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THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

By

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To my Father
John Edward Johnson

"And I will show you a still more excellent way."

1 Corinthians 12:31
Revised Standard Version

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PREFACE

Today finds us, whose profession it is to follow Him whom we call the Master of Life, faced with a wide-sweeping pluralism of religious faiths. To be sure, this is not a new situation in which Christians find themselves. For centuries, Christians have confronted other faiths and have sought an accommodation in one way or another. But this situation is perhaps more critical for modern-day Christians. With the increase of communication and contact that modern technology has brought, more Christians today are aware of

alternative faith-systems than ever before in human history. What this means is, that today's Christian is forced to come to some kind of terms with contemporary religious pluralism.

The literature of the major non-Christian world religions addresses, indeed, the major themes of religion. There is, then, at least initially, some form of consonance between the non-Christian religions and the Christian faith. For this reason, many writers on religion assert that the major world religions are but different paths to the same substantial goal, and that, accordingly, there is no weight of validity attaching to Christianity that can confer a uniqueness and superiority to that religion.

It is true that many of the major world religions evince worthy ethical ideals. Even that, however, is not always the case: as may be seen in the later form of Islam.

But our argument in this work is, essentially, that the major world religions disclose serious limitations—limitations that, as we hope to demonstrate in the sequel, contravene the essential aim of religion.

It is, therefore, argued that Christianity is, as the title of this work suggests, "the more excellent way." Christianity is the final religion. Its finality does not consist in institutional forms of expression, in creeds, organization, and ritual. All these are far removed from the living truth of Christian faith and experience. In no sense do they fully express the truth about the infinite God. The finality of Christianity consists in the realization that

> . . . the personal and living God, infinite and eternal, has spoken to men in Jesus Christ. Our knowledge about this God is not absolute, but we do know this absolute God. In Jesus Christ we have heard his word to us, have found the way of living fellowship with him, and have seen his will for our lives.[1]

To hold to the finality of Christianity does not imply that other world religions are devoid of all value. They do express humanity's ages-long search for fulfillment and salvation. They are upward paths taken by people who envisioned possibilities that transcend the conditions of their temporal existence. They point to a beyond that shines as a star in the remote regions of space. They adumbrate realities that become evident only under more complete conditions. The religious consciousness of humanity is developmental.

The Bible itself makes reference to this. To the pagans at Lystra Paul says that God is revealed in nature. God allowed the heathen "to walk in their own ways" and yet "he left himself not without witness."[2] To the Romans he wrote that the nations were not left without some manifestation of God:

> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.[3]

And to the Athenians he demonstrated that the Christian gospel is the perfect

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[1]Harris Franklin Rall, *Christianity: An Inquiry into its Nature and Truth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 77. Hereafter referred to as *Christianity*.

[2]Acts 14:16-17.

[3]Rom. 1:20.

fulfillment of the religion of reason common to humanity. Thus Paul stated:

> Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.[4]

F. W. Robertson points out that God dealt with the nations in such a way as to show them that in human nature there is no power to save from sin or achieve perfection of being. Having seen their failure, the peoples of the nations were then made ready for the revelation of salvation by Divine intervention:

> Moreover, recollect that the Bible contains only a record of the Divine dealings with a single nation; His proceedings with the minds of other peoples are not recorded. That large other world--no less God's world than Israel was. . .--scarcely is--scarcely could be, named on the page of Scripture except in its external relation to Israel. But at times, figures as it were cross the rim of Judaism, when brought into contact with it, and passing for a moment as dim shadows, do yet tell us hints of a communication and a revelation going on unsuspected. We are told, for example, of Job--no Jew, but an Arabian emir, who beneath the tents of Uz contrived to solve the question of his heart . . . ; one who wrestled with God as Jacob did, and strove to know the shrouded Name, and hoped to find that it was Love. We find Naaman the Syrian, and Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, under the providential and loving discipline of God. Rahab the Gentile is saved by faith. The Syro-Phoenician woman by her sick daughter's bedside amidst the ravings of insanity, recognizes, without human assistance, the sublime and consoling truth of a universal Father's love in the midst of apparent partiality. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" had not left them in darkness.[5]

To the Jews at Antioch, Paul showed how God's dealings with them prepared that people for the Christ who should one day come as the fulfillment of the divine purpose:

> And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he that raised up Jesus again; . . . he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.[6]

The writer to the Hebrews expresses the same thought: that God's dealings with the Jews in previous times was but the prelude to a final disclosure of Himself:

> God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . . .[7]

The difference between the human search for God and the Divine search for humanity is a "directional" one. The human quest is an "upward" way. It is a way in which time seeks eternity. It is a way that reaches certain

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[4]Acts 17:22-23.

[5]Frederick W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4 vols., New Edition (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1875), IV, 142-43.

[6]Acts 13:32-34.

[7]Heb. 1:1-2.

heights of purely human inspiration, a way that envisions the highest reaches of human achievement. But, precisely for the reason that it is a way native to human nature, it is a limited way.

The Divine quest is a "downward" way. It is the way in which eternity seeks time. It is the way in which God enters time in the person of His Son, whose words, life, death, and resurrection disclose the eternal God. It is the way of love's disclosure of the infinite God to a receiving humanity. Herein consists the finality of Christianity. H. R. Mackintosh has succinctly and beautifully stated it:

> Now we are dealing with "Christianity" in another sense [i.e., in distinction to any given human reaction to Christ in historical epochs]. Now it stands not for the reaction of man but for the action of God--for the revelation of God's holy love in Christ, for all that is meant by the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, for the great things which the Father has accomplished or promised in the Son for us men and our salvation, for all that God is offering to the world in His declared Gospel. And to affirm the absolute and final character of Christianity in *this* sense merely proves that we understand what Christianity means. Here faith rests on an unsurpassable height, for the sufficient reason that . . . no higher or greater reality than Holy Love can be conceived. Hence the finality of Christ and of what He imparts can justly be called in question only when a loftier fact than holy love has come into view--then, but not till then.[8]

There are three leading ideas that run like a leit motif through the great positive religions. They are: God, grace, and the eternal life. They concern the relation of value to existence, which is the dominant motif of religion. A recent American philosopher, who devoted his life to the theory of value, remarks:

> . . . there appears a fundamental unity in its basal concepts which enables the philosopher to say what the essence of religion is. The same principle holds for the pronouncements of religion--on man and his relation to the ground of things. However varied in form, they are reducible, in the major religions at least, to pronouncements concerning the relation of value to existence: on God as the *valor valorum* and the self diffusing Good; on grace as the power, not of ourselves, that makes for the enhancement of human good; and on life eternal as the conservation of the values of our life in time.[9]

Harald Höffding, who taught at the University of Copenhagen earlier in the twentieth century and who significantly influenced Urban, depicts the essence of religion in language comparable to that of Urban, but perhaps more trenchantly with respect to the fate of values in time:

> It will thus be seen that in its inmost essence religion is concerned . . . with the valuation of existence, and that religious ideas express the relation in which actual existence, as we know it, stands to that which, for us, invests life with its highest value. For the core of religion . . . consists in the conviction that no value perishes out of the world.[10]

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[8]H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 215.

[9]Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Humanity and Deity* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1951), pp. 253-54.

[10]Harald Höffding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, tr. B. E. Meyer (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1906), p. 6.

In this work, we shall consider the manner in which the major world religions handle these great themes of religion. We shall examine the literature of the various faiths as those literatures speak of God, Grace, and the Life Eternal. In particular, we shall look to the contrast between the Christian voice and the other voices of humanity's search for salvation.

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CHAPTER 1

GOD

In his greatest poem, the first book of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth, sensitive as he is to what Alfred North Whitehead calls "the haunting presences of nature," writes these wonderful lines:

> Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
> And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
> And Souls of lonely places! can I think
> A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
> Such ministry, when ye through many a year
> Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
> On caves and trees, upon woods and hills,
> Impressed upon all forms the characters
> Of danger or desire; and thus did make
> The surface of the universal earth
> With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
> Work like a sea?[11]

In the ancient world, about the time of the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 B.C.), two civilizations would react in strikingly dissimilar ways to these "haunting presences of nature." The eastern tribes of the Aryans moved from the North southeastward into India. With some accommodation to the thought of the conquered peoples, the Indians developed a sacred literature in which these "haunting presences of nature" were deified. The Divine became part and parcel of the natural order.

At approximately the same time, a small Sumerian tribe left its home in the Arabian Desert and slowly drifted westward until it found its final home in Palestine. Eventually these people threw off the Canaanite influence that had earlier influenced them and found a view of the Divine hitherto unknown by the people of the ancient world. The Hebrews did, indeed, appreciate the "haunting presences of nature," but they found in those "presences," not deity itself, but the traces, or evidences, of the only True God who, in His transcendent holiness, lives forever beyond the world of His creation, for which He cares and provides guidance.

These two views of the Divine--God who *becomes* the world, and God who *creates* the world--constitute, in the first place, the point from which this discussion of God in this work should begin.

The term for the Indian religious literature, written in Sanskrit, is *Veda*. The term comes from the root, *vid*, which means "to know." It therefore means "Divine knowledge." The Veda consists of hymns, which bear the names of e *Rishis* or sages who composed them.

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[11]Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 500.

Today there are four Vedas: Ṛ*ig*, Yajur, Sãma, and Atharva. The Ṛ*ig*-Veda is the chief Veda. Each Veda is divided into two parts: the *Mantras* are the collection of the hymns, while the *Brãhamanas*, a term derived from *brahman* ("prayer" or "devotion") contain the precepts and religious duties. The concluding portion of the *Brãhamanas* is the *Upaṇisads*, which today is classified as a third body of Indian religious literature. They are a discussion of the philosophical problems raised in the *Mantras* and the *Brãhamanas*. They will, obviously, figure significantly in this discussion, for they are foundational to any understanding of Indian religious thought. "The Upaṇisads," a noted Indian scholar writes, "contain the mental background of the whole of the subsequent thought of the country."[12]

In Vedic literature, the most popular god is *Indra*. When the Aryans invaded India, they soon found that they were dependent upon the rain for their livelihood. They therefore deified the atmosphere. Indra is thus the god of atmospheric phenomena, the god of sky and thunderstorms. He is himself created, from a "vigorous god" and an heroic female. He is represented as being of a golden color and as having many arms. He travels in a bright, golden car drawn by two ruddy horses. His weapon is the thunderbolt, carried in his right hand. He governs the weather and dispenses the rain.

Thus Vedic religion is the worship of nature. God and nature are one. There is a passage in the Ṛ*ig*-Veda that presents this view well:

> Those who stand around him while he moves on, harness the bright red (steed); the lights in heaven shine forth.[13]
> They harness to the chariot on each side his (Indra's) two favourite bays, the brown, the bold, who can carry the hero.
> Thou who createst light where there was no light, and form, O men! where there was no form, has been born together with the dawns.
> Thereupon they (the Maruts), according to their wont[14], assumed again the form of new-born babes[15], taking their sacred name.
> Thou, O Indra, with the swift Maruts, who break even through the stronghold, has found even in their hiding-place the bright ones (days or clouds).
> The pious singers (the Maruts) have, after their own mind, shouted towards the giver of wealth, the great, the glorious (Indra).
> May thou (host of the Maruts) be verily seen coming together with Indra, the fearless: you are both happy-making, and of equal splendour.
> With the beloved hosts of Indra, with the blameless, hasting (Maruts), the sacrificer cries aloud.
> From yonder, O traveller (Indra), come hither, or from the light of heaven; the singers all yearn for it;--
> Or we ask Indra for help from here, or from heaven, or from above

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[12]Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 2 Vols., 2nd. ed. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923) I, 65.

[13]A description of a sunrise. Indra is the god of the bright day, whose steed is the sun, and whose companions are the Maruts, or the storm-gods. *Arusha*, meaning red, is used as the proper name of the horse or rising sun. In this passage the term is a substantive, meaning the red of the morning.

[14]*Svadha*, lit. "one's own place," afterwards, "one's own nature. "The Maruts are born again, i.e., as soon as Indra appeared with the dawn, according to their wont; they are always born as soon as Indra appears, for such is their nature.

[15]To express that the Maruts were born, or that the storms burst forth from the womb of the sky as soon as Indra arises to do battle against the demon of darkness.

the earth, or from the great sky.[16]

Agni, the god of fire, is the second most important Vedic deity. He derives from the scorching sun, which by its heat kindles inflammable material. He appears in three aspects: the sun in the heavens, the lightning in mid-air, and ordinary fire on earth. He is described as having a tawny beard and sharp jaws with burning teeth. He is the protector of people and their homes. His function is expressed in the following hymn:

> The other Agnis (the other fires) are verily thy branches, O Agni. In thee all the immortals enjoy themselves. Vai*s*vânara! Thou art the centre of human settlements; like a supporting column thou holdest men.
>
> The head of heaven, the navel of the earth is Agni; he has become the steward of both worlds. Thee, a god, the gods have engendered, O Vai*s*vânara, to be a light for the Ârya.
>
> As in the sun the rays are firmly fixed, thus in Agni Vai*s*vânara all treasures have been laid down. (The treasures) which dwell in the mountains, in the herbs, the waters, and among men--of all that thou art the king.
>
> As the two great worlds to their son, like a Hot*ri*, like a skilful man, (we bring) praises--manifold (praises) to him who is united with the sun, to the truly strong one, new (praises) to Vai*s*vânara, the manifest god.
>
> Thy greatness, O Gâtavedas, Vai*s*vânara, has exceeded even the great heaven. Thou art the king of the human tribes; thou has by fighting gained wide space for the gods.
>
> Let me now proclaim the greatness of the bull whom the Pûrus worship as the destroyer of enemies. Agni Vai*s*vûnara, having slain the Dasyu, shook the (aerial) arena and cut down *S*ambra.
>
> Agni Vai*s*vûnara, extending by his greatness all dominions, who is to be worshipped, the bright one, rich in loveliness, is awake (or, is praised) among the Bharadvûgas, in the homestead of Puru*n*îtha *S*âtavneya. with his hundredfold blessings.[17]

Early Indian religious thought sustained a pantheon of naturalistic gods, devised to comprehend the various natural phenomena and forces. *Sura* is the sun, the author of light and life in the world. *Savitr* is also a solar deity, representing especially the invisible sun of the night. *Visnu* is *Sura* in the function of supporting all the worlds. *Pusan* is another solar god. He is also a pastoral god who protects the husbandmen and their cattle and the wayfarers. *Usas* is the goddess of the dawn. The *Asvins*, inseparable twins, are the lords of dawn and dusk. *Soma*, of whom we shall see more in the sequel, is the god of inspiration and the giver of immortal life. *Yama* is the ruler of the dead.

There is yet another god, whose importance is comparable to that of Indra and Agni. He is *Varuṇa*, the god of the sky. The name derives from "*var*," which means "to cover" or "compass." He is similar to the Greek Ouranos (Οὐρανός). He is "'the universal encompasser, the all-embracer.'"[18] He covers the entire heavens "as with a robe, with all the creatures thereof

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[16]*Vedic Hymns*, "Mandala I, Hymn 6," 1-10, in Max Müller, tr., *Vedic Hymns*, *Sacred Books of the East*, 50 Vols. Reprint (Deli: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), XXXII, 14-15.

[17]Vedic Hymns, "Mandala I, Hymn 59," 1-7, in Hermann Oldenberg, tr., *Sacred Books of the East*, Reprint, (Deli: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964), XLVI, 49-50.

[18]John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (New Delhi: Navchetan Press, 1973), p. 339.

and their dwellings."[19] He is usually associated with *Mitra*, the ruler of the day while Varuṇa is the ruler of the night.

As time progressed, Varuṇa became idealized and became the most moral of the Vedic deities. At first he was the keeper of the physical order. He was the custodian of *Ṛta*. *Ṛta* means "the course of things." It originally referred to the established and uniform course of the world process. Sings one hymn of the *Ṛig*-Veda:

> The dawn follows the path of Ṛta, the right path; as if she knew them before. She never oversteps the regions. The sun follows the path of Ṛta.[20]

Wordsworth voiced the same thought in the words:

> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

As time progressed, Ṛta assumed a divinity and became the keeper of the moral law. Here Indian mythological thought became idealized. "O Indra," voices one hymn, "lead us on the path of Ṛta, on the right path over all evils."[21] And in another hymn there is the prayer to Varuṇa, the keeper of Ṛta:

> Loose me from sin as from a band that binds me: may we swell, Varuṇa, thy spring of order.
> Let not my thread, while I weave song, be severed, nor my work's sun, before the time, be shattered.
> . . . . . .
> O mighty Varuṇa, now and hereafter, even as of old, will we speak forth our worship.
> For in thyself, invincible god, thy statues ne'er to be moved are fixed as on a mountain.
> Move far from me what sins I have committed: let me not suffer, King, for guilt of others.
> Full many a morn remains to dawn upon us: in these, O Varuṇa, while we live direct us.[22]

In time the pantheon of Vedic gods tended to give way to an incipient monistic tendency. Varuṇa became the chief of the gods protecting the natural and moral orders. His dual role is thus described:

> To make this Varuṇa come forth, sing thou a song unto the band of Maruts wiser than thyself,--
> This Varuṇa who guardeth well the thoughts of men like herds of kine.
> Let all the others die away.
> The night he hath encompassed, and established the morns with magic art: visible over all is he.

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[19]*Ṛig*-Veda, viii. 41, Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[20]*Ṛig*-Veda iv. 23. 9, *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[21]x. 133. 6., *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[22]Ṛig-Veda, ii. 28, in Lin Yutan, ed., *The Wisdom of China and India* (New York: Random House, c. 1942), p.18.

His dear one,[23] following his law have prospered the three dawns[24] for him.
He, visible, o'er all the earth, stablished the quarters of the sky:
He measured out the eastern place, that is the fold of Varuṇa:
like a strong herdsman is the god.
He who supports the worlds of life, he who well knows the hidden
names mysterious of the morning beams,
He cherishes much wisdom, sage, as heaven brings forth each
varied form.
In whom all wisdom centres, as the nave is set within the wheel.
Haste ye to honour Trita,[25] as kine haste to gather in the fold,
even as they muster steeds to yoke.
He wraps these regions as a robe; he contemplates the tribes of
gods and all the works of mortal men.
Before the home of Varuṇa all the gods follow his decree.
He is the ocean far-removed, yet through the heaven to him
ascends the worship which these realms possess.
With his bright foot he overthrew their magic, and went up to
heaven.
Ruler, whose bright far-seeing rays, pervading all three earths,
have filled the three superior realms of heaven.
Firm is the seat of Varuṇa: over the Seven [rivers] he rules as king.
Who, after his decree, o'erspread the dark ones[26] with a robe of
light;
Who measured out the ancient seat, who pillared both the
worlds apart as the unborn supported heaven. Let all the
others die away.[27]

The supreme deity is conceived under two main aspects, as *Brahman* and as Ā*tman*. Brahman is the deity in its objective aspect, while Ātman is the deity in its subjective aspect.

The term *Brahman*, which signifies the supreme reality, comes from the root *bhr*, "to grow," to "burst forth." Thus the term defines the deity as a gushing forth, a bubbling over, a ceaseless growth. This means that God is not the transcendent being who creates the world, but the being whose reality is expressed *as* the world. It is virtually the same thing to speak of God and the world; they are not two distinct orders of reality. But the supreme deity is not only Brahman, the deity is also Īśvara, or "Lord." The term indicates the creative diffusion of Brahman in and throughout the world. In short, the finally definitive name of the supreme reality is *Brahman-Iśvara*: God as infinite being and as self-diffusive freedom. God is absolute possibility, emanating spirit, world spirit (*Hiranya-garbha*), and the world. There is no transcendent divinity.

The seers of the Veda evidently came to the conclusion that Brahman, although the ultimate cosmic principle, lacked elements essential to the supreme deity. Brahman need not be spiritual, and, if not spiritual, its existence is problematical. The conception of Ātman, and its eventual identification with Brahman, is an effort to overcome the felt limitations in

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[23]The nights, which give way to dawn.

[24]Morning, noon, and evening.

[25]Varuṇa.

[26]Nights which Varuṇa turns into days.

[27]Ṛ*ig-Veda* viii. 41, in Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, eds. *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 17-18.

the idea of Brahman.

The etymology of the term, Ātman, is obscure. In the Ṛig-Veda the word signifies the inner life of man, the self. Its existence is both spiritual and certain. But it is limited, for the individual is finite. To overcome this limitation, the later Vedic thinkers identified the individual Ātman with the cosmic ultimate, or Brahman. In this way, it was thought, not only was the finitude, the distance from the infinite, of the individual self overcome, but the barrenness and the problematic of the metaphysical ultimate, Brahman, was itself overcome. In fine, the cosmic and psychological realities are one: Brahman and Ātman are identical. The infinite is not beyond the finite but *in* the finite. The whole of reality is Brahman-Ātman. And what this means is that, in the power of this form of immanence, the individual already, by virtue of existence, stands *within* the pale and reality of redemption.

Yet the identification of Brahman with Ātman did not, for the Vedic thinkers, adequately "personalize" the Absolute God who is beyond all experience and knowledge. This is attempted in a later Vedic hymn, which is addressed to the Unknown God, of whom it is repeatedly asked, "Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?" Therefore, a "second" deity, born of Brahman, or a development of Brahman, is contrasted with this unapproachable God. He is called *Hiraṇya-garbha*, which means "golden womb," or "golden child," or, more properly, "one born of a golden womb." He is also called *Prajāpati*, the "Lord of creatures." He is the creator-god. He is said to have arisen in the beginning. He emerged from the primeval waters and, from the shapeless primeval chaos, evolved the world:

> In the beginning there arose the Golden Child (Hiraṇya-garbha); as soon as born, he alone was the lord of all that is. He stablished the earth and this heaven:--Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice:
>
> He who gives breath, he who gives strength, whose command all the bright gods revere, whose shadow[28] is immortality, whose shadow is death:--Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> When the great waters went everywhere, holding the germ (Hiraṇya-garbha), and generating light, then there arose from them the (sole) breath of the gods:--Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?
>
> He who by his might looked even over the waters which held power (the germ) and generated the sacrifice (light), he alone is God above all gods:--who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?[29]

But the Vedic seers came to feel that the two eternally co-existing substances, water and chaos, needed to be accounted for. Thus, they propounded a second view of creation. According to this view, the two substances are not eternally pre-existent. Rather, they are evolved from the one absolute reality, Brahman. The later Vedic hymn, the Nāsadīya hymn, the hymn of creation sets forth this view:

> There was then neither what is nor what is not, there was no sky,
> nor the heaven which is beyond. What covered? Where
> was it, and in whose shelter? Was the water the deep abyss
> (in which it lay)?

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[28] *khaya*, in the sense of what belongs to the god, as the shadow belongs to a man, what follows him, or is determined by him. "Whose shadow is death:" ignorance of Him leads to death.

[29] x. 121, Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

There was no death, hence there was nothing immortal. There was
no light (distinction) between night and day. That One
breathed by itself without breath, other than it there has
been nothing.
Darkness there was, in the beginning all this was a sea without light;
the germ that lay covered by the husk, that One was born
by the power of heat (tapas).[30]

The absolute reality is alone in primordial being: "other than it there has been nothing." "It is beyond time, beyond space, beyond age, beyond death, beyond immortality."[31] It is the world-ground from which all existence derives: "That one breathed by itself without breath," i.e., was self-moved absolutely. The process of creation is that of self-diremption, a going-forth into existence. The power effecting this movement is *tapas*, heat, or desire. Thus the world is the self-diremption of the ultimate reality. It is therefore one with its eternal ground.

However, this hymn suggests a distinction between the Absolute Reality and the Personal God. The latter is called Īś*vara*, or "Lord." He is the Personal God. He is the manifestation of the Absolute, who now has become accessible to human experience and thought.

The *Upaniṣads* carry forward the views of the Veda. For this reason, they are also called the *Vedānta*, or the end of the Veda. The expression suggests that they contain the essence of Vedic thought. The term *Upaniṣad* derives from *upa ni sad*, which means "sitting down near," and conveys the idea of "sitting down near" a teacher to receive instruction.

The Upaniṣads affirm the Vedic identity of Brahman and Ātman:

The wise one [i.e., the Ātman, the Self] is not born, nor dies.
This one has not come from anywhere, has not become anyone.
Unborn, constant, eternal, primeval, this one . . . .

More minute than the minute, greater than the great,
Is the Self that is set in the heart of a creature here.[32]

They also accept the view that creation is expression, that God becomes the world. The view is expressed, as in the Vedas, in mythical and fanciful language. But philosophically the language registers a metaphysical theory of creation. The smallest of the Upaniṣads, the Īśa Upaniṣad, pictures the transcendent, yet immanent, unity that underlies the world:

(Know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving
world, is enveloped by God . . . .
(The Spirit) is unmoving, one, swifter than the mind.
The senses do not reach It as It is ever ahead of them. Though
Itself standing still It outstrips those who run. In It the all-
pervading air supports the activities of beings.
It moves and It moves not; It is far and It is near;
It is within all this and It is also outside all this.[33]

In distinction to the Indian view of the God who externalizes himself in

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[30]Ṛig-Veda x. 129, Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-01.

