it appears that these two ‘versions’ of reality are not entirely independent, though one exists in time and space, and the other in eternity. Amazingly, each of these ‘versions’ of reality is dependent upon the individual perspective of the perceiver.

The Wavular (Nondual) version of reality is absolute. It exists noumenally, but not phenomenally; that is, it can be seen in inner vision by the higher mind but does not appear as a physical reality. “Physical” requires time and space; and that’s where the Particle-version of reality exists. The two versions of reality exist as exclusive, yet complementary realms, or perspectives. The Wave-version of reality is operative in the Particle-version; but the Particle-version of reality is ultimately illusory, being

identical to the Vedantic concept of ‘Maya.’ It is an appearance arising from the limited human perspective.

Some mystics, including myself, have experienced for themselves, in inner vision, that the nature of reality is wavular, within a single continuum, and that this one eternal continuum of Consciousness and Bliss is all that is. This is clearly experienced at a ‘higher’, or subtler, level of consciousness, but having experienced it, how and why do we then sink from there to the ‘particulate’ reality that we all normally experience in the framework of time and space? Is it possible that this particulate reality is a construct of the perspectives of our individual minds?

What *is* this indescribable ‘quantum field’, this undivided continuum of Consciousness— this wavy ocean of reality? Is It the universal Mind that encompasses and includes everything, including each of ‘our’ individual minds? We are in it and part of it; we, as well as everything in the universe, flow along in its tides and evolve according to its whims. It is the manifest Divinity. Some say it is God’s *lila*, His play!

But the *real* unanswerable question is ‘whence comes this Particulate world that we experience?’ If the Nondual, Wavular, vision of reality is the ultimately *real* one, whence comes this Dualistic, Particulate, vision of reality that is ubiquitously present to each of us throughout our lives? Is it a result of human perception only? And if it is a product of our own perception, is it ego-generated? In other words, is the Nondual ‘ocean’ of reality overlayed by a projected ‘reality’ produced by the sense of ‘I’— which then necessitates ‘not-I’ (or ‘the other’), and hence a multitude of pairs of opposites? Or is our delusion a universal one, created and manifested by the inscrutable power of God?

In my own experience, these two ‘frames of reality’, the Particulate and the Wavular, the Dualist and the Nondualist, are wholly differentiated perspectives that almost seem to be distinctly separate dimensional realms: One, the Particulate, is our normal, personal, ‘Technicolor’, world of subject-object perception and interior mind-born qualities and values. The second, the Wavular, is a transcendent transpersonal awareness arising from a perspective beyond time and space and is identical with an eternal and undivided Consciousness that spreads as waves to include all existence. The Wavular, Nondual, reality is absolute; but the Particulate, Dualist,

reality is a product of the individual mind. It is initiated, I believe, by the arising of the sense of ‘I’—that which we refer to as “the ego”.

Let us examine the evidence: the creation of all the pairs of opposites (dualities) occurs in the individual mind and is personally unique for each individual. Each mentally constructed value is created from the unique perspective of each ‘I’: I-other, here-there, now-then, night-day, pleasant-unpleasant, like-dislike, good-bad, beautiful-ugly, etc. One thing is essential to the creation of each of these dualities: the ego, the I. Without the ‘I’, they have no footing in this world.

But, as we all know, the ego is a *false* sense of identity. It vanishes when the real *I*, the one Consciousness, the absolute Self, is revealed. That absolute Self is *experienced* as the eternal awareness of the Wavular (Nondual) reality when, by divine grace, one is lifted above the individually created Particulate perspective to that of the divine Mind. There, all is one eternal Self. But how can we reach that ethereal vision? First, know that your current Dualist perspective is false, and begin behaving in such a way to bring about the transformation of your perspective from that of a personal individual self to that of the One. I know well that it is not an easy task, and one that will require long effort; but you can begin simply by treating everyone as yourself—with love.

IV. David Bohm’s Implicate Order

According to the mystics who have seen into the nature of reality at the noumenal level, God, the one absolute Consciousness, is the Source and Cause of all phenomena, manifesting the universe by His Creative Power in a manner similar to the projection of thought in the mind of an individual. This Divine Thought contains implicit within it the conscious Intelligence of the Source; and implicit in it also is the entire design and evolution of the universe, from its initial coming into being to all the refinements and transformations necessary in the process of its ultimate realization. Science does not recognize such a scenario as tenable and relegates the visionary knowledge of the mystics to the category of speculative metaphysics. However, one brave scientist stepped forward to acknowledge the possibility that the mystic’s vision could provide a basis for a true and consistent worldview; his name was David Bohm.

David Bohm (1917-1992) was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on December 20, 1917. His father was a Jewish furniture dealer, but David went to college, receiving his B.Sc. degree from Pennsylvania State College in 1939 and his Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1943. At U.C. Berkeley, he studied with Robert Oppenheimer; and when Oppenheimer went to Los Alamos to work on the “Manhattan Project”, Bohm remained as research physicist at Berkeley, working on the Theory of Plasma and on the Theory of Synchrotron and Syndrocyclotrons until 1947, when he took a position as an Assistant Professor at Princeton University, working on Plasmas, Theory of Metals, Quantum Mechanics and Elementary Particles. It was there he met and had regular meetings with Albert Einstein.

