

The World-Soul

by G.R.S. Mead

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The task that I propose is no light one; it is no less than to consider some of the opinions of my fellow-men concerning Deity, and, if possible, to point towards a common ground of agreement or reconciliation between the innumerable ideas put forward on this inexhaustible subject. I write neither as an avowed monotheist, polytheist, nor pantheist; for I would fain believe that every true lover of theosophy is sufficiently imbued with the spirit of expansion and progress and synthesis, not to condemn himself to the narrowing limits of any of these separative ideas, which cannot fail to bring him into conflict with the prejudices of some section or other of his brother-men

I hope to find this common ground of agreement in the concept of the World-Soul in one or other of its aspects or modes; and in this attempt I despair of finding sympathy only from the so-called atheist, whose intellectual negation is frequently, if not invariably, stultified by his actions.

For do we not find the avowed atheist searching for the reason of that which he denies to have any intelligent operation? do we not find him frequently striving for an ideal which can never be attained, if, as he supposes, the present is the outcome of the past interaction of blindly driving force and matter? Why, again, should he work for the improvement of the race if that race, as he himself, is to depart into the void, together with the producer of his and its consciousness? For the body dies and the earth will also die. And if consciousness is a product of organized matter, then the disruption of that organism means inevitably the dissipation of consciousness. Why, then, this effort to benefit that which must, on his own hypothesis, tend inevitably to annihilation?

From materialists of this kind, then, this study will gain little intellectual sympathy, although I may venture to hope that the ideals of their fellow-men which will be brought forward will meet, if not with sympathetic consideration, at least with respect.

Nor will it be any part of my task to criticize, except in the briefest manner, any of the cruder expressions of man's longing after the Divine; but rather to put forward a number of instances of the more perfect expressions of great minds and great teachers who have in some measure sensed the actuality of that mysterious bond that makes all men one.

First, let me say that the term World-Soul is in this study not intended to carry any technical meaning such as that of the Platonic or Neo-platonic All-Soul or Soul of the Universals (Ψυχή του παντος or των

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σλων) . “Soul” is here used in a far more general sense, and is intended to denote the underlying and containing “something” under and around every manifested natural form - that something which is of the nature of life, consciousness, or intelligence (of each or all of these), which conditions and is conditioned by that form and no other, which “benefits and is benefited in turn”.

Nor would we exclude anything, not even that which in these latter days is called “inanimate”, from our greater sympathy; for to our true Selves nothing that exists, not even the grain of sand, is in-*animate*, for then it would be *soul*-less, and the Divine would be excluded from a portion of Itself.

And in this sacred inquiry let us start with ourselves, where we find a soul vehicled or involved in a body, the home of innumerable “lives”, vehicled again in infinitesimal cells, each the body of a soul. And yet the soul of man is not *composed* of these “lives”; the consciousness of man is not simply the product or sum of their consciousness, nor is his intelligence a compound of their intelligence. The Soul of man is one, a self-centred unit, indestructible, imperishable, self-motive; it dies not nor comes into being.

Next, let us, taking this as a starting-point, use analogy to aid us, as we ascend towards the region of ideas, and so endeavour to pass behind the veil of the mystery between the inner and the outer. For analogy is the most fruitful method the neophyte can employ if he would widen his understanding, and without it we might well despair of the possibility of knowledge.

Every thing, or rather every soul, may be said to be the mirror of every other soul, just as in the *Monadology* of Leibnitz; and if it were not that a true knowledge or gnosis or one soul comprises the knowledge of all other souls, and that the cosmos is involved potentially in every atom, then, we might well believe, were our striving towards wisdom vain and our aspiration to reality likewise vain.

Taking, then, the example of the human soul, enshrined or involved in, or involving, a universe of “lives” - whether we regard it as it were a sun in the midst of its system, or as an ocean of light in which the “lives” are bathed - let us try to conceive that there is another and more mighty Life, a Divine Soul, of which the human souls are “lives”, and which we may term the Soul of Humanity. And yet this Soul is not made up of the souls of men, but is a unit of itself, self-motive, and itself, a monad.

Further - for the human mind is so constituted that nothing short of infinitude can suffice it - that this Divine Soul is in its turn a Life, one of an infinite number of “Lives” of a like degree, that enshrine a SOUL transcending them as much as man transcends the “lives” of the universe of his body.

And further still: that THAT which transcends this DIVINE is, in ITS turn,... But why go further? Is not the series infinite? Where can we set the term, or place a boundary, or limit Infinitude? “So far shall thou go!” The mind in its daring loses itself in the fathomless greatness; the sublimity of its soaring deprives it of the support of the lower air of the intelligence, and it must return to earth to rest its wings.

Thus towards Infinity we rise in our ideation, conceiving every atom as the shrine of a soul and enshrined in a soul; every atom, animal, man; every globe, and system, and universe; every universe of systems, and system of universes - as the body of a soul.

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For our universe is neither the first nor the last of its kind; their number is infinite. And when the consummation of our present universe is perfected there will be “another Word on the Tongue of the Ineffable”, as the Gnosis has it; for the Ineffable speaks infinitely, or, as our Brahman brethren say, there are “crores of crores of Brahmas”, or universes.

Thus an infinity in one direction of thought, and equally so an infinity in the other direction. For are not the “lives” of the body, too, the souls of a universe of other invisible “lives”, and these, each in its turn, the suns of still more invisible universes, until the infinitely small blends with the infinitely great and all is One?

Perhaps it may be thought by some that in this concept we have nothing but an infinite series of eternally separated entities; of infinite division; of a chaos of multiplicity; of a stupendous separateness. This might be so if it stood alone; but as, in all things here below, we can have no manifestation without the interplay of contraries, we must take its twin concept to complete it.

In Pluribus Unum et Unum in Pluribus, One in Many and in Many One. “The *essential* unity of all souls with the Over-Soul” is a fundamental postulate of the Wisdom of all ages. That is to say, all souls are one in essence, whatever forms they may ensoul.

But - what is more; what is almost an over-powering thought, necessary though it be to universal perfecting - not only the human soul, but even the soul of the very grain of dust (or, at any rate, of what is thought of as a physical atom) has the potentiality of expanding its “awareness” into the All-consciousness.

Every soul is endowed with the power of giving and receiving with respect to every other soul; of passing through every stage of consciousness; of “expanding”; just as the One, the All-Soul, so to say, “contracted” itself into manifestation, into the Many, subordinating Itself to Itself, that every soul might know and become every other soul, by virtue of that Love which is the cause of existence.

Thus, then, every soul aspires to union with its own essence; and this constitutes the religious spirit of mankind, and also our love of Wisdom and our search for Certainty. This constitutes that Path to the Knowledge of Divine Things which today we call Theosophy - that synthesis of true religion, philosophy and science; of right aspiration, right thought and right observation, which the world is every blindly seeking.

And here we would call to mind what has been written at the beginning of this argument concerning the “lives” of our body, and add a thought. Just so, in the religious life, are men little “lives” in the Body of the MASTER, whose consciousness, we may venture to suppose, does not normally contain the whole consciousness of each little life, but whose “Bodily” feelings are these consciousnesses.

For instance, a man does not know in his consciousness the daily life and routine of any of the little lives which make up his body; he does not know in his consciousness whether they are happy or discontented; but his body does know that the lives of these little creatures go to make up a healthy or

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unhealthy body. In his self-consciousness, however, he does not think of them; they contract him through his body.

And here, if we may again dare to take analogy to guide us, we would venture on a further suggestion. In some sort of way, as with men, so we may imagine it is with those who are in the state of Masterhood. On the consciousness-side of such Masterhood the powers and intelligences, it seems probable, will not be interested in the details of daily life of the little lives that make up the Body of Masterhood, for their little lives do *not* make up His consciousness. His consciousness is quite other than this; and this I believe is the Mystery of the Christ. God gave of His own Body, in order that man through it could communicate afresh with Him.

On the body-side of such Masterhood, we may venture to believe that for the true lover of the Master, who is also the beloved disciple, every detail of every person's life will become of importance and interest, and he immediately connected with the Master. The body-side of Masterhood may thus be said to be connected with Fate and with the Passions of Humanity.

Our World-Soul, then, for us, is the One Soul of Humanity, which will differ for each soul in proportion to the state of consciousness at which it has arrived. No two souls are alike, just as no two blades of grass or grains of sand are alike; for if they were, as has been well said, there would be no reason why one should be in a particular place or state and not the other, and so the Reason of the universe be stultified.

The term "World", in our present inquiry, therefore, may be limited to the cycle of manifestation of our particular Humanity, for this is our present world - the collective embodiment of that Divine Soul, which may consequently be referred to as the World-Soul.

This Source of his being, this Essence of his nature, this Something that transcends himself in his highest self-consciousness, man calls by many names, of which the one that obtains most generally in the Western world is, in the English tongue, "God".

And here, much as I shrink from wounding the feelings of any devout believer, I would protest against the tendency of nearly all unreflecting religionists to limit the Illimitable, to crystallize the Ocean of Being, and to materialise That, which it is blasphemy to name, much less to attempt to dress in the tawdry rags of our own mental equipment.

There are those who will talk of "God" as they would of a human acquaintance, who profess a familiarity that would outrage our feelings of decency if the object of their remarks were even a wise and holy man whom we had learned to reverence

There are others who have such limited notions of the Divine that they cling with desperation to terms that have their origin in the most vulgar misunderstanding, and treat those who will not use their Shibboleths as "atheists", because they cannot understand that there is a reverence of the mind that transcends terms of the emotions; that there is an aspiration which transcends all endeavour to limit by the names of human qualities that Mystery who simultaneously is both the Source and End of all

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qualities, and also beyond them all - an aspiration to which such crudities seem little short of blasphemy. If such high reverence is "atheism", then indeed has language lost all meaning and returned to the inarticulate.

Let us all agree that no definition is possible, and that any enunciation of the Mystery is at best but a temporary stepping-stone to higher and still higher things, and there will no longer be seen the sad spectacle of human beings trying to pour the ocean into a water pot.

For after all what do we fear in the desperation with which we cling to such limiting terms? To me we appear to fear that, where all is so vague and abstract, the goal we propose to ourselves would, without definition, seem too far off for us ever to hope to reach it. But surely we have the infinitude within our own nature? Is there not a "Christ", which is his true Self, potential in every man; and beyond, the "Fatherhood"; and beyond, the "Father of all Fatherhoods"; and beyond - Ineffable Infinitude? But all within the nature and in the essence of every man; nothing is without, nothing outside of us or beyond us, nothing which is not of the same essence; all is That!

Is it so strange to "go home"? Is it an abstract void, a negation, to know the Fullness of the Self's true Being? Or, on the other hand, is this supreme ideal the vain exaggeration of the personal man expanded to infinity? Is such a faith dictated by self-pride and self-conceit? If such a truly reverent longing, the natural expression of the soul's filial love, should be condemned by any, they will first have to show that the great World-teachers have spoken falsely, for the word of no lesser men can come before Their teaching. One and all, the great Teachers have inculcated the certainty of this wisdom and gnosis; and it requires but little study to find how admirably it explains many a seeming contradiction in the general pages of the world-scriptures.

"Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom"; but do not debase yourself. Humility is not slavishness; reverence is not fawning. How can Deity take pleasure in abasement which a noble-minded man could never view without the greatest pity? "I am but as a worm in thy sight", David is believed to have said; and there are those who rejoice to echo the phrase literally, not knowing the meaning of the mystery-word, that this same "worm", that is the "scorn of men" but not of God, is the "serpent of wisdom", kin with the Divine.

For how can even the body, much less the *man*, the mind, or thinker, be so debased? Each is most honourable in its own domain, and only dishonourable in proportion as it fails to "do its mystery" in sacrifice to the Self, whose "Grace" or Good-will is its very life and being and the well-spring of its action, It is the duty of man to "worship" the Deity and not to grovel; to present that which is "worthy" to the Self, and not to delight in debasement; to value rightly or search out the true worth of the Divine, of Whom he is, and in Whom he lives and moves and has his being.