[31]Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[32]*The Upaniṣads*, ii. 18, 20, Radhakrishnan and Moore, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

[33]*Îśa Upaniṣad*, 1, 4-5, Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 567-71.

the world, the Hebrew conception of God is that He transcends His created world, yet relates Himself to that world in the stance of support and care. But in His essential being He is other to and beyond that world. As we earlier indicated, for the first time in human history, Hebrew thought asserted the transcendence of the Divine. Thus the world is not an expression or projection of His own essential being.

However, before we take up this novel thought of divine transcendence, it is well to consider a radically different concept of God's transcendent reality. This is the Greek philosophical concept of God, particularly, the views of Plato and Aristotle.

For the Greek mind, the eternal enjoyed a transcendence that was beyond all time. For Plato, the ultimate reality was *The Good* (τὸ ἀγαθόν). He used two terms to designate this supreme reality: *Idea* (ἰδέα) and eidos (εἶδος). The two terms are derived from *idein* (ἰδεῖν), meaning "to see." The original meaning of the two terms is "visible form." While he retained the original, intuitive meaning of the terms, Plato transferred that meaning from outward appearance to inner form and structure. The Good is *Idea*--indeed, the supreme *Idea*--because it is the supreme principle of order and stability of all things. It is, Plato says in *Phaedo* 99c, "the good, which must embrace and hold together all things."[34]

Since the primary meaning of *Idea*, or *Eidos*, is intuitive, the Good cannot be defined conceptually or known by the purely logical intellect. When, in *Republic* vi. 505, Plato introduces in the discussion the subject of the Good, he points out "that we have no adequate knowledge of it." As the creative and sustaining cause of all things it is "on the other side" of reality or being. It is wholly "transcendent." There can be no knowledge of what is "beyond" being.

Plato does, however, describe the supreme Good figuratively. In the ideal realm, the Good functions somewhat as does the sun in the visible realm. Just as the sun is the warmth that brings things to existence and the light that reveals those things to the senses, so the Good is the creative and sustaining cause of the world and the condition of its intelligibility. For us, then, the Good is the true end of life. But beyond this analogy, Plato dares not tread in his attempt to call our attention to the supreme *Idea*.[35]

Aristotle carried this thought of the radical transcendence of the supreme reality even further. He introduced *spiritual monotheism* in classical Greek thought. In his philosophy God means the same thing as the Idea of the Good in Platonic philosophy. God is, Aristotle maintained, a self-conscious being different from the world. But the deity is so far removed from the world that the divine mind has no knowledge of, to say nothing of affection for, the world. God is wholly ensconced in his eternal blessedness. As Perfection, God must think only of himself, of "that which is most divine and precious." There are some things, the things of earth, "about which it is

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[34]Harold North Fowler, *Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 341.

[35]Plato, *The Republic*, bk. vi, 505-10. Paul Shorey, *Plato: The Republic*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1956), pp. 86-108.

incredible that it [God] should think."[36] Again, as in Plato, transcendence is achieved at the price of time and history.

Now, the problem is not that of transcendence itself. The supreme reality must be different from the world of time and change, must be insusceptible of the ravages of historical process. But if the supremely real is to mean something in the life of humanity, it must also be present in that historical process.

The Hebrew view of God maintains the divine transcendence beyond the world of time and history, but it does so in a manner that sustains the divine knowledge of and care for the historical process. This dual role of transcendence and immanence, in which neither aspect of the divine reality is compromised, is secured in the Hebrew conception of divine creation. The transcendent-God is the creator-God.

Here it is appropriate to reconsider the Vedic account of creation. The Hymn to the Unknown God describes the creative process. First, God expresses Himself, by way of self-diremption, as the first existent, Prajãpati, or Hiranya-garbha, the "golden child." This first existent then becomes the source of the universe, "as soon as born, he alone was the lord of all that is [Prajapati]". The god then confronts the chaos of waters and impregnates them in the form of a golden egg or germ, from which the entire universe develops. In this indirect way, the transcendent divinity *becomes* the universe.

> When the great waters went everywhere, holding the germ (Hiraṇya-garbha), and generating light, then there arose from them the (sole) breath of the gods:--Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?

Now, as will be readily seen, the allusion to the chaos of waters, in the Vedic hymn, calls to mind the "face of the waters" in the biblical account of creation. But the Vedic and Hebrew accounts differ substantially. The Genesis account precludes both an eternally pre-existent material of creation and the emanation of the universe from the Absolute.

> In the beginning God created
> the heaven and the earth.
> And the earth was without
> form, and void; and darkness
> was upon the face of the deep.
> And the Spirit of God moved
> upon the face of the waters.[37]

The phrase, "in the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית), *bᵉrêʾshîth*) may be interpreted in two ways. It may be used absolutely and mean simply, "in the beginning." If this be the correct interpretation, verse 1 is a complete sentence. The verse then either asserts the creation of the primeval chaos described in verse 2 or it outlines the creative process described in the entire chapter. The second interpretation is probably the correct one, since a created chaos is contradictory. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, or imply, that God creates chaos.

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[36]Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, ix, 18-26. J. A. Smith and W. D. Ross, trs., *The Works of Aristotle*, 11 Vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1908), VII.

[37]Gen. 1:1-2.

This must be emphasized. The Genesis account of creation is in nowise a parallel to the Vedic myth. There is no process in which God through a process of self-diremption produces a first existent, a "golden child," who confronts the primeval chaos of waters, and impregnates the chaos with a "golden germ" so as to bring the universe into being.

If the phrase is used relatively, then verse 1 is a temporal clause that is subordinate either to verse 2 or verse 3. Verse 1 then would read, "In the beginning of God's creating the heaven and the earth." This may be the correct interpretation.

However, there appear to be arguments for either interpretation, and the decision as to which interpretation is correct is a difficult one. But what can be said with a high degree of certainty is that the phrase, "in the beginning," is not used in the sense of John 1:1, where the phrase, ἐν ἀρχῇ (*en archē*) means "from eternity." Thus Genesis does not authorize an eternal creative process, as in Indian thought, where the Absolute proceeds repeatedly in self-diremption. What it does signify is that creation was "at the commencement of time." It does not say *when* the beginning was. What it says is *that* the beginning was.

But beyond this difficulty of syntax, there is this that is certain. It is this: "God created." The verb "create" (בָּרָא, *bara*) expresses the central idea in the verse. It is used *exclusively* of *divine* activity. This is a restriction that is not found in any other language. The term carries with it the ideas of novelty, extraordinariness, and effortlessness. The "God said," which opens each day of creative activity, expresses the effortlessness of divine creation. While the term for creation stops short of indicating creation *ex nihilo*, it nevertheless strongly suggests it.

The object of the verb, create (*bara*) is "*the heavens and the earth*." This Hebrew phrase means, not a chaotic material out of which the universe is created, but the *organized* universe. The chaos, referred to in verse 2, is the *earth*, which, in that verse, is wholly excluded from any connection with heaven.

This verse must be carefully examined, because, on its surface, it might appear to be but a reformulation of the material of the ancient creation myths. The dark "face of the deep," the "face of the waters,"--are not these but the "great waters . . . holding the [golden] germ," described in the Vedic hymn, or the primeval chaos of waters ("abyss of waters, *Tiʾãmat*), described in the Babylonian Creation Myth?

The Genesis account of the chaos ascribes three features to it: confusion (בֹּהוּ, *bhòhû*, *emptiness;* תֹּהוּ *Tōhû*, *wasteness*,), darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ, *hō-shekʾ*), *waters* (מָיִם, *mahʾ*-yim). Just what this three-fold characterization of the chaos depicts, is somewhat hard to determine.[38] It does, however,

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[38]Jeremiah's description of a returned chaos is a clue to what the genesis account signifies:

> I beheld the earth, and, lo, it
> was without form and void; and
> the heavens, and they had no light.
> I beheld the mountains, and,
> lo, they trembled, and all the hills
> moved lightly.
> I beheld, and, lo, there was
> no man, and all the birds of the

describe the condition of the earth. Thus there is here no distinction of land and sea. What is probably meant is that the earth is an amorphous watery mass in which were commingled the elements of the future land and sea. But is not this the chaos of Vedic and Babylonian literature?

The Babylonian legend of the creation of the world is the *Enuma elish*, so named after the first two words ("When in the Height") in the opening line of the seven-tablets. It is interpreted and reinforced by Berosus, a Chaldean priest and chronicler who lived in the 3rd century B.C., and without whom the Babylonian legend would be unintelligible.

According to the myth, *Apsu*, the primordial ocean, existed in the beginning, before the gods were formed or heaven and earth created. Apsu is the first father. The first mother is *Ti'āmat*, which means literally the "sea." In the legend, however, the term assumes a special meaning: "the watery chaotic abyss from which primeval life arose by the mixing of its waters with those of Apsu and out of which heaven and earth were ultimately shaped."[39] The epic begins:

> When in the height heaven was not named,
> and the earth beneath did not yet bear a name,
> And the primeval Apsu, who begat them,
> And chaos, Tiamut, the mother of them both--
> Their waters were mingled together,[40]

In Berosus' account, Ti'ãmat encompasses the monsters, the first gods, that swarm in the watery darkness. The *Enuma elish* continues the account. The real gods, also born of Ti'ãmat, destroy their mother and her monster-gods, and, after cutting her in two, make heaven of one half and earth of the other half. Thus Berosus speaks of a time

> in which there existed nothing but darkness and abyss of waters, wherein resided most hideous beings, which were produced by a two-fold principle. . . . The person who presided over them was a woman [Ti'ãmat] named Omoroca, which in the Chaldean language is Thalatth, in Greek Thalassa, the sea: but, according to the most true computation, it is equivalent to Selene, the moon.[41]

Now, there is no question but that there are phrases in the ancient creation myths that parallel those in the Bible. We do not know to what extent, if any, the biblical writer availed himself of the older legends. But what can be said with certainty is that the parallel is quite limited and that it has been much exaggerated by those who wish to deprive the Genesis account of creation of its distinctive and unique character. The Babylonian and

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> heavens were fled.
> I beheld, and lo, the fruitful
> place was a wilderness, and all the
> cities thereof were broken down at
> the presence of the Lord, and by
> his fierce anger.
> Jeremiah 4:23-26.

[39]William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: Second and Third Series* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, c. 1995), p. 100.

[40]Charles F. Horne, ed., *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, 14 Vols. (New York: Parke, Austin, and Linscombe, Inc., c1917), I, 151.

[41]*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

Genesis accounts have in common only their conception of the physical universe. Both speak, for example, of the solid expanse of heaven stretched like a dome over the earth. But beyond this similarity, the difference between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts is vast and unbridgeable.

In the first place, the chaos in Genesis is not that out of which all things emerge; it is but the raw material out of which the commingled elements of the orderly world are separated by the creative fiat of God. Secondly, the biblical narrative is free from mythological associations. It contains absolutely no *personifications*. There is no personification of the primal chaos, as is the case in the Babylonian creation myth, where it is personified under the name of *Tiʾāmat*. Further, the focus is exclusively on the earth. There is no reference to the heavens. There are no activities of gods in the heavenly realms before the creation, as is normally the case with respect to mythical representations. There is no hint of a conflict in heaven. And there is no reference to the underworld. In sum, the Bible narrative of creation is unique and stands alone in its own right.[42]

The creatorship of God implies His transcendence over and beyond His created world. It implies the distinctive and unique reality of God. This, as we have observed, precludes any and all thought of the world as the emanation of God, as the diremption of the divine reality. And it is precisely this preclusion of evolutionary immanence of the Divine, this strong claim of God's unique self-hood, that makes the religion of the Bible, as is no other religion, the religion of redemption. Only as God is beyond world, beyond history, can God care for and redeem world and history.

W. Robertson Smith writes movingly in this regard:

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[42]In the Bible there are, to be sure, phrases that may allude to Near Eastern mythological motifs. Psalms 74:13-14 reads, in part, "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou breakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces," The Ugaritic "Poem of Baal" tells of Baal's conflict with *Yam*, the god of the sea. It speaks of the fabulous monsters, the dragons and the Leviathan. All this, however, does not necessarily mean that the Psalmist had this mythical material in mind when he composed the Psalm. Even if he did, that does not affect the position that the biblical account of creation refuses to employ myth, since the reference, if there be one, to the Babylonian creation myth does not concern the subject of creation. It is more probable that the references are to the crossing of the Red Sea and the Egyptian captains.

Isaiah 27:1 reads: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." This verse refers to the overthrow of the enemies of God. He conquers those on earth who oppose Him, and, precedent to the birth of the New World, those in Heaven who align themselves against Him (see Rev. 12:7). Here, again, there may be a mythological reference, where, in the Babylonian creation myth, Marduk, the god of light, conquers the mythical serpentine monsters. If so, the writer uses the material to represent the final triumph of God. But, again, this circumstance does not denigrate from the uniqueness of the biblical account of creation as having no mythic personification. Parenthetically, it should be noted that there is no mention of Leviathan in the Babylonian creation myth.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12). The passage in which this verse serves celebrates the destruction of a monarch who has terrorized the world, which the writer further characterizes as an assault upon the throne of God. The overthrow of this tyrant, identified as Babylon, is pictured in allegorical terms, derived, probably, from some ancient astral myth, which today is unknown to us. But the point is, in the connection of the present discussion, that the allegorical representation does not signify any war in heaven prior to the creation of the world.

> The simple and grand cosmogony of Genesis 1 has no parallel among the heathen Semites because none of them has such a conception of God the creator. We shall see as we proceed that the pictorial details of the Hebrew story of creation bear a certain resemblance to the details of other, and notably of Babylonian creation myths. But the resemblance has been greatly exaggerated and the unity of the story in which the whole creation appears as one progressive and well-ordered work of God is not borrowed from Babylon, while the lesson of the story which makes it fit to stand at the head of the record of Revelation and Redemption is entirely foreign to Semitic tradition.
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> In the Old Testament the doctrine of one God the creator of all is one of the chief cornerstones of practical religion. Among the heathen the origin of the world is a matter of mere curiosity, which is discussed in a fluctuating and uncertain body of myths. The gods enter into these myths, for they are themselves part of the universe of things; but what they did and suffered in the cosmogonic age is practically unimportant for religion. If the cosmogonic myths had been wholly wiped out, Semitic heathenism would still have stood just where it was. But where would the religion of the Bible be without God the maker of all?[43]

While the created world is other than God, its Creator, it nevertheless witnesses to its Author and His creative power. The heavens and the earth are said to be the outskirts of His ways, the whisperings of His awesome power:

> The heavens declare the glory of God;
> and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
> Day unto day uttereth speech,
> and night unto night sheweth knowledge.[44]

> Lo, these are parts of his ways;
> but how little a portion is heard of him?
> but the thunder of his power who can understand?[45]

But, now, who is this God who lives beyond all times and all worlds, who brings these times and worlds into being by creative fiat? In this first verse of the Hebrew Bible, He is called by the name, אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*). *Elohim* is the plural form of אֵל.

In the Hebrew language every noun is derived from a verb, in the third person singular of the past tense, which is called the *radix* or *root*. Now, in the Hebrew language there is no such root for the word אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*). If there once were such a root, it is now lost. The whole of the ancient Hebrew language is lost, with the exception of that which is found in the Bible. Since there is a very close relation of the Hebrew to the Arabic, which is a living language, the root must be found in that language. The term for *God* in Arabic is الله, *Allah*. It is, Adam Clarke states,

> derived from the root, *alaha, he worshipped, adored, was struck with astonishment, fear, or terror*; and hence, he adored with sacred horror and veneration . . . . Thus from the *ideal* meaning of this most expressive root, we acquire the most correct notion of the Divine nature; for we learn that God is the *sole object of adoration*; that the perfections of his nature are such as must *astonish* all those who piously contemplate them, and fill with *horror* all those who would dare

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[43]Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

[44]Ps. 19:1-2.

[45]Job 26:14.

> to give his glory to *another*, or break his commandments; that consequently he should be *worshipped* with *reverence* and *religious fear* . . . .[46]

Elohim, then, is the God who is worshipped and adored with astonishment, fear, and even terror. At this stage in God's self-revelation, He appears to human consciousness as the Numinous, or the *Mysterium Tremendum*. These terms are employed by Rudolf Otto in his *The Idea of the Holy*. The term *numinous* comes from the Latin, *numen,* which means *a nod, a command*. Its corresponding verb, *nuere*, means *to nod*. Perhaps the ease and naturalness of a nod with which a command may be given accounts for the expansion of the meaning of the term, to signify the *divine will*, the *might of a deity*, *majesty*, and *divinity*. Thus, according to Otto, the numinous is the majestic presence of divinity before whom the creature is submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to the Supreme Being. Abraham voiced this sense of the numinous, when he petitioned God to spare the men of Sodom: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27).

Otto further designates the numinous as *mysterium tremendum*, The literal meaning of the expression is *aweful mystery.* The elements of *tremendum*, Otto says, are *awfulness, overpoweringness* (*majesty*), *energy* or *urgency*. The element of *mysterium* is *the Wholly Other*. The *awfulness* of *the Wholly Other* is that which overwhelms the creature-consciousness.[47] The *mysterium tremendum* is the supernatural and transcendent *Elohim*, the God of mysterious creative power.

The *Elohim* of transcendent, creative power is the power to be eternally. It is the mysterious, unfathomable depth of the Divine Reality, what Luther called "the naked absolute." Tillich, for example, writes that it

> is the basis of Godhead, that which makes God God. It is the root of his majesty, the unapproachable intensity of his being, the inexhaustible ground of being in which everything has its origin. It is the power of being infinitely resisting nonbeing, giving the power of being to everything that is.[48]

There now comes a profound development in regard to the name of God. Having issued the great command to lead the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, the Lord manifests Himself to Moses under a new name:

> And God spake unto Moses,
> and said unto him, I am the Lord:
> And I appeared unto Abraham,
> unto Isaac, and unto Jacob,
> by the name of God Almighty, but
> by my name **JEHOVAH** was I not known to them.[49]

In earlier times, then, God was known under the name of "God Almighty."

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[46]Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible*, 6 Vols. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1857, I, 27.

[47]Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, tr. J. W. Harvey, 2nd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950), chs. II-V.

[48]Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 250-51.

[49]Exod. 6:2-3.

The God who here speaks to Moses is the Creator-God, *Elohim*, of Genesis. It is this God who was known to the patriarchs by the name of *God Almighty*. The name in the Hebrew is אֵל שַׁדַּי, *El Shaddai*. *El* is the singular of *Elohim*. *Shaddai* is a term connoting power. It comes from the primitive root *shadad*, meaning *to deal violently with*, *to devastate*. *El Shaddia* is the transcendent Divinity of overpowering majesty, the *mysterium tremendum.*

But this God of early revelation is now come to humankind under a new name, the name of **JEHOVAH**. Something new, something wonderful is now occurring that will bring the God who dwells in the isolation of transcendence near to the trembling heart of humanity. He is now come as **JEHOVAH**.

The drama of the fulfilled Old Testament revelation of God begins with God's appearing to Moses in "a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Here God first appears under the old name of *Elohim*. At this name, Moses is stricken with awe and fear and hides his face. He is given the great commission to lead his people out of Egypt. Then, still under the spell of the aweful majesty of divine transcendence, he hears those words of assurance. God who spoke worlds into existence now speaks anew: "Certainly, I will be with thee." What now, Moses asks, is the name of this God?

> And Moses said unto God [*Elohim*],
> behold, when I come unto the
> children of Israel, and shall say
> unto them, The God [*Elohim*] of your fathers
> hath sent me unto you: and they
> shall say unto me, What is his name?
> what shall I say unto them?
> And God said [lit. *he said*] unto Moses,
> **I AM THAT I AM**: and he said,
> thus shalt thou say unto the children
> of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.
> And God said moreover unto
> Moses, thus shalt thou say unto
> the children of Israel, The Lord
> God of your fathers . . . , hath sent
> me unto you: this is my name for
> ever, and this is my memorial
> unto all generations.[50]

"This is my name for ever." It is as if we were standing with Moses in the sands of Midian and witnessing the moment when the new name was disclosed. The name is still *Elohim*, but to that name is added the designation, *Jehovah*. He is, and forever will be, *Jehovah Elohim* (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים), the *Lord God*.

In Hebrew, the term, **I AM THAT I AM** (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, *Hayah asher Hayah*) literally means "I will be what I will be." While it is difficult to place meaning on the expression, it quite obviously indicates the eternal self-existence of God. But the expression also indicates that God's eternal self-existence is neither the self-enclosed absolute of Greek thought nor the overpowering remoteness of the transcendent and awesome Creator-God, *Elohim*.

Now, the name *Jehovah*, or Jahweh, *employed in verse 13*, is the causative form of the verb הָיָה (*hayah*), "to be." The term, *Jahweh (*יְהוָה*)*, thus means "He causes to be." The entire expression of Exodus 3:14, *Hayah asher Hayah*, then comes to mean "He causes to be what comes into existence (*Yahweh asher Yibweh*). God's name, then, signifies not only his eternal self-existence and

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[50]Exod. 3:13-15.

mysterious transcendence but his action in history and his involvement in the human drama, his personal faithfulness to his people. God's name is the name of revelation: "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:15). "Unto all generations," God will be the "Great Companion" of humanity, faithful in history to uphold and redeem his people.

It is Isaiah who gave the conception of God's creatorship a profound religious significance:

> Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span? . . . . Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out these hosts by number. . . . Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it. . . . I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth. . . . I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. . . . Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. . . .[51]

> Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.[52]

In the far-distant past, a meteorite fell in the part of Arabia in which Mecca is located. The Roman historian, Diodorus Siculus (ca. 60 B.C.) had in his own day mentioned the occurrence. The meteorite was placed in the corner of a cube-like building, the Ka'bah. The shrine became the center of idol worship.

In the seventh century A.D., the prophet Muhammad became dissatisfied with the idolatrous polytheism and licentious practices of the inhabitants of Mecca. After a period of extreme stress, he wandered into hills around Mecca and received a vision. It was nighttime when, so the tradition recounts, the archangel Gabriel stood before him and commanded him to recite. This night, "The Night of Power and Excellence," witnessed the birth of Islam and its scripture, the Qur'ãn.

The Qur'ãn, which purports to be the completion of divine revelation begun in other religions, sets forth a monotheism in an Arabian hue. The opening Sura reads:

> In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate[53]
>
> Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds,
> the All-merciful, the All-compassionate,
> the Master of the Day of Doom.
>
> Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succour.
> Guide us in the straight path,

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[51]Isa. 40:12, 26; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 48:13.

[52]Isa. 40:28-31.

[53]This line, which opens each Sura, is known as the *Fattiha*.

the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.[54]

The central article of Moslem thought is the assertion that God is one and undivided. He is alone and supreme. He is self-subsistent, omniscient, and omnipotent:

God

there is no god but He, the
Living, the Everlasting.
Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep;
to Him belongs
all that is in the heavens and the earth.
Who is there that shall intercede with Him
save by His leave?
He knows what lies before them
and what is after them,
and they comprehended not anything of His knowledge
save such as he wills.
His Throne comprises the heavens and the earth;
the preserving of them oppresses Him not;
He is the All-high, the All-glorious.[55]

From a chronological standpoint, there are two phases of the Qur'ãn. The earliest, or Meccan, portion represents God more in accordance with Jewish and Christian scriptures. God is the God of mercy and judgment who holds the people responsible for their acts. There is some emphasis on the freedom of the will in matters of human destiny. Thus:

We [God] do not send the Envoys, except good
tidings to bear, and warning; whoever believes
and makes amends--
no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow.
But those who cry lies to Our signs, them
the chastisement shall visit, for that
they were ungodly[56]

But in the latest, or Medina portion, the Qur'ãn becomes more strident and harsh. By this time in his life, Mohammed had become a militant leader of a new religion centered in Medina, from which he exerted his influence over all Arabia with great force. God now becomes the God of majesty and power who wills the events of history and decrees unqualifiedly and absolutely the salvation or damnation of believers and unbelievers. God does not reason with his people, but conducts them toward their happiness that results from their trust in his commands. God is compassionate, but only to the Moslem who submits unquestioningly to his will. But to those who reject him, he shows only hatred. In short, as R. E. Hume so vividly put it, Allah now becomes "like an Arab Sheikh glorified and magnified to cosmic proportions."[57] Thus a later Sura speaks:

So God leads astray whomsoever He will,
and He guides whomsoever He will; and

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[54]All quotations from the Qur'ãn are from A. J. Arberry, tr., *The Koran Interpreted*, 2 Vols. (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1955).

[55]Sura 2:255.

[56]Sura 6:49-50.