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In the 1950's David Bohm was widely considered one of the most talented and promising physicists of his generation. Albert Einstein regarded him as his successor. But his primary work from the 1950's to the 1990's—the ongoing development of his “causal interpretation” (which he later referred to as an “ontological interpretation”) of quantum mechanics as an alternative to the standard ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’—was met with dismissive hostility by the majority of the world physics community. In an attempt to provide a scientific formulation of quantum physics consistent with the mystic's vision of a Divine origin and manifestation of our world, Bohm developed and presented his ontological theory, postulating the

“unfoldment” of the order of the phenomenal world from an “enfolded” order at a subtler invisible level, referring to these two as “the explicate order” and “the implicate order”. These two ‘orders’, one invisible and timeless (the implicate order), the other phenomenal and temporal (the explicate order), comprise what Bohm calls ‘the holomovement’, “the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”.⁶

According to his theory, the implicate order is an invisible substratum containing an archetypal template for the emergence and dynamics of both matter and consciousness, much the way the human mind is the archetypal template of conscious thoughts produced from it. And in his wonderfully lucid writings he endeavored to explain how an “explicate order” such as this perceived phenomenal universe has its source in and unfolds from an implicate, or enfolded order. The implicate order implicitly contains and manifests the explicate order, and the explicate order contains within itself (at a subtler level) the implicate order.

Bohm theorizes that, in the implicate order, all things are interconnected in a way that transcends space and time. This is because the implicate order is an integral noumenal substratum resembling a transcendent Thought-matrix which generates, forms, and organizes the constituents of the explicate order. Everything in the implicate order consists of one wavular continuum (as does thought) until it is manifest in the explicate (spatio-temporal) order, i.e., until it is witnessed by a conscious observer. Then it becomes particulate, i.e., ‘an individualized ‘thing’’. Bohm suggests that this wave/particle complementarity can be explained by the implicate-explicate order duality. In the implicate order, objects consist of waves in a continuum (a *Field*); in the explicate order, those objects appear to be particulate.

Bohm eventually felt it necessary to amend his theory to acknowledge a yet subtler Source underlying the implicate order as its Fount, a superimplicate order (or even a subtler super-superimplicate order, both of which were only vaguely defined), which could be interpreted as an eternal multidimensional Ground resembling the Absolute Consciousness, or “the One”, of Neoplatonism, or the absolute Brahman of the Upanishads. Thus, not only is the emergence of time and space, matter and energy, given a causal base in this superimplicate order, so is the subjective consciousness of man. This

view, while it replicates the metaphysics of the mystic, and has the advantage of being a consistent and plausible model, also has the disadvantage, from the standpoint of science, of being wholly undemonstrable, as is any metaphysics that postulates a transcendent and noumenal source for the physical universe. But Bohm was more interested in the correspondence with truth than with the correspondence with scientific criteria.

Bohm presented his ‘ontological’ theory, not as empirical evidence or ‘scientific’ proof, but as a plausible framework to answer many of the questions that were and remain to this day so baffling to science—such as the source of the wave-particle duality, the Mind-Matter duality, the apparent purposive activity of natural elements, the so-called ‘entanglement’ of individual particles, and many other unexplained phenomena. His multi-dimensional framework is consistent with the ‘mystical’ visions reported repeatedly by mystics and seers of every spiritual tradition throughout history. And, though there is no mention of a personal ‘mystical’ experience in any of his writings, one suspects that Bohm did indeed experience a revelation of sorts in his early life that led him to devote his future life and career to the framing of a metaphysics inspired by that vision and applicable to many of the recent observations in quantum physics, his chosen field.

In his original theory, Bohm postulated the existence of a “quantum potential”, which he saw as a wave-like complement to each individual quantum (particle) that provided the information to guide and control the movement and function of each particle. In his later writings, he amended this concept to a “quantum *field* potential” assigning the guidance-wave—not merely to the individual quantum particle, but to the entire energy field from which the particle arose, and by extension to the entire universe. This brings Bohm’s theory more in line with traditional mystical theology which suggests a single divine Mind as the one guiding and controlling force operative throughout the universe.

We may readily recognize that the concept of the “implicate order” is quite similar to what the mystic describes as ‘the divine Mind’ (*Nous*), or ‘the creative Energy of God’, out of which all phenomena arise, and in which all are contained. While remaining distinct from the manifest universe, the divine Mind extends Itself by way of this Energy to the entire universe. The divine Mind is inherent and implicit in His Energy, and it is in this way that

He fills all animate and inanimate beings, to varying degrees according to their evolution, with His own Consciousness and Joy, and moves them all according to His will. Thus, the manifested living beings, who are the evolutes of His Energy, are able to know within themselves His being, His freedom, His Consciousness, His Joy. By His grace, they are able to transcend in mind the limitations of the egocentricity imposed on them in the process of manifestation and are able to ascend in consciousness to the very being of God, knowing Him as their original and authentic Self.

In that ascension, they perceive the perfection of His universal manifestation in which all created things are linked in a wonderful unity of being and becoming. Like the atoms in a cresting wave, or in the flowering of a rose, they are welded together in a synchronous dance of movement toward their intended evolutionary culmination. How vast and perfect in every way is their dance! It is indescribably wonderful!

In the mystic's vision the unfolding of the universe and all that that unfolding entails is seen to be a coordinated and integrated presentation whereby "all things move together of one accord;" and "assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain." This vision is to be found also in David Bohm's expression of the implicate-explicate order of the universe. He sees the "superimplicate order" as the ultimate conscious Source of the implicate order, and he sees the implicate order, in turn, as the causal framework of the explicate order—the explicate order (the manifest universe) being merely a limited "reflection" of the implicate order. In the mystic's vision, as in Bohm's theoretical postulations, the question of *causality*, dispensed with in the 'Copenhagen Interpretation' of quantum physics, reappears as an inherent principle of holistic interconnectedness in the universal design.

In Bohm's broad suppositional proposition, causality is seen to rest in the implicate order (and ultimately in the superimplicate order), whose phenomenal effect is the explicate order in all its manifestory effusiveness. And, while this 'ontological interpretation' of David Bohm's is a marvelous restatement of and extrapolation on the expressed vision of the mystic, it remains, from the standpoint of science, merely another speculative metaphysical philosophy, unprovable and unfalsifiable by science's criteria of proof.