"And so.... with fear and trembling work out your own salvation; for the Worker in you, both as to willing and working for well-pleasing, is Deity".

ὥστε . . . μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν
κατεργάζεσθε. Θεὸς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν
καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

And if that Worker is the Divine Self, what reason is there that It should humble Itself, or debase Itself? For the very Power that makes man work out his own salvation is that Deity Itself.

We shall now be able to understand the words of Krishna, in the *Bhagavad Gita* (vii, 21, 22)”

“Whichever form [of Deity] a worshipper longs with faith to worship, 'tis I who make his faith steady.

“Endowed with that faith, he strive in the worship of that [form], and obtains therefrom his desires; 'tis I who decree the benefits”.

Yo yo yam yam tanum bhaktah shraddhaya rchitum ichchati,
Tasya tasyachalam shraddham tameva viddhamyaham
Sa taya shraddya yuktustasyaradhanamihate
Labhate cha tath kaman mayaiva vihitan hitan

And again (ix.23):

“Those devotees of other deities also who worship endowed with faith, they too, O son of Kunti, worship Me indeed, thought not according to the ancient rule.”

Yepy anyadevatabhakta yajante shraddhaya'nvitah,
Te'pi mameva Kaunteya yajantyavidhipurvakahm

For Krishna is the World-Soul, the Self of all men(x.20):

“O Lord of Doubt, I am the Self seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning and middle and end of all creatures.”

Ahamatma Gudakesha sarvabhutashyasthitah
Ahamadishcha madhyamcha bhutanamanta eva cha

And that none may think that all this is bad assertion and supported statement, let us collect some evidences of wisdom from various climes and races and times, testimony as convincing and

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unimpeachable to the soul-knower as any that the modern scientist possesses for his five-sense facts.

The wealth of material is so great that it is difficult to cull a passage here and there and leave so much unnoticed. Neither is it easy to know in what order to take our selections from the world-religions - whether to take them in sequence of time or dignity of contents.

Let us begin with the oldest scripture of our Aryan race, the Vedas, and continue with the greatest of the Puranas. Next let us take a glance at Taoism, the most mystical of the creeds of the Far East; then pass to the Avesta, that ancient Iranian scripture of the Parsis; and so on to Egypt; first quoting from the Zohar and other Kabalistic writings which contain some reflection of the wisdom of the Chaldeans and Egyptians and of the Hellenistic Gnosis, and furnish a key to the misunderstood scriptures of the Jews. Egypt will bring us to speak of the wisdom of Thrice-greatest Hermes and the Christianized Gnosis of those who are now known generally as Gnostics; and this will lead to a quotation from Paul and some reference to Greek and Roman philosophy, and the ancient systems ascribed to Orpheus and other great teachers of Hellas. Finally, we shall find identical ideas among the Scandinavian peoples, and a striking confirmation in Mohammedan Sufiism.

All the writers of these scriptures, without exception have sense the World-Soul, hymned of It, sought union with It; for of what else could they speak? They have glorified that which It is in Its essence, and do not worship Its grosser and more impermanent manifestations, the changing surface of five-sense nature. Such an idolatry was reserved for these latter days, when human intellect worships the ground its body treads on, the gross body of the World-Soul, and has forgotten whence it came and whither it will return. Today is an age of popular deification of matter and the consequent debasement of ideals.

Thus, then, let us first turn to that mysterious link with the past, the *Rig Veda*. Who knows whence it came? Who can tell its origin? Perchance those who can read the hidden world-record since the great Deluge of Atlantis could name its transmitters, and tell of those who withdrew to the "Sacred Island".

Among prayers to the Supreme Principle, the World-Soul, first must come the famous Gayatri, "the holiest verse in the Vedas". It runs as follows, in what Wilson calls "Sir William Jones's translation of a paraphrastic interpretation:"

"Let us adore the Supremacy of that Divine Sun, the Godhead, Who illuminates all, Who recreates all, from Whom all proceed, to Whom all must return, Whom we invoke to direct our Understandings aright in our Progress toward His Holy Seat." [Sir W. Jones's *Works*, xiii. 367. "His Holy Seat" suggests the thought that the state where He does not move is fixed.]

This *mantra* is found in the 10th Hymn of the 4th Ashtaka (Eighth) of the Samhita (Collection) of the *Rig Veda*, not as in the above expanded paraphrase, but in an abbreviated form; for "such is the fear entertained of profaning this text, that copyists of the Vedas not unfrequently refrain from transcribing it", says Wilson [in "Vishnu Purana, ii, page 251] "It is the duty of every Brahman to repeat it *mentally* in his morning and evening devotions". It is almost to be suspected that the Western world has not received the correct text, for it is well known that the Brahmans are the proudest and most exclusive people in the world where the secrets of their religion are concerned, and it is reasonable to suppose that a master

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mantra which pertains to initiation would not be lightly revealed. But perhaps this is raising an unnecessary suspicion.

The subtle metaphysical and mystical interpretations of this most sacred formula, especially those of the Vedanta school, testify to its sanctity. The number of interpretations also to which the words of the *mantra* lend themselves is very great. The phrasing, for instance, can be taken as neuter or masculine, and so on.

The spirit of the central thought of the Indian religious world may be further exemplified by another Hymn translated by Sir William Jones. It reiterates the most clear-seeing intuition of the human mind, the feeling of identity with the World-Soul, in a magnificent litany which runs as follows:

“May that Soul (Atman) of mine, which mounts aloft in my waking hours, as an ethereal spark, and which, even in my slumber, has a like ascent, soaring to a great distance, as an emanation from the Light of lights, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

“May that Soul of mine, by means similar to which the low-born perform their menial works, and the wise, deeply versed in sciences, duly solemnize their sacrificial rite; that Soul, which was itself the primal oblation placed within all creatures, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

“May that Soul of mine, which is a Ray of perfect Wisdom, pure Intellect and permanent Existence, which is the inextinguishable Light fixed within created bodies, without which no good act is performed, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

“May that Soul of mine, in which, as an immortal Essence, may be comprised whatever has past, is present, or will be hereafter; by which the sacrifice, where seven ministers officiate, is properly solemnized, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

“May that Soul of mine, into which are inserted, like the spokes of a wheel in the axle of a car, the holy texts of the Vedas, into which is interwoven all that belongs to created forms, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

“May that Soul of mine, which, *distributed in other bodies*, guides mankind, as a skilful charioteer guides his rapid horses with reins; that Soul which is fixed in my breast, exempt from old age, and extremely swift in its course, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent! [Sir W. Jones's *Works*, xiii. 372,373]

If an interpretation of the last two shlokas may be ventured upon, I would suggest that as to what we may call the mind-side of things, the “holy texts of the Vedas”, that is, of the Gnosés of God, are the sacred words (*logoi*) or justified utterances, the sounds or forth-soundings, which go straight from axle to circumference, and keep the soul spherical. Without those sacred sounds from the mouth of Brahma, the Logos, or World-Soul, we should all return to soul-sparks, or be extinct. Those sacred sounds may be

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said to be the rays which proceed from the stillness, or hub of the Soul, in all directions. They are the powers which cause consciousness to spread itself in space; they are the props or supports of all spherical things.

In connection with the last shloka it is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the famous image in Plato. Here men are to be thought of as horses, and we are to think of the Soul as lines of consciousness between them all, and of all the varying lines of consciousness as reins which are in the hands, or directed by the Atmic Powers, of the Charioteer, the World-Soul. Each little man-soul is a rein connecting the man with the Great Charioteer of the universe. And here again we see how the Over-Soul is linked up with every horse by means of reins, yet He himself is other than all the reins added together.

Our Hymn is an instance of the theosophy buried in the Vedas, in the face of which it is difficult to understand the criticisms of the once paramount Weber-Mullerite school, which would have set it *all* down to the imaginings of a primitive pastoral people. The theosophical student is glad to turn to a fairer estimate, such as that of Barth, who says:

“Neither in the language nor in the thought of the *Rig Veda* have I been able to discover that quality of primitive natural simplicity which so many are fain to see in it. The poetry it contains appears to me, on the contrary, to be of a singularly refined character and artificially elaborated, full of allusions and reticences, of pretensions to mysticism and theosophic insight; and the manner of its expression is such as reminds one more frequently of the phraseology in use among certain small groups of initiated than the poetic language of a large community.” [*The Religions of India*, page xiii]

Truly so; and perhaps ere long the methods of the Veda may be better understood, and it will be recognized that the powers of nature and the moral attributes of man are fitter aids towards the realization of mystic theogony than are personifications which include all his vices and his pettiness. As H.W.Wallis says:

“The deities of the *Rig Veda* differ essentially from the Gods of Greek or Scandinavian mythology and of the *Mahabharata*, in the abstract and almost impersonal nature of their characters. They are little more than factors in the physical and moral order of the world, apart from which none, except perhaps Indra, has a self-interested existence.” [*Cosmogony of the Rig Veda*, page 8]

To the Greek, Scandinavian and Mahabharatan deities we may add the Pantheons of other nations as well. The “self-interest” of their Indras, Zeuses, Jehovahs, and the rest, is explicable when we remember that they are representations of the spirit of national time-periods, manifestations of group-minds, for there are crores of such Brahmas, Jupiters, and Jehovahs in the cosmos.

It is time that the Western nations should remember their birthplace. We are not Semites but Aryans, a younger branch of the great Aryan race, perchance, but still Aryans and not Semites. And being so we should remember the wisdom of our fathers, and put aside the earlier cruder conceptions of one of the later Semite nations as to Deity. The pre-exilic Jehovah is in his place as the God of a small warlike nomad tribe, but entirely out of place in the religion of those who profess to be followers of the Christ. It is high time to lay aside such naïve anthropomorphism, which the post-exilic learned Jews themselves

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rejected, as their Kabalah, or Tradition, and as Philo of Alexandria, prior to Christianity, well testify. The self-limitation of many a mind in Christendom today is belief in th his “jealous” and “self-interested” Jehovah as the One God, an idea alien to Aryan Thought. Direful indeed has been the effect of the “curse” of the “chosen people” on their spoliators. They were robbed of their Scriptures, deprived of them by force; and the ravished maiden of Jewry, forced against her will into the arms of marauding Aryans, has used her “magic arts” against the folk who hold her prisoner, for today she imprisons the *minds* of those who hold her *body* captive.

In other words, the Western nations, being the youngest of the Aryan family, and lusty mainly in body, have in the past given their popular worship to the dead-letter of that which they have not understood, and so enslaved their minds and characters with a bibliolatriy begotten of formalism by a Rabbinism divorced from the true spirit of prophecy. Let us hope that all this is past, and that the twentieth century may see the “prodigal” return “home”, and, chastened by the experience of his exile, show his real heredity in an activity that his more sluggish elder brother in the East, who has never left home, cannot, perchance, manifest in such abundance. The Aryans have an ancestral religion; and every Aryan in the West should see to it that he does not pursue after what is a stranger to his blood, to the rejection of what has been appointed for him. The effort of the Christ was originally an attempt to universalize religion, and to make active the spirit of all the traditions of the time and region in which He energized; and the Aryan tradition should not be excluded.

Of course in the above I speak of the crude ideas of God held by the Hebrew populous, and not of the Mystery-Deity, the Father, preached openly to His contemporaries by the Master whom the Jews called Jeschu ha-Notzri, and whom the West calls Jesus the Nazarene. For did He not say mystically that His hearers were “of their father the devil”, for they were “Abraham's seed”, and “Abraham” was the Ruler of this world? Nor do I mean any disrespect to the Jews of today, who are no more the Jews of the earlier Bible than we are Goths or Vandals, or woad-besmeared Britons. I do not write about, or for, “bodies”; I am writing for “minds” and “souls” whose ancestry is divine, and not of the Lord of the Body, call him by what name we may.