[57]R. E. Hume, *The World's Living Religions*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 225.

none knows the hosts of the Lord but He.
And it is naught but a reminder to mortals.[58]

Again,

Surely this is a reminder; so he
who will, takes unto his Lord a way.
But you will not unless God wills;
Surely God is ever All-knowing, All-wise.
For He admits into His mercy
whomsoever He will; as for the
evildoers, He has prepared for them
a painful chastisement.[59]

One may very well contrast this harsh, authoritarian concept of God with the tender, sympathetic Hebrew understanding of God. This God is the God who reasons with His erring people and invites them into the safe enclave of salvation:

Come now, and let us reason
together, saith the Lord: though
your sins be as scarlet they shall
be as white as snow; though they
be red like crimson, they shall be
as wool.[60]

Again, there is Hosea and his rebetrothal to his erring wife, the symbol of the restoration of Israel to Jawheh's favor:

Then said the Lord unto me,
Go yet, love a woman beloved
of her friend, yet an adulteress,
according to the love of the Lord
toward the children of Israel,
who took to other gods, and love
flagons of wine.[61]

In the context of the symbolism of earthly love, God signalizes His enduring love for His people--His people who have, indeed, grieved Him because of their waywardness, but whom He offers reconciliation and restoration:

Therefore, behold I will allure
her, and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak comfortably unto her.
. . . . . .
And I will betroth thee unto
me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee
unto me in righteousness, and in
judgment, and in lovingkindness,
and in mercies.
And I will even betroth thee
me in faithfulness: and thou shalt
know the Lord.[62]

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[58]Sura 74:34.

[59]Sura 76:30.

[60]Isa. 1:18.

[61]Hos. 3:1.

[62]Hos. 2:14-20.

There are, certainly, passages in the Qur'ãn, particularly the earlier portions, in which there are notes of compassion and tenderness:

> True piety is this:
> to believe in God and the Last Day,
> the angels, the Book, and the Prophets,
> to give of one's substance, however cherished,
> to kinsmen, and orphans,
> the needy, the traveller, beggars,
> and to ransom the slave,
> to perform the prayer, to pay alms.
> And they who fulfill their covenant,
> and endure with fortitude
> misfortune, hardship and peril,
> these are they who are true in their faith,
> these are the truly godfearing.[63]

Despite such passages as these, however, the dominant tone of the Qur'ãn is harsh and unforgiving, with emphasis on the infliction of retribution on the part of the stern and authoritarian Allah. There is, for example, the injunction to wage war against unbelievers:

> Fight those who believe not in God and the Last Day
> and do not forbid what God and His Messenger
> have forbidden--such men as practice not the
> religion of truth, being of those who have been given
> the Book--until they pay the tribute out of hand
> and have been humbled.[64]

Again,

> O Prophet, struggle with the unbelievers and the hypocrites,
> and be thou harsh with them; their refuge shall be Gehenna--
> an evil homecoming![65]

W. Robertson Smith, the eminent scholar of Semitic people, points out that Hebrew prophecy consists, not in prediction or mechanical frenzy, but in its salutary effect upon experience and history. In Isaiah 41:22, where the idols are challenged to predict the future, the context makes it clear that the authentic intent of prophecy is to produce an effect in history such as Jehovah produces, i.e., to "do good." On the basis of this criterion of true prophecy, Smith dismisses Mohammed as an unoriginal political manipulator:

> In fact, Mohammed has absolutely no fresh religious idea. Nor has he any fresh application of religious truth to the present juncture. His political revelations are purely his own private policy. The swoon, which he was able to produce, is merely a cloak in the later Suras for the coldest political judgment or a veil of selfish ambition combined--such are men--with a real zeal against polytheism and real belief in the Judgment.[66]

The religious thought of China, Taoism and Confucianism, identifies God with the totality of the universe. In this regard, these systems are one with Hinduism. The central metaphysical concept in both Taoism and Confucianism is

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[63]Sura 2:172.

[64]Sura 8:29.

[65]Sura 66:9.

[66]Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

the *Tao*.

The term, *Tao*, literally means *road*, or *path*. It means *the way to go*. As a metaphysical term, it refers to the ground of, and reason for, the order and harmony of nature. It is that which accounts for the world. It is conceived to be eternal.

The legend has it that the book, *Lao Tzû*, was composed by a man called Lao Tzû, who was born in the State of Ch'u in 604 B.C. However, that such a person did live is questionable. It is quite probable that the book is the product of several minds and that it in its present form dates from the 4th century B.C.

The *Lao Tzû*, also called the *Tao Te Ching*, admits that the *Tao* cannot be defined:

The Tao that can be told of
Is not the Absolute Tao;
The Names that can be given
Are not the Absolute Names.[67]

The Absolute *Tao*, shrouded in impenetrable mystery, is simple, formless, without desire and striving, supremely content:

Tao is all-pervading,
And its use is inexhaustible!
Fathomless!
Like the fountain head of all things.
Its sharp edges rounded off,
Its tangles untied,
Its light tempered,
Its turmoil submerged,
Yet crystal clear like the still water it seems to remain.
I do not know whose Son it is,
An image of what existed before God.[68]

Although it subsists in eternal silence, the *Tao* is the active power in all things. The term for "power" is *Te*, which may also be translated as "virtue." Thus *Te* is the manifestation of the *Tao*:

The marks of great virtue
Follow alone from the Tao.

The thing that is called Tao
Is elusive, evasive,
Evasive, elusive,
Yet latent in it are forms.
Elusive, evasive,
Yet latent in it are objects.
Dark and dim,
Yet latent in it is the life-force.
The life-force being very true,
Latent in it are evidences.[69]

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[67]*Lao Tzû*, chap. 1, Lin Yutang, tr., *The Wisdom of China and India* (New York: The Modern Library, c1942), p. 583.

[68]*Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 585.

[69]*Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 594.

The *Lao Tzû* is also an ethics. The goal of life is to achieve in present life a harmony with the *Tao*. Contemplation of the *Tao* is the first step taken by the Taoist sage. Then follows the stage in which one seeks to become merged into the *Tao*. Since the *Tao* is the absolute totality, and since the sage is part of that totality, the sage then *is* the *Tao*. Being one with the *Tao* he is the *Tao*:

> This is the Mystic Unity.
> Then love and hatred cannot touch him.
> Profit and loss cannot reach him.
> Honor and disgrace cannot affect him.
> Therefore is he always the honored one of the world.[70]

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. in the small state of Lu, which was located in present-day Shantung Province. His thought is primarily an ethical and political philosophy. The key concept here is that of *Li*. The basic sense of the term is "propriety." In its ethical and social significance, it prescribes a regulated order in personal and social life. Social reality is to be one in which everything is in order and in its proper place. The social ideal is that of harmony. The individual must be endowed with a pious and religious state of mind. This is "true manhood." The relation between personal and social morality is an invariable one: the personal is the basis of the social. Only as individuals are virtuous will there be order and harmony in society.

Of true manhood, Confucius writes:

> "True manhood consists in realizing your true self and restoring the moral order or discipline (or *li*)."
> . . . . . .
> "To find the central clue to our moral being which unites us to the universal order (or to attain central harmony), that indeed is the highest human attainment."[71]

With respect to the social import of *li*:

> "The principles of *li* and righteousness serve as the principles of social discipline. By means of these principles, people try to maintain the official status of rulers and subjects, to teach the parents and children, and elder brothers and husbands and wives to live in harmony, to establish social institutions . . . .
> This *li* . . . is the principle by which the ancient kings embodied the laws of heaven and regulated the expressions of human nature. Therefore he who has attained *li* lives, and he who has lost it, dies . . . *Li* is based on heaven, patterned on earth, . . . Therefore the Sage shows the people this principle of a rationalized social order (*li*) and through it everything becomes right in the family, the state, and the world."[72]

The above quotation indicates that *Li* is not only a personal and social norm of morality, but that it is also a metaphysical principle, in the sense

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[70]*Ibid*., chap. 56, p. 612. The expression, "Mystic Unity, may also be translated as "Mysterious Absorption."

[71]*Li Chi*, chap. 22, Lin Yutang, tr., *op. cit*., p. 831.

[72]*Li Chi* 9, Lin Yutang, tr., *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), pp. 228-29.

that it "is based on heaven." Confucius does speak of the *Tao*, but he does not regard it in the same light as did the Taoists. For him, the *Tao*, or the *Way*, is not a mystical concept signifying the ultimate reality. Instead, it is the Way to be followed in securing human happiness, both personal and social. Yet, it is the Way of Heaven. When one orders his life in accordance with respect for *li*, he realizes, not only the *Tao* of man, but also the *Tao* of Heaven. He comes into harmony with the will of Heaven.

Confucius' conception of Heaven is somewhat enigmatic. There are passages in the *Analects* where Confucius regards Heaven as the supreme deity--a view consonant with the beliefs of the Chinese people. He believed himself to be intrusted by Heaven to relieve the people from their distress and he desired that Heaven would support him in his efforts.[73] When others misunderstood him, he found comfort in that Heaven understood him.[74]

However, Confucius did not interpret the concept of Heaven in theistic, or personalistic, terms. For Confucius, Heaven is but a vaguely conceived moral force in the universe, a force that, nonetheless, assists men in their struggle to do the right.

We have previously noted that God was first known by the ancient Hebrews under the name of "God Almighty" (אֵל שַׁדַּי, *El Shaddai*). This is the God of absolute transcendence. The appropriate human response to this God is one of astonishment, fear, and even terror. But the time came when God became known under the new name of **JEHOVAH** (*Jahweh*, (יְהוָה). His name is still *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), but to this name a new designation is added, that of **JEHOVAH** (*Jahweh*). God is now, and will be forever, *Jehovah Elohim* (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים), the *Lord God*. He now speaks, "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."[75]

It is of the utmost significance to observe that this new name of God did not come by way of reason or rational reflection. It came *by way of experience*. Moses stood in the presence of God, who now manifests Himself under the new name of the Lord God, *Jehovah Elohim*. He speaks out of the fire. But it is a fire that does *not* consume. Although God inspires fear, yet He soon offers a comfort of fellowship in the words of assurance, "Certainly I will be with thee."[76] In sum, God is not only the God of eternal self-existence and mysterious transcendence, but He is the God who is active on behalf of His people. Fashioned by a basic religious experience, the name *Jahweh* is a concrete manifestation of the divine Reality.

Now, the text in Exodus makes it clear that God's name, the "Lord God," or *Jehovah Elohim*, is His name forever. It is the final name of God. But this finality does not preclude a fuller, more complete, disclosure of that which is involved in the name. He is *Jahweh* (יְהוָה), He who "causes to be." He is **I AM THAT I AM** (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, *Hayah asher Hayah*), He "who causes to be what comes into existence." In these expressions is found the forward glance, that God is the God who will continue to cause what will continue to become

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[73]Confucius, *Analects* 9.5, Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, tr. (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938), p. 139.

[74]Confucius, *Analects* 14.38, Waley, *Ibid*., p. 189.

[75]Exod. 3:15.

[76]Exod. 3:12.

reality. There is here, in this name of Deity, the harbinger of a new day of Divine disclosure. The glorious name of God will be further disclosed. This is the promise, this is the reality of the New Covenant.

How does the New Testament advance the name of God, while yet not annulling any of the Old Testament import of that name? That is the question we must now consider.

The key to the respect in which Christianity advanced the Hebrew conception of God is found in the term, used often and regularly by Jesus Himself, namely, that of *Father*. The Fatherhood of God is the decisive element in the New Testament fulfillment of the idea of Deity.

But a significant distinction must be made at this point in the argument. In the New Testament there are two words for *father*. There is the Greek term, Πατὴρ (*patēr*). The other term is the Aramaic, Ἀ**β**βά (*Abba*).

The term, Πατὴρ (*patēr*), is used either in the absolute sense or the relative sense. Jesus used the term in both senses. In Matthew 11:25, Jesus spoke of the Father in an absolute regard: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth . . . ."[77] Here the term, *Father*, is given further characterization as "Lord of heaven and earth." The complementary phrase, "Lord of heaven and earth," links heaven and earth together as the totality of God's creation and asserts that God is transcendent over His creation. This sense of Divine fatherhood is in line with the Hebrew view of God's absolute transcendence and therefore does not go significantly beyond the Old Testament view of God.

Jesus used the term, *Father*, in a relative sense, when he prayed in Gesthemene, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."[78] The expression, "my Father," is Πάτερ **mou**. The term *Father* is the Greek, *patēr*, the same term used in the previous text. As used here, the term is also in line with Hebrew usage. Thus the Psalmist sings:

> Sing unto God, sing praises
> to his name: extol him that
> rideth upon the heavens by
> his name **JÄH**, and rejoice before him.
> A father of the fatherless
> . . . is God in his holy habitation.[79]

And Isaiah writes, "But now, O Lord, thou art our father . . . ." In Jeremiah God asks, "Wilt thou from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" In the same book, God declares, "for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born." Finally, Malachi inquires, "Have we not all one father? hath not God created us?"[80]

In such passages as these, the fatherhood of God is restricted to the

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[77]Matt. 11:25.

[78]Matt. 26:39.

[79]Ps. 68:4-5.

[80]Isa. 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 31:9; Mal. 2:10.

nation. Thus Moses said in God's name, "Israel is my son, my firstborn."[81] The fatherhood is also but one of relation; it indicates only how God is related to his people. It does not mark out the character of God. Both of these limitations placed on the divine fatherhood are removed in the New Testament. The Old Testament ascribed fatherhood to God, but it is in the New Testament that the concept is filled with a new content. Thus Paul writes, "One God and Father of all . . . ."[82] Jesus used the term to describe the character of God. It is His very nature to give good things to those who ask Him. He bestows the kingdom of heaven upon the poor in spirit and gives the vision of Himself to the pure in heart. The term declares the very spirit of God that lies behind all of His relations to humanity. In sum, the advance is this: God is Father, not merely because He created us, or because He rules over us, or because of a national covenant, but because He loves us and secures for us our well-being and happiness.

> If ye then, being evil, know
> how to give good gifts unto your
> children, how much more shall
> your Father in heaven give good
> things to them that ask him?
>
> Blessed are the poor in spirit;
> for their's is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> Blessed are the pure in heart;
> for they shall see God.
>
> He that loveth not knoweth
> not God; for God is love.[83]

But the finally definitive understanding of the New Testament sense of the fatherhood of God is found in Jesus' use of the Aramaic term for father, ἀββά (*Abba*). Jesus used this term in the hour of His extreme agony in Gesthemene:

> And he went forward, and
> fell on the ground, and
> prayed that, if it were possible,
> the hour might pass from him.
> And he said, Abba, Father,
> all things are possible unto thee;
> take away this cup from me:
> Nevertheless not what I will, but
> what thou wilt.[84]

The expression, *Abba Father*, is without any punctuation, the intervening comma being supplied by the translation into English. The Greek expression reads, literally, Ἀββά ὁ πατὴρ. In the English translation, the two uses of the term, Father, without punctuation, makes little sense. This means that the import of the expression is found only in the fact that two different languages are employed, the Aramaic and the Greek, Ἀββά (*Abba*) and Πατὴρ (*patēr*). Why does our Lord employ these two languages in His prayer to His Father?

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[81]Exod. 4:22.

[82]Eph. 4:6.

[83]Matt. 7:11; 5:3, 8; 1 John 4:8.

[84]Mark 14:35-36.

In Jesus' time, the Aramaic word for father, Ἀββά (*Abba*), was used in the day-to-day life of the family. It was a word of extreme familiarity. The father in the family was addressed as *Abba*. From the side of the children, the word connotes *affection* and *respect*; from the side of the father, *care* and *tenderness*. The late Catholic theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, summarily clarifies the meaning of the word:

> *Abba* as an ordinary, secular term for one's earthly father for the Jew suggests in particular paternal authority: the father is the one charged with authority, with *exousia*, complete authority, whom the children are in duty bound to obey and treat with piety. The father is also the one available to look after and protect his own, the family, to come to the rescue and to give advice and counsel. He is the focus of the entire family (paternal house), everything revolves around him and through his person forms a community. . . . To sum up, one can say that in Jesus's time what the *abba* signified for his son was authority and instruction: the father is the authority and teacher.[85]

In addition to the term's being a familiar familial name for the father, it was also the simple, even babbling, speech of the little child to its father. It would appear, then, that, when the term is used to designate the fatherhood of God, it is so intimate as to be wholly incongruous with the majesty of the transcendent God. It would so appear to the Jews of Jesus' time. But, as Jesus used the term in His prayer, it is not so. For it brought to view the possibilities of intimacy and introduced something entirely new. It finally and completely revealed the character of God. God is, indeed, the Πατὴρ (*patēr*). As in the Hebrew faith, He is the Father in creation and covenant; the Father who rules over His people. But He is infinitely more. He is not a distant ruler in transcendence, but the One who is intimately close. This, and precisely this, Jesus disclosed in His use of the Aramaic term, *Abba*, joined, as it is in His prayer, with the absolute word, *Patēr*.

Jesus' "*Abba* experience," as we have just indicated, is revelatory of the character of God. He is now seen as the benevolent, solicitous One who cares for and offers a future for His children. He is now seen as a power cherishing and offering the people salvational freedom.

The nearness of God has implication for His holiness. The Old Testament, we know, affirmed the holiness of God. The phrase, "the Holy One of Israel" occurs repeatedly. The term, *holy*, is *qôdesh* (קֹדֶשׁ). Its primary meaning is apparently "separation" or "cutting off." Thus Isaiah suggests that the holiness of God is His separateness:

> To whom will ye liken me,
> or shall I be equal? saith the
> Holy One.
>
> For thus saith the high and
> lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,
> whose name is Holy;[86]

God commands His people to be a separate, and therefore a holy, people:

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[85]Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, tr. Hubert Hoskins (New York: The Seabury Press, c1979), pp. 262-63.

[86]Isa. 40:25; 57:15.

> And ye shall be holy unto me:
> For I the Lord am holy, and have
> severed you from other people, that
> ye should be mine.[87]

The New Testament advances the conception of Divine holiness. The practice of Jesus implies a new and ideal conception of holiness. The Sermon on the Mount teaches a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; a righteousness that excludes anger and lust as well as murder and adultery. This clearer and ethical conception of the holiness of God is further implied in His attitude to sinners. He was not afraid to come into personal contact with even the worst of sinners. He dined with publicans and received harlots, having no fear of defilement from them. Indeed, He came, He said, "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."[88]

This life-stance of Jesus makes it clear that the holiness of God does not consist in far removal from sinful humanity, being Himself subject to defilement. His holiness is not primarily separation, as it was for the Old Testament. It is not ritual. Divine holiness is purely ethical. It is the quality in His being that requires us to respond, "Hallowed be thy name."[89]

This conception of Divine holiness has, to be sure, parallels in the Old Testament. The Psalmist, for example, sang:

> Behold, thou desirest truth
> in the inward parts: and in the
> hidden part thou shalt make me
> to know wisdom.[90]

And Habakkuk wrote:

> Art thou not from ever-
> lasting, O Lord my God, mine
> Holy One?
> Thou art of purer eyes than to
> behold evil, and canst not look
> on iniquity . . . .[91]

But these passages are but intimations. The clarity and force with which it is expressed in the New Testament are unique.

Holiness in the Old Testament is *separation*. Holiness in the New Testament is *permeation*. A great preacher of a former time has aptly phrased the distinction:

> There is a difference between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. The spirit of Judaism is separation--that of Christianity is permeation. To separate the evil from the good was the aim and work of Judaism:--to sever one nation from all other nations; certain meats from other meat; certain days from other days. Sanctify means to set apart. The very essence of the idea of Hebrew holiness

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[87]Lev. 20:26.

[88]Luke 5:32.

[89]Matt. 6:9.

[90]Psa. 5:6.

[91]Hab. 2:12-13.

> lay in sanctification in the sense of separation. On the contrary, Christianity is permeation--it permeates all evil with good--it aims at overcoming evil by good--it desires to transfuse the spirit of the day of rest into all other days, and to spread the holiness of one nation over all the world. To saturate life with God, and the world with Heaven, that is the genius of Christianity.[92]

We have earlier pointed out that in the Old Testament the new name of God, **JEHOVAH** (*Jahweh*, יְהוָה), came, not by way of reflection, but by way of experience. So it was when, in the fullness of time, the implications of this ancient name were fully disclosed in New Testament times. What this name fully means came within the matrix of Jesus's *Abba* consciousness. *Jaweh*, the great **I AM** is *Abba*, the intimate **Father**.

Jesus' experience and designation of God as *Abba* carries on its face the truth of Jesus's sonship. His unique experience of God as Father is also His unique experience of Himself as Son. While Jesus did not speak of Himself as the Son of God, he most certainly was conscious of this unique relation between Him and the Father. So apparent was it that, toward the close of His ministry on earth, one of His disciples exclaimed in wonderment: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."[93]

The eminent disclosure of the character of God, the eminence of His *Abba*-name, is not something that man is able to achieve. It is achieved by Him who is uniquely the Son of the Father. The very intimacy of the *Abba* experience means, necessarily, that the Son is one with the Father, that the Son *is* God.

Jesus expressed His unity with the Father: "I and my Father are One."[94] The shortest and most emphatic expression of this unity is found in Jesus' High Priestly prayer, "even as we are one."[95] The key to the import of the phrase is the first person personal pronoun *we* (ἡμεῖς). It declares unequivocally: *we are* one.

Yes, it is this very unity with the Father that qualifies the historical Jesus to speak the fulfilled name of God, *Abba*, and thereby preeminently show forth the character of Deity.

But the intimate unity of Father and Son is not merely and only an event in time and history. It crosses the temporal boundary and finds its ultimate anchor in eternity. Indeed, it is only as this unity is an eternal one that it may serve as an historical event to lift humanity's vision of God.

The Psalmist wrote:

> Thy throne, O God, is for
> ever and ever: the sceptre of thy
> kingdom is a right sceptre.[96]

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[92]Frederick W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4 Vols. (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1879), "The Shadow and Substance of the Sabbath," I, 88.

[93]Matt. 16:16.

[94]John 10:30.

[95]John 17:22.

[96]Ps. 45:6.

The writer to the Hebrews trod this path to the very end. The Old Testament *Theos* predication, or predication of Deity, is here transferred to the Son. The Son is God:

> But unto the Son he saith,
> Thy throne, O God, is for ever
> and ever; a sceptre of righteousness
> is the sceptre of thy kingdom.[97]

And John carries the thought forward. Jesus, the Son of the Father, *is* the *Word*, the *Logos* (ὁ Λόγος). He was in the beginning, the beginning that is before the beginning (re'shith רֵאשִׁית) of creation. He was with God. The English translation does not clearly indicate the respect in which the *Logos* is with God. The Greek preposition, translated *with*, is not the preposition, *sum* (σῦμ), together with. It is πρός, which means *to* or *toward*. Its root meaning is *near*, *facing*. Literally, then, the phrase reads, "and the Word was toward God." Such a translation, however, is unacceptable linguistically. The key to the meaning of the phrase lies in the root meaning of the preposition, *near* or *facing*. The preposition implies that the *Logos* exists not merely alongside of God, but that He has converse with God as person to person. It therefore implies the separate personality of the *Logos*. He is "not in God," Chrysostom says, "but with God, as person with person, eternally." Finally, the *Logos* was God. Although distinguishable from God, the *Logos* is of Divine nature. He is not "a God." Neither is He identical with all that can be called God. The Greek reads, "and God was the Word." The definite article does not prefix the term "God," which indicates that the *Logos*, while divine, is not the whole Godhead, but is, rather a personal position in the Godhead.

Now the fact that the *Logos* sustains, eternally, converse with God, bears on the subject of the long advance in the communication of God to humanity. We have earlier observed that during the first Old Testament days God was known by the name, "Elohim" (אֱלֹהִים) or "God Almighty" (אֵל שַׁדַּי, *El Shaddai*). He is the God of absolute transcendence. He is the power to be eternally. He is the mysterious, unfathomable depth of the Divine Reality, "the naked absolute."

Were this the whole of the Godhead, the unfathomable mystery of Being would not be penetrated. There would be no word. All would be silence in the stillness of the dark night of eternity. But this is not so. There is, eternally, the Word, the *Logos*. The unfathomable depth of Divinity is brought to light in the *Logos*. The God of power is also the God of meaning. The *Logos*

> opens the divine ground, its infinity and its darkness, and it makes its fullness distinguishable, definite, finite. The *logos* has been called the mirror of the divine depth, the principle of God's self-objectification. In the *logos* God speaks his "word," both in himself and beyond himself. Without the second principle the first principle would be chaos, burning fire, but it would not be the creative ground. Without the second principle, God is demonic, is characterized by absolute seclusion, is the "naked absolute" (Luther) (*Ibid., p. 251)*.

Thus the mutual relation between God and Christ is one of unity of the two on the one side and of their distinctness and individuality on the other.

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[97]Heb. 1:8.

Further, God has primacy over Christ. This is secured in the titles, Father and Son. It is emphasized in the term, found in John 1:18, "only begotten," which is applied to the Son.

The New Testament develops a certain interchangeability between Christ and the Spirit. For example, Romans 8:27 says that the Spirit does the work of intercession, while Romans 8:34 ascribes that work to Christ. Yet in John 14:26 the Spirit has a certain independence as the "Comforter" (*Paraclete*, Παράκλητος), whom the Father sends in Christ's name. Then in John 16:14 the Spirit is again linked with Christ: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." 1 John 2:1 makes the final linkage, where Christ is called the *Paraclete*: "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."

Notwithstanding the close association between Christ and the Spirit, the Spirit's independence is affirmed. The independence of the Spirit is asserted in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit." However, the English is a mistranslation of the original. The passage literally reads: "Spirit [is] the God" (Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός). The subject of the sentence is "God," which is indicated by the fact that it has the definite article, *the*. The predicate, *Spirit*, lacks the article. But it is not an indefinite and therefore should not be rendered as *a spirit*. On the contrary, it is generic and portrays the fundamental essence of the Divine Being and yet maintains the integrity of the Spirit.

