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VI. Creation of the Phenomenal World

Indian: “On him the three heavens rest and are supported, and the three earths are there in six fold order. The wise King Varuna hath made in heaven that Golden Swing [the Sun] to cover it with glory” (RV 7:87.5; cf. 1:52.12; 4:42.3-4; 10:121.1; BG 10:39; 14:3). “[Varuna] urged the high and mighty sky to motion, the Star of old, and spread the earth before him” (RV 7:86.1)¹. “Various beings come forth from the imperishable Brahman and unto Him again return” (Mun. Up. 2:1.1; cf. Ch. Up. 3:14.1). “He from whom all beings are born, in whom they live, being born, and to whom at death they return- seek to know him. He is Brahman” (Tait. Up.* 3:1, p. 88).

Old Testament: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1; cf. Ps. 121.2). “I am the Lord, who made all things, who stretched out the heavens alone, who spread out the earth” (Is. 44:24; cf. 42:5; 45:12; Ps. 89:11; Jer. 10:12; 51:15; Heb. 1:10). “I am he, I am the first and I am the last. My hand laid the foundation of the earth and my right hand spread out the heavens” (Is. 48:12-13). New Testament: “From him and through him and to him are all things” (Rom. 11:36). “The Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist” (1 Cor. 8:6; cf. 11:12).

1. Creation from Divine Ideas

Indian: “He [the Self-existent Svayambhu-Brahma], desiring to produce beings of many kinds from his own body, first with a thought created the waters, and placed his seed in them” (LM 1:8).

Indian and Western religious philosophers agree that the universe is created out of exemplary ideas or forms, the archetypes of all things that exist in the Divine Mind. These ideas are the thoughts of Brahman-God, which are forms within the Divine Intelligence, out of which the universe is made. The universe is not a onetime creation like a carpenter who constructs a house or an artist that draws a picture, since both objects continue to exist after the builder or painter perishes. It is more like a continuous projection or emanation where the sky remains lit up only as long as the sun illuminates it or like playing music that only last as long as it is performed. In this way Brahman-God's creative activity is ongoing and if It ceased to act on the universe it would immediately perish. Preservation of the universe is due to perpetual creation and the ceasing of it brings about destruction.

The Divine Mind not only creates physical objects through the objectification of Divine Ideas, but also properties, propositions, and values, both physical and moral laws. First the Divine Mind thinks then It wills. A person can think without willing, but cannot will unless they think.

Nirguna Brahman the Essence of God is timeless, is not a person, has no properties, and does not create the universe. A changeless and timeless Nirguna Brahman would have to change in order to create the universe since this event requires some time to occur. It is Saguna Brahman the Manifestation of God that is not simple, but changes, has many attributes, and creates the universe.

The Divine Ideas in the mind of God have two interrelated aspects: (1) an epistemological function accounting for God's knowledge of Itself and other things (omniscience), and (2) an ontological or causal function involved in Brahman-God's creation of both matter and form (omnipotence). Divine Intellect generates ideas and has omniscient epistemological understanding (and feeling) of their workings within the universe. The Mind changes into Will and through the mediation and command of the omnipotent Divine Will, these exemplary ideas become operational creating and modifying the creation. Power and knowledge are interrelated since Brahman-God produces everything that exists according to some mental form.

Thomas Aquinas is quite emphatic that exemplars are extrinsic formal causes and not part of the thing they exemplify, i.e., Divine ideas are not part of creatures. If Divine ideas were part of creatures, then God's essence (nature) would also be part of them, since His ideas are

ontologically the same as His essence.² Projection is an external manifestation and objectification of that which is internal.

The Indian Religious Philosophers

Abhinavagupta (975-1025) and other Kashmir Shaivites taught that the world creation is due to the self-manifestation of the Absolute. Following L. N. Sharma's commentary on Abhinavagupta, "The production or creation of an object is merely an externalization of the 'idea', which previously existed as one with the light of consciousness. Creation is nothing but an objectification of that which is essentially subjective. It is of the nature of self-consciousness and might be described as His knowing of Himself.... During manifestation, the indeterminate and absolute self-consciousness assumes the form of determinate and relative consciousness. However, even when it becomes an object of determinate knowledge, it remains in its essential nature as the absolute subject.... Creation is not a new production, it is a mere externalization of that which is internal. It can be compared to the creation of a new piece of art by the artist. In this case, novelty consists in the external manifestation of the ideas which previously existed as identical with the consciousness of the artist. The universal creation might also be conceived on the analogy of creativity of the individual. Actions of an individual are nothing but the external manifestation of his ideas which in the original state were one with his self-consciousness."³ Abhinavagupta states, "This only means that the 'this' or external appearance, though now different from the (Divine) light, does appear externally through the power of the Lord Himself, for any other cause (than the Lord) is impossible. In one's consciousness also, one can bear witness to the fact that it is the (Divine) consciousness that appears in all forms. Thus it is clear that while the universe is the [Absolute] Self Itself, i.e., identical with the [Absolute] Self (in Its transcendental aspect), it appears differently as 'this' (in its immanent aspect)."⁴