How long will the little mind of man persist in telling us the fashion in which God, the Great Mind, “created the world”; how long will men ignorantly speak of That which is unutterable, and degrade the majesty of their Divine Souls into the poor imaginings of little minds which think in terms of their bodies? More reverently indeed did our ancestors phrase the mystery. How different are the beginning of cosmogony as sung of in the *Rig Veda!* The passage is doubtless familiar to many of my readers in the noble verse of Colebrooke; but it should be made familiar to all.

Nor Aught nor Naught existed; yon bright sky
Was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above.
What covered all? What sheltered? What concealed?
Was it the Water's fathomless Abyss?
There was no Death - yet there was naught immortal;
There was no Confine betwixt Day and Night.
The Only One breathed breathless by Itself;
Other than It there nothing since has been.
Darkness there was; and all at first was veiled
In Gloom profound - an Ocean without Light.
The Germ that still lay covered in the Husk

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Burst forth, One Nature, from the fervent Heat.

Who knows the Secret? Who proclaimed it here?
Whence, whence this manifold Creation sprang?
The Gods themselves came later into Being:
Who knows from whence this Great Creation sprang?
That whence this All, this Great Creation came -
Whether Its Will created or was mute,
The Most-High Seer that is in highest Heaven,
He knows it - or perchance He even knows it not.

Gazing into Eternity ..
Ere the foundations of the Earth were laid
Thou wert. And when the subterranean Flame
Shall burst its Prison and devour the Frame,
Thou shalt be still as Thou were e'er before,
And know no Change, when Time shall be no more -
O, Endless Thought, Divine Eternity!

[Rig Veda, x, 129]

The following is another and more literal version:

“The non-existent was not, and the existent was not at that time; there was no air or sky beyond. What was covering in? and where? under shelter of what? was there water - a deep depth?

“Death was not nor immortality then; there was no discrimination of night and day. That one thing breathed without a wind [?breath] of its own self. Apart from it there was nothing else at all beyond.

“Darkness there was, hidden in darkness, in the beginning; everything here was an indiscriminate chaos. It was void covered with emptiness, all that was. That one thing was born by the power of warmth.

“So in the beginning arose desire, which was the first seed of mind. The wise found out by thought, searching in the heart, the parentage of the existent in the non-existent.

“Their line was stretched across. What was above? what was below? There were generators, there were mighty powers; *svadha* below, the presentation of offerings above.

“Who knoweth it forsooth? who can announce it here? whence it was born, whence this creation is? The gods came by the creating of it (*i.e.* the one thing). Who then knoweth whence it is come into being?

“Whence this creation is come into being, whether it was ordained or no - He whose eye is over all in the

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highest heaven. He indeed knoweth it, or may be He knoweth it not." [Wallis, *Cosmogony of the Rig Veda*, pages 59 and 60]

Even such a wooden translation as the one we have just been reading cannot prevent the grandeur of the original occasionally peeping through. But how much more noble are the lines of Colebrooke; and how much still more noble might be the version of a poet-scholar who had sensed the mystery!

Notice the last lines. Our World-Soul may know, or perchance even He knoweth not. For there are other World-Souls more transcendent still. None knoweth absolutely but the One and Only One.

If, then, we would venture so greatly as to try to lift a tiny corner of the veil of this ultimate mystery, we can do so only by trying to sympathize with the thought of the singer of the sacred verses.

I need hardly point out the similarity of this vision of cosmogenesis with other of the most ancient cosmogonies known to us - for instance, from the traditions of Chaldea and Egypt, from the fragments of Orphicism and the remains of the Trismegistic sermons.

I would first suggest from that from one point of view we may regard the Non-existent as Spirit or Consciousness, and the Existent as Matter. These have to wed in the supreme Sacred Marriage, the Unceasing Union, the Great Work, in order to become self-conscious. They then become Form.

"Heat" or "Warmth" is perhaps the power of expansion, a manifestation of this Holy Desire, the Divine Eros, or Pothos, in Greek. The "one thing" that was born was not as yet Form, we may believe, but the one substance or element, in which everything is compressed into sameness and essence.

The Desire (Kama) that arose in It, is thus the Desire of Spirit for Matter and of matter for Spirit.

This Desire is said to come before Thought. So also in the case of the small cosmos or man, we may say, in terms familiar to some of our readers, that *buddhi* is the beginning of man. There arises in buddhic substance a desire to become self-consciousness. It thus spits up into mental planes. Desire may be said to be the realization of incompleteness by Spirit and Matter.

The gnosis of the "parentage of the existent in the non-existent" is to be discerned only by the wise in spiritual contemplation; that is to say, perhaps, that such minds alone find how to get from consciousness to self-consciousness; from universals to particulars, or to persons.

The "line" of the next shloka may perhaps be taken as the limit which makes universals become particulars. The "generators" below may be considered as masculine powers, and the "presentation of offerings" above as feminine receptivity or resignation ready to be worked upon; suggesting the birth of the first duality, a division into power and suffering or passion. The offerings may thus be thought of as the sacrifice of Spirit to Matter.

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In the next verse the gods are said to proceed from the One Godhead at the birth of the first substance; these gods live within the buddhic element. The true "Beginning" of things is before even this. These gods or powers within matter first had bequeathed on them self-consciousness; instead of being simple nature powers they became gods.

In the last verse "this creation" (or emission or emanation) seems to connote the coming forth into the formal plane-side of things conditioned by the Great Mind.

The World-Soul does not know. Perhaps this dark saying may be understood from the reflection that one never can know what one does oneself. We have to be outside and apart from a thing to know it. Really to know one must be able to unite oneself with, and separate oneself from, either and both, for true knowledge sees from within and without. Hence without "sin" and "Satan" man could never know God. The first thing for real knowledge is to separate oneself from and then unite in experience.

Passing next to a later Hindu-Aryan scripture, let us read how the great sect of the Vaishnavas hymn the Deity, as written in the *Vishnu Purana*:

"OM! Glory to Him who dwells in all beings (Vasudeva). Victory be to Thee, Thou heart-pervading one (Pundarikaksha). Adoration be to Thee, Thou cause of the existence of all things (Vishvabhavana). Glory be to Thee, Lord of the sense (Hrishiksha), Supreme Spirit (Mahapurusha), Ancient of birth (Purvaja).

[From Vishnu Purana, I. i.; Wilson's translation, i, 1,2]

And later in the same work we read:

"Salutation to Thee, Who art uniform and manifold, all-pervading, Supreme Spirit, of inconceivable glory, and Who art simple existence! Salutation to Thee, O inscrutable, Who art Truth, and the essence of oblations! [An oblation is a sacrifice, or the setting aside in order to perceive; just as we have to get outside a thing in order to understand it, we have to separate ourselves from it. A sacrifice in this sense is that which is set aside, something apart; something which for certain purposes, in order to accomplish certain results, we choose to consider sacred. Sacrifice, therefore, embraces the idea of limit for a purpose, a setting aside, a breaking-off of a fraction, or consecration of a portion, that the whole may ultimately be consecrated.] Salutation to Thee, O lord, Whose nature is unknown, Who art beyond Primeval Matter, Who existest in five Forms, [These are given by Wilson (i. 3) as: 1, Bhutatman, one with created things, or Pundarikaksha; 2, Pradhanatman, one with crude nature; or Vishvabhavana; 3, Indriyatman, one with the senses, Hrishiksha; 4, Paramatman, Supreme Spirit, or Mahapurusha; and 5, Atman, Living Soul, animating nature, and existing before it, or Purvaja] as one with the Elements, with the Faculties, with Matter, with the Living Soul, with Supreme Spirit!

"Show favour; O Soul of the Universe, essence of all things, perishable or eternal, whether addressed by the designation of Brahma, [Masculine.] Vishnu, Shiva, or the like. I adore Thee, O God, [Parameshvara, Supreme Lord, rather.] Whose nature is indescribable, Whose purposes are inscrutable, Whose name, even, is unknown.

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“For the attributes of appellation or kind are not applicable to Thee, Who art THAT, the supreme Brahma, [Neuter] eternal, unchangeable, uncreated. [Aja, unborn, rather]

“But as the accomplishment of our objects cannot be attained except through some specific form, Thou art termed by us Krishna, Achyuta (Imperishable), Ananta (Endless), or Vishnu.

“Thou, unborn (Divinity), art all the object of these impersonations; Thou art the gods, and all other beings; Thou art the whole world; Thou art All

“Soul of the Universe, Thou art exempt from change; and there is nothing except Thee in this whole existence.

“Thou art Brahma, Pashupati,[Shiva, “Lord of (sacred) animals”] Aryaman, Dhatri, and Vidhatri;[Aryaman and Dhatri are two of the Twelve Adityas, or Sons of Aditi (the Boundless, Infinity), the “Mother”, which were seven originally, Martanda, the “rejected” Sun, being the eighth. Later they became the Twelve Sun-Gods. Vidhatri is the arranger or disposer, the Kosmokrator or Demiurge, and is added as a title to Brahma, Vishvakarman (the Omnificent) and Kama (Desire or Love), the Eros of the Orphic fragments. As Dr Muir says: “This Kama or Desire, not of sexual enjoyment, but of good in general, is celebrated in a curious hymn of the *Atharva Veda*: Kama was born first [the Orphic Protogonos], Him, neither gods, nor fathers, nor men have equalled. Thou art superior to these, and for ever great.”] thou art India, [The “Zens dwelling in the Aether” of Homer (Ζ ενς αιθερι ναιων — Iliad, ii 412); in the Aether, the Abode of the Gods. The Pater Aether of Virgil.] Air, Fire, the Regent of the Waters;[Varuna (Ooaroona), the Regent of the “Astral” Waters of Space; the Uranus (Ouranos) of the Greeks, who was emasculated and dethroned by Kronos (by mystical wordplay or sound-sympathy, equated with Chronos, Time), at the instigation of his mother and wife Gaea (Earth). From the drops of his Blood (? Fire) sprang the Gigantes or Titans, and from the Foam (? Air and Water mixed) that gathered round his limbs in the Sea, sprang Venus Aphrodite (Hesiod, *Theog.*, 180-195). The Giants may be taken to represent great monadic forces in “bodies”; Aphrodite may be taken to denote the great buddhic plane (Mahabuddhi).] the God of Wealth, [Kuvera, the Keeper of the Treasures of the Earth, Lord of the Earth, called the Egg of Jewels, Ratnagarbha] and Judge of the Dead; [Antaka the “Ender”, a title of Tama, the “Restrainer”, the Judge of the Dead. A Vedic Hymn tells us that Yama “was the first of men that died, and the first that departed to the [celestial] world”. As Dowson says: “He it was who found out the way to the home which cannot be taken away: ‘ Those who are now born [follow] by their own paths to the place whither our ancient fathers have departed’”. This, in the more direct tradition of the Vedas, is a glyph of the Race that brought

“ . . . death into the world
And all our woe, with loss of Eden.”

But Yama, in the later traditions Pitripati and Pretaraja, the “Lord of the Manes” and “King of the Ghosts”, was also Dharmaraja, “King of Justice”, our *Selves* who judge ourselves, in the clear Akashic Light, while Chitragupta (the “Hidden Painting or Writing”), the Scribe of Yama, reads the imprint of our virtues and our vices from the Agrasandhani or “Great Record”, the Tablets of the World-Memory. Yama is represented as of a green colour, clothed with red.] and Thou, though but one, presidest over the world, with various energies addressed to various purposes.

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“Thou, identical with the Solar Ray, Greatest the universe; all Elementary Substance is composed of [“Composed of” might be omitted. This “substance” is better thought of as consciousness or spirit in a state of different qualities.] Thy qualities; and Thy Supreme Form is denoted by the imperishable term Sat [That is, “Being.”] . . .