The sentence is constructed comparably to John 1:1, where it literally reads, as the foregoing has indicated, "And God was the Word." The subject term in the sentence is "the Word," although it is preceded by the predicate, "God." The predicate lacks the definite article, which is a device to maintain the separate identities of the two, the *Logos* and *Theos*. Thus the Son is not confounded with the Father, although all the while declared to be of the same essence.

This is the situation as regards the *Spirit*. The passage is likewise constructed to secure the independence of the Spirit, while asserting the Spirit to be of the same essence as the Father.

The twofold formula, *God* and *Christ* is now enlarged to the triadic formula, *God*, *Christ*, and *Spirit*. The New Testament throughout places the Son in subservience to the Father; the Spirit, to the Son. The Spirit is the unity of the Father and Son, the fulfillment of Jesus's affirmation in His High Priestly prayer, "we are *one*."

Herein lies the full implication of Jesus' *Abba* consciousness and His revealment of Deity. In His history and in His eternity, the *Logos* is the God of meaning who brings the *Father*, the God of power, to view. The Son and the Father are united in the unity of the *Spirit*. Through *Spirit* God as *power* "becomes" God as *meaning*. Spirit is the nexus in which the divine ground, the dark unfathomable, is self-objectified as the divine meaning, the unveiled luminous. Through *Spirit* God is *Light*.[98] In this *Light* there is secured the full and complete disclosure of Him whose name is for ever a memorial unto all generations.

The unity of the Father and Son in the unity of the Spirit, which the triune formula asserts, preserves the unity of the Godhead. The Jew's protest to Jesus's statement in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one," is thus

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[98] 1 John 1:15.

invalidated. The New Testament does not compromise the salient article of Judaism, that God is *one*. Indeed, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."[99] The Qur'ãn rejects the divinity of Christ: "The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God."[100] The argument is that, since generation is sexual, it cannot be imagined in God's case: "The Creator of the heavens and the earth--how could He have a son, seeing that He has no consort . . . ?"[101] Surely, this argument cannot be taken seriously: it is nonsense to reject the deity of Christ on the basis of the sexuality of human reproduction!

The long journey of humanity to see God has taken two roads. One way is the way of identity. God is identified with either all or a part of nature. This is the way, as we have seen, taken by Indian and Chinese thought. There is a pathetic longing for God that is disclosed in their literature. It is a longing that cannot be fulfilled. As long as God is reduced to natural phenomena, His position is so consonant with humankind as to preclude relief from lostness and anxiety. If God is submerged in the transience of natural process, He is unable to lift humanity into the haven of salvation. This can only be accomplished by the God of transcendence.

The second way, then, is the way of transcendence. This is the way of Hebrew and Christian thought. It is a progressive way. It began in the days of the Patriarchs, when God was known by the name of *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) and *El Shaddai* (אֵל שַׁדַּי). Here the transcendence is absolute: God is the Numinous Other who inspires wonderment and fear. He is the God of mysterious power, the impenetrable ground of eternal Being.

The time came when He appeared to Moses under a new name, the name *Jehovah Elohim* (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים). He is the transcendent Absolute, but now is also the *Lord God*. There is softening of the severity of transcendence. God now enters the human scene and conveys the assurance, "Certainly, I will be with thee."[102] He takes up the burden of His people and leads them to freedom and salvation.

But there is more. God must be closer to His people. The ages rolled inexorably onward. There then came a new dawn and a new day. God again spoke anew:

> God, who at sundry times and
> in divers manners spake in
> time past unto the fathers by
> the prophets,
> Hath in these last days
> spoken unto us by his Son, whom
> he hath appointed heir of all
> things, by whom also he made
> the worlds . . . .[103]

In the days of His flesh, the Son then spoke, *Abba* Father. In and

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[99]Mark 12:29.

[100]*Sura* 4:168.

[101]*Sura* 6:101.

[102]Exod. 3:12.

[103]Heb. 1:1-2.

through the virtue of the Son's relation with the Father, the Spirit now draws the believers within the sacred circle of the intimacy of Father and Son. Thus the Great Apostle transfers the intimacy of the *Abba* relationship to those whom God saves:

> For ye have not received
> the spirit of bondage again to
> fear; but ye have received the
> Spirit of adoption, whereby we
> cry, Abba, Father.
>
> And because ye are sons,
> God hath sent forth the Spirit of
> his Son into your hearts, crying,
> Abba, Father.[104]

We now live in "the Spirit of adoption." All the former promises have been fulfilled: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."[105] As He was once the God of the ancient people of God, so He is now the God of the Church, ὁ Θεός τῆς ἐκκλησίας.[106]

In this life God dwells in His Church and walks with His people. Yet we are a people who look forward to a fuller, more complete abiding in God. We look "for a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God."[107] The city is even now established. "Let not your heart be troubled," Jesus said:

> ye believe in God, believe
> also in me.
> In my Father's house are
> many mansions: if it were not
> so, I would have told you. I go
> to prepare a place for you.
> And if I go and prepare a
> place for you, I will come again,
> and receive you unto myself;
> that where I am, there ye may
> be also.[108]

To be received completely and finally into the sacred union of the Father and Son, this is our inheritance. This is the meaning, for us, of *Abba* Father. "But ye are come," the writer to the Hebrews says, " unto . . . the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . and church of the firstborn."[109] John of Patmos caught glimpse of the inheritance of the faithful: the Church, indwelt now by the Spirit, brought finally and forever into the unity of the Father and the Son.

> And I John saw the holy city,
> new Jerusalem, coming down
> from God out of heaven, prepared

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[104]Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.

[105]2 Cor. 6:16b.

[106]Acts 20:28.

[107]Heb. 11:10.

[108]John 14:1-3.

[109]Heb. 12:22-23.

as a bride adorned for her husband.

Come hither, I will
shew thee the bride, the
Lamb's wife.

And the Spirit and the bride
say, Come.[110]

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CHAPTER 2

GRACE

The Greek word for *grace* is *charis* (χάρις). The term derives from the verb, *chairo (*χαίρω*)*, which means, *to rejoice*, *to be merry*. The word is used in profane Greek. The basis of its usage is the relation to χαίρω. The emphasis is on the feeling of joy. The word always connotes the feeling of self-transport. Thus Homer writes, "but no crown of grace (χάρις*) is set about his words."*[111] Pindar writes: "Even as sea-faring men deem as their first blessing (χάρις) . . . ."[112]

The cognate noun, *chara* (χαρά), which is derived also from the verb χαίρω, means *joy*, *delight*. In *Agamemnon* the Chorus chants, "Joy (χαρά) steals over me, giving challenge to my tears."[113] Sophocles writes, "But joy (χαρά) that comes beyond the wildest hope."[114] Plato barely distinguishes joy (χαρά) and pleasure (ἡδονή), "χαρά (joy) is the very expression of the fluency and diffusion of the soul."[115] Aristotle almost completely replaces χαρά with ἡδονή, although there is a trace of the distinction in the definition of virtue. He defines joy (χαρά) as a passion, which is different than a state of character, "in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions."[116]

The word *grace* is found often in the Vedas and to a lesser extent in the Upaniṣads and Buddhism. The Sanscrit term is *prasāda*, which means *consecrated food*. It creates *cidrasa* (divine aura) in the devotee.

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[110]Revelation 21:2, 9; 22:17.

[111]*The Odyssey* viii. 174, tr. A. T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 271.

[112]*Pythian Odes* I 33, tr. Sir John Sandys (London: William Heinemann, 1924), p. 159.

[113]Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 270, tr. H. W. Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 25.

[114]Sophocles, *Antigone* 392, eds. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), p. 199.

[115]*Cratylus* 419c, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Bollingen Foundation, c1961), p. 455.

[116]*Ethica Nicomachea* II. 4. 1105b. 25-27., tr. W. D. Ross (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1925).

The Vedic Hymns indicate the main outlines of Vedic sacrifices. Sacred grass, or *darbha* grass, is placed for the gods, who come through the divine gates on their way to the sacrifice. Butter is sprinkled on the grass. Offerings of honey and grain are made. A sacrificial victim is provided. A fire is lighted, the smoke of which carries oblation to the gods.

Now, it is important to observe that this sacrificial offering to the gods cannot be carried out by the priests alone. Another priest, or Hot*ri*, is required. This is none other than one of the gods, who is regarded as particularly close to human beings, namely, the god, Agni.

The Apri[117] Hymn, Ma*n*dala I, 13 describes the sacrificial procedure:

> Being well lighted, O Agni, bring us hither the gods to the man rich in sacrificial food, O Hot*ri*, purifier, and perform the sacrifice.
>
> Tanûnapât[118]! make our sacrifice rich in honey and convey it to the gods, O sage, that they may feast.
>
> I invoke here at this sacrifice Narâ*sam*sa, the beloved one, the honey-tongued preparer of the sacrificial food.
>
> O magnified Agni! Conduct the gods hither in an easy-moving chariot. Thou art the Hot*ri* instituted by the Manus.
>
> Strew, O thoughtful men, in due order the sacrificial grass, the back (or surface) of which is sprinkled with butter, on which the appearance of immortality (is seen).
>
> May the divine gates open, the increasers of R*i*ta, which do not stick together, that to-day, that now the sacrifice may proceed.
>
> I invoke here at this sacrifice Night and Dawn, the beautifully adorned goddesses, that they may sit down on this our sacrificial grass.
>
> I invoke these two divine Hot*ris*[119], the sages with beautiful tongues. May they perform this sacrifice for us.
>
> I*l*â ('Nourishment'), Sarasvatî, and Mahî ('the great one'), the three comfort-giving goddesses, they who do not fail, shall sit down on the sacrificial grass.
>
> I invoke hither the foremost, all-shaped Tvash*tri* to come hither; may he be ours alone.
>
> O tree[120], let the sacrificial food go, O god, to the gods. May the giver's splendour be foremost.
>
> Offer ye the sacrifice with the word Svâhâ to Indra in the sacrificer's house. Therefore I invoke the gods.[121]

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[117]The Apri hymns were destined for the Pray*a*ga offerings of the animal sacrifice. They were addressed, verse by verse in regular order, partly to Agni, partly to different spirits or deified objects connected with the sacrifice, such as the sacrificial grass, the divine gates through which the gods had to pass on their way to the sacrifice, &c.

[118]Tanumapat, lit. "son of the body," is a sacrificial god whose work is to spread gh*ri*ta or honey over the sacrifice. This god, and also Nar*asam*sa, may be a form of Agni.

[119]These two divine Hot*ri*s are the divine counterparts of the human Hot*ri* priests.

[120]The sacrificial post (yupa) to which the victim was tied before it was killed.

[121]*Mandala I, Hymn 13*, vss. 1-12, *Vedic Hymns*, tr. Hermann Oldenberg. F. Max Müller, ed., *The Sacred Books of the East*, 50 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964), XLVI, 8-9.

The passage points out that Agni is the mediator between gods and men. Another Vedic passage expresses the close relation between Agni and humankind:

> For thou, Agni, O sage, who knowest both races (of gods and of men), passest (to and fro) between them, like a messenger belonging to thy own people, belonging to thy allies.[122]

Again,

> Agni, thou art for ever the wise son of Heaven and of the Earth, the all-wealthy one. In thy peculiar way sacrifice here to the gods, O intelligent one!
>
> Agni, the knowing, obtains (for his worshipper) heroic powers; he obtains (for him) strength, being busy for the sake of immortality. Bring then the gods hither, O (Agni), rich in food.[123]

Finally,

> May Agni the thoughtful Hot*ri*, he who is true and most splendidly renowned, may the god come hither with the gods.[124]

In sum: according to the Vedas, grace consists in the offering of sacrificial food to the gods in exchange for their blessing:

> Agni kindled has sent his light to the sky; turned towards the dawn he shines far and wide. (The sacrificial ladle [filled with butter]) goes forward with adoration, rich in all treasures, magnifying the gods with sacrificial food.[125]

The Upaniṣads do not subscribe to the Vedic theory of grace. Instead, they moralize the religion of the Vedas. They do this by calling attention to the inwardness, or spiritual significance, of the Vedic sacrifices. There are no appeals to the gods for material prosperity or increase of happiness. These become unnecessary, since the transcendent God of the Vedas is transformed into the God of immanence. As we saw earlier in the previous chapter, the objective Brahman and the subjective Àtman are identical, and, further, the individual self is identical with the universal Àtman. The inward resources of the individual are such, if properly developed, as to achieve salvation without the assistance of divine grace. Mystic intuition is able to grasp the central spiritual reality. Within the individual self lies the unity of thought and being. The knowledge of God is revealed in the individual's very existence. It need not be given from the outside. It but needs to be unveiled. When ignorance is lifted, the individual is made one with the truth. This is set forth in the following:

> This self within the body, of the nature of light and pure, is attainable by truth, by austerity, by right knowledge, by the constant practice of chastity. Him, the ascetics with their imperfections done away, behold.
>
> Truth alone conquers, not untruth. By truth is laid out the path leading to the gods by which the sages who have their desires fulfilled travel to where is that supreme abode of truth.
>
> Vast, divine, of unthinkable form, subtler than the subtle. It

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[122]*Mandala II, Hymn 6*, vs. 7, *Vedic Hymns*, *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[123]*Mandala III, Hymn 25*, vss. 1-2, *Ibid.*, p. 291.

[124]*Mandala I, Hymn 1*, vs. 5, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[125]*Mandala IV, Hymn 28*, vs. 1, *Ibid.*, p. 423.

shines forth, farther than the far, yet here near at hand, set down in the secret place (of the heart) (as such) even here it is seen by the intelligent.

He is not grasped by the eye nor even by speech nor by other sense-organs, not by austerity nor by work, but when one's (intellectual) nature is purified by the light of knowledge then alone he, by meditation, sees Him who is without parts.

The subtle self is to be known by thought . . . . When it (thought) is purified, the self shines forth.[126]

Thus it is the light of knowledge that achieves salvation. Nevertheless, this insistent theme is significantly compromised in other passages of the Upaniṣads. To be sure, the Upaniṣads teach that certain ethical conditions, subsidiary to the goal of salvation, must be met. Discursive understanding of natural processes must give way to the immediacy of spiritualized intuition. The lower self of animal lusts and passion must give way to the higher nature, free from selfish individuality. A larger interest in the whole of things must predominate over narrower interests. True satisfaction, bliss, must replace satisfactions in finite things. Finally, an inner purity must be achieved.

There are indications in the Upaniṣads that these conditions cannot be met unaided, and that, therefore, knowledge alone is not the route to salvation. There must come to the individual a deliverance from bondage. There is the need of grace from the Supreme Self:

This self cannot be attained by instruction, nor by intellectual power, nor even through much learnings. He is to be attained only by the one whom the (self) chooses. To such a one the self reveals his own nature.[127]

There is a cry for purity, without which a person cannot become one with God:

Into thee thyself, O Gracious Lord, may I enter . . . .
Do thyself, O Gracious Lord, enter into me . . . .
In that self of thine . . . , O Gracious Lord,
am I cleansed . . . .[128]

Thus the literature of Indian religious thought expresses a longing for salvation through the agency of mediation. In the Vedic period the mediator is the god Agni. In the Upaniṣads, the mediator is the gracious Lord. The thought of mediation is developed further in the *Bhagavadgītã.*

The Gītã, which literally means "The Lord's Song," is a religious poem, composed around the fifth century B.C. It is the most popular work of Sanscrit literature. Its central motif is the struggle between good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of good.

The Gītã accepts the metaphysics of the Upaniṣads. The ultimate reality is the one Brahman-Ātman. But what is distinctive in the Gītã is the conception of the Absolute as the personal God. This God, the God to whom devotion and loyalty are given, is called the *Puruṣottama*. The word literally

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[126]*Muṇdaka Upaniṣad*, III. 1. 5-9, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Principle Upaniṣads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1953), pp. 687-88.

[127]*Katha Upaniṣad* I. 2. 23, *Ibid.*, p. 619.

[128]*Taittirīa Upaniṣad* I. 4, *Ibid.*, p. 531.

means "best of men." But the word *purusha* (man) is used in its mythic sense of the soul of the universe. So the compound term signifies the "Supreme Soul."

The conception of God as the *Puruṣottama* brings the absolute God nearer to the longing of the individual for a saving relation with God. But still the need for mediation between God and humanity has not, for the Indian mind, been adequately met. This is accomplished in a further development in the Gītã, namely, the theory of avatãrs.

The term *avatãr* comes from *avatã*, which means "a descent." An avatãr is an incarnation of a deity, especially of Vish*n*u. They appear and reappear throughout time, when, in periods of great distress, they assist in the battle for the triumph of the good. Thus the Blessed Lord assures Arjuna, the representative man:

> Though I am unborn, and My self is imperishable, though I am the lord of all creatures, yet, establishing Myself in My own nature, I come into [empiric] being through My power (*mãyã*.
>
> Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bhãrata (Arjuna), then I send forth [create incarnate] Myself.
>
> For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.[129]

The supreme avatãr, who is a full manifestation of God, is K*rish*n*a*. Indeed, the Gītã suggests that he is the Puruṣottama himself. Regardless of the question of the identity of K*rish*n*a*, he is a mythic figure of mediation between God and humanity. He serves to bring the Absolute near to the heart of a yearning humanity.

The concern of Chinese thought is primarily ethical and political. It is a religion only in a secondary sense. The metaphysics supporting the ethics of Taoism and Confucianism entails what may be termed a one-sided intellectual and intuitive form of religion. For this reason, the idea of grace is absent from Chinese religious thought.

According to Taoism, as we have earlier observed, the ultimate reality is the *Tao*, or the *Way*. We might characterize the eternal *Tao* by observing that it is not only the ultimate reality, or the totality of all that there is, but that it is the process, or procedure, that orders the eternal fact of reality. The *Tao* is thus the source of the active power in existing things--the power that brings them into being and into ordered harmony with the totality of the universe. This active power, immanent in the *Tao*, is called *Te*. *Te* is the life-force that is latent in the *Tao* and governs the order of nature.

> The marks of great virtue [*Te*]
> Follow alone from the Tao.
> . . . . . .
> Yet latent in it is the life-force.[130]

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[129] *The Bhagavadgītã* 4:6-8, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 116.

[130] *Lao Tzû*, chap. 1, Lin Yutang, tr., *The Wisdom of China and India* (New York: The Modern Library, c1942), p. 594.

Now, the *Te* is also the active power in the individual. It is the power of the intelligence to conform to the order and harmony of the eternal *Tao*. Any one can attain fullness of life and well-being by achieving thorough conformity with it. This is accomplished by intellectual intuition.

The *Tao,* although ever-present, is mysteriously silent. It cannot be observed by the senses or the logical intellect. It is detected only by intuition.

The Tao never does,
Yet through it everything is done.[131]

The Great Tao flows everywhere,
(Life a flood) it may go left or right,
The myriad things derive their life from it,
And it does not deny them.
When its work is accomplished,
It does not take possession.
It clothes and feeds the myriad things,
Yet does not claim them as its own.
Often (regarded) without mind or passion,
It may be considered small.
Being the home of all things, yet claiming not,
It may be considered great.
Because to the end it does not claim greatness,
Its greatness is achieved.[132]

Intuition is passive and receptive. The knowledge of the *Tao* is given. Chuang-Tzu, who lived in the 4th century B.C., wrote:

> "Concentrate your will. Hear not with your ears, but with your mind; not with your mind, but with your spirit. Let your hearing stop with the ears, and let your mind stop with its images. Let your spirit, however, be like a blank, passively responsive to externals. In such open receptivity only can the Tao abide.[133]

The goal of human life is to become identified with the *Tao*. The *Tao* is power in quietude, action without assertiveness, production without possession, and development without domination. This paradigm of heaven now becomes the rule of life for the individual. The goal is quietude of self-possession, harmonious adjustment with others, and compliance with the peaceful course of nature. And this can be accomplished through mental accord with the *Tao*. But there is more here than merely mental compliance with the *Tao*; there is *oneness* with the *Tao*. The individual *becomes* the *Tao*. In sum: the active power of the universal *Tao* in the individual, through which an identity is established, enables the individual to achieve fullness of life.

To return to the root is Repose;
It is called going back to one's Destiny.
Going back to one's Destiny is to find the Eternal Law.
To know the Eternal Law is Enlightenment.
. . . . . .
Being in accord with Tao, he is eternal . . . .

In embracing the One with your soul,

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[131]*Ibid*., chap. XXXVII, p. 603.

[132]*Ibid*., chap. XXXIV, p. 602.

[133]Chuang-Tzu, *Ibid*., pp. 647-48.

Can you never forsake the Tao?
In controlling your vital force to achieve gentleness,
Can you become like the new-born child?
In cleansing and purifying your Mystic vision,
Can you strive after perfection?[134]

The fundamental ethical and social principle of Confucianism is that of *propriety*. This is known as *Li*. Essentially, it is a principle that calls for and establishes harmony. It is fundamental in ordering the basic relationships between human beings: ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, the oldest son and his younger brothers, and elders and juniors. The *Li Chi*, or *Records on Ceremonials*, an important Confucian classic, says:

> "What is this great *Li*? Why is it that you talk about *Li* as though it were such an important thing?" . . . "What I [Confucius] have learned is this: that of all the things people live by, *Li* is the greatest. Without *Li*, we do not know how to . . . establish the proper status of kings and ministers, the ruler and the ruled, and the elders and the juniors; or how to establish the moral relationships between the sexes, between parents and children and between brothers; or how to distinguish the different degrees of relationships within the family. That is why a gentleman holds *Li* in such high regard."[135]

The *Li Chi* speaks eloquently of harmony:

"When wives and children and their sires are one,
"Tis like the harp and lute in unison.
When brothers live in concord and peace
The strain of harmony shall never cease.
The lamp of happy union lights the home,
And bright days follow when the children come."[136]

Li is not only the principle of social order, it is the principle of what Confucius designates as "true manhood." In more contemporary speech, *Li* is the principle of individual integrity.

> "To find the central clue to our moral being which unites us to the universal order (or to attain central harmony), that indeed is the highest human attainment. . . . True manhood consists in realizing your true self and restoring the moral order or discipline (or *li*). . . . To be a true man depends on oneself.[137]

Finally, *Li* is the principle that brings humanity and nature into the *Tao* or will of Heaven. It is the principle of cosmic harmony. Confucius seemed to regard Heaven as a moral force that empowered the doing of good. "If it is the will of Heaven," he is reported to have said, "that the Way shall prevail, then the Way will prevail."[138] In another passage, he indicates

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[134]Lao-Tzu, *XVI, X, Ibid.*, pp. 591; 587.

[135]*Li Chi* XXVII, Lin Yutang, tr., *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), p. 216.

[136]Ku Hung Ming, *The Conduct of Life: A translation of the Doctrine of the Mean*, XV. Wisdom of the East Series (London: John Murray, 1906), p. 28.

[137]*Ibid.*, Lin Yutang, tr., *The Wisdom of China and India* (New York: The Modern Library, c1942), p. 831.

[138]Arthur Waley, tr., *The Analects of Confucius*, XIV. 38 (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938), p. 189.

that the ability to achieve moral goodness is a gift from Heaven: "Heaven begat the power (*tê*) that is in me."[139] These passages are indicative of the need for and the presence of grace. But they are only a hint and are not characteristic of the ethical thought of Confucianism.

Confucius' ethical and religious thought is strictly humanistic. In the West, the view is that one discovers the truth about man by first apprehending God. Confucius' view is just the reverse. Moral truth is first discovered in oneself. Because of the cosmic significance of the moral order within the individual, one then realizes harmony with God:

> "It is man that makes truth great, and not truth that makes man great. . . . Truth may not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth."[140]

This put more succinctly: "A man can enlarge his Way; but there is no Way that can enlarge a man."[141]

We have seen that, for Hinduism, mediation between God and humanity is cast in mythical terms. Here it must be observed that mythic representation of mediatorial grace cannot reach the depth of the human situation and bring recovery to the lost condition of humanity. It cannot overcome the estrangement from God. Estrangement is historical, and if it is to be assuaged, it must be an event *within* history, albeit emerging from *beyond* history from eternity.

When we consider the radical humanism of Chinese thought, we also find an insuperable difficulty. The assumption is that the natural intellectual powers of the individual are sufficient to bring harmony within the individual and society, and, ultimately, with God, the *Tao* of Heaven. However, even Confucianism has doubts that the springs of human nature yield the living waters of righteousness. The *Li Chi* observes:

> Therefore, if the gentleman measures men by the standard of the absolute standard of righteousness, then it is difficult to be a real man[142]

"The absolute standard of righteousness"--this is beyond human reach. The theory that human nature is in and of itself capable of affording redemption is a superficial view. It is a shallow view that ignores the depth and complexity of the human being, what, in Christian terms, is designated as sin. Too, it ignores the terrible record of history--of man's spiritual dereliction, his inhumanity to man, and his violation of the Sacred.