But consider this: On the evening of November 18, 1966, I was privileged to “tap in” to what I now consider to be the subtle-level aspect of reality that Dr. David Bohm labeled “the implicate order”. Dr. Bohm founded his conception of ‘the implicate order’ on purely theoretical grounds, never suggesting that this hidden ‘order’ could be known intelligibly; but the fact remains that the visual experience described by me and by other mystics is identical with what Dr. Bohm describes as the characteristic features of ‘the implicate order’. Surely, this would tend to lend credence to the reality of what is experienced in ‘the mystical vision’ as well as to offer confirmation of the theories of David Bohm.

Though this non-spatio-temporal aspect of reality that Bohm refers to as ‘the implicate order’ has been called in the past by many different names, no one prior to Dr. Bohm has so clearly connected its existence to current scientific evidence and the requirements of a logically consistent scientific framework. Clearly, Bohm’s work is ground-breaking proof that gnosis is a fruitful source for scientific investigation and understanding. In effect, Bohm has translated the great theology of mystics like Plotinus and Shankara into the vocabulary of physics and given it a form and rationale that is relevant to contemporary thought. Perhaps other scientists will follow the path he has shown, expanding on his vision, and bringing us closer to a science that corresponds with the declarations of revelation proffered by the Gnostics.

Here is a graphic to show how each of the prominent mystical traditions relate to Bohm’s ‘causal’ scheme:

<i>Plotinus</i>	<i>Vedanta</i>	<i>David Bohm</i>
The One	Brahman	The Superimplicate Order
The Divine Mind	Ishvara/Maya	The Implicate Order
Soul/World	Jiva/Jagat	The Explicate Order

Bohm’s vision is, in its essence, compatible with, and virtually identical to, the perennial vision of the mystics. It is flexible enough to encompass consciousness, creativity, and all the phenomena experienced in the subjective and objective world of experience. It also provides the answers to nearly all of the questions put forth by quantum physics in recent times; in fact, it was designed by Bohm to answer these questions. For example, the question regarding the wave-particle duality and the phenomena of non-

local effects. “Non-locality” refers to the fact that particles from a larger particle that are split off from one another are able to have an immediate effect on one another even at great distances—hence non-locally, as well as acausally. Since there is no actual causal relationship between such distant particles, these non-local interactions are considered to be *entangled* or synchronous, representing instantaneously connected ripples in a vast conscious ocean of energy.

Thus, in Bohm’s scheme, as in those of the mystics, all things, as projections of a higher dimensional reality, are immediately linked in a web of relationship which is not determined by proximity, or interacting forces, but simply by participation in that common conscious Whole. The fact that distinct entities need not share the same local region of space to be immediately interconnected is therefore explained by Bohm’s theory. As Bohm has stated:

Ultimately, the entire universe (with all its particles, including those constituting human beings, their laboratories, observing instruments, etc.) has to be understood as a single undivided Whole, in which analysis into separately and independently existent parts has no fundamental status.⁷

This explanation of the nonlocal (acausal) interconnectedness of particles that are constituents within a whole, as well as an unbroken continuum of Consciousness, suggests an explanation for clairvoyance, telepathy, and the oft-experienced phenomenon of synchronicity in human events, first given attention by Carl Jung. ‘Synchronicity’ refers to the occurrence of unexplainable and causally unconnected, yet meaningful, “coincidences” such as the type all of us have at times experienced. It may involve thinking of someone who then immediately calls on the phone. Or it may involve the uncanny repetition of a theme or motif in our daily life, such as an image, name or number repeatedly appearing in various circumstances. Or it might be evidenced in the actuality of some occurring event that you had dreamed of the night before. Such “coincidences” are explained similarly in terms of the quantum interconnectedness of all things in both the implicate and the explicate orders.

On the cosmic and the human scale, “synchronicity” refers to the universal propensity of matter and consciousness to follow a specific governing energy pattern: what Jung called an “archetype”. *Archetype* is the name given to specifically defined “energies” which exist as invisible real-world “forces” that manifest in both the material and the mental realm. For example, the Sun, Moon, and the planets all have “archetypal” energies associated with them. These energies were described and elaborated into metaphorical personalities by earlier civilizations, namely the Babylonians and the Greeks, who regarded them as “gods”, embodied as the planets. Thus, each of the bodies within the solar system, including the Sun and Moon, individually embody an archetypal energy which is said to define its particular “influence”. These archetypal influences continue to exist today, even though we no longer think of them as “gods”.

Many events which we would normally think of as synchronistic, or coincidental, in fact occur in a common astronomical milieu, i.e., under common planetary conditions, as, for example, a retrograde station of Mercury, a Moon-Neptune square aspect, or any other similar configuration occurring in the heavens. A violent dream might occur at the exact time that Mars transits to a conjunction or square (90°) the position of a planet in our own personal natal planetary map. This would constitute a synchronistic relationship between the Mars’ transit and our own psyche. However, most of us are unaware of the continuously changing angular interrelationships between planets or of their relationship to our own natal maps. And while it is understood that such interplanetary relationships are not the *causes* of earth-events or psychological states, they are synchronous with them, and serve to signal the presence of archetypal energies operating in the external universe for those who are prepared to read these signs.⁸

How, one wonders, do the planetary positions and angular relationships relate to human subjects? And most especially, how do the current positions of planets and their angular relationships relate to the positions of the planets at the time of the birth of the individual? Most scientists would answer, ‘They don’t! Such a notion is simply a relic of ancient superstition!’ But the reality of the synchronicity of planetary positions and their archetypal energies with actual events or states of consciousness is unquestionable to one who has made a long and careful study of the planetary motions and their synchronous correlations. And yet the question of *how* these distant planets can affect a significant change in one’s world and in the subjective

content of one's mind is still an open question, and a matter of yet unresolved controversy. Is the connection local or non-local? Is it causal or acausal?