“To Him Who is one with True Knowledge; Who is, and is not, perceptible, I bow. Glory be to Him, the Lord Vasudeva!” [Vishnu Purana, V. xviii; Wilson's trans., v. 14-16]

The same strain of adoration is still further emphasized in the Hymn of the Yogins when Vishnu, in the Boar Incarnation, or Varaha Avatara, raised the Earth out of the Waters:

“THOU ART, O God; there is no supreme condition but Thee.” [Ibid., I. iv., i. 63.]

Or again, as the God. Brahma prays to the Supreme Hari (Vishnu):

“We glorify Him, Who is all things; the Lord supreme over all; unborn, imperishable; the Protector of the mighty ones of creation, the unperceived [Aprakasha: Fitzedward Hall tells us that the commentator explains this to mean “Self-illuminated”.] indivisible Narayana; [The Son of Nara (Man); also so called because the Waters (Narâi) were His first Ayana or place of motion] the smallest of the small, the greatest of the great Elements; in Whom are all things; from Whom are all things; Who was before existence; the God who is all beings; Who is the End of ultimate objects; Who is beyond Final Spirit, and is one with Supreme Soul; Who is contemplated; as the cause of final Liberation, by Sages anxious to be free.” [Vishnu Purana, I. ix. i 139.]

As the Avatara Krishna, He is hymned of by Indra after his defeat by Him:

“Who is able to overcome the unborn, un-constituted Lord, Who has willed to become a mortal, for the good of the world ? ” [Vishnu Purana, V. xxx.; v. 103.]

And when Krishna is *nailed* by the arrow to the *tree*, [The Christ-consciousness is nailed by the Arrow of Truth to the Tree of Life. Absolute Truth, not relative truth, is the shaft from the realms of Reality to our worlds below.] and the Kali Yuga begins, this is how Arjuna, his beloved companion, laments the departure of the Christ-Spirit, the Mediator, of That which “unites Entity to Non-entity”:

“Hari, Who was our strength, our might, our heroism, our prowess, our prosperity, our brightness, has left us, and departed. Deprived of Him, our Friend, illustrious, and ever kindly speaking, we have become as feeble as if made of straw. Purushottama, [Lit., the Man Supreme] Who was the living vigour of my weapons, my arrows, and my bow, is gone. As long as we looked upon Him, fortune, fame, wealth, dignity, never abandoned us. But Govinda [That is, the Herdsman, the same as the Shepherd of Western tradition.] is gone from among us. ... Not I alone, but Earth, has grown old, miserable and lustreless, in His absence. Krishna ... is gone ! ” [Vishnu Purana, V. xxxviii.; v. 161]

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The “vigour of my arrows and my bow” seems to refer mystically to the great male and female force in the universe, without which the “Earth” grows old, that is, cannot rejuvenate or re-create or refresh itself. It loses its “lustre”, that is, does not reflect the true Light.

Let us next pass to China and the Far East. Lao-tzu, perhaps the greatest of the Chinese masters, teaches as follows, in his sublime work the *Tao-Teh-King*, or “The Book of the Perfection of Nature”: [See *A Study on the Popular Religion of the Chinese*, by J. J. M. de Groot. Translated from the Dutch in *Les Annales du Musée Guimet*, ii. 692 et seq.]

“There was a time when Heaven and Earth did not exist, but only an unlimited Space in which reigned absolute immobility. All visible things and all which possess existence, were born. in that Space from a mighty Principle, Which existed by Itself, and from Itself developed Itself, and Which, made the heavens revolve and preserved the universal life; a Principle as to which philosophy declares we know not the name, and Which for that reason it designates by the simple appellation Tao, which we may nearly describe as the Universal Soul of Nature, the Universal Energy of Nature, or simply as Nature.”

And in speaking of the mysterious Tao, [There are, I am well aware, endless controversies as to the correct rendering of this mystery-name, but this is not the place to discuss the question.] the That which cannot be translated, the nameless Principle, we may with advantage quote from an essay by a sympathetic scholar, who writes [See “Taoism”, an essay by Frederic H. Balfour, in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 77] as follows:

“We are told that It has existed from all eternity. Chuang-tzu, the ablest writer of the Taoist school, says that there never was a time when It was not. Lao-tzu, the reputed founder of Taoism, affirms that the image of It existed before God Himself. [That is here God as the Logos.] It is all-pervasive; there is no place where It is not found. It fills the universe with its grandeur and sublimity; yet It is so subtle that It exists in all its plenitude in the tip of a thread of gossamer. It causes the sun and moon to revolve in their appointed orbits, and gives life to the most microscopic insect. Formless, It is the source of every form we see; inaudible, It is the source of every sound we hear; invisible, It is that which lies behind every external object in the world; inactive, It yet produces, sustains and vivifies every phenomenon which exists in all the spheres of being. It is impartial, impersonal, and passionless; [“Passionless” because It is only in relation to Itself. It has no relation to anything other than Itself; whereas Passion suggests oneself and another, oneself and something other than oneself.] working out its ends with the remorselessness of fate, yet abounding in beneficence to all.”

And later on he quotes as follows from Chuang-tzu:

“There was a time when all things had a beginning. The time when there was yet no beginning had a beginning itself. There was a beginning to the time when the time that had no beginning had not begun. There is existence and there is also non-existence. In the time which had no beginning there existed No-thing. . . . When the time which had no beginning had not yet begun, then there also existed No-thing. Suddenly, there was No-thing; but it cannot be known, respecting existence and non-existence, what was certainly existing and what was not.”

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I have given the above as a specimen of subtle metaphysical speculation, and also as an example to show the utter inadequacy of words to express ideas. The mind loses itself in endeavouring to transcend itself, even to the extent of appearing entirely incomprehensible to those who have not seriously approached the contemplation of that supreme intuition of humanity, the essential Unity of all things.

But no one should think that this No-thing [That is to say, nothing we can think of] is an empty abstraction and pure negation; it transcends our finite concepts, but is no less the One Reality because of that. It is the right valuation of these great problems that inspires such noble concepts of existence and calm contemplation of “death” as those expressed in the words of Lieh-tzu.

“Death is to life as going away is to coming. How can we know that to die here is not to be born elsewhere? How can we tell whether, in their eager rush for life, men are not under a delusion? How can I tell whether, if I die today, my lot may not prove far preferable to what it was when I was originally born? . . . Ah! men know the dreadfulness of Death; but they do not know its rest. . . . How excellent is it, that from all antiquity Death has been the common lot of men! It is repose for the good man, and a hiding-away of the bad. Death is just a going-home-again. The dead are those who have gone home, while we, who are living, are still wanderers.”

[Op. ct., p. 81.]

Death is indeed a “going-home”, but a “going-home” that need not be delayed until the body dies. Mystics understand the meaning of the phrase “those who go home” when they have “died” to their lower natures, and who then know the real nature of this illusory existence, although, as the Rishi Narada reported, it was very pleasant for those “who had forgotten their birthplace”. The Soul of Humanity, the World-Soul, weeps for her children, who forget their Mother and, “prodigal sons” that they are, fill their bellies with husks of the swine.

Continuing our depredations from the shelves of the world-library, we pass to ancient Persia, or whatever country gave to the world the wisdom of the old Avesta. Written in a language hardly yet plainly decipherable, it may well be approximated to the Vedas in antiquity, and its language be referred to one of the first branchlets of the mother of Sanskrit.

In the Zervanist system of the Mazdaeans of Asia Minor [See my *Thrice-greatest Hermes*, Volume 1, page 400] Zervan Akarana, “Time without Bounds”, is the ineffable All; in this arises Ahura Mazda, the World-Soul, whose names are many. He is The Being and the One Existence; the One, Who was, Who is and Who shall ever be. He is Pure Spirit and the Spirit of Spirits; Omniscient and Omnipotent, the Supreme Sovereign. He is beneficent, benevolent, and merciful to all. In the *Dinkard* (ii. 81) He is described as:

“Supreme Sovereign, wise Creator, Supporter, Protector, Giver of good things, virtuous in actions and merciful.”

Let us next see what the Kabbalah has to teach us, and mark the difference of its great large spirit from the lesser things we have grown used to in the orthodox tradition.

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Solomon ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol, of Cordova, perhaps the greatest of the mediaeval Kabbalistic adepts, thus sings of the World-Soul, or the Supreme Principle, in one of his philosophical Hymns, called "Kether Malkuth", or "The Crown of the Kingdom":

"Thou art God, Who supportest, by Thy Divinity, all the things formed, and sustains all the existences by Thy Unity. Thou art God, and there is not any distinction established between Thy Divinity, Thy Unity, Thy Eternity, and Thy Existence; because all is only One Mystery, and, although the names may be distinct, all have only one meaning.

"Thou art Wise. Wisdom which is the fountain of life floweth from Thee; and compared with Thy Wisdom, all the knowledge of mankind is foolishness.

"Thou art Wise, being from all Eternity; and Wisdom was always nourished by Thee.

"Thou art Wise; and Thou hast not acquired Thy Wisdom from another than Thyself.

"Thou art wise; and from Thy Wisdom Thou hast made a determining Will, as the workman or artist does, to draw the Existence from the No-Thing, as the light which goes out of the eye extends itself. Thou didst draw from the Source of Light without the impression of any seal, that is, form, and Thou madest all without any instrument." [Myer's Qabbalah, page 3]

See how the mind of this learned Jew regarded the mystery of the "creation" of the universe. Deity, out of Its Wisdom which is Itself, emanates or evolves a determining Will to draw "Existence" from the "No-Thing", the potentiality of that same Wisdom, for it is No-Thing in that It transcends all and every thing we can think of, that is to say, the highest conceptions of human thought. But It is no more "Nothing" than is Deity the "Unconscious". The No-Thing is not "nothing", the Non-conscious is not "unconscious", but both are attributes expressive of our ignorance, while asserting that That transcends all things and all consciousness.

We should do well in this connection to bear in mind the wise words of the Zohar, and apply the injunction contained therein to the words of the Hymn of the master of the Kabbalah we have just cited, being well assured that he would have permitted none of his pupils to take the words of his instruction for the real mystery itself. For the *Zohar* says:

"Woe to the man who sees in the Torah (Law) [That is, the Mosaic Books, the famous "Five Fifths"] only simple recitals and ordinary words ! . . . Each word of the Torah contains an elevated meaning and a sublime mystery. [This is, of course, an exaggeration, the perversion of a truth.] The recitals of the Torah are the vestments of the Torah. Woe to him who takes this garment for the Torah itself!" [*Zohar*, iii., fol. 152B, as quoted by Myer, *op. cit.*, page 102.]

Or, again, as Origen, the most philosophical of all the Church Fathers, writes:

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“Where can we find a mind so foolish as to suppose that God acted like a common husbandman, and planted a paradise in Eden, towards the East; and placed in it a tree of life visible and palpable, so that one tasting of the fruit by the bodily teeth obtained life ? And, again, that one was a partaker of good and evil by masticating what was taken from the tree? And if God is said to walk in the paradise in the evening, and Adam to hide himself under a tree, I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history having taken place in appearance, and not literally.” [De Principiis, IV. i.16; A.-N.C.L.; *The Writings of Origen* (Crombie's trans.), i. 315-316]

But then Origen was once the disciple of the Platonist Pantaeus, after the latter's return from India. Pantaeus was also the teacher of Clement of Alexandria.

Yet one more citation from the *Zohar*, before we leave the Kabbalah.