There is no reference to grace in the *Qur'ãn*. This omission of grace reflects the Qur'ãn's attitude toward Jesus. It presents the person of Christ in a twofold respect. On the one hand, it speaks of Jesus with great respect and affirms His holiness:

> And when the angels said,

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[139]*Ibid*., VII. 22.

[140]Lin Yutang, *Ibid*., p. 829.

[141]Confucius, *Analects* XV. 28, Waley, *Ibid*., p. 199.

[142]*Li Chi* XXXII, Lin Yutang, *Ibid*., p. 830.

'Mary, God has chosen thee;
and purified thee;' . . .
'Mary, God gives thee good
tidings of a Word from Him
whose name is Messiah,
Jesus, son of Mary;
high honored shall he be
in this world and the next,
near stationed to God.
He shall speak to men
in the cradle, and of age,
and righteous he shall be.'[143]

On the other hand, the Qur'ãn views Jesus as but a human being. The above quotation does, indeed, refer to Jesus as "Messiah" and "Word." But these terms do not have the sense in which they appear in the Bible. "Messiah" means only a title of honor. "Word" means only that Jesus is a human messenger of God, a prophet in the long chain of prophets. Thus the Qur'ãn has God say of Jesus:

He is only a servant
We blessed, and We
made him to be an example
to the Children of Israel.[144]

Islam is a nature religion. The emphasis is on the transcendency and unity of God. It accepts only the supernatural *quoad modum*, that is, the direct intervention of God in history. This intervention is for the purpose of teaching the principles of natural religion, of revealing certain data, of working miracles, etc. There is nothing in the Qur'ãn equivalent to the Biblical view of the progressive revelation of God's love for His people. The references to the Old Testament, for example, are limited to the history of Moses and his ancestors; in short, to the nomadic period of Hebrew history.

The Qur'ãn rejects everything supernatural. There is no participation through grace in God's life. Missing is the center-piece of Old Testament prophecy: the promise of the Messiah, the call of the people of God. Missing is the New Testament Messiah, the Incarnate Word who is the high point of history. Missing is the revelation that God is love, the supernatural adoption of the believers through grace, the founding of the Church, and the outpouring of the Spirit. Missing is the Kingdom of God in the form it must have on earth, with struggle and suffering at times, and yet with expectation of the coming of the Son of Man in clouds of glory and of His reign that shall know no end.

There is no progress in the revelation of the mystery of God. Instead, Islam presents a succession of prophets who remind the people of an unchangeable natural history. The law of that history is that God will destroy those who reject His messengers and give victory to those who believe those messengers. It presents itself as the last community of God on earth and waits for its God as the lengthening shadows await the end of the day.

The Hebrew word for *grace* is חֵן (*chên*). It derives from the primitive root חָנַן (*chânan*), which means literally *to bend*, *to stoop*. The thought is that of bending, or stooping, in kindness to an inferior. Hence, the term

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[143]Sura 3:39-40, A. J. Arberry, tr., *The Koran Interpreted*, 2 vols. (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1955).

[144]Sura 43:59.

came to signify *to show favor, to be gracious*.

In the Old Testament, the term (the verb) חָנַן (*chânan*) is not a theological term. For example, Proverbs uses the term in connection with human relationships. Mercy must be shown to the poor:

> He that oppresseth the poor
> reproacheth his Maker: but he
> that honoureth him hath mercy חָנַן (*chânan*)
> on the poor.[145]

But the term takes on its complete meaning when it is used in reference to God. Jahweh is always ready to turn in love to the weak and lost:

> Hear me when I call, O God
> of my righteousness: thou
> hast enlarged me when I was in
> distress; have mercy upon me, and
> hear my prayer.[146]

He is called upon to redeem:

> But as for me, I will walk in
> mine integrity: redeem me, and
> be merciful unto me.[147]

The highest reaches of the term is found in those prayers where the petitioner appeals to the grace of the covenant or to Jahweh's own word:

> Have mercy upon me, O God,
> according to thy lovingkindness:
> according unto the multitude
> of thy tender mercies blot out
> my transgressions.[148]

> I intreated thy favour with my
> whole heart: be merciful unto me
> according to thy word.[149]

It is not surprising that the noun, *grace* (חֵן,*chên*) appears repeatedly in the Old Testament. In a beautiful passage, the term is combined with the term *glory*:

> For the Lord is a sun
> and shield: the Lord will give grace
> and glory: no good thing will he
> withhold from them that walk uprightly.[150]

Adam Clarke's words are a virtual hymn to the divine grace and glory:

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[145]Prov. 14:31.

[146]Ps. 4:1.

[147]Ps. 26:11.

[148]Ps. 51:1.

[149]Ps. 119:58.

[150]Ps. 84:11.

> *The Lord will give grace*] To pardon, purify, and save the soul from sin: and then he will *give* glory to the sanctified in his eternal kingdom; and even *here* he withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly. Well, therefore, might the psalmist say, verse 12, "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."[151]

The Old Testament often speaks of God as a shield. But only in the verse referred to above does the Old Testament refer to God as the Sun. This is significant. God is the Sun who shines the beams of His saving grace to His people. He is the Sun who ripens that grace into glory:

> But what can all the honors, riches, and distinctions of the world do for us, compared with the blessings of his favor, who is a "Sun and a Shield?" If he gives us grace and glory hereafter, he will not withhold any thing truly good from us. . . . he has promised to give grace and glory to every one, who seeks them in his appointed way; and he delights in fulfilling this promise. What is grace, but heaven begun below, in the knowledge, love, and service of God? What is glory, but the completion of this felicity, in perfect conformity to him, and the full enjoyment of him for ever? And if he has begun to give us grace, his grace will be sufficient for us, and will certainly ripen into glory.[152]

The later speech of the Old Testament shows a remarkable development. The term *kindness* (חֶסֶד, *cheçed*) appears repeatedly in the Old Testament. In the first instance the term describes inter-human relations. It signifies, not merely an act, but the disposition, of kindness of one person to another. Thus Abimelech asks Abraham to deal kindly with him as a recompense for the kindness he has shown Abraham.[153] The later use of the term, however, brings it into the scope of covenant relation. This is seen in the covenant between Jonathan and David. David asks that Jonathan deal kindly with him. Now, there is a basis upon which this kindness is founded. David appeals to the covenant Jonathan has made with him and asks Jonathan to show him kindness for the sake of this covenant.

> Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the lord with the . . . .[154]

When the term *kindness* is placed within the context of the covenant relation, it loses its earlier distinctiveness in favor of the meaning of the term *grace*. Kindness (חֶסֶד, *cheçed*) becomes merged with grace (חֵן, *chên*). This development is vividly seen in the book of Esther:

> And the king loved Esther above all women, and she obtained grace [חֵן, *chên*] and favour [חֶסֶד, *cheçed*] in his sight . . . .[155]

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[151]Adam Clark, *The Holy Bible*, 6 vols. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1857), III, 484.

[152]Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible*, 6 vols., 5th ed., (Boston: Armstrong, and Crocker and Brewster, 1832), III, 297.

[153]Gen. 21:23.

[154]1 Sam. 20:8.

[155]Esther 2:17.

In sum: kindness is a function of divine grace; it is founded in the grace of Jehovah. Thus grace is of paramount importance in the Old Testament. Nehemiah witnesses to this great truth:

> . . . but thou art a God ready
> to pardon, gracious and
> merciful, slow to anger, and
> of great kindness . . . .[156]

The term *gracious* is חָנוּן (*channûwn*). As does the term, *grace* (חֵן, *chên*), it derives from the common primitive root, the verb חָתַן (*châtan*). Thus, again, kindness now means grace.

The Gospel of John presents the contrast of law and grace:

> For the law was given by
> Moses, but grace and truth
> came by Jesus Christ.[157]

Now, this New Testament passage speaks more about *development* than it does about *antithesis*. The development is a development of grace. It is true that Old Testament religion is founded upon law. Yet what righteousness is obtained is founded upon grace, not law. This St. Paul states, when he says that if the law cannot procure righteousness:

> Is the law then against the
> promises of God? God forbid:
> for if there had been a law given
> which could have given life,
> verily righteousness should have
> been by the law.[158]

The verses to which this text belongs suggest, indeed, that it is grace that gives the law. And it is, in the Old Testament, divine grace that forgives sin:

> Help me, O Lord my God:
> O save me according to
> thy mercy.[159]

Here the term for *mercy* is חֶסֶד, *cheçed*. It literally means *kindness*, but here, again, the kindness of God is merged with grace. This is the import of the translation, *mercy*. It signifies *merciful kindness*.

The mercy of God appears in conjunction with *truth* or *faithfulness*, with *righteousness* and *judgment*. The great acts of God in Israel's history are evidences of His mercy. Enoch and Abel find favor in God's sight; Abraham is called to be the bearer of a new revelation; Moses is chosen to deliver the people from bondage. All of God's promises are fulfilled when, through Moses, God selects from the nations a chosen people.

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[156]Neh. 9:17.

[157]John 1:17.

[158]Gal. 3:21.

[159]Ps. 109:26.

The idea of a chosen nation entails a further development in the Old Testament idea of grace. Grace is now mediated to the individual through the nation. God's loving care and guidance is now made effective through His covenant with the nation:

> This people have I formed
> for myself; they shall shew forth
> my praise. . . .
> I, even I, am he that blotteth
> out thy transgressions for mine
> own sake, and will not remember
> thy sins.[160]

There are two sides to the structure of Old Testament religion. There is, as we have observed, the element of grace. Grace permeates the Old Testament. There is no limit to Jehovah's love for His people, no limit to His offer of reconciliation. However, His love is expressed in covenant relation, which takes the form of law. The blessings of the covenant are enjoyed only on condition of obedience to the law. Thus, Old Testament religion is dominated by the ideas of righteousness and judgment. The full measure of grace has not yet been revealed. This fulfillment awaits the coming of another covenant, the New Covenant of grace.

The recurring refrain of Old Testament grace is Moses' request of God:

> Now therefore, I pray thee,
> if I have found grace in thy sight,
> shew me now the way, that I
> may know thee, that I may find
> grace in thy sight . . . .[161]

"That I may find grace in thy sight." This oft-recurring Old Testament expression indicates that grace is here relational. Grace is the attitude of God to His people. The divine response is assured: "The Lord will give grace and glory." In sum: grace is the act of giving.

But now, the scene changes remarkably. Grace is still attitude and response on the part of God. Grace is still relational. But it now is infinitely more: it is something *substantive*. The glimpses of substantive grace, found to be sure in the Old Testament, are replaced by a steady vision of the very *being* of grace, of grace as constitutive of essential reality.

For in an infinite sense God did indeed, conclusively and forever, give grace and glory. John, in his "Golden Prologue," sings of this. He sings of the *Word*, the *Logos* (ὁ λόγος), who was with God and who was God. He lifts the further refrain:

> And the Word was made
> flesh, and dwelt among us, (and
> we beheld his glory, the glory
> as of the only begotten of the
> Father,) full of grace and truth.[162]

The glory of the incarnate *Logos* is unique; it is the glory of an only

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[160]Isa. 43:21, 25.

[161]Exod. 33:13.

[162]John 1:14.

begotten. The glory proceeds from the Father and dwells in the only begotten *wholly*, as if there is no need for another to reflect the rays of divine glory. This glory is defined: it consists of "grace and truth" (χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, *charitos kai alēthias*).

The phrase, "grace and truth," recalls the Old Testament phrase, "mercy and truth," used to delineate the character of Jehovah. Thus the psalmist sings:

> All the paths of the Lord
> are mercy and truth unto such
> as keep his covenant and his
> testimonies.[163]

The Old Testament phrase, "mercy (*cheçed*) and truth (*e'meth*)," is וֶאֱמֶת חֶסֶד, The Septuagint translates the Hebrew phrase into the Greek, as ἔλεος καὶ ἀληθείας (Ĕlĕŏs kai alēthias). The translators used the Greek, ἔλεος (Ĕlĕŏs), which means *compassion*, because they felt that it was a richer word than the Greek, χάρις (*charis*), and was therefore more appropriate to the meaning of the Hebrew term, חֶסֶד, (*cheçed*, *mercy*). In the Septuagint, then, χάρις (*charis*) signifies Divine kindness or favor, but does not carry the thought of redemption. For this latter meaning, therefore, the Septuagint uses the term ἔλεος (Ĕlĕŏs).

In the New Testament, however, the case is reversed. χάρις (*charis*) is used to signify the Christian conception of grace and is therefore a richer term than ἔλεος (Ĕlĕŏs). ἔλεος (Ĕlĕŏs) refers to the Divine compassion in the presence of humanity's pain and misery. But χάρις (*charis*) denotes God's attitude to human sin and the Divine willingness to forgive.

John continues:

> And of his fulness have all
> we received, and grace for grace.[164]

The fulness of grace that is Christ's is communicated to the children of earth. Here grace is the blessing of Christian salvation. This blessing is inexhaustible and constantly bestowed upon the believer. It is "grace for grace."

This phrase, "grace for grace," is especially significant. The expression in the original Greek is, literally, "grace *instead* of grace" (χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, *charin anti charitos*). The usual preposition, *for*, *upon*, is ἐπί (*epi*). Why John does not use this preposition in the passage, but replaces it with the preposition, *instead*, has puzzled biblical commentators over the years to no end.

Since the following verse contrasts the New Testament dispensation with the Old, it has been suggested that the meaning is that New Testament grace replaces Old Testament grace, that the former is now effective instead of the latter type of grace. While the larger context in which the passage occurs may be taken to indicate this interpretation, it nevertheless may not be correct.

The use of the preposition ἀντί (*anti*) may yield a better translation

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[163]Ps. 25:10.

[164]John 1:16.

for the phrase, "grace for grace." In all probability the meaning is not "grace in addition to grace already received." Had John meant this, he might have better used the preposition ἐπί (epi). Had he done so, the English translation of the phrase would be the correct one. But he did not use it. He chose an unusual grammatical form. He did so to convey the thought of something more than "grace for grace." His thought is, rather, "grace interchanging with grace." But it is not New Testament grace interchanging with Old Testament grace. Grace is replaced with grace, but the meaning is that "every grace received is a capacity for higher blessedness." The Christian experience of grace is a life of Divine uplifting, a faith that accepts mercy flowering into joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Grace is central in Paul's understanding of the salvation event. He speaks repeatedly of the grace of God. He recognizes that it is God the Father who is the primal fountain of Christian salvation.

> For the grace of God that
> bringeth salvation hath
> appeared to all men.[165]

But he speaks again and again of the grace that is in Christ. For, as Paul unhesitantly witnessed, it is Christ who embodies the principle of grace in His own person and who reveals the Father's grace.

> That as sin hath reigned
> unto death, even so might grace
> reign through righteousness unto
> eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.
>
> . . . for the grace of God . . .
> is given you by Jesus Christ.[166]

A reading of the Pauline epistles reveals the extent to which he exalts the grace of Christ. Both salutation and benediction are replete with an hymn to that grace:

> Grace be to you, and peace,
> from God our father, and from
> the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> The grace of our Lord
> Jesus Christ be with you
> all. Amen.[167]

The centrality of grace in Paul's thought and life stems from his sudden transformation near the gates of Damascus. From that day onward, throughout his life, the Christ who stood forth on that dusty road became to him the Lord of grace as well as the Lord of glory. He later wrote of this transformation event:

> But when it pleased God . . .
> and called me by his grace . . . .
>
> . . . . . .

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[165]Titus 2:11.

[166]Rom. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:4.

[167]Eph. 1:2; Phil. 4:23.

> But by the grace of God I
> am what I am: and his grace
> which was bestowed upon me
> was not in vain; But I laboured
> more abundantly than they all;
> yet not I, but the grace of God
> which was with me.[168]

Paul's understanding of grace as a central and singular event in salvation history is evident in his prevailing use of the noun in the singular number. So unique is grace in Christ that he seems to want to avoid the use of the plural. In Christ, and in Him alone, is the one salvific grace. He had doubtless heard of Peter's words, "for there is none other name under heaven . . . whereby we must be saved."[169] As there is no other name, so, for Paul, there is no other grace. Thus when he speaks of a plurality of gifts he uses χαρίσματα (*charismata*).

The grace of Christ means, according to Paul, several things. First, it means *absolute freeness*. In contrast to the Old Testament dispensation of law, under which divine blessings were secured by obedience to the law, the blessing of salvation is given freely by grace:

> Being justified freely by his
> grace through the redemption
> that is in Christ Jesus:
>
> For by grace are ye saved
> through faith; and that not of
> yourselves: it is the gift of God:[170]

Grace also means *power to conquer sin*. While Old Testament law leads to the imputation of sin, New Testament grace brings power to master sin. It removes the guilt of sin and its dreadful consequences. It breaks the supremacy of sin over the believer's heart.

> Moreover the law entered,
> that the offence might abound.
> But where sin abounded, grace
> did much more abound:
>
> But now being made free
> from sin, and become servants
> to God, ye have your fruit unto
> holiness, and the end everlasting life.[171]

The grace that is in Christ is the full measure of Christian blessing. The riches of Christ are unsearchable. There is, as John wrote, the superabundance of grace, "grace interchanging with grace." It is as a stream of living water issuing from an inexhaustible fountain:

> For all things are for your
> sakes, that the abundant grace
> might through the thanksgiving
> of many redound to the glory of

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[168]Gal. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:10.

[169]Acts 4:12.

[170]Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8.

[171]Rom. 5:20; 6:22.

God.[172]

But what for Paul distinguishes grace the most is that it is an *act of self-sacrifice*. Thus he writes:

> For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.[173]

He shows more fully what was involved in this sacrifice, when he speaks of it as a self-emptying:

> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.[174]

In the *Preface* of this work, we have suggested that we look upon "grace as the power, not of ourselves, that makes for the enhancement of human good." In this chapter, we have seen how the longing for redemptive grace has been couched in uncertain and tentative terms. In Hindu thought, it is the mythic god, *Agni*, who attends the "sacred food" of grace and mediates between gods and humans. Again, it is the mythic avatar, *Krishna*, who is the descent of God to humanity. In Chinese thought, it is the power (*Te*) of the *Tao* and of *Heaven* that brings salvation. And in Hebrew thought, the element of grace is set in the covenant-relation, which takes the form of law, the meaning of grace here being but anticipatory of a new day. Beyond mythic representation, beyond impersonal moral force, beyond covenant-law, the completed meaning of grace awaits its unveiling. We have shown that this unveiling is accomplished in the Christ of grace. And, finally, we have indicated that His grace is effectual in and through His self-sacrifice. In short, mediatorial grace is *sacrificial*.

Mediation between Deity and Humanity by way of sacrifice is an ancient idea. The Semites, from which Abraham came, sacrificed a sacred animal as the means of establishing communion with the god. They believed that the social group was of one blood, participating in one blood that passes from generation to generation and circulates in the veins of every member of the group. Not only do the members share in a common blood, but the god also shares with the people in this one life of life-blood.

Nevertheless, the Semites sensed that their kinship with the god was broken or, at least, severely strained. Their problem was to find some means of creating or reinforcing a living bond between them and their god. They found this means in the concept of a sacred animal. An animal, clean as they were not, shared, too, in the common life-blood of humans and their god. If,

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[172]2 Cor. 4:15.

[173]2 Cor. 8:9.

[174]Phil. 2:6-8.

they believed, they met together in a sacred feast and partook of the flesh and blood of the sacred animal, they would thereby create or keep alive the living bond of union between them and their god. This is the essential meaning of primitive animal sacrifice. W. Robertson Smith makes this observation:

> . . . the slaughter of such a victim is permitted or required on solemn occasions, and all the tribesmen partake of its flesh, that they may thereby cement and seal their mystic unity with one another and with their god. . . . but in ancient times this significance seems to be always attached to participation in the flesh of a sacrosanct victim, and the solemn mystery of its death is justified by the consideration that only in this way can the sacred cement be procured which creates or keeps alive a living bond of union between the worshippers and their god. This cement is nothing else than the actual life of the sacred and kindred animal, which is conceived as residing in its flesh, but especially in its blood, and so, in the sacred meal, is actually distributed among all the participants, each of whom incorporates a particle of it with his own individual life.[175]

Exodus 24:4-8 describes the formal covenant-sacrifice at Mount Sinai. There are similarities and differences between this sacrifice and earlier Semitic sacrifices. In both sacrifices, there is the sacred stone where the Deity is present. In both sacrifices, there is the sacred animal that is slain, part of the blood poured over the stone and part appropriated by the people.

Nevertheless, despite this continuity, the Hebrew sacrificial covenant at Mount Sinai is markedly different from the older, heathen sacrifices of blood. The latter type of blood sacrifice is based on the belief that there is a natural kinship between people, their deity, and the sacred animal. By offering the animal and performing the rite in which its life is distributed to themselves and the god, they then come to share in the divine life. Their bond with deity is thus established and perpetuated.

The sacrifice at Sinai is not based on the assumption of natural kinship. Here the sacrificial animal does not serve actually, or physically, to bring participation in the life of Deity. Its function, *via* its death through blood-letting, is not to serve as the medium of *participation in* the life-blood of deity, but to *ratify, or seal* a *covenant-relation with* God. Relationship with God is not through *nature*, but through *covenant*. It is for this reason that Moses performed the sacrifice before the twelve stones, the "altar" of divine presence, and sprinkled the blood over the stones and the people. In sum: the covenant-sacrifice at Sinai adapted older, familiar forms to a new situation. In distinction to a natural kinship with Deity that is reinforced in physically appropriating the life of the sacrificial animal, kinship with God is a covenant-kinship that is affirmed *via* the sacrosanct nature of life as the life-blood of the sacrificial animal is sprinkled over both the altar and the people. In the advance of the Divine self-revelation, older forms have now received a new, spiritualized, content.

But there is yet a further advance in sacrificial mediation. The writer of Hebrews speaks of a new high priest and of a new sacrifice:

> For such an high priest became
> us, who is holy, harmless,
> undefiled, separate from sinners,

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[175].William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: First Series*, rev. ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1914), p. 313.

> and made higher than the heavens;
> Who needeth not daily, as
> those high priests, to offer up
> sacrifice, first for his own sins,
> and then for the people's: for
> this he did once, when he offered
> up himself.[176]

We are now at the center of grace and sacrificial mediation. Their meaning and truth are best disclosed in that period in Jesus's life when he was close to the hour of His death. Two incidents are of especial significance in this regard: the Lord's Supper and the High-Priestly Prayer.

The Lord's Supper is described in these words:

> And as they did eat, Jesus
> took bread, and blessed, and
> brake it, and gave to them,
> and said, Take, eat: this is
> my body.
> And he took the cup, and
> when he had given thanks, he
> gave it to them: and they all
> drank of it.
> And he said unto them, This
> is my blood of the new testament,
> which is shed for many.[177]

There is a marvelous, yet intriguing, duality to this sacred rite. On the one hand, it has the element of the Mosaic covenant-sacrifice. But, on the other hand, it has the older, Semitic element of participation in the life-blood of Deity. But the life-blood that is now shared between the people and God is not actual blood. The older rite has been finally and definitively spiritualized. The sharing of the life of God is now a *spiritual* sharing. And that sharing is *symbolized* in the *actual* eating of the bread and drinking of the wine. The meaning of this duality is this: there is a union, but a spiritual one, within the life of God, which lifts the formality of the Old Covenant into the rarified atmosphere of spiritual reality. This is the final, decisive meaning of mediatorial grace.

Jesus' High-Priestly Prayer, as it is recorded in John's gospel, occurred in the lengthening shadow of His cross. The days of His public ministry were drawing to a close. They were bright days, filled with hope and marked by success and triumph. The crowds surrounded him and listened gladly to His "gracious words." But it was not long until there came a change over the spirit of His life. His conversation with His disciples became filled with mysterious hints of betrayal and the cross. He seemed to be leaving the sun-lit heights and to be descending into the cloud-land of shadows. Words of awe fell from His lips as He struggled to pierce the thick glooms of mystery, doubt, and death:

> Now is my soul troubled;
> and what shall I say? Father,
> save me from this hour: but for
> this cause came I unto this hour[178]

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[176]Heb. 7:26-27.

[177]Mark 14:22-24.

[178]John 12:27.

Then He was alone in the night in Gesthemene. With resigned will, He voiced His prayer in words of mournful grandeur:

> And for their sakes I sanctify
> myself, that they also might be
> sanctified through the truth.[179]

The term *sanctify*, as it is used for Christ's sanctification of Himself, does not mean *to make holy*. For Christ *was* holy. Rather, the term is used in the Hebrew sense of *to consecrate*, *to separate*, *to devote* or *dedicate*. At the time of the Exodus, the first-born were spared by the symbolic blood on the lintel of every Hebrew house. For this reason they were viewed in a peculiar light. They were regarded as devoted to the Lord--redeemed and set apart. The Hebrew word to express this devotion is *sanctify* (קדש, *qâdâsh*). Later in Hebrew history, the tribe of Levi took the place of the first-born. Thus the Hebrew sense of *sanctify* is to devote or consecrate.