The theory of a local connection, adhered to by some, derives from the classical mechanistic view of the universe, and suggests some kind of wave pattern interference or facilitation. If there is an electromagnetic type of wave field that extends from all the planets to earth and also interacts with human brain waves, then the connection is local, and the phenomenon of astrological correspondences is explained as a *causal* relationship. To date, however, no such field has been discovered. The alternative theory is that mind and planets are instantaneously interconnected *non-locally* as embodiments of one all-pervasive Intelligence. Such correlations exist not in any cause-effect manner, but rather in the same way as the other acausal connections we have discussed; they exist because of the interconnectedness of all things within the universe at the "implicate" level. Clearly, synchronicity, the synchronization of events, takes place only within a coordinated whole. In such a coordinated whole, we would never be able to know or prove *how* such correlations work; we could only acknowledge that "Thy will be done." According to this theory, the universe is not a great mechanistic clock; it is a conscious and coordinated continuum established in the one great Mind.

According to this theory, it is a consciously projected and integrated Thought-construct in which we live; a dream-world. The planets and their synchronicity with mental and physical actions are, like us, constituents in an integral Thought-drama. Who can measure the relationships between items in a dream? They are not separate; they are constituents of a Whole, in which there are no divisions. Likewise, this universe is all God's Thought-projection. He is both the Cause and the effect. Within this Thought-drama, planets move, people evolve; it's all organically coordinated, but there are no independent causal relationships going on within it. It is the way it is because that is just the way He thought it, willed it. In other words, the planets are to be seen as signs, or markers, of particular archetypal energies contained within the whole, signifying elements of the cosmic design fashioned by a transcendent Intelligence. In such a universe, what clearer understanding could one gain by pursuing the matter further? Additional scientific enquiry would be irrelevant.

Communing with the Author through love and the surrender of the soul would be far more fruitful.

IV. The Synchronicity of Cosmos And Psyche

The dawning recognition by many scientists of the quantum interconnectedness of everything in the cosmos is one of the most significant recent developments within the scientific community. And one of the most potent sources of evidence for this view has recently been produced by Richard Tarnas, a cultural historian and professor of philosophy, whose book, *Cosmos And Psyche*, gives lucid and dramatic expression to one particular facet of this wholistic view. In his book, he relates the results of the thirty-years of research he has accumulated on the relationships between the ordered movements of the planets and the historical events and psychological states observed in our Western culture over the last two millennia. From this study, he concludes:

I have become convinced, after the most painstaking investigation and critical assessment of which I am capable, that there does in fact exist a highly significant—indeed a pervasive—correspondence between planetary movements and human affairs, and that the modern assumption to the contrary has been erroneous. The evidence suggests not that the planets themselves cause various events or character traits, but rather that a consistently meaningful empirical correspondence exists between the two sets of phenomena, astronomical and human, with the connecting principle most fruitfully approached as some form of archetypally informed synchronicity.⁹

Drawing upon an enormous amount of research, which is divulged in the course of his book, Tarnas builds an impressively unassailable case for the above conclusion. He has shown by scientific methods that there is, indeed, a proven correlation between the recognized archetypal energies associated with the various planets and the manifestation of those energies in the lives and activities of humans on earth. I had attempted to show, in my book, *The Supreme Self*, that even the mystical experience, what has been referred to as ‘the union of soul and God’, is seen to be signaled by particular planetary patterns, especially as those transiting patterns relate to the positions of the planets at the time of the individual’s birth; and Richard Tarnas’ work now confirms and corroborates those findings.

What an extraordinarily remarkable and amazing discovery this is: that our lives, our births, our very thoughts, are intertwined with the planetary energies and their angular relationships to one another! I too have watched and wondered at the amazing synchronicity evidenced between the planets and my own inner and outer world for over thirty years, and I doubted that I would ever see a comprehensive presentation of empirical evidence for these synchronicities in my lifetime. But Richard Tarnas has accomplished the impossible. For that, he will take his place among the giants. In this recently published book, Richard Tarnas, one of the finest, most well-informed, minds of our time or any other, has shown in an overwhelming fashion the synchronous correlations between various planetary patterns occurring throughout history and the events and cultural motifs that have surfaced historically in human affairs. It seems almost certain to me that this book will be regarded in the future as a significant watershed in the intellectual and spiritual development of our Western culture. Whether the minds of average citizens are capable of the mental subtlety required for grasping and utilizing this knowledge in their lives remains yet to be seen.

Tarnas' monumental study does not omit the recognition of a noumenal Cause behind the many interconnections in the universe; in fact, he acknowledges the limitations of a purely "scientific" engagement with the cosmos, and advocates a larger engagement that integrates science with spiritual vision:

.. This larger engagement with the cosmos will require of us a profound shift in what we regard as legitimate knowledge. It will demand an initial act of trust in the possible reality of an ensouled cosmos of transformative beauty and purposeful intelligence. ¹⁰

... The cosmos as a living whole appears to be informed by some kind of pervasive creative intelligence—an intelligence, judging by the data, of scarcely conceivable power, complexity, and aesthetic subtlety, yet one with which human intelligence is intimately connected, and in which it can consciously participate. ¹¹

Though Tarnas is clearly an exception, there is a tendency among many of the purveyors of the newly formulated synchronistic worldview to omit or entirely dismiss the concept of an ultimate intelligent Cause, immanent within Its own creation. Acausal connections within the Whole do not eliminate the

requirement of a Cause for the Whole itself. We must not simply take the ‘implicate order’ to be an independent *a priori* substratum.