“The Ancient of the Ancients, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a Form, yet also has not any form. It has a Form through which the universe is maintained. It also has not any form, as It cannot be comprehended.” [Zohar, “Idra Zuta”, iii. 288a; Myer, *op. cit.*, page 274]

Passing from Chaldaea and Judea to Egypt and its hoary wisdom, this is what Gaston Maspero, the veteran French Egyptologist, in his *Histoire d'Orient*, writes concerning the ideas of the Egyptians on the Soul of the World:

“ In the beginning was the Noon, the Primordial Ocean, in the infinite Depths of which floated the germs of all things. From all Eternity God generated Himself and gave birth to Himself in the Bosom of this Liquid Mass, as yet without form and without use. This God of the Egyptians is One Being only, perfect, endowed with knowledge and unfallacious intelligence, incomprehensible in so far as no one can say in what He is comprehensible. He is the One Only One, He Who exists essentially, Who alone lives in Substance, the sole Generator in the Heaven and on the Earth Who is not generated, the Father of Fathers, the Mother of Mothers.” [Quoted by E. Amélineau in his *Essai sur le Gnosticisme Egyptien*, in the series of Les Annales du Musée Guimet, tom. xiv. 282]

The Supreme God of the Mysteries whom the Greeks named Ammon, the Egyptians called Amen. As E. de Rougé says: [*Mélanges d'Archéologie*, page 72]

“The name Amen means ' hidden,' ' enveloped,' and by extension ' mystery.' . . . This God then was called Amen because He represented all that was most secret in Divinity.”

In a Hymn to Ammon Ra, speaking of the name Amen, it is said:

“Mysterious is His Name even more than His Births.” [Grébaut, *Hymne à Ammon Ra.*]

And in the invocations, which M. Naville has collected under the title of Litanie du Soleil, the same God is called “Lord of the Hidden Spheres”, the “Mysterious One”, the “Hidden”.

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“Amen” thus seems to suggest the secret which will only be revealed when man has risen again into the Great Mother and can thus make the world around undergo “magical transformation”, or the “turning of things inside out”, so to say, whereby that which is secret becomes revealed in its pure nakedness; it is as it were the going back from form into the “womb of things”, and so tracing consciousness back to the Father by means of the light-sparks hidden in every atom.

“Mysterious is His Name even more than His Births.” His Births are the things He brings forth by means of His Spouse or Syzygy, “Will or Matter. His Name is the True Sound, which He utters forth from out of Himself, which causes Matter to bring forth or Himself to bring forth.

Here also is the place for a fine Hymn to the Sun, the masculine sign of the World-Soul, in which we can see, peeping through, the same mysticism as we find in both the initiatory Psalms of the Old Testament and certain concepts in the New. Thus it runs:

“The Princes of Heaven all daily behold the Glory of the King's Crown, upon the Head of Thee, the Mighty Prince, which is the Crown of Power, which is the Crown of the Endurance of Thy Government, an Image of Thy Might.

“Songs of Praise to the Creator of Egypt, and of the Shining Barque of the Lord. Make those to fear who hate Thee, make Thine enemies to blush, Lord and Prince of the very shining Star-house; Thou Who hast joined together Thy Plantation, Thou Who seest the Murderer of Thy Child of Man, the Righteous. Let me go to Thee; unite me with Thee; let me look upon Thy Sunlight, King of the Universe !

“Praise to Thy Face, Beaming Light in the Firmament, to Thee, to the Shining Lord of Heaven's Barque, to the Creator and Ruler Who renders Justice to all men, who delight to see Thee walking in the Web of Thy Splendour.” [From Uhlemann's *Book of the Dead*, as quoted in Dunlap's *Sod: The Mysteries of Adoni*, page 187]

This beautiful Hymn, like all inspired writing of this description, can be interpreted in many ways. It reminds me of much that I have pondered over in my Gnostic studies, and I will, therefore, hazard a suggestion which may be of interest to those who delight in similar paths of mysticism.

Heaven may be taken for the spiritual soul (Buddhi). The “Princes of Heaven” are the powers of this soul, and may be regarded as feminine, when contrasted with the Atman or Spirit proper.

In this connection “daily” would connote any time-period, every breath of the Spirit, or Great Breath, in man.

They “behold the Glory”; that is, they come into contact with this Glory or Shekinah or Presence; they are in definite relation with the Rays of the Spiritual Sun, in the state of active ecstasies.

The “Crown” thus denotes the state when the Power of Light or of the Spiritual Sun is not only potential

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within the brain and mind, but rays forth; when the man ceases to be only a personality, and begins to live, as it were, outside himself, as well as inside, when his powers begin to ray forth, out from personality.

The “Crown of Power” suggests the bringing of oneself into definite understanding relationship with other people; “Endurance” is stability, and “Government” is control over matter and others; while “Image” gives the idea of a raying-forth power which, like a stream of light-sparks, carries with it the full potencies of all its Father's Power.

“Image” seems to mean a reflection, or something thrown off from the Self, in a potential condition, not actual, but containing within itself the whole of its own creator. “Imagination” in this sense is not a faculty of the mind, but an atmic spiritual power.

In other words, the Praise giving suggests the state of a man when the powers of his spiritual soul come regularly into definite relationship with the Power that rays forth from the Mind of God. This is a Power which enables a man to bring himself into gnostic relationship with everyone. It is a continuous and stable control over substance, which is the other half of one's Self; and being an image of God's Strength or Might, carries with it all the powers of God potentially.

The “Shining Barque of the Lord” may be taken as this spiritual soul again; and the “Shining Star-house” once more as the same mystery, the Buddhi, where the atmic or spiritual stars hang themselves out in constellations and configurations, ordered as the stars of heaven are ordered.

The “Plantation” is perhaps again the selfsame setting-in-order of the inner stellar world of man's own nature, or may be compared with the Paradise, in which the Trees of Life are synonyms of the stars.

The “Murderer of Thy Child of Man, the Righteous”, reminds us of Typhon, the Slayer of Osiris, who is the Son of Man, the Justified, or Righteous.

Let us now turn to another Book of Wisdom, and hear what Hermes, the Thrice-greatest, has to tell us of the mystery. In the treatise called Poemandres, the “World-Mind” (Paramatman), the “Mind of all Masterhood”, mirrored in the higher mind of the initiate, speaks thus to his lower consciousness:

“Thou sayest well, O Thou, thus speaking. I, Mind, Myself, am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously.

“To such My Presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love.

“And ere they give the body up unto its proper death, they turn them with disgust from its sensations, from knowledge of what things they operate.

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“Nay, it is I, the Mind, that will not let the operations which befall the body work to their natural ends. For, being Doorkeeper, I close up all the entrances, and cut the mental actions off which base and evil energies induce.” [*Corpus Hermeticum*, i. 22; see my *Thrice-greatest Hermes*, Volume 2, page 14]

As it is impossible in the space at my disposal to attempt an analysis of all the passages cited, I can only suggest briefly a few hints. The Father is here, as in cognate schools of philosophical mysticism, what the Upanishads of the Veda call Atman in both cosmos and man. The “hymns” are the “music of the spheres” of man's inner nature, which sing in harmony only when man becomes one with the great Soul of Nature. The idea is well expressed by Dryden, who writes:

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony,
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

All activity creates sound, and when a man, really gets atmic or spiritual consciousness, he hears, it is said, the atoms of his body singing together in a harmonious song of praise to himself, or his Self, who holds them together in this special relationship one to another, and causes them to be active unto sound.

The teaching, however, as to the disgust or loathing [The original, *μυσταπτεοθαι*, is a very strong word, meaning to abominate, detest, loath; used of filth and foulness] of the senses is different from the wiser instruction of the Upanishads, where we learn that both longing and detestation are equally bonds of attachment, and that pure freedom can never be won by either means.

Mark well also the curious expression that the Mind is the “Door-keeper”, both the Great Mind and the mind of man; the one keeping the doors or gates of the great planes of the universe, the other guarding the portals of the little universe.

And here we may call to mind “H. P. B.’s” words:

“In that mansion called the human body the brain is the front door, and the only one which opens out into [physical] space.” [*Lucifer*, vii. 182. The brain might rather be called the back door. The front door should perhaps be the whole body, for we have to use our whole body to live and be conscious in the cosmos or real space]

Let us — as the preceding sentences naturally lead up to it — pause here a moment to learn the path of the soul upwards, when, in the case of the righteous, death overtakes the body, or when the man becomes “dead” to sin, and when the corruptible are put off for the incorruptible, according to the Trismegistic Gnosis:

“Well hast thou taught me all, as I desired, O Mind; and now, pray, tell me further of the Way Above, as now it is for me.

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“To this Man-Shepherd said: When thy material body is to be dissolved, first thou surrenderest the body by itself unto the work of change, and thus the form thou hadst doth vanish, and thou surrenderest thy way of life, void of its energy, unto the Daimon. Thy body's senses next pass back into their sources, becoming separate, and resurrect as energies; and passion and desire withdraw unto that nature which is void of reason.

“And thus it is that man doth speed his way thereafter upwards through the Harmony.

“To the first zone he gives the Energy of Growth and Waning; unto the second zone, Device of Evils, now de-energized; unto the third the Guile of the Desires de-energized; unto the fourth, his Domineering Arrogance, also de-energized; unto the fifth, unholy Daring and the Rashness of Audacity, de-energized; unto the sixth, Striving for Wealth by evil means, deprived of its aggrandisement; and to the seventh zone, Ensnaring Falsehood, de-energized.

“And then with all the energizing of the Harmony stript from him, clothed in his proper power, he cometh to that Nature which belongs unto the Eighth, and there, with those that are, hymneth the Father.

“They who are there welcome his coming there with joy; and he, made like to them who sojourn there, doth further hear the Powers who are above the Nature that belongs unto the Eighth, singing their songs of praise to God in language of their own.

“And then they, in a band, go to the Father home; of their own selves they make surrender of themselves to Powers, and thus becoming Powers they are in God.

“This the good end for those who have gained Gnosis — to be made one with God.

“Why shouldst thou then delay? Must it not be, since thou hast all received, that thou shouldst to the worthy point the way, in order that through thee the race of mortal kind may by thy God be saved ? ”
[*Corpus Hermeticum*, Volume 1, pages 24-26; *op. cit.*, ii. 15-17, which see for notes and commentary; also see my *Hymns of Hermes*, pp. 21 ff., in the series “Echoes from the Gnosis.”]

Much could be written on the ascent of this Scala Santa, the true spiritual Climax, but I have already treated the subject elsewhere, and would refer the interested reader to the note for the indications.

What, however, the idea of the Egyptian initiate was concerning this attainment, and how difficult it is to treat of such lofty themes without the greatest self-contradictions, we may learn from the following Hymn:

“ Holy art Thou, O God, the Universals' Father.

“ Holy art Thou, O God, Whose Will perfects itself by means of its own powers.

“ Holy art Thou, O God, Who willest to be known and art known by Thine own.

“ Holy art Thou, Who didst by Word make to consist all things that are.

“ Holy art Thou, of Whom All-nature hath been made an Image.

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“ Holy art Thou, Whose Form Nature hath never made.

“ Holy art Thou, more powerful than all Power.

“ Holy art Thou, transcending all Pre-eminence.

“ Holy art Thou, Thou better than all Praise.

“Accept my reason's offerings pure, from soul and heart for aye stretched up to Thee, O Thou unutterable, unspeakable, Whose Name naught but the Silence can express!”

[*Corpus Hermeticum*, i. 31; op. cit., ii. 19, 30, for notes and commentaries]

The inability of human words to express That which must ever transcend expression (for even the Universe itself, or even an infinite number of Universes is incapable of expressing It), and the inability of the human mind to comprehend the Divine Mind, are also admirably set forth in the following Hymn:

“ *Who*, then, may sing Thee praise of Thee, or praise to Thee ?

“ *Whither*, again, am I to turn my eyes to sing Thy praise? Above, below, within, without ?

“There is no way, no place is there about Thee, nor any other thing of things that are.

“All are *in* Thee, all are *from* Thee, O Thou Who givest all and takest naught, for Thou hast all and naught is there Thou hast not.

“ And *when*, O Father, shall I hymn Thee? For none can seize Thy hour or time.

“ *For what*, again, shall I sing hymn? For things that Thou hast made, or things Thou hast not ? For things Thou hast made manifest, or things Thou hast concealed ?

“ *How*, further, shall I hymn Thee ? As being of myself? As having something of mine own ? As being other ?

“ For that Thou art whatever I may be; Thou art whatever I may do; Thou art whatever I may speak.