According to the Indian conception, the creation of the world proceeds out of the (transcendental) *Vedas* and the *Shabda* the subtle ideas. In support of Sayana's (1320-87), a renowned *Rig Vedic* commentator idea that creation proceeded out of the *Vedas*, Swami Vivekananda stated, "Veda means the sum total of eternal truths; the Vedic Rishis experienced those truths; they can be experienced only by seers of the supersensuous and not by common men like us. That is why

in the *Vedas* the term Rishi means ‘the seer of the truth of the Mantras’.... *Veda* is of the nature of Shabda or of idea. It is but the sum total of ideas. Shabda, according to the old *Vedic* meaning of the term, is the subtle idea, which reveals itself by taking the gross form later on. So owing to the dissolution of the creation the subtle seeds of the future creation become involved in the *Veda*. Accordingly, in the *Puranas* you find that during the first Divine Incarnation, the Minavatara, the *Veda* is first made manifest. The *Vedas* having been first revealed in this Incarnation, the other creative manifestations followed. Or in other words, all the created objects began to take concrete shape out of the Shabdas or ideas in the *Veda*. For in Shabda or idea, all gross objects have their subtle forms. Creation had proceeded in the same way in all previous cycles or Kalpas.... Supposing this jug breaks into pieces; does the idea of a jug become null and void? No. Because, the jug is the gross effect, while the idea, ‘jug,’ is the subtle state of the Shabda-state of the jug. In the same way, the Shabda-state of every object is its subtle state, and the things we see, hear, touch, or perceive in any manner are the gross manifestations of entities in the subtle or Shabda state. Just as we may speak of the effect and its cause. Even when the whole creation is annihilated, the Shabda, as the consciousness of the universe or the subtle reality of all concrete things, exists in Brahman as the cause. At the point of creative manifestation, this sum total of causal entities vibrates into activity, as it were, and as being the sonant, material substance of it all, the eternal, primal sound of ‘Om’ continues to come out of Itself. And then from the causal totality comes out first the subtle image or Shabda-form of each particular thing and then its gross manifestation. Now that causal Shabda, or word-consciousness, is Brahman, and it is the *Veda*.”
 “The *Vedas* are an expression of the knowledge of God.”⁵

He continues, “When the mind proceeds towards self-absorption in Brahman, it passes through all these stages one by one to reach the absolute (Nirvikalpa) state at last. In the process of entering into Samadhi, first the universe appears as one mass of ideas; then the whole thing loses itself in a profound "Om". Then even that melts away, even that seems to be between being and non-being. That is the experience of the eternal Nada. And then the mind becomes lost in the Reality of Brahman, and then it is done! All is peace! Great men like Avatars, in coming back from Samadhi to the realm of "I" and "mine", first experience the unmanifest Nada, which by degrees grows distinct and appears as Om, and then from Omkara, the subtle form of the universe as a mass of ideas becomes

experienced, and last, the material universe comes into perception.” The disciple he was speaking to realized that none could express and explain it in the way Vivekananda was doing, unless it were a matter of his own spiritual experience.⁶

The transcendental *Vedas* from which the Indian *Vedas* are derived are the equivalent of the Eternal Truths (*Aeternitas Veritas*) described in Western thought. On our level necessary truths include logical truths (e.g., Aristotle’s syllogism), mathematical truths (e.g., Euclidean geometry), and conceptual truths (e.g., nothing comes from nothing, I think therefore I exist).

Following Swami Abhedananda’s (1866-1939) conception, “A painter first idealizes in his mind a design of something, and then projects the mental design in the material form. Similarly, God thinks of the manifold world in His Cosmic Mind and then gives them the material form.... He projects the images of the manifold world outside from within.”⁷ Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (c. 30/20 B.C.-45/50 A.D.) “meant by the Logos the ideal creation which existed in the Divine Mind before the actual creation. For instance, before the creation of light God said, ‘Let there be light.’ These words, however, were merely an audible expression of the thought or idea of light that existed in the Divine Mind: the creation of the external light was therefore, nothing but the projection or expression of the idea or thought of light in the Divine Mind.”⁸ “After the dissolution of the universe, the universe with its objects remains in thought-form in the Cosmic Mind, or the Divine Energy, or Prakriti. Plato calls the thought-forms an Idea or Eternal Type, the Christian theologians call it the Logos or Word, and the Indian grammarians call it Sphota or the immortal Word or Sound.”⁹

Abhedananda continues, “You have read in Genesis: ‘The Lord said ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.’ Before He said ‘Let there be light,’ He had in His mind the thought of light, the idea of light. So the idea of light was expressed in the form of the words, ‘Let there be light,’ and as soon as it was expressed ‘there was light.’ You will find that in the spiritual realm thoughts are realities. Every thought has its form, as it were. Every idea is real. You do not need any material projection. The projection of that thought on the material plane, you do not need. The Cosmic Mind contains all the ideas or concepts of the various things that have come into existence since creation. For instance a horse. Horse is a manifestation of the thought of horse which existed in the Cosmic Mind before creation, and that is like a pattern. That pattern exists in the