There is a supreme ruler from whom the implicate order derives, who generated the universe and set it in motion, who is its efficient and its material Cause as well as its underlying order, and who permeates every particle of the Whole. He is not merely the implicate order; He is the Cause of all that exists, and is the center of our intelligence, our creativity, our soul; He is our true and lasting Self. He cannot be seen or measured in any way; and so, He is beyond the methods of science. He can be known only through His gracious Self-revelation—in other words, through gnosis. He is the One to whom we must look, and the One to whom we offer reverence and gratitude for all that we are and all that we enjoy. Yes, Virginia, there is a God; He does exist. He really exists! And yes, He is loving; He is full of kindness and joy, and He knows everything. I know; for I have seen Him.

V. Summarizing Complementary Perspectives

For David Bohm, the wave-particle duality was indicative of the perspective from two different planes or levels of reality, one invisible and beyond time and space, consisting of a field of spreading waves, and a second plane or level of reality manifesting in the physical time-and-space world consisting of particulate matter. The first, the subtle-level plane, he called “the implicate order”; and the second, the physical plane, arising from the former, he called “the explicate order”. He explained the wave-particle duality in terms of these two “orders”, both of which, he believed, contribute to our experience of the world that we perceive and with which we interact.

As Bohm points out, from the eternal perspective of *the implicate order*, one contiguous field, or continuum, spreads its ripples, and everything consists of those ripples or waves—there are no distinct individual entities; all are interconnected in one, and consist of that one, as waves spreading on the ocean consist of the ocean. But from the perspective of the (spatio-temporally manifest) *explicate order*, things are individualized, particularized; as each wave on the ocean has its own individual characteristics, each thing or being in the explicate order has its own separate identity or soul. So, in a way similar to, and directly related to, the wave-particle duality, there is also a duality of self-identification. Just as, from different perspectives we may appear wavular or particulate, similarly,

from different perspectives we may appear to be identical to the universal Consciousness or distinct as an individual soul.

Another dispute similar to the wave-particle debate had been going on for centuries in the realm of metaphysics: it was between the advocates of causal determinism and the advocates of free will or choice. The question is “Are we entirely governed by the will of the One, or do we have a free and independent will to do as we choose? Do we move in accordance with the will of one all-inclusive causal tide, or do we each have the ability to determine our own fate according to our individual choices?” Through the centuries, this dispute has gone back and forth in a manner reminiscent of the wave-particle dispute, with no resolution. And no one seemed to notice that this dispute was directly linked to the wave-particle dispute!

Just as light and electrons, viewed from different perspectives, appear to be either wavular or particulate, our identities, viewed from different perspectives, may appear to be either contained in and identical with the universal Consciousness or as distinct individual souls. The perspective from the vantage point of eternity is quite different than the perspective from the vantage point of time and space! Likewise, viewed from these different perspectives, we may appear to be either entirely free or totally determined by universal causal factors.

The notion that we, and everything in the universe, may appear as wavular from one perspective, and particulate from another has not yet sunk into the collective psyche; no doubt, it will also be difficult for humanity to come to terms with the understanding that, from one perspective, we are entirely self-determined and solely responsible for our actions, and from another perspective, we are entirely at the mercy of the universal causal fiat; that we are *both* the one nondual continuum and an individual soul at once, that we are *both* free and determined!

Mystical experience such as that of my own and others, along with the experimental findings of respected physicists, leads us to acknowledge that the wave-particle duality is not just a curious paradox; it represents a new paradigm whose implications have not yet fully dawned on the scientists—let alone on the public. The fact that light and matter reveal themselves to be particulate in some experiments and wavular in others suggests to some (like David Bohm) that there are two separate perspectives overlapping—a

wavular one and a particulate one (even if the particulate perspective turns out to be merely a subjectively induced illusion).

So far, humanity has not been able to come to terms with the question of whether we are determined or free in our willing; but perhaps we will also eventually come to an understanding that the determinism-freedom duality, like the wave-particle duality, is a complementarity of perspectives that we can accept, recognizing that we may appear to be causally determined *and/or* appear to possess a free will, depending on our perspective. Such an understanding, however challenging to our current worldview and to everyone's sanity, would certainly serve to clarify and resolve one more long-standing dispute over the question of whether we are free or determined in our will.

We may also eventually see that this complementarity of determinism and freedom is closely bound up with the complementarity of identities—the recognition that from an eternal perspective we may appear to be participants in the continuum of the one world-soul (*Atman/Brahman*), and therefore identical with It; and we may also appear from the spatio-temporal perspective to be distinct individualized souls (*jivas*). Both of these perspectives contribute information necessary to the *complete* knowledge of ourselves, and so, each perspective is therefore complementary. The relationship between the underlying unity of Consciousness (the implicate order, or wavular continuum) and the manifold universe of individual subjective souls and objects (the explicate order, or particulate phenomena) is comparable to the relationship between the ocean and its waves. What we mean by 'the ocean' is the self-contained body of water; 'the waves' are the varied unique configurations of water that play on its surface. Like waves, each soul, defined by the astronomical pattern that accompanies its embodiment, is unique and may or may not be harmoniously compatible with other souls, who are associated with different astronomical patterns.

The relationship between the varied soul-manifestations may be harmonious or disharmonious; but in the underlying Consciousness (the level of the implicate order), as in the depths of the ocean, there is no differentiation, no multiplicity, and therefore no relationship which may be either compatible or conflicting. At the level of the explicate order, from the perspective of a particular soul, another soul may indeed appear to be incompatible, unlovable, and indeed unlikable; while, at the level of the implicate order, all souls are in fact inseparably one in the indivisible unity of Consciousness.