“ For Thou art all, and there is nothing else which Thou art not.”

[*Corpus Hermeticum*, v. (vi.), 10, 11; op. cit.,ii. 105; *Hymns of Hermes*, 44, 45]

In all the great traditions of the Wisdom-Religion, in Egypt and Phoenicia, in Babylon and China, in India and Greece, the World-Soul is Intelligence, symbolized indifferently in personifications which are sexless, or male-female (androgynous), or, again, male or female, according to the mode of its operation. The Universal Mind of Pythagoras is a name of Deity universally recognized in antiquity. Athena is Wisdom, and Bacchus the Divine Mind, for the philosopher and initiate. Thus we have no difficulty in understanding why Poemandres (lit., Man-shepherd) is Great Mind, Mind of all Masterhood.

Less easy is it to understand why there are seven spheres in the Harmony, except by analogy with sound and colour, and the septenary scheme of the chemical elements according to the periodic law. But whether we understand or not the mystery of the “number of manifestation”, we must all become musicians and learn to sing sweetly on Apollo's heptachord before we “can hear the Powers who are

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above the Eighth singing their songs of praise in language of their own”.

This language is no speech of the “tongue of flesh”, for there are celestial languages, tongues of gods, of angels and archangels, and daimones. There are certain “sweet voices”, and voices from heaven, even as the Rabbis of Israel called the word of prophecy the Bath-kol (lit., Daughter of the Voice or Word) the Heavenly Voice; or as the *Acts of John* tell us in John's Vision of the Cross:

“And I saw the Lord Himself above the Cross, not having any shape but only a Voice; and a Voice not such as was familiar to us, but a sweet and kind Voice, and one truly of God.” [See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (2nd ed.), p. 435.]

We must learn to play on the seven-stringed Lute of the radiant Sun-God, and modulate the harmonies of our own septenary nature, for:

Seven sounding letters sing the praise of Me,
The immortal God, the almighty Deity;
Father of all, that cannot wearied be.
I am the eternal Viol of all things,
Whereby the melody so sweetly rings
Of heavenly music.

[Oliver, *The Pythagorean Triangle*, page 175]

Many are the mysteries involved in this idea, not the least of which is the mystery of the human body, the miniature cosmos. There are, it is said, seven “strings” in the physical body, one “chord” pinned out, so to say, in seven different directions, by seven *chakras* (wheels or centres), as Indian psycho-physiology calls them.

The practical mystic must find the chord, find the *chakras*, find the directions in space, and “name” them. From one point of view we may say that it is in the solar plexus that the chord is involved or rolled up; this is the centre in the body whence the personal chord passes forth to the mother-side of things, and makes the man to become impersonal. I am here-speaking of the mystic and not of the psychic. The triplicity of substance (*guna* in Sanskrit means a “thread”) — the modes that play through the one element or substance — binds us all in a mystic matter to our cosmic mother; this chord is attached to our buddhic swaddling clothes, so to say, and we hang like an atom in space.

We are cosmically like children in a prenatal stage; we cannot use our cosmic mouth as yet and utter “words of power” or sing “sweet songs”.

As the child, the Christ-child, grows, the chord becomes the seven strings of the *vina* throughout the body, and these strings must be played upon harmoniously. The strings are never out of tune; it is we who have to learn to play tunefully and harmoniously upon them. And then at last the three master *chakras* of the body will become attached to the three spiritual modes, the three modes of activity of

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power, instead of being attached, as at present, to our buddhic “swaddling clothes”. Then at length will man become Man and stand upright, and free himself, and utter wisdom and power.

Passing next to schools of Gnosticism cognate with the Trismegistic tradition, let us take a thought or two that comes from the minds of the great masters of the Christianized Gnosis.

Epiphanius professes to describe the ceremony whereby the Heracleonitae prepared a dying brother for the next world. The words of power wherewith the soul might break the seals and burst open the gates of the Invisible in its passage to rest, are given as follows:

“ I, the Son from the Father, the Father Pre-existing, but the Son in present existence, came to behold all things, things both other than my own and of my own, yet things not altogether other than my own, but of Achamoth, who is female, and made them for herself. But I derive my race from the Pre-existing, and I am going back unto my own whence I have come.” [*Haer.*, xxxvi. 3. Cf. also Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I. xxi. 5]

This is what the Hindus call a *mantra*, a formula of power, to keep the mind in tune and establish it upon the higher basis of its spiritual being. It is of special interest as giving us the spirit of the as yet almost untranslatable formulae of the *Book of the Coming-forth unto Day*, commonly called the *Book of the Dead*.

It gives the reason of the descent, the coming-forth to know; the things of himself are the spiritual things-that-are; the things of Achamoth (a Hebrew name for Wisdom) are the things of matter, those things which Wisdom in her substance-nature brings forth of herself, without her Lord, the Mind; they are other than His, and yet not other, for she is His spouse.

Such a self-realized man, such a Man, is a Race and not an individual.

There were many such mystic formulae containing hidden truths which true lovers of theosophy will instantly recognize; such as, for instance, the garnering of the harvest of life-experiences, by the greater mind, quoted by Epiphanius from the lost *Gospel of Philip*, which runs as follows:

“I recognized myself, and gathered myself together from all sides; I sowed no children for the Ruler, but I tore up his roots, and gathered together my limbs which were scattered abroad; I know thee who thou art, for I am from the realms above.” [See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (2nd ed.), p. 600.]

This is the apology or defence of the soul of the truly initiate as it passes through the realms of the Invisible, each of which is in charge of a ruler, the minister of the Ruler Death. As the Logos gathers together His children (the light-sparks, or logoi, or angels, or divine minds, of men), the Atoms of the Limbs of His Body, and takes them Home into His Bosom, so does the greater mind of a man collect its limbs in its turn and become Osirified.

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“I recognized myself”, or “I have known myself”; having lived many lives raying-forth, I have now become aware of myself, of my Self, and developed true Self-consciousness. The time has now come for returning again. I collect or gather together all my rayings-forth, collect myself from every atom of matter. For before the real withdrawing-time comes, it is said, the man has to ray forth into every atom by the power of great love and great sympathy; he must go everywhere before he can become cosmic.

And so we may think of such an one as saying: I have given up sending forth my spiritual potencies or rays into external things; I have gathered myself unto myself, back again from atomic diversity into my true Self. I now become conscious of Thee, the World-Soul, for I am at-one with the One Above.

But let us take a passing glance at a few of these great Gnostic “heresies”

In the tradition of “Simon”, the Soul of the World was symbolized as Fire, and spoken of as “He who stands, has stood, and will stand”, as we learn from his *Great Announcement*.

Maenander, after him, and Saturnilus, the disciple of Maenander, named It the Unknown Father.

As we pass down the corridors of history we find Basilides, one of the most famous masters of the Gnosis, re-naming this Un-nameable of many names, and calling It by the mysterious appellation Abraxas, perhaps a transliteration from some mystery-tongue. This was the Unborn Father, “He who is not”.

This he did for the comprehension of the “many”; for the “few” he had a further teaching:

“There was when Naught was; nay, even that 'Naught' was not aught of things that are. But nakedly, conjecture and mental quibbling apart, there was absolutely not even the One. And when I use the word 'was', I do not mean to say that It *was*; but merely to give some suggestion of what I wish to indicate, I use the expression 'There was absolutely Naught' For that 'Naught' is not simply the so-called Ineffable; it is beyond that. For that which is *really* Ineffable is not *named* Ineffable, but is superior to every name that is named.”

Carpocrates, who follows next in date, like Saturnilus, speaks of the Unknown Father, the Ingenerable. [Hippol., *Philos.*, viii. 4.]

Finally, the World-Soul or World-Mind of the Valentinian Gnosis was called Bythos, the Depth, from which came all the Aeons or Spiritual Eternities. This was not called the Father until the primal Syzygy or Double, Sige (Silence), emanated in the All-Unity. This was perhaps in some way the Noon of the Egyptians, of whom it is said:

“Thou art the First-born of the Gods; Thou from Whom I came forth.” And again: “Thou art the One creating Himself”, as we read in the Book of the Dead [For a work of introduction to the study of Christian Gnosticism, the reader may be referred to my *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*]

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Among prayers to the Supreme Principle are specially to be remarked the mystic invocations in the Coptic Gnostic MSS., brought back from Upper Egypt, and preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and in the British Museum. These are largely Christian overworkings superimposed on a basis of Egyptian Gnosticism. In the concluding section appended to the *Pistis Sophia* document headed "Extract from the Books of the Saviour", the Saviour, the First Mystery, thus addresses the Hidden Father in the mystic celebration of an initiatory rite of which a dim memory remains in the Eucharist of the Churches. The Prayer is in the mystery-language, untranslatable by the "profane", and runs as follows:

"Hear Me, My Father, Father of all Fatherhood, Boundless Light:

[*Pistis Sophia* (Schwartz), p. 357; see my translation, p. 358, and Carl Schmidt's (Koptisch-gnostische Schriften), i. 232.]

*“ Aeēiouō· ĩaō· aōī· ōīa· psinōther· thernōps·
nōpsiter· zagourē· pagourē· nethmomaōth·
nepsiomaōth· marachachtha· thōbarrabau· thar-
nachachan· zorokothora· ĩeou· sabaōth.”*

Even the casual reader will at once perceive the permutations of the three mother-voices out of the seven, and the reader of modern theosophical literature will recall the three, five and seven - vowelled mystery - names of the "Stanzas of Dzyan" in *The Secret Doctrine*. Whether some practical mystic who is a scholar as well, following in the steps of Leemans, Wessely, Dieterich and Kenyon, will ever be able to recover the key to this and, similar enigmas with which the Coptic Gnostic works and the Greek magical and theurgical papyri are studded, who shall say? From a note of a scribe, however, written at the end of Book I. of the *Pistis Sophia* document, we learn:

"This is the Name of the Deathless One: AAA° 000; and this is the Name of the Voice for the sake of Whom the Perfect Man has become active: III." [Pistis Sophia: Schwartz, page 125; Mead, page 123; Schmidt, i 81]

The thrice-holy Alpha and Omega is the Name of the Endless and Deathless One, for He is both End and Beginning simultaneously; while Iota is the Creative Potency. The Deathless One is the Father of the Pleroma, or Fullness. [Cf. E. Amélineau, Notice sur le Papyrus gnostique Bruce, page 113]

Moreover, in the same document, on the page following the mystery-invocation we have quoted above, we read:

"And Jesus cried aloud, turning to the four corners of the world, together with His Disciples, all clad in linen garments, and said: ĩaô°ĩaô°ĩaô°.

"This is its interpretation: *lōta*, because the All hath gone forth; *alpha*, because it will turn itself back again; *omega*, because the consummation of all consummations will take place."

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o Kabalistic method for obtaining a numerical solution I have yet applied has produced any satisfactory result, except that the sum of the digits of the seven-vowelled name is seven, and the sum of the whole invocation is likewise seven. The work has all to be done; and though no one has yet solved the method of this deeply-concealed mysticism, we should bear in mind that no scholar has even attempted a solution other than the hopeless guesses of an inadequate philology, and a speculation by Harnack that we have here fragments of the “speaking with tongues”. (glossalaly).

Let us next take the Gnostic teaching of Paul in his Letter to the Colossians (i 12-19):

“Giving thanks to the Father who fits us for a share in the Inheritance of the Holy [Or the Saints.] in the Light; who preserved us from the Power of the Darkness, and translated us into the Kingship of the Son of His Love, in Whom we have our Redemption,[The Textus Receptus adds “through his blood”, but this is not in the best texts] the Remission of Sins; Who is Image of God the Invisible, — the First-born of every creation.![Or foundation.]

“For in Him are founded all things, in the Heavens and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones or Lordships, whether Beginnings [*Archai*, or Rulerships, a hierarchy of Aeons; the same term used in the opening words of the Fourth Gospel: “In the Beginning was the Word”] or Powers. All things were founded through Him and for Him. And He is before all, and in Him all things consist.