This is the meaning of the sanctification of Christ. Christ devoted Himself, even to the extremity of death, in behalf of others. Yes, it is true, as the writer to the Hebrews proclaims, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." The writer also states:

> How much more shall the
> blood of Christ, who through the
> eternal Spirit offered himself
> without spot unto God, purge your
> conscience from dead works to
> serve the living God.[180]

But it is not merely death that made Christ's sacrifice the world's atonement. Death itself has no special virtue, even if it be the death of God's Son. Blood does not afford pleasure to God. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."[181] We cannot suppose that God has pleasure in the death of the righteous. We cannot believe that blood merely as blood, or death merely as a debt of nature, have a mysterious saving virtue.

Not these! For God is satisfied with that only which pertains to the Conscience and Will. Thus the same writer to the Hebrews says: "Sacrifices could never make the comers thereunto perfect."[182] The blood of Christ was sanctified, devoted to the world's salvation, by the Will with which He shed it. This is what gives it value. He gave Himself as a sacrifice offered upon conscience. The sacred cause in which He fell was *love to humanity*. He sanctified Himself, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Abandoning His life to that truth, "the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin."[183] This is the mediatorial grace of "our Lord Jesus Christ."

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[179]John 17:19.

[180]Heb. 9:14.

[181]Ezek. 33:11.

[182]Heb. 10:1.

[183]1 John 1:7.

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see;

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.[184]

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CHAPTER 3

ETERNAL LIFE

The ancient Vedic Aryans who entered India in the second millennium B.C. were a people possessed of strength and filled with the joy of conquest. Their days were bright and happy days, free from all vexations of the spirit. Consequently, they took little thought of death. Their predominant concern was for the affairs of this present life. A prayer for long life is addressed to Rudra:

May I obtain to a hundred winters through
the most blissful medicines which thou has given;
Put away far from us all hatred, put away anguish,
put away sickness in all directions!
In beauty thou art the most beautiful of all
that exists, O Rudra, the strongest of the strong,
thou wielder of the thunderbolt! Carry us happily
to the other shore of our anguish, and ward off all
assaults of mischief.[185]

Another hymn petitions for length of days:

May Vâta waft medicine, healthful, delightful
to our heart; may he prolong our lives!
Thou, O Vâta, art our father, and our brother,
and our friend; do thou grant us to live!
O Vâta, from that treasure of the immortal
which is placed in thy house yonder, give us
to live![186]

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[184]John Newton.

[185]Vedic Hymns, "Ma*nd*ala II, Hymn 33," 2-3, Max Müller, tr., *Vedic Hymns, Sacred Books of the East*, 50 vols. Reprint (Deli: Motilal Banarsidass), XXXII, 426.

[186]"Ma*nd*ala X, Hymn 186," *Ibid*., p. 451. Vâta, or Vâyu, is the god of the wind, i.e., the wind of the world.

Bestow on us, Agni, through thy kindness
wealth which may last all our life, and have mercy
on us that we may live.[187]

There are many prayers for prosperity and valiant offspring. For example:

Thus being seen by us, bring near to us,
O Agni, graciously united with the gods, benignantly, great wealth benignantly. Make us behold
great (bliss of valiant offspring), O mightiest one,
that we may obtain such enjoyment. Produce great
bliss of valiant offspring, O bountiful Lord, (as fire
is produced) by attrition, for those who praise thee,
like a strong hero in thy might.

Now bestow on us thousandfold wealth with
offspring and prosperity, splendid, most powerful,
and undecaying abundance in heroes, O Agni![188]

Notwithstanding their optimism concerning the present, the Vedic Aryans thought of the hereafter. They believed that death was not the end of things, that having once existed they would never cease to be. Two mortals, Yama and Yami, had in the long-ago passed beyond death to preside over a kingdom in the realm of the setting sun. Now when a person dies, he or she comes to this paradise by crossing over water and a bridge:

For us has Yama first found out the pathway:
This pasture can never be taken from us.
To where have passed away our former fathers,
The later born by their own paths have travelled.

Unite thou with the Fathers and with Yama,
With thy good works' reward in highest heaven.
To home return, all imperfection leaving.
Unite with thine own body, full of vigour.[189]

According to the Vedas, the gods became immortal through the potency of the Soma, an exhilarating beverage. The human goal is to join the gods in heaven, where the joys of earth are heightened and perfected. The hymn to *Soma Pavamãna* (*Self-Purifying Soma*) reads:

O Pavamãna, place me in that deathless, undecaying world
Wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines.
Flow Indu,[190] flow for Indra's sake.
Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the king,
Vivasvãn's son,[191]

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[187]*Vedic Hymns*, "Mãṇḍala I, Hymn 79," Hermann Oldenberg, tr., *Sacred Books of the East*, Reprint, (Deli: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964), XLVI, 104.

[188]"Mandala I, Hymn 127," 11; "Mandala III, Hymn 13," 7, *Ibid*., pp. 131, 266.

[189]Ṛig-*Veda*, x. 14, vss. 2, 7, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles E. Moore, eds., *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 32.

[190]Indu (or Soma), the moon, which is said to contain the celestial nectar, soma juice.

[191]Yama.

Where is the secret shrine of heaven, where are those waters
young and fresh. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as they list.

In the third sphere of inmost heaven, where lucid worlds are full
of light. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
Make me immortal in that realm of eager wish and strong desire,
The region of the radiant Moon, where food and full delight are
found. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
Make me immortal in that realm where happiness and trans-
ports, where
Joys and felicities combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled.
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.[192]

In contrast to the Vedas, the Upaniṣads take a more pessimistic view of human life. There is a profound dissatisfaction with finite things, a realization that happiness cannot be obtained from the finite. The pleasures of the world are finite, being cut off by old age and death.

This dissatisfaction with the present world is expressed eloquently in the opening verse of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*:

Those who discourse on *Brahmanan* say: What is the cause?
(Is it) *Brahman*? Whence are we born? By what do we live?
And on what are we established? O ye who know *Brahman*,
(tell us) presided over by whom do we live our different
conditions in pleasures and other than pleasures (pains).[193]

The Upaniṣads therefore strive for the infinite where is found the only durable happiness. They point the way to the ultimate reality that is infinite existence (*sat*), absolute truth (*cit*), and pure delight (*ānanda*). The human heart prays:

'from the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light,
from death lead me to immortality.'[194]

The goal of human life is to become one with God. Of the many passages in the Upaniṣads that depict this goal, two significant ones may be quoted here:

Even as birds, O dear, resort to a tree for a resting-place,
so does everything here resort to the Supreme Self. They all
find their rest in the Supreme Self.

Into thee thyself, O Gracious Lord, may I enter. Hail.
Do thou thyself, O Gracious Lord, enter into me. Hail.
In that self of thine, of a thousand branches, O Gracious
Lord, am I cleansed. Hail.[195]

In a previous chapter, we saw that the Vedas present a two-fold view of God: God as the unapproachable Absolute and God as the personal God. The Upaniṣads accept this Vedic position. The Absolute and God are identical. The Absolute, the supreme Brahman, is the transcendent, all-comprehensive, and

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[192]Ṛig-*Veda* ix.113, 7-11, *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[193]*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, I, 1, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1953), p. 709.

[194]*Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I. 3. 28, *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[195]*Prásna Upaniśad*, IV. 7; *Taittirīya Upaniśad*, I, 4. 3; *Ibid.*, pp. 663, 530.

unknowable God. The personal aspect of God, which is necessary for religious devotion, is called Īś*vara*. But the two are one. The Absolute is both impersonal and personal.

The religious consciousness sustains in its purview both modes of the Supreme Being. It looks upon God as transcendent and at the same time as the giver of grace, *devaprãda*, which brings deliverance from bondage.

> This self cannot be attained by instruction nor by intellectual power nor even through much learning. He is to be attained by the one whom (the self) chooses. To such a one the self reveals his own nature.[196]

After a long process of discipline and exercise, the oneness with God is realized. When this stage of religion is reached, the personal conception of God is transcended. The higher, noetic, consciousness perceives the identity between the worshipper and the object worshipped. The two become one. The end of religion is its transcendence.

This highest consciousness is called *mokṣa* or *release*. The Upaniṣads insist that it cannot be described in rational or conceptual terms. But the literature clearly indicates that this state is the disintegration of individuality. Individual self-hood is lost in the final state.

The finite self is the Ātman drawn to a finite limit and coupled with the elements of the world process--the process that accounts for sense and mind. As the point of concentration of the infinite and finite, the finite self is in an unstable equilibrium that is resolved only when *at-one-ment* with the Godhead is reached. This state is the final release, or *mokṣa*.

Release can be positively characterized only through image and metaphor. Two such passages may be noted:

> Just as the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean casting off name and shape, even so the knower, freed from name and shape, attains to the divine person, higher than high.
>
> As the flowing rivers tending towards the ocean, on reaching the ocean, disappear, the name-shape broken up, and are simply called the ocean, even so of this seer, these sixteen parts tending towards the person, on reaching the person, disappear, their name-shape broken up, and are called simply the person.[197]

These passages refer to "name and shape," or to "name-shape." The final release in which individuality is dissolved is a breaking up of "name-shape." The "name-shape" refers to the two elements that make up finite individuality. "Name" (*nãma*) is the idea, or archetypical character, of individuality, and "shape" (*rùpa*) is the visible embodiment of the idea. These are dissolved, eliminated, when union with the Godhead is finally realized.

The imagery contained in the above passages indicate what is meant by the ultimate release. Just as the river as an empirical object is lost and yet its waters remain in the all-encompassing ocean, so the factuality of the individual is lost and yet the trans-finite reality of individuality (the Ātman "concretized") remains. Metaphysically, this is possible because the

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[196]*Muṇdaka Upaniṣad*, III, 2. 3, *Ibid*., p. 689.

[197]*Muṇdaka Upaniṣad*, III 2. 8; *Praśna Upaniṣad, VI. 5, Ibid*., pp. 691, 667.

essential reality of individual selfhood *is* the Infinite Self, the Ātman.

There are, to be sure, passages in the Upaniṣads that seem to indicate that mokṣa, or release, is *likeness* to God. On this account, individuality would be retained. A passage in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* suggests that eternal life is becoming like God in the enjoyment of personal immortality:

> When a seer sees the creator of golden hue, the Lord, the Person, the source of Brahmã, then being a knower, shaking off good and evil and free from stain, he attains supreme equality with the Lord.[198]

Another passage suggests that when time shall end the liberated ones shall have companionship with God:

> The ascetics who have ascertained well the meaning of the Vedãnta knowledge, who have purified their natures through the path of renunciation, they (dwelling) in the worlds of Brahmã, at the end of time, being one with the immortal, are all liberated.[199]

However, other passages in the Upaniṣads clearly indicate that eternal life is becoming one with God. There is an absolute identity between the individual and Brahman:

> One's deeds and the self, consisting of understanding, all become one in the Supreme Immutable Being.[200]

It is also said that the individual self becomes established in God and all distinctions are removed:

> He, verily, is the seer, . . . the thinking self, the person. He becomes established [merged] in the Supreme Undecaying Self. He who knows the shadowless, bodiless, colourless, pure, undecaying self attains verily, the Supreme, Undecaying (self). He who, O dear, knows thus becomes omniscient, (becomes) all.[201]

We have earlier called attention to the significance of Ṛ*ta* as it is found in the *Rig*-Veda. It is the principle of order that regulates both the natural and human worlds. The concept is found in the Upaniṣads under the name of *Karma*. According to the principle of karma, which is the counterpart to the principle of conservation in the physical world, there is nothing arbitrary or capricious in the moral world. Moral acts have their inevitable consequences: good deeds follow good deeds and bad deeds follow bad deeds. There is no escape from the consequences of moral acts.

> Verily one becomes good by good action, bad by bad action.
>
> Verily, this whole world is *Brahman*, from which he comes forth, without which he will be dissolved and in which he breathes. Tranquil, one should meditate on it. Now verily, a person consists of purposes. According to the purpose a person

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[198] *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III. 1. 3, *Ibid*., p. 686.

[199] *Ibid*., III. 2. 6, pp. 690-91.

[200] *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II. 2. 3, *Ibid*., p. 691.

[201] *Praśna Upaniṣad*, IV. 9-10, *Ibid*., p. 663.

has in this world, so does he become on departing hence.[202]

For those individuals who die with a legacy of bad actions, rebirth in the temporal world awaits them. This process of rebirth continues from reincarnation to reincarnation until good actions ultimately merit an escape from the law of karma and bring the final release of mokṣa, final oneness with God.

> As here on earth the world which is earned by work perishes, even so there the world which is earned by merit perishes. Those who depart hence without having found here the self and those real desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds. But those who depart hence, having found here the self and those real desires--for them in all worlds there is freedom.[203]

Now, Buddhism, a later form of Indian religious literature compiled around the middle of the third century B. C. and purporting to be the thought of Buddha, accepts the Upaniṣadic doctrines of Karma, rebirth, and mokṣa. Since Buddhism is a strictly ethical philosophy, however, it does not follow the Upaniṣads in their metaphysical speculations as to the ultimate nature of reality. Buddhism is exclusively concerned with the subject of humanity's deliverance from suffering and acquisition of freedom and bliss. This condition of ultimate salvation Buddhism calls *nirvāṇa*. But, given its anti-metaphysical proclivity, it does not speculate as to the precise nature of nirvāṇa.

The term *nirvāṇa* means literally "blowing out" or "cooling." It is this dual meaning of the term that creates the difficulty as to just what nirvāṇa is and implies. "Blowing out" suggests extinction," while "cooling" suggests, not complete annihilation, but the dying out of desire and passion.

With respect to nirvāṇa as "cooling," there is no question but that this is Buddha's use of the term in the moral sphere, as the dying out of false desire, or *tanha* (thirst). Nirvāṇa is a moral condition of freedom from selfish desire and a compassion for others. Buddha describes this condition:

> Looking for the maker of this tabernacle, I shall have to run through a course of many births, so long as I do not find (him); and painful is birth again and again. But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou has been seen; thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken, thy ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, approaching the Eternal (visankhâra, nirvâna), has attained to the extinction of all desires.[204]

But the meaning of nirvāṇa as "blowing out," as extinction, raises difficult questions. Buddha refused to engage in metaphysical speculation concerning the reality and nature of God. Thus he neither asserts nor denies the reality of Deity. Absent the assertion of the reality of God, Buddha does not, therefore, regard nirvāṇa as oneness with Brahman. Nirvāṇa is not the mokṣa of the Upaniṣads. Neither is it a companionship with God, for that is only a perpetuation of a desire for life. What, then, is nirvāṇa? If it is neither oneness with God nor fellowship with God, is it extinction?

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[202]Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, III. 2. 13; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III. 14. 3, *Ibid.*, pp. 217, 391.

[203]*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII. 1. 6, *Ibid.*, p. 493.

[204]*Dhammapada*, XI, 153-154, Müller, *Ibid.*, X, 42-43.

Buddha nowhere gives a theoretical definition of nirvāṇa. He provides no theoretical answer to these questions. However, there are passages in Buddhist literature that suggest that nirvāṇa is extinction of individuality. The analogy of an extinguished flame is employed to indicate the destruction of personal existence:

> 'Now what do you think, O king? When there is a great body of fire blazing, is it possible to point out any one flame that has gone out, that it is here or there?'
> 'No, Sir. That flame has ceased, it has vanished.'
> 'Just so, great king, has the Blessed One [Buddha] passed away by that kind of passing away in which no root remains for the formation of another individual. The Blessed One has come to an end, and it cannot be pointed out of him, that he is here or there.'[205]

There are other passages that suggest that nirvāna is positive fulfillment, a perfection that destroys what is individual in a person and brings a oneness with eternal reality. This ultimate condition is called *parinirvâna*, which is different from the ethical form of nirvāna attained in this present life. It is a timeless existence devoid of empirical egoity and filled with bliss:

> Where there are beings who, when dead, will not be reborn, there time is not; and where there are beings who are altogether set free (who, having attained Nirvâna in their present life, have come to the end of that life), there time is not--because of their having been quite set free [*parinirvâna*].[206]

Professor Radhakrishnan argues that the positive aspect of Buddhist nirvāṇa requires the reality of God, or, in Indian terms, the Brahaman-Ātman. Without the Absolute, nirvāṇa is negative, is annihilation. "If," he writes, "we look upon nirvāṇa as a positive condition we must admit the reality of a permanent."[207] This being so, then, nirvāṇa is, as for the Upaniṣads, the loss of individuality and absorption into the infinite.

The ancient Chinese belief in life after death was tied to their conception of the family. Those of the family who had died were still vaguely present and aware of the activities of members of the family who were living in the present world. There was a two-fold dependence: on the one hand, the well-being of the living was promoted by the deceased; while, on the other hand, the bond that tied the dead to present generations was secured by the prayers and sacrifices of living descendants.

The ever-turning cycle of life-death, death-life was a feature of existence burned into the consciousness of the Chinese. The Absolute *Tao* expresses its active power in terms of the principle of reversion. All things that abide in and through the *Tao* reflect this principle. This is true for the succession of the generations of humanity: the living are born of those who have gone before them and through whose death space has been provided for the living. The living, in their turn, must accept the same fate, their death giving rise to the new and living age.

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[205]*Melinda*, III, 5. 10, T. W. Rhys Davids, tr., *Sacred Books of the East*, XXXV, 114.

[206]*Melinda*, II. 2. 9, *Ibid.*, p. 78

[207]Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923, I, 451.

Reversion is the action of Tao.
Gentleness is the function of Tao.
The things of this world come from Being,
And Being (comes) from Non-being.[208]

But, for the Chinese, there is more to the idea of future life than that found in the persistence of family structure or the relentless wheel of the succession of generations. To be sure, when one dies, the individual consciousness in relentless pursuit of egoity will be exterminated. The individual "I" will vanish from the universe. However, there is a wisdom, a recognition, that, though one dies, there is nothing lost in the universe. The *Chuang Tzû*, a fourth century B. C. Taoist work, says:

> The universe is the unity of all things. If one once recognizes his identity with this unity, then the parts of his body mean no more to him than so much dirt, and death and life, end and beginning, disturb his tranquility no more than the succession of day and night.[209]

Thus there is a respect in which those who die yet remain:

He who does not lose his center endures,
He who dies yet (his power) remains has long life.[210]

To return to the root is Repose;
It is called going back to one's Destiny.
Going back to one's Destiny is to find the Eternal Law.
To know the Eternal Law is Enlightenment. . . .
Being in accord with Nature, he is in accord with Tao;
Being in accord with Tao, he is eternal . . .[211]

With respect to life beyond death, the situation here is fundamentally the same as the Indian Vedic and Upaniṣadic solution to the question. Eternal life consists in the noetic stance of accordance with the Absolute *Tao*. And this stance achieves everlastingness, not as a relation between an individual and God, but because the individual *is* the *Tao*. Final redemption is bought at the price of dissolving individual self-hood into the all-consuming matrix of the universal. The center of the individual is not really individualist. The center is the center of all that is, the one, absolute, and eternal *Law*. To know this, to be thus enlightened, is eternal life. Eternal life is being grounded in the *Tao* as the *Tao* itself, where all distinctions of personal standpoint are swept away. In the thin and rarified atmosphere of the all-encompassing unity, in the inchoate, undifferentiated monism of eternal being, there is, indeed, the eternity of standpoint. But it is a standpoint in which the aspirations of time are distilled into an elixir in which the values they signify are forever lost. Again, the religion of nature reaches its own pre-ordained dissolution.

Confucius is silent on the question of death and its outcome, if, indeed, there be an outcome. His silence is explained by the facts that he avoided metaphysical speculation and system-building and concentrated his

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[208]*Lao Tzû*, chap. 40, Lin Yutang, tr., *The Wisdom of China and India* (New York: The Modern Library, c1942, p. 605.

[209]*The Writings of Kwang--zze*, tr. James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, 50 vols. Reprint. (Deli: Motilal Banrsidaas), XL, 48.

[210]*Lao Tzû*, chap. 33, *Ibid.*, p. 602.

[211]*Lao Tzû*, chap. 16, *Ibid.*, p. 591.

attention upon the moral and social improvement of the human condition. When the individual orders life in accordance with the principle of *Li*, or *propriety*, one thereby realizes the *Tao* of man and relates harmoniously to the *Tao* of heaven.

> Our central self or moral being is the great basis of existence, and *harmony* or moral order is the universal law in the world.
>
> When our true central self and harmony are realized, the universe then becomes a cosmos and all things attain their full growth and development.[212]

It is enough that one know and experience the universal harmony, the *Tao*, or *Way*, of heaven that envelopes and enfolds personal life. There need be no concern about anything beyond this all-embracing harmony of things. To live within the universal harmony is sufficient; what may, or may not, await us beyond this life, we need not, and cannot, know.

> Tzu-lu then ventured upon a question about the dead. The Master said, Till you know about the living, how are you to know about the dead?[213]

During Confucius' time, it was a much-disputed question whether or not the dead were conscious. If they were not, it became problematical whether sacrifices to the dead were of any value. The above statement addresses this question, and Confucius professes no knowledge on the question. He did, however, accept the validity of sacrifices, not as a means of procuring benefits from the dead, but as a means of preserving a living sense of continuity with them. It was enough for him to know that as he has himself participated in those ancestral rites, so would he, after his death, be warmly and affectionately remembered in the same way. This, at least, we do know about our inheritance beyond the veil of this life.

The question of eternal life as regards the individual is bound up with the evaluation of existence and of the nature of the experience of the self. In both the *Ṛig-Veda* and the *Upaniṣads*, the term *mãyã* is used to designate the character of the world. The term literally means *illusion*, *deception*.

The hymns of the *Ṛig-Veda* do not support the view that the world, including finite selves, is illusory. When the term *mãyã* is used, it refers to the power by which the world appears as the evolution of God. "Indra takes many shapes quickly by his mãyã."[214] The *mãyã* of the world is its relative, rather than absolute, reality. When this derived reality is taken absolutely, it is *mãyã*, illusion, as ignorance, *avidyã*. But illusion in the epistemic sense is not, does not entail, illusion in the metaphysical sense of the unreality of the world.

There are, to be sure, passages in the *Upaniṣads* that suggest the unreality of the world. For example:

> 'Then having pierced through what is thus enveloped one sees *Brahman* who sparkles like a wheel of fire, of the colour of the sun, full of vigour, beyond darkness, that which shines in yonder sun, also in the

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[212]Lin Yutang, tr. *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), p. 104.

[213]Arthur Waley, tr. *The Analects of Confucius*, XII, 11 (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938), p. 155.

[214]*Ṛig-Veda* vi. 48.19, Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

> moon, in the fire, in the lightning. And having seen Him assuredly, one goes to immortality. . . . But when the mind is dissolved and there is the bliss of which the witness is the self, that is *Brahman*, the immortal, the radiant, that is the way. That indeed is the (true) world.'[215]

In this passage, the Absolute Brahman is likened to a spark which, when revolving, creates a fiery circle. This may suggest that the world is a mere appearance that has no substantial reality. Only Brahman, "the immortal, the radiant, is "the (true) world."

But, as a general rule, the *Upaniṣads* do not follow this lead. They hold to the thesis that the world is real, not in itself, but as grounded in the self-evolving Brahman. The view that the universe is grounded in and governed by intelligence entails its reality and not merely its apparent existence.

> All this is guided by intelligence, is established in intelligence. The world is guided by intelligence. The support is intelligence. Brahmã is intelligence.[216]

It is thus evident that, although the term *mãyã* is also used in the *Upaniṣads*, it does not signify the unreality of the world. Here, as in the *Ṛig-Veda*, it indicates only that the world is unreal by itself. It is yet real, but only relatively so, as an expression of God. *Mãyã* is the power of creative expression that gives form and name to things, the power that is distributed throughout the manifested world. Just how this relation between the infinite and the finite holds, the logical intellect cannot know. The term, *mãyã*, is used to express this unfathomable mystery. It is used, further, to express the infinite distance between the Absolute and the world. It is the distance measure by *mãyã*, illusion--the moment that world is viewed in and by itself.

In the past, some European thinkers have suggested that since the world is unreal, there can be no eternal life for the individual self. The argument is based on the assumption that *mãyã* means the unreality of the world and of finite selves. Hence, eternal life is an impossibility.

However, if the Indian view eliminates the possibility of eternal life for the individual, it does not do so on this--a false--reading of the meaning of *mãyã*. On the contrary, it is eliminated on the grounds suggested earlier, namely, that individuality, while empirically real, is not the true self. That is, the yearning for selfhood is not realized in the present life, under the conditions of time.

According to Upaniṣadic thought, the self is the principle of activity. As vital power, it is identified with *prãna*, a term meaning *breath* or *life*. Its preeminence as the defining condition of the experience of selfhood is the fact that without breath all other bodily activities, as the various activities of sense, are eliminated.

> Therefore breath alone is the uktha.[217]

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[215]Maitrï Upaniṣad, VI. 24, Radhakrishnan, *The Principle Upaniṣads*, pp. 834-35.

[216]*Aitareya Upaniṣad*, III. 3, *Ibid*., p. 523.

[217]The word means *hymn*. The point is that the word is to be meditated on as *prãna*, or *life*.