The question of how we are to reconcile these two seemingly irreconcilable perspectives is one to which, as yet, we have found no answer.

I am convinced that, so long as we are embodied on this earth, there are two complementary identities within us: one, an undifferentiated continuum of Consciousness which we usually refer to as ‘the eternal Self’; and the other, an assembly of predispositions, habits, and karmic history, that we refer to as ‘an individual soul’. And until we come to terms with both complementary aspects of our identity, we cannot wholly know who we really are; we cannot know the full truth about ourselves.

Many spiritual teachers have advised that this ensemble of qualities that comprises the individual soul must become transparent to the light of God, the eternal Self who is within us, so that those finer divine qualities may shine through. One such spiritual advisor, Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), put it this way: “The very best and utmost of attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee.”

God, our eternal Self, has created everything from Himself, and so, ultimately, all is God. But within His creation, there are *apparent* dualities—such as body-soul, matter-space, the One-the many—all *appearances* only. “I” and “Thou” is another of these apparent dualities. So, Meister Eckhart’s advice to “let God act and speak in thee,” presumes a duality between “God” and “Thee” which is only an apparent duality; there is no *real* distinction between the two—and yet there certainly appears to be a distinction: “I”, the individual soul, am that separate ego, that isolated “me” that stands over against the all-embracing One in whom all the universe exists. My little mind engages in self-centered noise and chatter; God’s Mind is pure clarity and inspiration—so, clearly, “I” must be still, and let God do all the speaking and acting. But these two, “I” and “God”, are simply two different perspectives from two different levels of consciousness in the same manifest individual. They are what David Bohm called the Explicate Order and the Implicate Order.

From the perspective of one’s individualized consciousness—“the soul”—God appears to be other than ourselves, but God is the heavenly Father in whom we live and move and have our being. Our relationship to Him is to a hazily perceived Overseer who guides and inspires us. But from the perspective of the illumined soul, dissolved in and made one with the Divine Consciousness that is God, the duality of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ that is apparent only

in the world of time and space vanishes, and the only perspective remaining is that of the One who alone is—the Implicate Order and not the Explicate Order. Ultimately, He alone is. That which is eternal is the sole Reality. All else is projected illusion.

While we live, however, the *apparent* duality of I and Thou persists through habit, through the long-accustomed habit of separating one's *individual* identity from the One, thereby creating an "I" and a "Thou" where only the One truly exists. So, while this *apparent* duality exists (i.e., while we are embodied), the practical solution would seem to be to regard the two—"I" and "Thou"—as complementary. Of course, when the true eternal Self is revealed, both I and Thou will vanish, and only the One will experience Its ever-present existence. The fact is, while we are *always* the nondual Reality, so long as we perceive ourselves as embodied souls, we are temporarily confined to a Divinely produced universe of complementary identities, both of which must be thoroughly known and acknowledged.

NOTES:

1. Neils Bohr: "Evidence obtained under different experimental conditions cannot be comprehended within a single picture, but [it] must be regarded as *complementary* in the sense that only the totality of the phenomena exhausts the possible information about the objects." From "Discussions with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics," in P. Schilpp, *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*; New York, Open Court Publishing, 1949.
2. From James Jeans, Aberdeen Address to the British Association for The Advancement of Science, 1934, "The New World-Picture of Modern Physics". The full text of James Jeans' 1934 Aberdeen Address may be found at:
[history.mcs.st-http://www-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html](http://www-and.ac.uk/history/Extras/BA_1934_J1.html)
3. *Ibid.*
4. See the description of my mystical experience in my book, *The Supreme Self*, available as a free download at the Downloads page on my website at: www.themysticsvision.com.

5. Neils Bohr: "Evidence obtained under different experimental conditions cannot be comprehended within a single picture, but [it] must be regarded as *complementary* in the sense that only the totality of the phenomena exhausts the possible information about the objects." Quote is from: "Discussions with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics". In P. Schilpp. *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*; New York, Open Court Publishing, 1949.
6. Bohm, David, *Wholeness And The Implicate Order*, London, Routledge, 1980; p. 172.
7. Bohm, David, *Wholeness And Implicate Order*, London, Routledge, 1980. (For a a brief, intelligent and lucid exposition of Bohm's visionary physics, see "Lifework of David Bohm", by Will Keepin at:
http://www.vision.net.au/~apaterson/science/david_bohm.htm
8. For more information on the mystical interpretation of astrological synchrony, please see my website: www.theastrologersvision.com.
9. Tarnas, Richard, *Cosmos And Psyche*, New York, Viking, 2006; p. 68.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 468.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 489.

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24. WAVE-PARTICLE DUALITY

Compiled of Articles from *The Mystic's Vision*

by Swami Abhayananda.

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1. A Wonderful New Science

Over a century ago, the science of physics was revolutionized by the discovery that light and matter appear to behave both as waves and as particles. The long-standing question of whether the nature of light and matter was wavular or particulate had gone back and forth throughout the previous three centuries, the consensus now favoring one, now the other. But then, in the early twentieth century, the leading scientists in the field of theoretical physics were unanimous in declaring that matter and light evidenced *both* wavular and particulate properties—properties that alternately appeared, depending on how they were measured. Thereafter, for all practical purposes, waves and particles (quanta) were considered to be “complementary” ways of describing light and matter.