“And He Himself is the Head of the Body of the Assembly;[*Ekklesia*, one of the Aeons] He Who is the Beginning, [*Arche*, The Primeval Aeon] the First-born from the Dead; [The uninitiated] that He might be in all Himself supreme. For it seemed good that all the Fullness [Pleroma, the totality of the Aeons, the synthesis of their hierarchies. Cf. Epiphanius (Hoer., l. iii. 4), who remarks on the Valentinians quoting this text.] should dwell in Him.”

The spirit and terminology of the whole passage is entirely Gnostic, and can only be understood by a student of Gnosticism. The essential identity of every Soul with the Over-Soul has been, is, and will be, a fundamental doctrine of the Gnosis.

The glorified Master, the Christ, is the Man who, perfected by the sufferings and consequent experiences of many births, finally becomes at-one with the Father, the “World-Soul, from Whom he came forth, and at last arises from the Dead and returns to Life and Light or full Self-consciousness.

He, indeed, is the First-born, the perfected, Self-conscious Mind, or Man, containing in himself the whole Divine Creation or Pleroma; for he is one with the hierarchies of Spiritual Beings who gave him birth, and instead of being the microcosm, the image of the Image as when among the Dead, has become the Macrocosm or the true Image of the World-Mind.

Through the power of this Spiritual Union, or Sacred Marriage, do we win Redemption from the bonds of self-will and thus attain the Remission of Sins, which, according to the wise among the Gnostics, was in the hand of the First and Last Mystery alone, our Highest Self, who is at the same time our Judge and Saviour, sending forth the Sons of His Love, all Rays of His Great Compassion, into the Darkness of

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Matter, that Matter may become self-conscious and so perfected. In plainer words, these Rays are each the higher self in every child of the Great Man, proceeding from their Divine Source (Maha-buddhi or Great Buddhi), the Spouse of Deity, that Ocean of Love and Compassion which is the Veil of the Innominable and Incognizable Self (Paramatman).

Or let us regard these pregnant words of Paul from the standpoint of the man who is winning towards Perfection and has almost achieved.

“Light” may then be said to be the state when such a man is not raying-forth; it is the opposite of “Darkness”, which in this connection may be said to express the state when the man is throwing-forth into matter his own light, his own “attention”. This is the state “as in a glass darkly” — the looking-glass state, when we see ourselves in any form and think it is our existence.

“Light”, however, may be a state of supreme consciousness, or it may be a state in which a man is not self-conscious. Man has to be able to get outside a thing to know it and understand it; he has to have been outside — forth from the state of Light, before he becomes self-conscious in the Light.

The “Inheritance” may be said to be that which descends from Father to Son, by law, or something fixed; it is a cosmic law.

Mystically “fits us” may be thought of as clothing or outfitting us; and the share as one of activity, of life, or energy.

We are then “translated” into the result of His Love; but this does not mean, I believe, that such a man is taken from where he is and goes on to infinitude, but that he begins to do both; he begins to take an active share in this law or inheritance of completeness or perfection, as soon as ever he can translate himself into the Love of his own Father, his Highest Self.

In such a one who is becoming perfect, the “Head” might signify the idea of truly “Personal” [That is, pertaining to the Person] consciousness and control; the “Body” substance; and the “Assembly” the Aeon where everything separate is assembled together. It is where everything parted has assembly together; within the very substance of it the true consciousness of the “Person” begins to sprout. This true “Personal” contact may be said to be not with the “Assembly”, but within the “Body” of the “Assembly”; this “Body” being the one element or quintessence.

The “First-born from the Dead” would thus in this connection denote the first sprouting of the true “Personal” or higher consciousness within the one-element side of what had hitherto been dead matter.

It must not, however, be supposed that such ideas were foreign to the greater minds of Greece and Rome. As has already been said, all that can be attempted in this study is to select a few passages here and there. Pythagoras and Plato, and the Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean writers, can supply us with innumerable quotations; but as already much has been given from their works in other theosophical studies, we may here show that there are other less known philosophers in this connection who can yield

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us evidence. For instance, Xenophanes, the principal leader of the Eleatic sect, [Or school, or “heresy”; e.g., αἰρεσσις Ἑλληνικὴ, “a study of Greek literature” (Polyb., xl. 6, 3)] describes God as incomprehensible.

“Incorporeal in substance, and figure globular; [That is, perfect] and in no respect similar to man. That He is all sight and hearing, but does not breathe. That He is all things; Mind and Wisdom; not generate but eternal, impassible and immutable.” [Oliver, *The Pythagorean Triangle*, page 49]

Lucian also makes Cato say:

“God makes Himself known to all the World; He fills up the whole Circle of the Universe, but makes His particular Abode in the Centre, which is the Soul of the Just.” [*Ibid.*, 51]

Nor were these philosophical concepts evolved by “civilization”, for we find the same ideas again and again reiterated in the oldest “Orphic Fragments”, which must be given an original antiquity at least contemporaneous with the Trojan War period. Let us here attempt a translation of one of the Hymns based on this Orphic tradition.

“Zeus is the First. Zeus that rules the thunder is the Last. Zeus is the Beginning [lit., Head]. Zeus the Middle. From Zeus were all things made.

“Zeus is Male. Zeus, the imperishable, is Maid.

Zeus is the Foundation of the Earth and starry Heaven. Zeus is the Breath [Air] of all. Zeus the Whirl of unwearied Fire. Zeus is the Root of the Sea [Water]. Zeus is Sun and Moon. Zeus is King. Zeus- Himself the Supreme Parent of all.

There is but One Power, One Daimon, One Great Chief of all; One royal Frame in which all things revolve. Fire, and Water, and Earth, and Aether, Night and Day, and Metis (Wisdom) the First Parent, and All-pleasing Eros (Love). For all these are in the Great Body of Zeus.

Wouldst thou see his Head and fair Faces ? The Radiant Heaven, round which his Golden Locks of Gleaming Stars wave in the Space Above in all their Beauty. On either Side two Golden Taurine Horns, the Rising and the Setting of the Gods, the Paths of the Celestials.

is Eyes the Sun and the opposing Moon; His Mind that never lies, the imperishable kingly Aether.”

[From the text of Cory, as found in Aristotle, *De Mund*, Eusebius, *Proep. Evan.*, III.; and Proclus, *Tim*]

Let us next turn to the lore of our Scandinavian forefathers, to the prose *Edda*, which repeats a still more

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hoary tradition lost in the night of time. Thus it speaks of the World-Soul, of the Supreme Deity and the Primordial State of the Universe:

“Gangler thus began his discourse: 'Who is the first or oldest of the Gods?'

“'In our language,' replied Har, 'He is called Alfadir [All-Father, or the Father of All; but in the old Asgard He had twelve names.'

“'Where is this God?' said Gangler. 'What is His power? and what hath He done to display His glory?'

“'He liveth,' replied Har, 'from all ages, He governeth all realms, and swayeth all things great and small.'

“'He hath formed,' added Jafnhar, 'Heaven and Earth, and Air, and all things thereto belonging.'

“'And what is more,' continued Thridi, 'He hath made man, and given him a soul which shall live and never perish, though the body shall have moldered away or have been burned to ashes.'

“'But with what did He begin, or what was the beginning of things?' demanded Gangler.

“'Hear,' replied Har, 'what is said in the Voluspa, :[The Volu- or Volo-spa, meaning “The Song of the Prophetess”, is a kind of sibylline song containing the whole system of Scandinavian mythology.]

'Twas time's first dawn,
When naught yet was,
Nor sand nor sea,
Nor cooling wave;
Earth was not there,
Nor heaven above.
Naught save a void
And yawning Gulf.”

[From I. A. Blackwell's translation, appended to Bishop Percy's translation of M. Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, Bohn's edition, pp. 400, 401.]

And now we have almost done with our serried ranks of witnesses; multitudes have not been called into court, but are waiting if need be to convince us that man is of a divine nature and not a congeries of molecules. Let us, therefore, conclude our case by citing from mystical Mohammedan Sufiism, which will tell us why Allah is supreme in the hearts of so many millions of our fellow-men.

The passionate longing for union with the World-Soul, with the Source of our Being, is magnificently

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portrayed by the mystical Persian poets. Thus Jami, in his *Yusuf u Zuleykha*, sings:

Dismiss every vain fancy, and abandon every doubt;
Blend into One every spirit, and form and place;
See One — know One — speak of One —
Desire One — chant of One — and seek One.

[*Religious Systems of the World*, Article “Sikhism”, page 306.]

And again:

In solitude where Being signless dwelt
And all the universe still dormant lay,
Concealed in selflessness, One Being was,
Exempt from ' I'- or ' Thou '-ness, and apart
From all duality; Beauty Supreme,
Unmanifest, except unto Itself
By Its own light, yet fraught with power to charm
The souls of all; concealed in the Unseen,
An Essence pure, unstained by aught of ill

[*Ibid.*, page 328]

Perhaps some may be surprised that I have omitted from the numerous citations already adduced any reference to Buddhism. I have done so, not because the idea of the World-Soul is absent from that system, but because, for the most part, it is difficult to find therein anything in the nature of prayers or adoration to a Supreme Principle. The protest of Gautama against the externalization of the Divine was so strong, that his followers, as it seems to me, have in course of time leaned to extremes, and preferred to express their aspirations rather in terms of denial of material qualities than in positive terms of definition of spiritual attributes. But what after all is Nirvana but a synonym of at-onement with the World-Soul state in one of its degrees? [Cf *The Voice of the Silence* (1st edition page 49): “Thou shall not separate thy being from BEING and the rest, but *merge the Ocean in the drop*, the drop within the Ocean.”] And this is indicated by the more transcendent term Parinirvana, which provides for infinite transcendence in the state.

The word *nir-vana* means literally “blown out”, “extinguished”, as of a fire; but it also means “tamed”, as, for instance, *a-nirvana*, used of an elephant not tamed, or one just caught or wild. There is no doubt whatever that the term describes a state in which the lower nature is entirely tamed, though it is to be regretted that a more positive teaching does not obtain in the so-called Southern Church of Buddhism. Its greatest metaphysicians, however, declare that the state of Nirvana is of such a nature that no words can even hint at its reality, much less describe it, and that it is not wise to inculcate material ideas, however lofty, in the minds of the people. Therefore it is that in popular Buddhism we are met with such apparently self-contradictory statements as:

“They who, by steadfast mind, have become exempt from evil desire, and well-trained in the teachings of

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Gautama; they, having obtained the fruit of the Fourth Path, and immersed themselves in that Ambrosia, have received without price, and are in the enjoyment of Nirvana. Their old Karma is exhausted, no new Karma is being produced; their hearts are free from the longing after future life; the cause of their existence being destroyed, and no new yearnings springing up within them, they, the wise, are extinguished like this lamp." [Ratana Sutta, 7, 14. That is to say, mystically, we exist as a flame at night; when the sun shines we may just as well be blown out; it makes no difference. You are not any use even to yourself, for you can see by means of the sun]

One naturally asks: If they are extinguished, how can they enjoy Nirvana ? But such contradictions are the lot of all popular presentations of the true mysteries of religion; in fact, it seems to be in the nature of things that Truth can only be stated in a paradox. Nothing but a study of esotericism will reconcile the exoteric systems with each other and with themselves. Nor will anything else persuade an orthodox Buddhist that there is salvation without the Pitaka of Gautama, or a Brahman without the Vedas, or a Christian without the Bible. How different is the spirit that animates some among the mystics, who consider it a sin, not only to say, but even to think, that their outer religion is superior to that of any other man !

Among all this over-cautious negation, therefore, I would suggest that the Nirvanic state contacts the "planes" of consciousness of the World-Soul proper. Of course this is not orthodox Buddhism, either of the Northern or Southern Church, as known to us; but it enables us to reconcile Buddhism with the other traditions, and also to see how the mystic interpretation is the connecting link between all of them, and completes their insufficiencies.