Cosmic Mind, throughout eternity, and whenever the occasion rises, through the process of evolution, that concept or idea of a horse becomes real, on the material plane, and then it is a horse.... That type, or pattern, or idea of a horse which is in the Cosmic Mind, is perfect. It is a perfect horse. But we have not seen a perfect horse.... The perfect horse is in the Cosmic Mind, as an ideal or a pattern.”¹⁰

Agreeing with Plato to some extent, Swami Abhedananda wrote, “The universal Logos included all the ideas and thoughts, or rather the perfect types of all created things that exist in the universe. Before a horse was created, there was a perfect idea or type of horse in the Divine Mind. We do not see this perfect type in the world; we may see a red or a black horse, a large or a small horse, but we cannot see the ideal horse. What we call a perfect horse is nothing but the nearest approach to the perfect ideal horse that exists eternally in the Divine Mind. So it is with every created species, thing or being. Before man came into existence there was an Ideal Man or a perfect type of man in the thought of God, and its projection or physical manifestation became something like [less than] that ideal type, because the gross manifestation, being limited by time, space, and causation, cannot be exactly the same as the ideal type which is perfect. This ideal, or the perfect type of man, which exists in the Divine Mind, is eternal and a part of the universal Logos. All human beings, therefore, are more or less imperfect expressions of that Ideal Man or Logos or the first begotten son of the Divine Mind.”¹¹

To say that the universe is a manifestation of Brahman-God, means it is an effect but from a higher to a lower ontological level. It is a causal relationship between two different ontological levels, unlike a physical law of causation within nature. From the vertical standpoint there is a hierarchy of ontological levels (i.e. levels of being, existence), and from the horizontal perspective the higher ontological level interpenetrates the lower one. As Vivekananda states, “He is inside everything. He is outside everything, interpenetrating everything.”¹² And Abhedananda writes, “This infinite Being pervades the universe and interpenetrates every particle of matter, giving existence to everything.”¹³

Universals like “humanness” explain the general similarities between people. But they do not tell us why we are so different from one another. Are our differences due to the fact that each of us has been projected into a different space, time, and causal environment?

According to Plato's (427-347 B.C.) Theory of Forms (*Eidos*), substantial non-physical Forms represent reality. Every object or quality has a form (what it is), such as human beings, horses, rivers, colors, courage, love, and goodness. Eternal Forms are archetypes, meaning original models, of which particular objects, properties, and relations are copies. Particulars participate in the forms, and the forms inhere in the particulars. What is Form itself? Forms such as beauty, are more real than any object that imitates them. Unlike physical entities, these forms are timeless and unchanging unqualified perfection. They are the essences of various objects that determine what kind of thing it is. For example, a particular table exists only because tableness is at the core; it is its essence. Socrates taught that the world of Forms is transcendent to our own world and that true knowledge is the ability to grasp the world of Forms with one's mind. Form transcends space and time altogether, yet it provides the formal basis for them. They are perfect, unchanging, and non-physical without spatial or temporal dimensions. The entity is essentially or really the transcendent Ideal Form, and the empirical object in the sensible world is an appearance (*phainomena*), shadow, or imitation of It; that is, a temporary portrayal of the Form under differing circumstances. Our function is to imitate the ideal world as much as possible, which includes the Good by acting morally. Some scholars interpret Forms as universals, so that the Form of Beauty is that quality that all beautiful things share. Others interpret Forms as 'stuffs,' whereby the sum total of beauty in various things in the world put together constitute the Form of Beauty. It is possible that not all forms are instantiated, in which case we would not know what it is. Since an intelligible world of forms is known by reason and not by perception, can we say they exist in thought as an idea but are without physical existence?¹⁴

Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.-50 A.D.) the first person to interpret Hebrew *Biblical (Old Testament)* ideas from the standpoint of Greek philosophy, reasoned out when the creation process began, God generated the Intelligible (Divine) world of ideal incorporeal patterns or forms from His eternal ideas. The transcendent God does not directly interact with the world as its creator, but through the operation of the Logos. "When he [God] willed to create this visible world, he first formed the Intelligible [Divine] world, so that he might employ a pattern completely Godlike and incorporeal for the production of the corporeal world.... he put together

the Intelligible world, and, using that as a model, he also brought to completion the sensible world. As, then, the city prefigured in the architect's mind held no place externally but was stamped in the soul of the artisan, so too the Intelligible world could have no other location than the Divine Logos ... this entire sensible world since it is greater than the human image, is a copy of the Divine image, it is clear that the archetypal seal, which we declare to be the Intelligible world would be the very Logos of God."¹⁵ "God's shadow is his Logos, which he used as an instrument and thus created the world. This shadow and representation, as it were, is in turn the archetype of other things." "Every man in respect of his mind is intimately related to the Divine Logos, being an imprint or fragment or effulgence of that blessed nature."¹⁶ Philo theorized that the Divine Logos is the first-begotten Son of the uncreated Father, the shadow of the one Supreme Reality, the second God, the mediator between God and the world. The Logos encompasses the word, reason, and power of God. It is the intelligible world comprising both the objective Divine Mind and Its subjective ideas, the pattern of all creation, the archetype of human reason.¹⁷ He believed the two creation stories in found in Genesis are not contradictory, since one describes the creation of the Intelligible (Divine) world and the other the corporeal world.