But even though the standard ‘Copenhagen’ interpretation considers this complementarity a fundamental property of the universe, there are others who think that the ambiguity lies not in the nature of light and matter but in the fundamental nature of human perception and measurement. There are yet others who believe that the universe consists of one single wave-propagating continuum—and that the appearance of light and matter as particulate is merely the effect of the countless number of ways of perceiving the distinguishable manifestations of that one continuum. However, those scientists involved in practical experimental physics completely avoid dealing with the controversy simply by following the established mathematical formulas (involving the ‘collapse’ of the wave functions) that allow for whichever interpretation—wave or particle—that is called for; thereby leaving such theoretical questions regarding the ‘true’ nature of reality to more philosophically adventurous minds.

A distinctly more philosophically adventurous mind, that of David Bohm, gave expression to a 'new' conception of the universe in a 1975 article written with Basil Hiley. Here is a relevant portion of that article:

“The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the ‘parts’ are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent ‘elementary parts’ of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum inter-connectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole.”¹

The ‘old’ way of conceiving the universe, I will remind you, regarded all the things, particles, and individual beings as separate independent objects and creatures that interacted in accordance with physical ‘laws.’ The ‘new’ way of conceiving of the universe regards every particle, object, and living being as inseparably united in an integral conscious continuum of which all particles, things, and beings are constituted. Everything that once appeared to be random outcomes of merely blind forces, and governed by laws of probability, is now seen to be acting in harmonious accord within an “unbroken whole” conceived and contained within the one Mind, wherein “all things move together of one accord, and wherein assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.”

The most amazing and most wonderful aspect of this new way of seeing the universe is the recognition that every individual mind partakes of the one Mind and is capable not only of establishing a meaningful connection to the one Mind, but of actually experiencing its identity with that one all-pervasive Mind. For those to whom this identity has been revealed, all

things and all beings are seen to be connected in an all-inclusive matrix of what some call ‘Spirit’, and others refer to as ‘Mind-stuff’; and all things are seen to be interrelated through one universal will or intention. Those who have experienced their own existence and the existence of all phenomena as manifestations of the one Spirit, the one immortal Mind, know with certainty that all identity is one. Such people, known as ‘mystics’, are yet few, but their numbers are growing, and one day the vision of a divine cosmos, existing within a divine Mind, will become the ‘standard model’ of a wonderful new science.

NOTES: 1. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, “On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory”, London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975, pp. 96, 102.

2. Consciousness And Matter

I. Consciousness

Humans meet reality on two fronts: the mental front and the physical front—what the ancient Greeks referred to as *Psyche* and *Cosmos*—or what we today might call the subjective and the objective realities. Another way of referring to these two fronts is as the realm of *Consciousness (Mind)*, and the realm of *Matter (Body)*. And so, if we are to give a full picture of our experience of reality, we must give an account of both its mental and its physical aspects. The mental aspect of our reality, or consciousness, is experienced as wavular; the physical, or material aspect of reality is experienced primarily as particulate. But, since Consciousness is the source and creator of Matter, every distinct particle of Matter also contains Consciousness; and so, Matter is both wavular and particulate, as is the Light from which Matter is made. There is one all-pervasive Consciousness, and the consciousness of every distinct individual is included in and partakes of it.

Consciousness is like an ocean in that it is a continuum that is wavular; in other words, it is capable of producing waves of consciousness in the form of thoughts. We are all familiar with the waves we produce in our consciousness, and we are familiar with the fact that waves, in whatever continuum, are formed of two opposing movements: a crest and a trough—

each movement necessitating the other. This became clear to me during a ‘mystical’ experience that occurred when I was in my twenties:

The experience had begun as an intense prayer, and initially, while I was still identified with my separate self, I was addressing God as “Thou”; but when God’s grace revealed to me that I was merely a wave on the one ocean of Consciousness, and that He alone was the sole reality, I realized that, now, to speak the word, ‘Thou’, would be to re-establish duality. For I saw that, with the thought of ‘Thou’, I bring into existence at the same time, an ‘I’.¹ ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are interdependent; there is no ‘Thou’ without an ‘I’, no ‘I’ without a ‘Thou’. The crest and trough of a single wave are opposing twins, two sides of one coin. It is the same with all such pairs of contraries: “I love and (thereby) create (its opposite) hatred; I am in peace, and am fashioning chaos; standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.” All opposites occur as the crest and trough of a single wave. It is only in a continuum capable of producing waves that opposites necessitate one another in this manner. Thoughts, created in and of consciousness, are therefore undeniably wavular.

These waves of thought on the ocean of Consciousness produce duality, but Consciousness Itself, like an ocean, has no contrary to Itself, no opposite; It is the one substratum, the boundless and undivided ocean of Consciousness, and has no duality in It. Grace having revealed that ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are merely the crest and trough of a wave of thought, both were resolved in the one ocean of Consciousness who alone exists absolutely. Then, the false ego-identification simply vanished, leaving only the one all-pervasive Consciousness aware of Itself; and in that expanded awareness, all became clear: “Now, weeping and laughing are gone; night is become day; music and silence are heard as one; my ears are all the universe.” In that moment beyond time, “All motion has ceased; everything continues. Life and death no longer stand apart (because that One contains everything—living or otherwise). No I, no Thou; no now, or then. Unless I move, there is no stillness (for stillness cannot be without movement).”

This is the realization of the one eternal ocean of Consciousness; It is *That* which has been called ‘God’, ‘the Absolute’, ‘the Unchanging Ground’, ‘the divine Self’. When it is known, It is known to be the ultimate Reality, the final irrefutable answer to the question, ‘Who am I?’. Anyone who has experienced the divine Self in this way will tell you that the experience at its

peak does not last forever; but it is certainly transformative and lasting in its joyous certainty.

II. Matter

What, then, of the material universe that surrounds us and constitutes our bodily form? Theoretically, the universe of Matter is the result of an initiating eruption of high-frequency electromagnetic radiation, or Light, that occurred around fourteen billion years ago from the eternal Consciousness. That Light transformed into wave-particles, collected into atoms, molecules, gases, stars, and entire galaxies spread throughout this vast universe. The one eternal Consciousness, manifesting in this way as multiple forms within Itself, then imparted Its own awareness to these forms as Life and Consciousness, and multiplied.