The "great heresy" of the "pilgrim soul", we are told, is the feeling of "separateness". With men, divided sense, and especially the "brain-mind", is that which keeps us from ourselves, for it produces the illusion of an *external* universe, whereas it is the "heart" that binds us to our fellows, and that alone can make us one with all men and with all nature.

Though I do not wish to fall into the error of transferring our present conditions to that of the World-Soul, and thus become guilty of materializing and anthropomorphizing that which transcends our highest consciousness as men, still I think that the suggestion of an analogy may not be harmful. As in man the "head" externalizes and separates, and the "heart" binds and looks within, so, I would imagine, there may be some parallel here with what we may term an external state of the World-Soul, and an internal consciousness.

Thus we find a "head-doctrine" and a "heart-doctrine" [I would suggest to students of the mystical treatise called "The Two Paths" one of the three "Fragments from the Book of the Golden Precepts", in the little book known as *The Voice of the Silence*, that the "eye-doctrine" may also be regarded as the higher mental view, when one must be above and beyond the object in order to be able to view it without prejudice, and the "heart-doctrine" be taken for the method whereby, so to speak, one enters the object and becomes it in order to understand its hidden secrets] in every religion. "Nirvana" can be reached by two Paths. By one an inner external state of consciousness of sublime bliss can be arrived at, by the other a union with "all that lives and breathes". This "external" state is doubtless deeply internal and highly subjective to our present senses; but it differs from that full reality of the "heart" that beats in compassion with all "hearts", just as the gratification of the senses and intellect differs from the calm of a noble soul conscious of striving for truth and purity in the midst of the most unfavourable surroundings.

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Nor is the intuition of the “heart-doctrine” absent from any of the best religionists of today. The most advanced thinkers of Christendom reject the idea of an eternal joy in Heaven, spent in vain adoration and inactive bliss. With true intuition they conceive that the joy of Heaven would be incomplete so long as others suffer. The grim Calvinism of a Tertullian who counted it one of the joys of his Heaven to look down upon the tortures of the damned in Hell, finds approbation only among the very ignorant. The larger minds of the Church will have none of it, just as some Buddhists count the Pratyeka Buddha, he who obtains the Nirvana of the “eye”, a symbol of spiritual selfishness. For like as the “spooks” in a *séance*-room rejoice to masquerade as great characters, and call themselves Homer, and Dante, and Jesus, so do many love to call themselves Christians and Buddhists, whereas they have as little claim to the title as have the irresponsible “spooks” to greatness.

To me, then, the attainment of Nirvana, or the “Peace of God”, or Moksha (Liberation), or by whatever name you choose to call it, is the attainment of a degree of consciousness of the World-Soul. For though I have in this connection spoken of Heaven in making a comparison, Heaven is rather to be connoted with Svarga or Dve-chan (Sukavati), or whatever name is given to the state of bliss between two earth-lives. But this is not *becoming* the World-Soul, or even a Great Soul, any more than the possession of a human body constitutes an entity a *man*.

To become the World-Soul, the Nirvana of the “eye” must be renounced, just as the world of external sensation must be renounced, to become one with the Higher Self, who commands:

“Leave all that thou hast, and follow *Me*”, in that “ye brought nothing into the world, neither shall ye take anything out”.

Nirvana, in this sense, must be renounced; for until every Soul of man has attained Nirvana, the World-Soul is not as He is; [Cf. “For so long as thou callest not thyself Mine, I am not what I AM”. See *The Acts of John*, in *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (2nd ed.), page 437] and he who would be one with Him must take up the burden of a like responsibility. Just as the adept purifies the atoms of his body from the taint of passion in order to reach the Knowledge of the Self or Gnosis, so must the Nirmanakaya aid in purifying the souls of men, whose purification will enable the World-Soul to be in, perchance, a more glorious state of activity. For though we make these distinctions in order to give some faint idea of the Mystery, still all is the Self sacrificing Itself to Itself, and selfishness and selflessness are words that lose their meanings in an intuition that escapes all words.

But to return to popular Buddhism. Though there is little evidence of any cult of a Supreme Principle, in the ordinary sense of the word, in the Southern Church, in the Northern Church it is different. The cult of one or other of the Supreme Buddhas is extensively practised; and we find prayers addressed to Manjushri, the personification of Wisdom, and to Avalokiteshvara, the “merciful Protector and Preserver of the world and of men”, who are invoked and prayed to as, for example, by Fa Hian, [*Buddhism*, by T. W. Rhys Davids, page 203] just as Shiva or Vishnu is worshipped by orthodox Hindus.

How the inner interpretation throws light on the outer forms, many know from a study of modern theosophical literature. The World-Soul, Adi-Buddha, who emanates the five or seven Dhyani-Buddhas, shows the identity of conception with the other great traditions.

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Perhaps it may have caused surprise that the Upanishads have not been cited; but that has not been for lack of passages, for the single object of these mystical scriptures is to inculcate the doctrine of the essential identity of man with God.

This, indeed, is the key-note of the Aryan religion, and every Upanishad persistently reiterates it. As “H. P. B.”, but for whom these studies would not have originally been undertaken, says in that great store-house of instruction and information, *The Secret Doctrine* (i. 351):

“Not till the Unit is merged in the All, whether on this or any other plane, and Subject and Object alike vanish in the absolute negation of the Nirvanic State (negation, only from *our* plane), not until then is scaled that Peak of Omniscience — the Knowledge of things-in-themselves; and the Solution of the yet more awful Riddle approached, before which even the highest Dhyān Chohan must bow in silence and ignorance — the unspeakable Mystery of That which is called by the Vedantins, Parabrahman.”

Of course this may be denied by the theist; but let us remember that definition, even of the most metaphysical character, will land the definer in the most preposterous contradictions.

The reader may also object: What does Madame Blavatsky know of the highest Dhyān Chohan (Spiritual Being) ?

To which, if I may venture to say so, her reply would be, as it has been to many another question: “Thus have I heard”.

In other words, the teaching is that of those from whom “H. P. B.” had received instruction, or help in her writings, and it agrees with the general traditions of such things.

The explanations contained in *The Secret Doctrine* were never meant to rest on mere assertion; and the statement above quoted finds its support in all the great world-religions, as may be amply seen even from the few quotations adduced in this study.

I have also not given any selections from the heterogeneous books of the collection called the Old Testament or Covenant, for they must be already familiar to most of my readers, but have preferred citations from the Kabbalah. Perhaps some may be surprised that I have also refrained from giving the prayer of Christendom from the New Testament, known as the “Lord's Prayer”. This, however, was not a Christian prayer originally, but a Jewish one, and even James, the “Brother of the Lord”, gives a teaching directly opposed to one of its principal clauses. This prayer is found almost *verbatim* in the Jewish Kadish, and runs as follows:

“Our Father, which art in Heaven, be gracious to us, O Lord our God; hallowed be Thy Name; and let the remembrance of Thee be glorified in Heaven above, and upon Earth here below.

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“Let thy Kingship reign over us, now and for ever.

“Thy holy men of old said: ' Kemit and forgive unto all men whatsoever they have done against me'.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil thing.

“For Thine is the Kingdom, and Thou shalt reign in Glory, for ever and for ever more.”

[Gerald Massey, *The Natural Genesis*, ii. 469. Version from *A Critical Examination of the Gospel History*, page 109. Cf. Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, page 374.]

Moreover, if “James” is any authority, we find ourselves placed on the horns of a theological dilemma, for he says:

“ Let no one, when he is tempted, say ' I am tempted of the Deity': for the Deity cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man.” [Jas. i 13. The words used for tempted, etc., are all from the verb πειραζομαι, and are identical with the word used in the prayer as found in the texts of Matthews (vi.13) and Luke (xi.4), viz., πειρασμος]

This teaching is more in harmony with the direction:

“Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy *Father in secret*” [Matt. vi. 6, τω πατρι σου τω εν τω κρυπτω] This does not mean that being in a physical closet the prayer is thus “in secret”, but that this prayer, or contemplation, is to be made to, or on, the “Father in secret”, within the “chamber of the heart”, as the Greek text proves beyond any question.[Cf. *Thrice-greatest Hermes*, Volume 1, page 209; and *Fragments* (2nd ed.), page. 70]

In closing, let me again say I think that both the believers in a Personal God and those who refuse to give any attribute to Deity may find some common ground of agreement in the concepts of the World-Soul which have been set forth above.

Of course, it is only to the truly broad-minded that any appeal is made. In our days unorthodoxy, in its traditional sense, is no longer a term of reproach; reproach is now securely saddled on the back of orthodoxy. And for this desirable state of affairs we owe many thanks to fearless freedom of thought, to the unwinking scrutiny of scientific observation, and the logic of scientific methods.

But the pendulum begins to swing to the extreme, and it is time to guard against freedom developing into license, and the newly-fashioned idols of “orthodox” science being substituted for the crumbling idols of “orthodox” religion.

Religious thinkers are beginning to broaden in every direction, and though Churchmen still hold persistently to the term Personal God, they will, under pressure, so sublimate the concept that it is easy to perceive that the words have no longer for them, their traditional meaning, and that for some reason best known to themselves, or for some undefined fear, or blind conservative instinct, they prefer to cling to names instead of to Names or Powers.

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The theist contends that men must have something to lean on, and that to take away the Personality of Deity would be to destroy the hope of the Christian world. But why so ? Is there not a Christ in every man to lean upon ? Nay, is not the Christ the very Man himself, if he would but know *Himself*? What more is requisite ?

But the “orthodox” world has so long been reciting invocations to Jehovah that they have forgotten the teachings of their Founder who spoke of the “Father in secret” — no new teaching, as our quotations amply prove, but a repetition of the old, old mystery.

But the more spiritually-minded Christians are ashamed of the crude recitals concerning Jehovah, and do not care to have his exploits referred to. They try to explain it by apologetically postulating a partial revelation to the Jews, precluding a full revelation to themselves.

If, however, reference be made to the injustice of leaving other world-religions out in the cold, it is usually met with freezing silence, and the subject is hastily changed; or there will be talk of monotheism and polytheism, and the question be begged by assuming that Judaism, in its orthodox tradition, is the highest expression of monotheism, whereas its spirit is rather that of monolatry or enolatry, if we care to amuse ourselves with word-coining.

But, for my part, I find the reconciliation of pantheism and monotheism, of God beyond Being, and God the Logos, in the great saying “All and One”, which was first handed on to Greece by Heracleitus, and constituted the most sacred formula of the Trismegistic Gnosis descended from the Wisdom of Egypt. This master-idea has been called panentheism; but by whatever name we call it, it is sublime, and to me seems inevitable.

There may be some who, after reading these studies, will accuse the writer of unfriendly feelings towards the Faith of the Western world, and spread the rumour that theosophy is anti-Christian. This it is not; but it does accomplish a metamorphosis. It takes us up to such heights that the lesser conceptions of popular theology fall away unregretted and almost unnoticed.

And this it accomplishes for all of any religion who come within its potent influence. Theosophy purifies and rarefies the dogmas and superstitions in Brahmanism as well, in Buddhism, in Taoism and Zoroastrianism, in Islam, and in Jewry. To the bigot of any of these faiths it appears anti-Brahmanical, anti-Buddhistic, and so forth. But every true theosophist knows well the impossibility of being an enemy of any religion, seeing that he has a surer faith in the realities of religion than even the blindest believer in the separative creed of his fathers.

May the day soon dawn when the unchanging ideals, the vivifying ideas, and fruitful concepts of that universal Theosophy or Wisdom who is the Mother of all religions, shall come to light in the greater consciousness of Humanity, and all men, without distinction of race, caste, creed, or sex, recognise a common possession in them, and a common kinship with our Common Mother and God's Eternal Love.

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As a man casting off worn-out garments takes other new ones, so the lord of the body casting off worn - out bodies enters other new ones.

BHAGAVAD GITA, ii. 22