Let people know that breath is the uktha indeed.
The Devas (the other senses) said to breath:
'Thou art the uktha, thou art all this, we are thine,
thou art ours.'[218]

Now the meaning of the experience of selfhood, of life as activity, is that it express its inner nature freely without the inhibitions of conditions imposed from the outside. But this it cannot do in present experience. Its freedom is bound from the side of external conditions. The solution, according to the Upaniṣads, is to discover a self that is wholly *self-conditioned*. Thus the true self is not the actual empirical self of this-world experience. Rather it is the self that is one in the unity of its being. It is, as we have earlier seen, the universal, unitary Ātman. It is self that is not only the key to reality, it is the self that *is* the real as identified with Brahman.

It is evident that, regardless of how such key terms as *mãyã* and *nirvãṇa* are interpreted, the problematic of Indian thought with respect to the question of eternal life turns on the fundamental decision to fulfill the yearning for selfhood in an experience of absolute freedom from any external relations. If to be conditioned by others is to be without a self, then to be a self is to be free from these conditions. To be a self is to be one without a second.

It is readily seen that if there is such an experience, it is the experience of one and only one being. Thus the dialectic of selfhood leads to the inevitable conclusion that there can be only one self, which is *Ātman-Brahman*. This means, then, that the finite self is no self at all. It is but a fragment in the universal diversification, behind which there is nothing at all but the one solitary being. Thus there is no immortality for the individual self. What immortality there is, is the immortality that is already achieved in the eternity of the absolute self. It is immortal in its own eternity. Its metaphysical distance, as a moment in the life of the Absolute, is cancelled and it becomes indissolubly one again in its eternal grounding. Finite individuality is cancelled, but trans-individual immortality is secured.

This view of the nature of eternal life, as regards the individual, is precisely the view advanced by Chinese thought. For, as we have observed, the individual has eternal life through its identity with the Absolute *Tao*.

The idea of eternal life cannot be consistently developed on the presupposition that the life of the individual is already the life of the eternal reality. If eternal life is the conservation of the values of our life in time, that life cannot be one in which individuality is lost in its identity-less immersion in an all-encompassing unity of infinite being. For to lose individuality is to lose not only the temporal values themselves but the life itself in which those values were secured in the voyage of time. Precisely here lies the difficulty of all nature religions that reduce existence to the evolutionary development of the Absolute God. Both Indian and Chinese religious thought reveal a fundamental inadequacy at this point, where their view of eternal life becomes inimical to the religious idea of redemption.

We have observed in the previous chapter that Islam is a nature

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[218]*Airareya-Âranyaka Upaniṣad*, Fourth Kanda 15-17, Max Muller, tr., *The Upaniṣads*, 2 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1879, 1884), I, 207.

religion. It resorts to the supernatural *quoad modum*. God's relation to history is exclusively *direct*. There is no mediation between God and humanity. The great and final act of divine intervention is the Last Judgment. It is to be heralded by certain "signs" of its imminence: omens, foreboding rumblings, and mysterious occurrences in nature. Then the last trumpet will sound, the dead will rise, and all souls will assemble before Allah's judgment throne. Each person will be judged and sent to everlasting punishment in hell or his eternal reward in heaven, as the case may be.

Now, in keeping with its nature-motif, Islam describes the heavenly state in terms of tangible things: precious clothing, splendid foods and fruit, with handsome youths waiting on the elect, etc. The bliss enjoyed by the elect is purely natural. What particularly distinguishes the Moslem from the Christian paradise is the reference to the *houris*. These are young women of perfect beauty, the whites of their eyes intensely white and the black of their eyes intensely black, who are allotted to the elect, the companions of the Right.

Surely the godfearing shall be in a station secure
among gardens and fountains,
robed in silk and brocade, set face to face.

upon close-wrought couches
reclining upon them, set face to face,
immortal youths going round about them
with goblets, and ewers, and a cup from a spring
(no brows throbbing, no intoxication)
and such fruits as they shall choose,
and such flesh of fowl as they desire,
and wide-eyed houris
as the likeness of hidden pearls,
a recompense for that they laboured.[219]

While the majority of passages in the *Qur'ãn* characterize paradise in heightened earthly terms, there is one passage that suggests a happiness of a more spiritual nature.

'O soul at peace, return unto thy lord,
well-pleased, well-pleasing!
Enter thou among My servants!
Enter thou My Paradise!'[220]

There is a passage that may refer to the resurrection: "Upon that day faces shall be radiant, gazing upon their Lord."[221] But the verse has no Messianic reference. As in all passages describing the apocalypse, God alone is King and Judge.

It is quite clear that, for Islam, individual existence is equated with empirical psycho-physical selfhood. This form of individual existence is to be reinstated by the direct intervention of God at the end-time of the resurrection. Following the Last Judgment, the saved will resume, albeit in heightened form, the same order of existence enjoyed in the former life on earth. While Islam offers no attempt to demonstrate, philosophically, the

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[219]Sura 44:51-53; 55:15-24, A. J. Arberry, tr., *The Koran Interpreted*, 2 vols. (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1955).

[220]Sura 89:27-30.

[221]Sura 75:22-23.

truth of the nature-theory of the resurrected life, it is precisely the naive realism, which is taken for granted, that accounts for the highly voluptuous reading of life in paradise.

Life (חיים, *chay*) in the Old Testament means only physical, organic life. Its ultimate source was known to be God, who gave life in the creative act. Beyond this affirmation of its divine source, the Old Testament writers expressed little or no interest in the question of the origin of life.

For the ancient Hebrews, however, life was more than natural fact. It included the value judgment that life is an intrinsic good, that it cannot be relativized. Wisdom, Proverbs says, offers "in her left hand riches and honour," but in her *right* hand the absolutely desirable, "length of days." And in Job the statement is made, "all that a man hath will he give for his life."[222]

Since God is the source of life, the preservation or loss of one's life is decided by one's attitude to His Word. Jehovah is the Lord of life and death:

> See now that I, even I, am he,
> and there is no god with me: I
> kill, and I make alive: I wound, and
> I heal: neither is there any that
> can deliver out of my hand.[223]

Thus God presents His people with the choice:

> But the word is very nigh unto
> thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart,
> that thou mayest do it.
> See, I have set before thee
> this day life and good, and death
> and evil;
> . . . . . .
> I call heaven and earth to
> record this day against you, that I
> have set before you life and death,
> blessing and cursing: therefore
> choose life, that both thou and thy
> seed may live.[224]

The ultimate blessing of life is its length. This is the reward for obeying the divine Word. Thus God gave to Abraham the promise:

> And thou shalt go to thy
> fathers in peace; thou shalt be
> buried in a good old age.[225]

Because the goodness of life consists in its length of days, filled with fortune, Hezekiah, who is the righteous man prospering in the will of God, regards his imminent death an anomaly in providence--the deprivation of a due. He thus voices the prayer for restoration and salvation from premature death.

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[222]Prov. 3:16; Job 2:4.

[223]Deut. 32:39.

[224]Deut. 30:14-19.

[225]Gen. 15:15.

I said in the cutting off of my
days, I shall go to the gates
of the grave: I am deprived of the
residue of my years.
I shall not see the
Lord, even the Lord, in the land
of the living: I shall behold man no
more with the inhabitants of the world.
. . . . . .
O Lord, by these things men
live, and in all these things is the
life of my spirit: so wilt thou
recover me, and make me to live.
Behold, for peace I had great
bitterness: but thou hast in love to
my soul delivered it from the pit
of corruption: for thou has cast
all my sins behind thy back.
For the grave cannot praise
thee, death can not celebrate thee:
they that go down into the pit
cannot hope for thy truth.
The living, the living, he shall
praise thee, as I do this day: the
father to the children shall make
known thy truth.[226]

While the ancient Hebrew showed extreme aversion to an early death, he nonetheless accepted death, at the close of a long life, as something inevitable. The Old Testament righteous met the absolutely irrevocable fact of death with complete resignation. The state of the dead was a cheerless, shadow existence in the grave. The grave is the dwelling place of the dead. There is also, without any attempt of reconciliation, the dwelling place of the dead in the cosmic depths, in *sheol*.

Jehovah's jurisdiction is halted at the gates of *Sheol*. His grace has no relevance to the dead. They are cut off from His hand. This is the sting of death in the Old Testament. For the living, live is sustained in relation to God. In *sheol* thee is no such relation. Death and its kingdom are beyond the stream of divine power. The kingdom of death has subjected all the kingdoms of life unto itself.

Free among the dead, like the
slain that lie in the grave, whom
thou rememberest no more: and
they are cut off from thy hand.
Thou hast laid me in the lowest
pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

the earth hath he given to the children of men.
The dead praise not the Lord,
neither any that go down into silence.[227]

The comprehensive value judgment that this life is good is questioned particularly in two places in the Old Testament. The writer of Ecclesiastes reacts against the established view of providence, that life as a whole may be blessed of God. The world is a moral chaos and all existence is vanity. Since there is no hope of a future life, no extrication from this despairing

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[226]Isa. 38:10-11, 16-19.

[227]Pss. 88:5-6; 115:16-17.

condition is possible. Parenthetically, there is an important implication suggested here. The writer has judged that life on earth is rendered void and meaningless by the absence of any clear indication of an after-life. This implies that value of existence can be established only on the premise of an after-life. But of this there is no indication in Ecclesiastes.

What the writer of Ecclesiastes does suggest, however, is that some gratification and amelioration may be gathered at random from the disintegrating moments of the life-process.

> Go thy way, eat thy bread
> with joy, and drink thy wine with
> a merry heart; for God now
> accepteth thy works.
> Let thy garments be always
> white; and let thy head lack
> no raiment.
> Live joyfully with the wife whom
> thou lovest all the days of thy life
> of thy vanity, which he hath given
> thee under the sun, all the days of
> thy vanity: for that is thy portion
> in this life, and in thy labour which
> thou takest under the sun.[228]

In the Book of Job the value judgment on life's goodness is also questioned. But, unlike the case in Ecclesiastes, the questioning leads to a deepened understanding. The opening passages of the Book tell us of a righteous man who, according to the orthodox view, merits from God the reward of life's well-being. But then calamity overtakes him, in the form of the unexpected deaths of his sons. Nevertheless, he submits to the divine will.

> Naked came I out of my mother's womb,
> and naked shall I return hither: the Lord
> gave, and the Lord hath taken away;
> blessed be the name of the Lord.[229]

But as his condition worsens, as his sufferings mount, there is a sudden reversal of attitude. Job opens his mouth and curses, not God, but his own day. He begins his protest against providence and his repetitious wrestling with its inscrutable decrees. The orthodox view, as we have seen earlier, was that prosperity and long life are the rewards of the righteous, while confusion and early death are the rewards of the unrighteous. Yet, in the early prologue of the work, Job disputes even this. He recasts this orthodoxy by asserting that it is not altogether true: for providence is also involved in the ills of life. This variation upon orthodoxy is unmistakable in his reply to his wife:

> Thou speakest as one of the foolish
> women speaketh. What? Shall we
> receive good at the hand of God,
> and shall we not receive evil? In
> all this did not Job sin with his lips.[230]

Job's three friends take the orthodox position that his distressed condition is the result of his sin. To this Job protests that he has not

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[228]Eccles. 9:7-9.

[229]Job 1:21.

[230]Job 2:10.

sinned. How, then, is the problem to be resolved? How can his ills in life be reconciled with the dispensations of Providence? He realizes that within the narrow limits of his experience there is no possibility of reconciling the belief in a divinely appointed order of events and the actual events of human life. Yet he refuses to accept the conclusions drawn in Ecclesiastes, that all is vanity. Instead, he intimates that there is a larger experience that is cosmic and divine and in which he has a right to look for a solution. He believes that in his own limited experience, with its frailties and disappointments, there is that which points to an experience ideally complete, in which the fragmentariness of one's actual experience is taken up and ultimately saved. To be sure, the individual's experience of living suffers from a constitutional disability to cash the credits that are vouchsafed us. The experience of living, not so much the objects of experience, mocks us with a perpetually vanishing hope. Even the outreach of time, the time of yet another day, cannot yield up its promise of satisfactoriness. What, therefore, is needed is not more experience of the same kind, but a different kind of experience. What is needed is an experience of a *second birth*, a birth into a comprehensive experience in which the individual finds freedom and deliverance. In his passionate affirmation of faith, Job glimpses a birth into freedom--freedom beyond suffering, freedom beyond death itself.

> For I know that my redeemer
> liveth, and that he shall stand
> at the latter day upon the earth:
> And though after my skin
> worms destroy this body, yet in
> my flesh shall I see God:
> Whom I shall see for myself,
> and mine eyes shall behold, and
> not another; though my reins be
> consumed within me.[231]

There is, thus, in the Old Testament the indication of a fullness of life in which the value judgment that life is meaningful is finally sustained. The Old Testament offers the promise that death shall be conquered. There are intimations that this is so, in the special instances in which individuals are snatched up into the higher spheres over which God rules. There are hints that the righteous Jehovah will fulfill those covenant promises that can be secured only after death. The certainty of grace holds forth the assurance that the fellowship initiated by God cannot be destroyed.

> Therefore my heart is glad,
> and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh
> shall rest in hope.
> For thou wilt not leave my
> soul in hell [sheol]; neither wilt thou
> suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
>
> But God will redeem my
> soul from the power of the
> grave [sheol]: for he shall
> receive me.
>
> Nevertheless I am continually
> with thee: thou hast holden
> me by my right hand.
> Thou shalt guide me with
> thy counsel, and afterward
> receive me to glory.
> Whom have I in heaven but

[231]Job 19:25-27.

thee? . . .
My flesh and my heart faileth:
but God is the strength of my
heart, and my portion for ever.[232]

There are, then, Old Testament indications of the true discovery of the self, of the *second birth* into freedom, salvation, and life everlasting. We know what this second birth is not: it is not a birth into the same kind of experience undergone in our earthly, time-bound journey. And it is not a birth into the absolute unity in which all distinctions are lost and individuals swept into an inchoate abyss of undifferentiated oneness. But as yet we do not know what this birth into freedom is, what it *positively* is. There are, to be sure, Old Testament intimations. But they are only intimations. Only a new, strikingly unique revelation can disclose this final secret. Has there come to our stricken humanity such a disclosure? The New Testament asserts that there has, and that it has come from the Beyond and within the conditions of Time. There is He "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light."[233]

There are, for the purpose of bringing the Christian concept of the life eternal to view, two important categorial principles that provide the key in the argument. They are: (1) the idea of subjectivity, and (2) the idea of transcendence. Some reference to these ideas has been noted in the preceding discussion. We have observed something of the way in which Indian thought has attempted to discover the true self that lies beyond the ordinary waking consciousness, the true self of the individual that is the same as the universal Self, the Ātman. It would appear that there remains little, if anything, to be said about the nature of subjectivity. However, as we shall see, that is not the case. There is, beyond the introversion achieved here, yet a further act of introversion--an introversion that reveals the true possibilities of finite subject-selfhood.

The same line of thought holds true as regards the idea of transcendence. We have pointed out the difficulties inherent in the idea of God as related to the world in terms of His self-diremption, according to which the world and God are virtually identified. We have suggested that the Hebrew idea of divine transcendence is the corrective that permits a caring and redemptive relation to hold between God and the finite individual. But we have not as yet come to understand the nature of divine transcendence and the manner in which transcendence embraces the world of nature and humanity in the circle of redeeming care.

In sum, the present task is one of pursuing the leads already contained in the ideas of subjectivity and transcendence, so as to come to a better understanding of the nature of that which is preeminently set forth in the New Testament under the rubric of the life eternal. It may be noted here that these ideas appear so antithetical to each other that it would seem that they could not function together in an argument pointing to the conclusion of life eternal. But that is only an apparent difficulty.

In the Greek language there are two words for "life." There is life in the sense of Βίος (Bios). The term refers to life as an observable phenomenon or process. This life is the life of the conscious organism insofar as it is identified with bodily processes.

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[232]Pss. 16:9-10; 49:15; 73:23-26.

[233]2 Tim. 1:10.

The other word for life is Ζωή (Zoë). The term refers to life as identified, not merely with bodily processes, but with the experience of living. The term connotes a turn to the inwardness of experience. There is here a natural introversion leading away from the naturalistic conception of life as Bios. The act of introversion is not a religious act, but is an act that opens toward the possibility of yet a further introversion, a further entrance into subjectivity, that holds out the hope--indeed the realization--of a wholly new order of life. Zoë is life that becomes the material of religion. The function of religion is to bring a second, non-natural introversion that turns our experience of life as Zoë into a new life, life as ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, the life eternal, the αἰώνιος ζωή of Christian promise. The life eternal is the third, and finally definitive, meaning of life. It is life in the completed and perfected sense.

The outline of the first category, that of subjectivity, has been given, as it relates to life. The outline remains to be filled out in the sequel. Now a comparable delineation of the second category of interpretation, that of transcendence, must be made.

The idea of the transcendence of God, the idea of the absolute being of the Transcendent One, connotes a distinction between God and the world, including the world of human kind. That, as we have argued, is a valid idea and an idea essential to the thought of God's caring and redeeming relation to individuals. But the questions remain: How is this transcendence and distinction to be construed? How does such transcendence and separateness relate God to the finite order? These questions must be answered, if we are to understand how the subjectivity of finite subject-selfhood is received into the Eternal One so as to issue to the children of earth the gift of God's own everlasting life. Yet again the ideas of subjectivity and transcendence are intertwined.

If there is a valid meaning of transcendence, the key to the discovery of that meaning is found in but one place, in the recesses of our own subjective experience. It is within the first, and natural, introversion of life as Zoë that the true path to transcendence is found.

The experience in which there is the consciousness of objects is a form of experience of which we are unquestionably aware. Our perception of the features of real objects in the outer world--for example, objects with such features as their substance, shape, size, color, etc.--is a form of experience that we undergo in our normal, everyday life. It is the form of experience, particularly in our day of preoccupation with the objective contents of experience, that first comes to mind when we consider the nature of our conscious experience.

We accept the proposition that there is a difference between what we actually experience, the given data of sense experience--the perceptual givenness of hardness, fluidity, shape, size, color, for example--and the real object existing externally in the world of space and time. The independent Real is not directly experienced, or perceived. Nevertheless it is *known*. It is known in and through the continuing series, the transformability of one such series into another, of sense presentations, to which the object is an invariable. At the level of sense perception, then, experience becomes the subjective analogue of the independent Real.

It is a mistake to assume that the independent Real is wholly divorced from appearances. On the contrary, an essential component of its nature is its function to produce the appropriate appearance under the appropriate conditions. A case in point is our experience of color. While there is no color in light waves themselves, our experience of color is not merely and

simply a subjective reaction having no relation to the nature of the object. Part of the nature of the object is its constitution that enables it to disclose itself in the appearance of its color. That is as much of the nature of the real object as are other properties, e.g., mathematically measurable ones (shape and size), part of its nature.

Further, although the independent reality of the object is secured for us in the transformations of sense experiences, we know that our own sense experiences are incapable of adequately guaranteeing the objective status of the object. This further guarantee is provided by the experiences of others in the context of an experiencing community of persons. The subjective analogue of the independent Real is now a *social* one. Insofar as we are able to communicate our experiences to others, and they to us, the independent Real discloses itself as sustaining the conditions of social experience.

Our knowledge of the world is found in our acquaintance with phenomena and the transformations of phenomenal content as revelatory of the independent Real. Science is the transformation of such acquaintance into an organized and generalized form. It is an ideal, theoretical system of the transformations of experience that can be rendered exact, generalized, and verified. It exists in a social context. Thus the American philosopher, C. S. Peirce wrote:

> So with all scientific research. Different minds may set out with the most antagonistic views, but the progress of the investigation carries them by a force outside of themselves to one and the same conclusion. This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a foreordained goal, is like the operation of destiny, No modification of the point of view taken, no selection of other facts for study, no natural bent of the mind even, can enable a man to escape the predestined opinion. This great law is embodied in the conception of truth and reality. The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. That is the way I would explain reality.[234]

However, the question remains whether the social analogue is sufficient to establish the reality of the object and the world of nature. To argue that such is the case is but an assumption. Certainly the progress of science over the centuries, the ever-changing character of science, indicate that our conception of the reality of the world cannot be based in a social criterion. If, as we have suggested, the reality of nature requires the analogue of experience, that reality can be found and guaranteed only in a more comprehensive experience than is provided for in the social context of humanity. There must, to establish the world, be a supremely comprehensive experience. The supreme Subject-Self is the only adequate analogue of the world's reality.

We ourselves experience creation. For us, creation involves the rearrangement of material that we find already provided for the creative act. This is what happens in artistic creation. Now the creative experience of divine self-experience, of God, is wholly different from human acts of creation. God's creative experience has certain features peculiarly its own. It is creative through and through. Divine creation has no pre-existing material out of which to bring the object of creation into being. If God were to create *out of something*, it would not be creation. Neither is His creation

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[234]Charles Sanders Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-66), 5.408, V, 268.

a creation *out of nothing*. The expression is a misnomer. Indeed, the disjunction, *out of something* or *out of nothing* is an illicit disjunction.

There is no such thing, as is often suggested now-a-days, as a "science of creation." The idea is nonsense, an oxymoron. Science, as we have pointed out above, is a theoretical system in which the transformations of experience are conceptually organized. It presupposes acquaintance with phenomena. No such precondition exists with respect to the process of divine creativity.

There is, however, a certain logic concerning the creative experience of God that throws some light on the subject. God is the Eternal One, and as such God's creative experience is the experience of the possibility of existence. The possibility here is not the abstract, formal possibility of logic. It is *real possibility*. As such, it is a content of the divine experience. This is the metaphysical import of the New Testament language, where it is asserted of the eternal the *Logos*, *thought*, or *Word,* that

> In the beginning was the Word,
> and the Word was with God,
> and the Word was God.
> The same was in the beginning
> with God.[235]

It may be observed here, parenthetically, that the concept of real possibility, as it relates to the divine experience, throws light on the meaning of the following passages of scripture:

> . . . the book of life of the Lamb slain
> from the foundation of the world.

> According as he hath chosen
> us in him before the foundation
> of the world, that we should be
> holy and without blame before
> him in love.[236]

The divine experience of the possibility of existence is one thing; to experience the actuality of existence is another thing. The world as existing is also the content of the divine experience. Its existence is dependent on God's experience of its possibility. But its existence involves something further. It involves the creative action that brings it into actual existence as the objective equivalent of divine experience. It is in this sense that the world is the divine creation. Here the creative action is the "God said" of the Genesis account of creation: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."[237] It is the creation by the *Logos*, the *Word*: "All things were made by him: and without him was not anything made that was made."[238] The writer of Hebrews develops the same thought, where he speaks of the Son, "by whom also he [God] made the worlds," who upholds "all things by the word (lit. τῷ ῥήματι, *by the utterance*) of his power."[239]

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[235]John 1:1-2.

[236]Rev. 13:8; Eph. 1:4.

[237]Gen. 1:3.

[238]John 1:3.

[239]Heb. 1:2 and 3.

Now, all this brings the idea of the transcendence of God to clearer view. Divine transcendence means that, while the world is a content of the divine experience, it does not exhaust the being of God. The divine reality is not exhausted, as in Indian thought, in any act of self-diremption. On the other hand, the transcendence of deity does not mean a mechanical, external relation to the existing world. The relation is not one of *Deus ex machina*. It means that the God who is inviolate in the integrity of eternal self-reality holds as content of His experience the possibility and the actuality of existence. And it means, further, that this content exists distinctively in the integrity of its created existence. That individuals are the subject-content of the divine experience, and that they nevertheless possess distinctiveness of existence, is the key to the understanding of how it is that God brings care, salvation, and life eternal to His children of earth.

Granted all this--that the world's reality must be secured in the supreme experience of God--where is the evidence that this is indeed true, that there is more in the assertion than a problematic of thought? If there is any such evidence, it can be found in but one place, that is, in the individual's experience as a subject-self. Thus it comes that, again, the interpretive principle of subjectivity is called upon to disclose the way to the truth.

It is a mistake to assume that our experience of life is restricted to our consciousness of objects, that our knowledge is restricted to the knowledge of objects. Experience occurs, to be sure, in the form of a consciousness of objects. But that this is the only such experience, or even its most fundamental form, is something that cannot be sustained upon analysis.

Consciousness is not, as is too-often asserted, a relation between the conscious subject and the object known. It is a *state of the subject*. It is one, among others, of the forms of experience, one of the states of a self-identical subject capable of being in a variety of states. Experience is not defined by consciousness; consciousness is defined by experience.

When we consider the reality of our experience, we see that we do not experience ourselves in the first instance as a fact. The objects of which we are aware are *facts* of experience. And, as we have earlier observed, we do not actually experience their existence; we experience phenomenal data whose transformations are indexical of an objective natural order of things. Were our experience exclusively of this order, we could never directly experience our own existence. Hume would be correct, as would his naturalistic successors who subscribe to psychological phenomenalism. He writes in a famous passage:

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I can never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and can never observe anything but the perception.[240]

All this is true if our experience is exhausted in the awareness of phenomenal data, if our experience is exhaustively of the kind disclosed in the interchange with the object-world. The reality of self-experience, of the subject-self, that we believe, in our better moments, is fraught with riches of an existence given in the act of living, disappears in the shadow-land of

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[240]David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, Bk. 1, pt. 2, sec. vi (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1896), p. 252.

ever-changing, fleeting impressions.