Frederick Copleston, S.J. (1907-94) the British Jesuit explains Augustine's (354-430) the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, religious philosophy this way, "God did indeed create all things together in the beginning ... He created invisibly, latently, potentially, in germ, in their *rationes seminales* [seminal reasons or ideas]. In this way God created in the beginning all the vegetation of the earth before it was actually growing on the earth, and even man himself.... From all eternity God knew all things which he was to make: He does not know them because He has made them, but rather the other way around: God first knew the things of creation though they came into being only in time. The species of created things have their ideas or *rationes* in God, and God from all eternity saw in Himself, as possible reflections of Himself, the things which he could create and would create. He knew them before creation as they are in Him, as Exemplar, but He made them as they exist, i.e., as external and finite reflections of His Divine Essence [Nature].... Contemplating His own essence from eternity God sees in Himself all possible limited essences, the finite reflections of His infinite perfection, so that the essences or *rationes* of things are present in the Divine Mind from all eternity as the Divine ideas, though, in view of Augustine's teachings on the Divine

simplicity previously mentioned, this should not be taken to mean that they are ‘accidents’ in God, ideas which are ontologically distinct from His essence.... The corollary of this is that creatures have ontological truth in so far as they embody or exemplify the model in the Divine Being, and that God Himself is the standard of truth.” These ideas by which the world was created are contained in the Word of God, the second member of the Trinity. The Word contains the intelligible pattern of all things that are capable of being actualized.¹⁸ Does Brahman-God directly create everything, or just the basic primary causes (seeds) that in turn create the universe?

Following Dionysius the Areopagite’s (c. 500) system of ideas, Divine names are the names for God, His nature, and the source that sustain the fundamental properties of the universe. For example, the Divine name Being (or Being-Itself) is the cause of being in all that exists; Power the capacities to act in existing beings; and Unity the source of internal and external unification. Divine names are the primary causes of all the properties that participate in them. The organization of the Divine names is purposeful and exact, a hierarchy of a precise number and an order to account for the properties of participating beings. They are pre-contained in God in a unified, unlimited, transcendent, and superabundant manner. Divine name is the causal source of an intelligible property that bears that name. So for example, the Divine name “Life” refers to both Divine cause life-itself and the predicated property of life. Without Divine names, there would be no life, wisdom, power, hierarchical order, etc. in the universe. Due to participation in the Divine names all beings first exist, then exist as the types of beings they are.¹⁹

For Johannes Scotus Erigena (c. 810-77, Eri-gena meaning Irish-born), “The primordial causes, then are what the Greeks call Ideas, that is, the eternal species or forms and immutable reasons after which and in which the visible and invisible world is formed and governed ... For nothing naturally arises in the visible and invisible creation except what is predefined and preordained in them, before all times and places.... all things whatsoever that are perceived or understood whether in the visible or in the invisible creation subsists by participation in them, while they themselves are participations of the one Cause of all things, namely, the most high and holy Trinity; and they are said to be ... the one Cause of all things; and while they subsist immutably in it they [are] the primordial causes of other causes which come after them.”²⁰

As stated by Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), “God has the proper

exemplars of all the things He knows; and therefore He has ideas of all things known by Him.... So far as the idea is the principle of the making of things, it may be called an *exemplar*, and belongs to practical knowledge. But so far as it is a principle of knowledge, it is properly called a *likeness*, and may belong to speculative knowledge also.”²¹ “In the Divine wisdom are the models of all things, which we have called ideas—i.e., exemplary forms existing in the Divine Mind. And although these ideas are multiplied by their relations to things, nevertheless, they are not really distinct from the Divine Essence, inasmuch as the likeness of that Essence can be shared diversely by different things.”²² These Divine exemplars produce both form and material substance. This is why the Indian thinkers unlike the Westerners consider Brahman-God to be the formal cause that transforms into the material substance of the world.