Eventually, after the passing of a lengthy stretch of time, this universal expansion will reverse like the alteration of a breath, becoming a universal contraction; and all Matter will implode back to its energy state in the eternal Consciousness from which it originated, and the universal cycle will be repeated once again. That high-frequency Light which transforms into the fabric that we call *Matter* is woven of God's Intelligence and Light. Scientists prefer to say that Matter is made of *wave-particles*; but, of course, no one has ever seen a wave-particle. In fact, no such thing actually exists; 'wave-particle' is merely a statement of alternate possibilities.

Since the first half of the twentieth century, physicists have regarded both Light and Matter as possessing the contradictory but complementary properties of both waves and of particles. This has become well known as the Wave-Particle Duality (WPD), observable in physics experiments at the Quantum level. Equally well known is Werner Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty (or Indeterminacy), which states the impossibility of simultaneously measuring both the position and momentum of a wave-particle. It now turns out that these two limitations on our ability to know and understand Matter are really one and the same! This astonishing discovery appears in detail in the December 19, 2014 edition of *Nature Communications*. International researchers Patrick Coles, Jędrzej Kaniewski, and Stephanie Wehner made the breakthrough while at the Centre for Quantum Technologies at the National University of Singapore. They found that 'Wave-Particle Duality' is simply the quantum 'Uncertainty Principle' in disguise.

An article describing this new understanding appears also in the PhysOrg Newsletter for December 19, 2014, and is entitled “Quantum Physics Just Got Less Complicated”.² It states:

The quantum uncertainty principle is the idea that it's impossible to know two certain sets of information about a quantum particle at once. For example, the more precisely you know the position of an atom, the less precisely you can know the speed with which it's moving. It's a limit on the fundamental knowability of nature, not a statement on measurement skill. The new work shows that how much you can learn about the wave versus the particle behavior of a system is constrained in exactly the same way.

What's really surprising about this discovery is that, for three quarters of a century, the entire scientific community has been widely discussing and utilizing in their experimental research these two recognized limitations on our ability to know, and yet no one before now even suspected that they were related, let alone that the Wave-Particle Duality was simply another manifestation of the principle of Indeterminacy. In fact, there was a great deal of speculation over the years by well-respected physicists that the Wave-Particle Duality referred, not to a merely *apparent* duality, but to an *actual* duality in the objective nature of light and material substance.

In the case of the experimental determination of whether an elemental constituent of matter behaves as a particle or a wave, as well as in the case of determining its position or its momentum, the very act of observing that constituent of Matter has the power to alter the experimental result. Whether the outcome of an experiment results in a wave or a particle, and/or whether its position or its momentum is measured, each outcome is wholly dependent upon the experimenter's intent, since in both cases, one kind of experiment will give one result, another kind of experiment will give another result.

In other words: If we perform an experiment that allows us to know the *position* of a wave-particle with some certainty, that experiment precludes the accurate knowledge of its *momentum* (velocity times mass); and if we perform an experiment that allows us to have accurate knowledge of the *momentum* of a wave-particle, that experiment precludes the accurate knowledge of its *position*. Similarly, if we perform an experiment that

allows us to know the *particulate* nature of a wave-particle, that experiment precludes our knowing (observing) its *wavular* nature; and conversely, if we perform an experiment that allows us to know the wavular nature of a wave-particle, that experiment precludes our knowing (observing) its particulate nature. All of these limitations on our ability to know are described by Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy, or Uncertainty.

The question is 'what, if anything, does the unification of these two phenomena, previously thought to be separate and uniquely distinct, say about the nature of Matter that was not previously known?' To physicists, this new understanding places both of these limiting phenomena under the common umbrella of one mathematical formula; but that hardly tells us anything *new* about the nature of material reality. Despite all the words and the mathematical formulas, we remain as ignorant concerning the mysterious nature of Matter as we were before this mathematical unification.

All that we really know is that Matter, in its very tiniest forms, appears to us as either waves or particles. If we ask the question, 'Waves or particles of what?', we are back to the original electromagnetic impulses—elusively invisible forces created, governed, and coordinated by a transcendent Intelligence. That Intelligence that projects the Energy by which the material universe is formed is the same Intelligence, the one divine Consciousness, in which our individual consciousness exists. That one conscious Self, that Lord of the universe, is the ultimate Source of the progression of all causes—both mental and physical. He is the uncaused Cause, existing in Himself alone, remaining unaffected by all this busy world and all our mind-born creativity. And so, all enquiry comes to an end: we, with our material form and our conscious awareness, are projections of the one divine Mind. We consist of Him and live in Him; He is the one reality, our own eternal Self.

The only question remaining is: 'Can we give up our addiction to worry and doubt, our addiction to fear and fault-finding, and rest simply in the peace of God, our eternal Self? Can we accept our inability to know all the mysterious details of this material universe, and put all our trust and faith securely in God, knowing that we are upheld in His mercy, guided by His wisdom, enlivened by His breath, and made happy in His joy?' Is it possible that such knowledge could be enough for us simple mortals? Can we learn to turn our gaze within, to quiet our own minds, purify our hearts, and know God as our own eternal Self? Yes, with His Grace, we can. Praise God.

NOTES:

1. See the account of my mystical experience in *The Supreme Self*, Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984. Or download the book or the excerpt “My Experience of Enlightenment” on my website at: www.themysticsvision.com.

2. See the article at: <http://phys.org/news/2014-12-quantum-physics-complicated.html>

-End of Volume Two-