All this changes, however, when we realize the first introversion of which we spoke earlier, when we identify our life with the experience of living. Here we must observe that, in the light of this introversion, we are enabled to see that when we have an *object* of experience we are conscious of what it means *to be conscious* of objects. We are conscious of our existence as experience-bearing subject-selfhood. This consciousness is never an *object* of experience. It is a *mode* of experience, that is, one of the forms in which experience-bearing selfhood discloses itself in the act of living. Of this consciousness of subjective selfhood, Professor A. A. Bowman writes:

> . . . the consciousness which is thus reduced to a tangled complex of objective factors, is still wanting in one of the fundamental characteristics of consciousness, as this is known to us in experience. It is not the consciousness which we experience as what it means to *be conscious* of objects, but the consciousness which we observe as itself an *object*. Now if there is such a thing as consciousness in this latter sense, there is such a thing as consciousness in the former . . . . And with this conception of consciousness the conception of personality stands or falls. Either there is no such thing as personality, or else to be a person is to have experience of what it means to be conscious. Not that the experience of being conscious is all that is implied in personality; but without the capacity for such experience one of the defining conditions of personal existence is wanting. Personality implies more than what it is to *be* an object, no matter how complex. It implies what it is to *have* an object; and what it is to have an object implies what it is to *be* a subject. Now what it is to be a subject is undoubtedly a content of experience, but it is not an objective, phenomenal content. To whatever extent personal existence is bound up with natural antecedents and concomitants, it is undoubtedly not reducible to these.[241]

Life as Zoë, the experience of living, proceeds through the succession of episodes of experience. An episode of experience is a "specious present," which is a temporal duration sufficient to enable the subject-self to adjust to its environment. These episodes that we experience are internal to experience itself and are indistinguishable from experience. The continuing succession of these episodes merges into an ever-changing present that becomes the experience of the past. In this manner experience becomes a comprehensive experience. This comprehensive experience is what is meant by the experience of selfhood. Selfhood is the capacity for comprehensive experience. This capacity is what is meant by personality.

Now, we do not actually, under the conditions of terrestrial existence, enjoy a comprehensive experience. We are not, in the full sense of the term, personalities. While we have the idea of personhood, and while we claim to be persons, we cannot of ourselves guarantee that claim. We are, however, unwilling to forfeit the claim. To do so would jeopardize even the limited extent to which we achieve the comprehensiveness of our experience that secures our fragile personhood. There is but one way in which to secure the claim that we ourselves cannot make good. It is to appeal, vicariously, to the one divine comprehensive experience, in whose life of creative activity, we are sustained, and to rest our fragmented life in the grace of reconciliation. The alternative is clear: either we abandon our claim to be persons or we affirm the reality of God.

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[241]Archibald Allan Bowman, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1938), II, 281-82.

One may object here, that the necessity in our limited experience of personhood to affirm the reality of the comprehensive experience of deity, or the reality of God, does not "prove" that God does indeed exist. If what one wants here is a formal proof, one that proceeds deductively, the objection holds good. But the matter does not rest here. We actually experience the fragmentation of our subject selfhood. It is impossible, from the standpoint of experience, to realize our limited selfhood, or finitude, without at the same time realizing in our experience the actuality of the perfected experience of the divine personality. Without this realization, we could not be aware of our own limited and finite condition.

Now, the flow of our episodic experiences, which do yield satisfactions, can never yield a final, comprehensive satisfaction. Life as Zoë, the experience of living, is not ultimately satisfactory. There is no need to resort here to a lengthy procedure of proof. We know that very often we are unhappy when we have all that we want. We know that many times we fail to realize our happiness until it is all over. What this means is that our happiness is a thing of time and that there is something about it that cannot be experienced in any given time. Further, no future time, in which future episodes of experience may occur, can yield the happiness that completes the desire of life.

It is at this point that the mysticism of the East attempts to resolve the difficulty. The solution is to give up the very life that falsifies all the sought-for values of one's existence. The remedy is the annihilation of individual life and individuality. Salvation, as we have already seen, becomes, in this view, an abyss.

It is precisely here that the mystical religion of Indian thought contravenes the essential defining concept of religion. In its very nature, religion demands the distinctive reality of the individual and the continuation of that reality in the state of eternal life. In the present life, spiritual communion between the finite individual and God requires the personal existence of both the finite individual and the divine Person. If, beyond this present life, redemption is indeed a redemption of the individual, that redemption cannot involve the destruction of finite personality. There cannot be any redemption of the individual if in that process the individual is annihilated.

The answer that the Qur'ãn provides is the offer of a paradise of the very same time-bound episodes of experience that but falsify the completed meaning of life. The absolutely, unqualified incompetence of this view of the life hereafter is evident beyond cavil. It is futile to project the disillusionments of earthly experience into an infinite future.

Life as Bios is not the whole of life. And life as Zoë, the first, non-natural introversion, is itself not the whole of life. If there is an answer to life's problematic--and there *is* an answer--it is not found in a continuation of experiences of the same kind. It is found in *a new kind of experience*. It is found in a second introversion--an introversion beyond the introversion of life as Zoë--, in what the New Testament calls "the second birth." It is found in the third, and finally definitive, meaning of life: *life eternal*, ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή.

Life eternal, then, is a present experience. It is a *cognitive act*. But it is a cognitive act, not in the sense of *discovery*, but in the sense of *reception of givenness*. It is the cognitive appropriation of *revelation*. This the New Testament defines in the following exalted language:

And this is life eternal, that
they might know thee the only
true God, and Jesus Christ,
whom thou hast sent.[242]

In the Greek language, the conjunction ἵνα (*hina*), *that*, *in order that*, is used to introduce a clause that expresses the purpose of the action denoted by the main verb of a sentence. For example, John 1:7 reads: "He came that he might bear witness concerning the light." Here the conjunction is ἵνα (*hina*), *in order that*. The conjunction indicates that the action of the main verb, *came*, is a means to something else, *bearing witness*. The two actions are distinct.

The translation of John 17:3 in the King James version lends the impression that the two elements, *life eternal*, and *they might know*, or *knowing*, are two distinct things and that the former is for the purpose of the latter. If this were correct, the verse would mean that life eternal has for its aim, or purpose, the knowledge of God.

In this verse the sentence is introduced by the demonstrative pronoun, αὕτη (*autē)*, *this*. The verb ἐστί (*esti*), *is*, is *intransitive*. As used here, following the demonstrative, the conjunction, ἵνα (*hina*), does not introduce a purpose clause. Rather, it introduces a subsidiary clause that explicates the meaning of the demonstrative and the noun to which the demonstrative refers. Thus the conjunction, ἵνα (*hina*), expresses an *identity* of eternal life and knowledge. Eternal life does not *lead to* knowledge; eternal life *is* knowledge--knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the translation of the New English Bible is truer to the original: "This is eternal life: to know thee who alone art truly God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

The word, *eternal* (αἰώνιος), comes from two words, αει, *always*, and ων, *being* or *existence*. Eternal life is a *life ever living*. The Greek text has the definite article, "And this is *the* eternal life (ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ). The article is employed to point out the eminence of that life. Eternal life is not merely eternal existence; it is eternal existence with *blessedness*. The life eternal is the life of infinite fulfillment and happiness.

Now, as we have just indicated, eternal life, the second introversion, is a *present* possession. It is the act of knowing God. But--and this is the crucially important element--it is the act of knowing God *in Jesus Christ*. In this person, the Jesus of history, is found the givenness of revelation received in the knowing act of eternal life.

This knowledge that is eternal life in the present is unlike any form of knowledge with which we are familiar in connection with the knowledge of objects. It is the knowledge of a *Subject*, in this context, the knowledge, *via* the mediation of the *memoria* of His life, death, and resurrection, by *acquaintance*. Apart, even, from this ultimate knowing, we are familiar with this very form of personal knowledge. Here, then, is a key to the meaning of the new kind of experience, which is the experience of life eternal.

We know the difference between knowing an abstract meaning and knowing a living person. While our intellectual curiosity is satisfied when we understand an abstruse theorem, that understanding does not touch our inner life of meaning and value, of aspiration and hope. But when we become acquainted with a living person, someone whom we come to admire and love, the

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[242]John 17:3.

qualities of that life are discerned and are appreciated in such a way that they qualify and change the tenor of our own lives. While there is something indefinable, even mysterious, about personal knowledge, we know something of how it occurs. There is the shape of the face, the blush of the cheek, the tone and inflection of the voice, the gentle touch of the hand, the delicate gesture, all of which disclose something of the inner life and spirit of the loved one. These are perceptible events, actual occurrences in historical time, and as such they function as cues, pathways, that yield an awareness of the inner life and spirit of the beloved.

The knowledge that is eternal life is of this order. It is a knowledge that is brought in and through an actual historical event. That event is Jesus, who as the word of God's eternal self-revelation, now becomes the word of divine disclosure to the children of time. John writes in his first epistle:

> That which was from the beginning,
> which we have heard, which we have seen
> with our eyes, which we have looked upon,
> and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;
>
> (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it,
> and bear witness, and shew unto you that
> eternal life, which was with the Father,
> and was manifested unto us:)[243]

"We have heard"; "we have seen"; "we have looked upon"; "our hands have handled." These expressions witness to the first-century disciples' encounter with "the Word of life." In that historical rendezvous they were given an understanding, the knowledge that *is* eternal life. This understanding came as they listened to his teachings and witnessed his actions.

In his words they heard a new story: "After this manner therefore pray ye"; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"; "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all"; "This is my commandment, that ye love one another"; "Blessed are they"; "Let not your heart be troubled"; "Come unto me . . . , and I will give you rest."

In his actions they saw a new response. They witnessed their master's compassion for the teeming multitudes. They saw his friendship with the social outcasts of their day. They witnessed his converse with the woman of Samaria and heard his words of promise. They heard him as he wept over a lost city. They watched with fascination as he accepted with meekness the accolades of the people. They partook with him of the wine and bread of a New Covenant of grace. They trod with him the *via dolorosa*, the *Way of Sorrow*. They beheld him as he hung on his cross of agony, when he willingly accepted humanity's awful burden of estrangement and sin, and felt the pathos of his dying words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

What is it that gave those words and deeds their radical, life-transforming significance? The answer is that they were transparent with the quality of divinity. They disclosed that, indeed, this man, Jesus, was, and is, the Son of God.

Now, the relationship between the Father and the Son is described as εἶναι ἐν (*to be in*) and ἕν εἶναι (*to be one*). The first wording appears in John 10:38, ". . . the Father is in me, and I in him"; the second, in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." The relationship between the Father and the

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[243] 1 John 1:1-2.

Son is one of personal fellowship. It is a fellowship in which each is determined by the other: the God of *power* and the God of *meaning*. This relationship is a mutual γινώσκειν, (*ginoskein*) a mutual *knowing*. "As the Father knoweth me so know I the Father".[244] "But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me."[245]

A third element is included within the circle of mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son. It is the element of historical humanity. To know God in Jesus Christ is to share in the fellowship of the Father and Son, to be embraced within the closure of divine unity.

> And the glory which thou gavest me
> I have given them; that they be one,
> even as we are one;
>
> I in them, and thou in me, that they
> may be perfect in one . . . (John 17:22-23).

God and the Son are and have life. "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given the Son to have life in himself".[246] To know God and Jesus Christ, the great text of John 17:3 declares, is to *have* eternal life. And, as has been earlier observed, the knowledge that *is* eternal life is no knowledge of investigation, or observation, or speculation. It is what may be termed an "existential" knowing, a "participatory" knowing. If knowledge is a process in which the knower is determined by the nature of what is known (and it is), then to know God in Jesus Christ is to be determined by the nature of God and Jesus Christ. The Father and the Son are and have eternal life. Thus, it is eternal life to know God. "Lord," Philip said, "shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."[247] It sufficeth us: to know is the supreme and true mode of being.

The knowledge that is eternal life is a mode of being. It is the supreme quality of our temporal life. Can this mode of life, this quality of life, which is called "eternal life," be further identified? It can, and the New Testament does so. Substantively, eternal life is ἀγάπη, *agape*, *love*. "God is love . . . ."[248] The relation between the Father and the Son is that of love: "The Father loveth the Son"; ". . . I love the Father".[249]

The love of the Father for the world is actualized in the sending of his Son and the love of the Son is actualized in his obedience to the Father and to the service for his own. John said of him, as he lingered in the shadow of his cross: "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."[250]

The knowledge that is eternal life is, first of all, loving action. The

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[244]John 10:15.

[245]John 7:29.

[246]John 5:26.

[247]John 14:8.

[248]1 John 4:16.

[249]John 3:35; 14:31.

[250]John 13:1.

criterion of knowledge is obedience to the great commandment, whose content is love: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments".[251] But, further, the knowledge that is eternal life is the awareness of being loved. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).[252]

The passage of John 15:9, "continue ye in my love" (μείνατε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐμῇ) can be read both as loving action and awareness of being loved. Indeed, the awareness of being loved is the basis of loving action. In fine, to know, γινώσκειν (*ginoskein*), is the recognition and reception of love and action in obedience to the demand of love.

Christians today are separated by the generations from the "first originality" when first-century Christians met God in Jesus Christ. But the *memoria* of that meeting is preserved in the New Testament. In our own day and time, we may discover the words and deeds of the one who, in the days of his flesh, brought the saving knowledge of God and provided the gift of eternal life.

There is a further dimension to the life eternal. Life eternal in the present, as the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, is, as we have repeatedly insisted, a new kind of experience. But there is yet an added meaning to life eternal as a new kind of experience. It is the life eternal that awaits the individual beyond the gates of bodily death. It is the Christian promise of life everlasting, of life εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, "to the ages of the ages."

We have seen that, with respect to the experience of life as Zoë, the ongoing episodes of life do not promise fulfillment of the experience of living. Under the conditions of terrestrial existence, we do not experience life as a whole. And when life is completed, it appears not to be a new experience, but to be the end of all experience whatever. Thus the question remains, is there an experience of life after the death of the body?

Life as Bios, bodily life, is the objective equivalent of life as Zoë, or of life as subjectively experienced. The two forms of life coincide in the sense that when the experience of life occurs, a body is observed to exist. When we experience what it is to be alive, we experience the existence of the body.

Given this correlation, we must conclude that if life continues after the death of the body it will be an experience of living and that this experience will be accompanied by an objective counterpart. In some way this objective equivalent will be provided. And we may presume, that if this is so, the objective counterpart will be commensurate with the meaning of the new life that it manifests. Is all of this true? How can it be? The Christian answer is the doctrine of a spiritual or resurrection body.

Thus the second, and final, introversion beyond life as Zoë is secured in the resurrection. In this power of the resurrection, it is secured, first and foremost, in the resurrection of Jesus. In His resurrection, He becomes

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[251] 1 John 2:3.

[252] 1 John 4:16.

"the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead".[253] He is the ἀρχηγὸς, the *Archegos*, the "One who begins to lead," and is therefore in truth "the pioneer of life," even of the life everlasting. Of this ultimate salvation event, Paul writes:

> Now if Christ be preached
> that he rose from the dead, how
> say some among you that there
> is no resurrection of the dead?
> But if there be no resurrection
> of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
> And if Christ be not risen,
> then is our preaching in vain, and
> your faith is also vain.[254]

There are two aspects to the resurrection. First, there is the reality of resurrection *appearances*. Secondly--and this is the ultimate aspect--there is the reality of the resurrection *event*.

The reality of resurrection appearances.

With respect to the resurrection appearances vouchsafed the early disciples, there are several important considerations. First, there are differences in the various accounts as to certain details, although the various writers are in basic agreement. Those differences are due, it is thought, to the distinctive purpose for which each writer developed his narrative. Second, the narratives all agree that no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. The biblical accounts of the Resurrection, then, are of *resurrection appearances*. Third, these appearances, with some exception, were to groups of people, rather than to individuals confined in isolation. This circumstance is a telling argument against any theory that resurrection appearances were but private hallucinations. Fourth, the perception of the empty tomb did not in itself create the belief, on the part of the friends of Jesus, in his resurrection. Rather, the Resurrection explained the empty tomb. Fifth, the "testimonies" of the scriptures were not recognized until after the resurrection experience. And, finally, the resurrection appearances notwithstanding, the early followers of Jesus did not readily accept the truth and reality of his resurrection. Indeed, the record is clear that they did not expect him to be raised from the dead, and they believed in his resurrection only when the evidence was so persistent and accumulative that they could not do otherwise. The experience of Thomas confirms this, since it was only when Jesus offered his wounds for inspection that, without accepting the offer, Thomas recognized the risen Master and voiced the supreme declaration: "My Lord and my God".[255] For those early followers, the ground of their recognition of the risen Lord was, as it must be for us today, essentially a *response of faith*.

The experience of Thomas is a witness to the resurrection body of the risen Jesus. It is a confirmation that the experience of eternal life is accompanied with a resurrection body commensurate with that life.

The reality of the resurrection.

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[253]Acts 3:15.

[254]1 Cor. 15:12-14.

[255]John 20:28.

In 1 Cor. 15 St. Paul brings the whole complex of the Resurrection into unity. He recounts the tradition of the resurrection appearances and points up the present significance of the Resurrection of Jesus. He follows this with his discourse on the *reality* and *nature* of the resurrection. It is in this section of the chapter that he develops his concept of the "spiritual body." His essential point here is that immortality is *personal*, that it involves everything that is necessary to *recognizable individuality*. Thus the resurrection involves the resurrection body.

Now, obviously, the idea of a "spiritual" or "resurrection" body seems to much of modern thought but a superstitious fantasy. However, we must recall our earlier discussion, that spirit is a distinctive order of reality and that its interiority is presently manifested in bodily existence. Personality is essentially spiritual and cannot therefore be reduced to the bodily life with which it is associated. Thus, the Pauline idea that spiritual identity is, in God, capable of preservation and of manifestation in a different order of bodily presence may not be as far-fetched as many are led to suppose.

It is important at this juncture to consider carefully Paul's own statement of the matter. In verse 35 of 1 Corinthians 15, sets the two-fold question: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" To this first question, Paul attempts no answer; none can be given, save that it is a work of God. The second question, "with what body do they come?," literally reads, "*with what kind of body*? This question Paul answers indirectly and with analogies. His essential point is that the resurrection body is the same body, not by way of a material identity, but as of glorified individuality.

Now, the idea of spiritual body is an apparent contradiction in terms. This is inevitable. Paul uses this paradoxical combination of terms to express a double negation: the negation of the "nakedness" of a merely spiritual existence and the negation of the participation of flesh and blood in the kingdom of God. He is no bumbling logician; a careful reading of his writings reveal, on the contrary, a powerfully argumentative intellect. But he has enough common sense to realize that not everything of significance can be captured in the precision of logic. So his use of the oxymoron is intentional, the result of his interest to make it clear that the resurrection life is one of full individuality. That is the positive meaning that shines forth in the dual negation of the expression.

The basic analogy in depicting the nature of the resurrection body is that of "sowing." Its import is to show that there may be, even is, a personal identity under a complete change of material conditions.

The complete change of conditions means that it is not the *earthly* body that is raised in the resurrection. Paul nowhere speaks of the resurrection of the body, just as he nowhere speaks of the resurrection of the flesh. Rather, his language is **the resurrection of the dead**. Here there is a vast difference. For, Paul argues, in the resurrection of the dead God gives a **new body, an imperishable body, a body of glory that belongs to the spirit and through which the spirit may continue to enjoy self-manifestation in God's everlasting life! That is the resurrection life.**

It is a false understanding that regards the analogy of sowing to mean that what is sown, as precursor of the resurrection body, is the body of physical death. It is this interpretation of the analogy that is responsible for the erroneous view that the physical body, upon death, is actually and literally resuscitated. Nowhere in scripture is there any indication of this

crude notion. In the resurrection God gives a **new body**. If, now, it should happen that the skeletal remains of Jesus were discovered, that would make absolutely no difference as to the reality of the Resurrection. For, again, resurrection is not resuscitation; it is the divine gift of glorified individuality under totally new conditions of bodily self-manifestation.

In Paul's contrast of the natural body and the spiritual body, he speaks of the natural body as "sown in weakness." Obviously, Paul knew that one does not call a corpse weak. A sick person, not a corpse, is weak. He employs the analogy of sowing to show how the resurrection body is totally different from the physical body. The analogy does not describe a natural process. There are no powers of germination in a dead body from which another kind of body grows by natural development. Yet there is, as in the seed and the plant, a continuity between the natural body and the spiritual body. But, again, it is a continuity that is established, not by the processes of nature, but by the act of God. And the continuity is subtle, not readily discernible by a casual glance. This the accounts of the resurrection appearances make quite plain: the followers of Jesus had difficulty in recognizing him in his resurrection glory. Yet, with spiritual understanding, they did recognize him: the continuity amidst difference is there. That is the force of the analogy of sowing.

Sowing does not refer to the burial of the body; it refers to the birth of the human individual. In this regard, Paul refers to Genesis 2:7, where it is said: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Man's soul is planted like a seed into the matrix of mortal life in which it manifests itself in this life. In this sowing it is subject to the conditions of mortal life, those of change, decay, and death. And yet these conditions of mortal life are the "seed-time" of resurrection. The "psychic" [natural] body has in it the "making" of the spiritual. But it all depends upon the quality of this "making." That is, it all depends on the use made of the powers of the natural life. If those powers are centered inordinately upon the immediate impulsions and desires of natural life, deflected from their legitimate place as instruments of the spirit, the sowing of the natural life will be ineffectual. Only as the natural life is saved from itself, redeemed in the fold of Grace, will the natural life become the seed-time of resurrection. That is Paul's thought: the resurrection has its reality, for us, in spiritual affinity with the Lord of the Resurrection:

> For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
>
> And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
> But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the spirit that dwelleth in you.[256]

The metaphysical grounding of the resurrection life is found in the fact that the individual's life is a content in the comprehensive experience of God. The life as Bios and, further, the life as Zoë, are life as secured in the creative experience of God. Already, the individual is enclosed in the divine life-experience. It but remains that God shall elevate that life into the sphere of the resurrection life. This is effected in the second introversion, when through the grace of God life as the knowledge of God is granted. And, finally, it is secured in the final effectuality of resurrection life beyond

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[256]Gal. 6:7; Rom. 8:10-11.

the death of the body.

Wherein lies this assurance, this faith? It is anchored in God's own comprehensive experience. The creative experience of God reaches its culmination in the creation of individual subject-selves. This is the supreme possibility of the divine creative experience.

In the *Preface* to this work, it was stated that the meaning, philosophically, of the life eternal is "the conservation of the values of our life in time," that "the core of religion . . . consists in the conviction that no value perishes out of the world."

Now, it is in the Christian promise--and *no other promise*--that this conviction is realized. The promise rests in the creation of individuals as the supreme possibility of divine experience. However, God's realization of this supreme possibility cannot be accomplished by His unaided power. It is conditioned by the creation for God of His experience of being known and loved by the individual. In this experience of God lies our hope for immortality. The experience whereby God is acknowledged by us, we are able to believe, is valued by Him and will not be permitted to be lost from His own experience.

We have reached a standpoint beyond which there is no other standpoint. We are led to see that our own experience is but instrumental to the divine experience. The things of time, while they retain their meaning, are now the minor meanings of existence. That no other than the individual's immortality is possible, is eloquently stated by Professor Bowman:

> And it is unthinkable that the existence that is the meaning of experience, when experience means most, should pass away into the form of existence that is the least of the meanings of existence, that the individual who supplies to God the experience of being known should vanish in the least of the meanings of existence, should vanish in the physical and chemical elements of the body.[257]

For God so loved the
world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever
believeth in him should not
perish, but have eternal life.[258]

Yes, it is our destiny to die. But now death itself takes on a new meaning. It becomes but an episode in our life that leads to a perfected life. It becomes a stage in our life leading to the conservation of that which God Himself holds precious: that knowledge of Himself that is equally of value to Him and to us. In sum: in that experience of devotion and love, which is our created destiny, God promises and guarantees, through the risen Lord, the life eternal.

Behold, I shew you a mystery;
We shall not all sleep, but
we shall all be changed,
In a moment, in the twinkling
of an eye, at the last trump:
for the trumpet shall sound, and
the dead shall be raised incorruptible,

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[257]Bowman, *Ibid.*, p. 431.

[258]John 3:16.

and we shall all be changed.
For this corruptible must
put on incorruption, and this
mortal must put on immortality.
So when this corruptible
shall have put on incorruption,
and this mortal shall have put
on immortality, then shall be
brought to pass the saying that
is written, Death is swallowed
up in victory.
. . . . . .
But thanks be to God, which
giveth us the victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ.[259]

There are those, "the number of them . . . ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," who sing a new song in tribute to Him who, as the prince of life, has completed His redemptive work "in bringing many sons unto glory . . . ."[260]

Worthy is the Lamb that was
slain to receive power, and riches,
and wisdom, and strength, and
honour, and glory, and blessing.[261]

Amen. In sempiterna saecula.
Amen. Throughout time everlasting.

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[259]1 Cor. 15:51-57.

[260]Rev. 5:11; Heb. 2:10.

[261]Rev. 5:12.

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