For Aquinas, exemplars (or exemplar forms) are “the likeness of which something is made.” These ideas in the Divine Mind are superior to the determinate forms they exemplify. For example, air participates in the light of the sun, but it does not receive that light with the same brightness that is in the sun. Exemplars produce both the form and the matter of individual things. Although these ideas are eternal, everything that can come to be or perish is formed according to them. Exemplars as causes are both thought out by the Divine Intellect and ordered by the Divine Will to produce things. Divine Ideas as exemplar is an extrinsic formal cause and not part of the thing that it exemplifies. Yet, they cause the intrinsic form in created things. These formal causes entail both efficient and final causality as well.²³

Aquinas (as did Maximus the Confessor, Johannes Scotus Erigena, and Anselm of Canterbury) taught that we have eternally pre-existed in the Mind of God. A “house exists in the understanding of the architect before it was brought into actuality.... the things made by God have pre-existed in the Word of God from eternity, immaterially, without any composition.”²⁴ “Natural things have a truer being, absolutely in the Divine Mind than in themselves, because in that Mind they have an uncreated being, but in themselves a created being.”²⁵ “Although creatures have not existed from eternity, except in God, yet because they have been in Him from eternity, God has known them eternally in their proper natures, and for that reason has loved them.”²⁶ God “is the First Being, and all other beings pre-exist in Him as their First Cause, it follows that they exist intelligibly in Him, after the mode of His own nature.”²⁷ Does this not mean that the idea of “creation out of nothing” (*creatio ex nihilo*) must be

qualified, since the universe eternally pre-existed in the mind of God. On this subject Erigena wrote, “I understand the substance of the whole man to be nothing else but the concept of him in the Mind of his Artificer, Who knew all things in Himself before they were made; and that very knowledge is the true and only substance of the things known, since it is in that knowledge that they are most perfectly created and eternally and immutably subsist.”²⁸

The Irish born Protestant philosopher Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) was a devout Christian. He wrote, “To be is to be perceived (*esse est percipi*),” and what is unperceived by a finite mind is apprehended by God. He taught that objects in the phenomenal world exists because they are continually perceived by an incorporeal eternal Spirit (God). He is the “Eternal Perceiver,” without having sense organs. For Berkeley perception is an act of God projecting something out there that was not originally there. God is the immediate cause of all our experiences and the source of our sensations. The perception of an object is an idea that the Divine Mind has produced in the human mind, and it continues to exist, because God is an eternal Infinite Mind that perceives all. Human perception is passive since we do not determine the nature of our sense experience. “When in broad daylight I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses; the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will. There is therefore some other Will or Spirit [Mind of God] that produces them” (*Principles* #29). The persistence and regularity of the sensible objects that constitute the natural world are independent of all human perception. The world consists of nothing but minds and ideas. A person's mind, which perceives ideas, cannot be perceived and is comprehended intuitively by inward feeling or reflection (*Principles* #89). A material object is made up of a collection of ideas (shape, sense qualities, physical properties, etc.), which are caused in the minds of humans by the infinite omnipresent Mind of God. Yet, phenomenal objects like tables and chairs are only the ideas of an omniscient God. They actually exist but are not material and do not exist as a reality independent of consciousness.²⁹ God does not perceive something that is external to Him; else He would be a passive recipient of ideas impressed upon Him by a more powerful agency. His nature is active will, volition.

Berkeley also wrote, “The real tree existing without his [the human] mind is truly known and comprehended by (that is exists in) the infinite

mind of God.” “When I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind, I do not mean my mind in particular, but all minds. Now it is plain they have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them by experience to be independent of it. There is therefore some other mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them.... it necessarily follows there is an omnipresent eternal Mind.” “The Divine idea, therefore, of a tree I suppose (a tree in the Divine Mind), must be the original or archetype of ours, and ours a copy or image of His (our ideas are images of His, in the same sense as our souls are images of Him) of which there may be several, in several created minds, Like several pictures of the same original to which they are all to be referred.”³⁰

Following Berkeley’s presentation of Objective Idealism, the eternal Spirit (God) perceives the world that exists independent of our willing it. These sensations are more potent than our imaginations, since they present a reality with greater steadiness and order.³¹ Objects and their sensual properties (e.g., a rose and its fragrance) that we perceive come into existence when they are creatively perceived by the omniscient and omnipotent Divine Mind of God. This process can affect two or more minds at the same time that have a similar perception. Their continuity of existence over time is preserved in the Divine world of perceptive ideas. They cease to exist when the creative perception terminates. Since the perceptions originate in the Divine Mind, the human experience might be described as secondary. The Divine ideas are eternal, but our experience of them is temporary. For Objective Idealism the world is a projection of the whole, the totality, which is Brahman-God, while for Subjective idealism the world is a projection of the part, the individual person or living being.

Though according to the subjective idealists the world is only in our minds, yet we cannot for some reason shape it according to our desires. On the other hand, we can shape the thoughts in our own mind, so we can visually think of any object we desire to. If we purposely think of a bird or a fish in our own mind an image of it will be there, but it will not be in the outside world.

Many people believe that George Berkeley taught that ideas do not represent entities that exist beyond themselves, but are themselves entities. Conversely, George Stack stated that unknown to Berkeley, his epistemological philosophy implies a representational theory of perception. This is because Berkeley rejected Malebranche’s (1638-1715) thesis that

we have access to the ideas in the Divine Mind. God is the efficient cause of sense data that are “imprinted” on the senses of finite beings. Our sense-impressions differ from the ideas in the Mind of God. For example, we can suffer, God cannot. What we call sense ideas or things have an archetypical existence in the Divine Mind that is unknown to us. From this standpoint, the content in the Mind of God are the true realities, and the sense objects of finite perceivers are imperfect copies or resemblances, phenomenal manifestations, or representations of the eternal archetypes. Human perception is, ectypal, relative, and temporal, while Divine Intelligence is archetypical, absolute, and eternal.³²

Thoughts in the Divine Mind not only create physical objects, but also abstract entities such as the principles of reason, laws of logic and mathematics, numbers, values such as goodness, etc. Brahman-God is responsible for the very intrinsic and extrinsic structure and framework of existence. This is because according to the Divine attribute of Aseity (Self-existent, uncaused), Brahman-God cannot be limited, determined, constrained, or compelled by any entity independent of or apart from It. Physical and abstract entities depend on Brahman-God for their existence but It does not depend on them. The spiritual substance of Divine Ideas transforms into the subtle substance of ideas and by lowering the degree of vibrations into the gross substance of matter that become the universe.

According to some Metaphysical Realists, universals exist within the Divine Mind independent of the human mind, and prior to and apart from empirical objects, properties-qualities, and relations. The Divine Mind conceptually creates the universe out of universals that are instantiated on the material plane. Particulars participate in an associated universal. For example, individual chairs are created out of the universal ‘chairness.’ Universals are real entities existing independent of and distinct from particulars that possess that characteristic. Properties such as ‘blueness’ and ‘roundness’ exist in the higher world and are mind-independent entities. Universals are abstract (e.g., humanity), whereas particulars are concrete as material objects and abstract as numbers or geometrical entities. Three major kinds of universals are: types or kinds (e.g., animals, horses), properties-qualities (e.g., tall, heavy), and relations (e.g., larger than, son of). In opposition to this view, nominalists believe only individuals or particulars exist and reject the reality of universals claiming that they are not necessary to explain attribute agreement (such as

greenness) between various objects. Conceptualists accept universals as real, but only as concepts within the human mind due to the similarities among particular things.³³ What is Universal applies to all places, times, individuals, and situations. In this sense all laws, logical propositions, moral principles such as truth are universal. A particular is an instance of a universal.

If the universe proceeds out of the Divine Mind, this implies that metaphysical creation and relations are also a logical creation and relations. We find this idea in the Neo-Platonic Realism creation theory of the Irish Johannes Scotus Erigena (c. 810-77). The universal (the class-concept or logical genus) is the original reality that produces the particulars (the species and ultimately the individuals) taking on definite form. For him logical relations of concepts are also metaphysical relations. The universals of the Divine Mind are determining substances that through logical subordination become production and inclusion of the particular by the general. When creating the universe, logical partition and determination transform into a causal process by means of which the universal takes on form that unfolds in the particulars. Deity the most universal Being produces out of Its ideas all things. Following this system the creation of the universe might possibly proceed in the logical process and sequence of genus, then species, then individuals.³⁴ There is a possibility that the logical creation occurs in the opposite direction from the specific (individual) through a process to the general (genus).

Universal and Particulars exist as thoughts in our mind. These thoughts have extension occupying subtle space that vibrate at a level that is not perceivable to us. According to this conception when the universal becomes a particular this does not occur through a process of division as we might think. It occurs because the thought of the universal is replaced by the thought of a particular. Similarly, when Brahman-God creates the universe this could occur through a succession of changing thoughts. Following this idea in the physical realm when we cut an orange into two pieces it is not a process of division. It occurs because the idea of a whole orange is replaced through intermediate thoughts by the idea of a split orange. All of the laws of physics can be looked at this way. Granted these succession of thoughts follow a law-like process that makes the process understandable to us. Are these subtle vibrations atomic or subatomic?

What the Hindu and Judeo-Christian religious theists refer to as the attributes of Brahman-God are in some ways comparable to Plato's Ideas,

eternal forms, and archetypes of which all things in the lower spheres are copies to varying degrees. Divine attributes and Platonic Ideas-Forms are both unchanging, timelessly eternal, undivided, uncaused, and perfect; transcendent to our own world, existing beyond space and time.³⁵ Concerning Platonic Ideas-Forms, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) taught they are “expressed in innumerable individuals, exist as the unattained patterns of these, or as the eternal forms of things.” They are “the original unchanging forms and properties of all natural bodies, whether organic or inorganic, as well as the universal forces that reveal themselves according to natural laws.... No plurality belongs to them; for each by its nature is only one, since it is the archetype itself, of which all the particular, transitory things of the same kind and name are copies or shadows. Also no coming into existence and no passing away belong to them, for they are truly being or existing, but are never becoming or vanishing like their fleeting copies.”³⁶

The internal ideas in subtle matter and energy project the external universe of perceptible gross matter and energy. Matter is mind externalized. There is an isomorphic relationship between the inner idea and outer world with a corresponding similar form and relations. This is a conversion process, not an identity. Through a process of externalization by the projection of the internal ideas is made manifest. Consequently, the objects and events of the universe are dependent on the ideas for their nature and activity.³⁷

Are space, time, or causation objective as a substance and/or a force-power with an independent existence? Or are they subjective as the *a priori* way we order events?

It is possible that when an object splits into two pieces this does not occur through a process of division. It could occur through a succession of thoughts in the mind of Brahman-God, beginning with the whole object and ending with the object as two pieces. Similarly, when Brahman-God creates the universe this could occur through a succession of changing thoughts and not from the empirical object undergoing change.

Sat-Chit-Ananda and Platonic Forms

There are some noticeable similarities between Sat-Chit-Ananda and Platonic Forms. Both are simple without division, uncaused, infinite without parts, timelessly eternal, immutable, perfect, and transcendent to our own

world, existing beyond space and time. Yet, they provide the formal basis for the existence of space and time. The highest knowledge is gained through the purified rational understanding of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda and the Forms.³⁸ They differ in that in their original state there is only one Existence (Sat) or Consciousness (Chit), or Bliss (Ananda), while the Forms are multiple.

How does Existence (or Being or Is-ness), Consciousness, and Bliss relate to the phenomenal world? Our consciousness is a fragment or part of the Universal Consciousness (Chit) (Whole-Part, One-Many, Universal-Particular relationship). It is comparable to an ocean and its waves. Sat-Chit-Ananda manifests in the phenomenal universe working through the limiting factors of Name (Nama) and Form (Rupa), representing a whole-part process of individuation. Likewise, one can also think of the human mind as being a fragment of the Divine Mind.³⁹ Sat (Existence) devolves into life and death, Chit (Consciousness) into degrees of knowledge and ignorance, and Ananda (Bliss) into degrees of happiness and unhappiness.

As Swami Sarvapriyananda of the Ramakrishna Order writes, “Can we not regard 'existence' as the reality with the name and form of a book, microphone, glass, man or a woman, and so on? We can think of it as one ocean of existence in which the laptop, the book, the bottle, are all waves. The waves are different, with different forms, but there is one continuous mass of water where these individual waves exist. Would it be correct to say that water is in the wave or the wave is in the water? All waves are nothing but water. Whenever we see the waves, we see waves and water, but more precisely, it is water which appears as the wave. The wave is in the water. According to the Vedantic way of thinking 'existence' is the only reality. Instead of saying entities have existence, Vedanta would say Existence appears as various entities with different names and forms.... Now this Existence has no limit. Is there any time, is there any space that 'Existence' is not? If we say that space and time are real, then it is Existence which lends them reality. Existence must be there for any reality to be predicated.... Is there any entity apart from Existence? Logically speaking, anything that is separated from Existence immediately becomes non-existent.... Existence can be appreciated only with a name and a form.... So, Existence Itself has no limitation in time, space, and object.” “The objects of sense knowledge (sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell) that are perceived in the waking state differ from each other, but the consciousness of these is one. What we see, what we touch, what we smell, and what we hear, are all different from each other. The objects are

different from each other, experiences are different from each other, and the *vrittis* [mental modifications] too differ from each other; but the consciousness which illumines them all is not different. It is one and the same.”⁴⁰

From another perspective, Chit and human consciousness are related like an archetype and its ectypal copies, as the Platonic Forms are related to phenomenal existence. Concerning Platonic Ideas-Forms, Arthur Schopenhauer wrote they are, “Not themselves entering into time and space, the medium of individuals, they remain fixed, subject to no change.... These grades are certainly related to individual things as their eternal forms, or as their prototypes.” “Therefore these Ideas as a whole present themselves in innumerable individuals and in isolated details, and are related to them as the archetype is to its copies.... the eternal Ideas, the original forms of all things, can be described as truly existing, since they always are but never become and never pass away.”⁴¹

The phenomenal world can also be regarded a reflection of Sat-Chit-Ananda, and the human mind of the Divine Mind. A single universal Chit and Divine Mind are beyond nature, each reflecting Itself on the mirror of the mind. Phenomenal minds of different qualities differ in their capacity to reflect the ideas and forces from this supernatural source.

Vivekananda mentions, “The Self [Atman] of man is beyond all these, beyond nature. It is effulgent, pure, and perfect. Whatever of intelligence we see in nature is but the reflection of this Self upon nature.” “As the one sun, reflected on various pieces of water, appears to be many, and millions of globules of water reflect so many millions of suns, and in each globule will be a perfect image of the sun, yet there is only one sun, so are all these Jivas [individual souls] but reflections in different minds. These different minds are like so many different globules, reflecting this one Being. God is being reflected in all these different Jivas.”⁴² “The infinite is one and not many, and that one Infinite Soul is reflecting Itself through thousands and thousands of mirrors, appearing as so many different souls. It is the same Infinite Soul, which is the background of the universe, that we call God.”⁴³

For Plotinus (c. 205-70), “Nature [Physis, Samsara] is an image of intelligence, and since it is the last and lowest part of the soul, [it] has the last ray of the rational forming principle which shines in it.... that which is reflected from It [Nous, Divine Intelligence] into matter is nature ... and these are the last and lowest realities of the intelligible world.” The visible world is an imperfect reflection of the Ideal Forms of the Divine Intellect

(Nous), which is transplanted onto matter. “All things exist in something else ... something like an imprint and image of that other suddenly appears ... All that is here below comes from there, and exists in greater beauty there: for here it is adulterated, but there it is pure.”⁴⁴

In summary, the relationship between the Divine Mind and the phenomenal world, and between Sat-Chit-Ananda and phenomenal existence can be described as: Absolute-Relative, Abstract-Concrete, Archetype-Ectype, Being-Becoming, Cause-Effect, Essence-Existence, Eternal-Temporal, Free-Determined, Greater-Lesser, Homogeneous-Heterogeneous, Independent-Dependent, Infinite-Finite, Internal-External, Necessary-Contingent, One-Many, Original-Image, Original-Reflection, Perfect-Imperfect, Primary-Secondary, Subject-Object, Subtle-Gross, Transcendent-Immanent, Unity-Diversity, Universal-Particular, Unmanifested-Manifested, and Whole-Part. For each of these twenty-five dichotomies in the creative process the former has become the latter.

The Teleological (Design) Theory for the Existence of Brahman-God

Following Uddyotakara (6th Century) a Nyaya philosopher, “Primordial Matter, atoms (paramdnu), and karma prior to the commencement of their own activity become active (only) when superintended by an intelligent cause, for they are without consciousness, like an axe and so forth. Just as axes become active (only) when overseen by a woodcutter, since they lack consciousness, in the same manner Primordial Matter, atoms, and karma, while lacking consciousness, still become active, and so they must be superintended by a conscious agent.”⁴⁵ Other Nyaya philosophers taught, “Therefore, there must be an intelligent cause, for all these [worldly] effects. Without the guidance of an intelligent cause the material causes of these things cannot attain just that order, direction, and coordination which enable them to produce these definite effects. This intelligent cause must have a direct knowledge of all the material causes (the atoms) as means, a desire to attain some end, and the power of will to accomplish or realize this end. He must be omniscient.... He must be God.”⁴⁶

Shankara the Advaita Vedantic seer-philosopher supported the teleological theory that an omniscient conscious director is indicated by the regularity, symmetry, and harmony of the world. He wrote, “What is noticed in the world is that houses, palaces, beds, seats, recreation grounds, etc., are made by the intelligent engineers and others at the

proper time and in a way suitable for ensuring or avoiding comfort or discomfort. So how can the insentient Pradhana [Primordial matter of Sankhya philosophy] create this universe, which cannot even be mentally conceived of by the intelligent (i.e., skillful) and most far-famed architects ... Even in the case of earth etc. it is noticed that special creations take place under the control of potters and others. On that analogy, the possibility arises of Pradhana also being under the control of some conscious entity.... the *Vedas* present a conscious entity [Saguna Brahman] as the cause.”⁴⁷ “Heaven and earth obey a fixed order; this would be impossible were there not a conscious, transcendent Ruler.” The cosmos was created by the supreme intelligence that controls the universe, just as a maker of pottery utilizes a conceptual pattern in his mind in order to mold the clay into a pot.⁴⁸ “The creation, maintenance, and destruction of this world—differentiated by names and forms, serving as the platform for diverse agents and enjoyers to experience the fruits of action according to definite places, times, and causes, and having the nature of arrangement that transcends comprehension—are produced from the omniscient, omnipotent Brahman as their cause.”⁴⁹

The Nyaya ideas were revised by Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) who noted, “We see the multifarious, wonderful universe, as well as the birth, existence, and annihilation of its different parts; hence, we naturally infer the existence of a Being who regulates the whole, and call him the Supreme: in the same manner as from the sight of a pot we conclude the existence of its artificer.... Nature is an insensible Being, she is, therefore, void of sight or intention, and consequently unable to create the regular world. Atoms are not supposed to be the cause of the world.... Because an atom is an insensible particle, and from the above [Vedic] authority it is proved, that no Being void of understanding can be the author of a system so skillfully arranged.”⁵⁰

In support of the teleological theory, the Vedanta philosopher and mystic, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) held that the process of evolution is not a random play of mechanical forces brought about by chance and accidental variations. Evolution denies “an inconsequent Force that acts at random and creates this or that by a general chance without any determining principles.” Rather the uniform and regulated motion of the world affirms a force that actualizes a “decisive Divine imperative” that “obeys a predetermining Will.” “If there were only infinite potentiality without any law of guiding truth and harmonious self-vision ... the world could be nothing but a teeming, amorphous, confused uncertainty.”⁵¹

Evolution entails an ascent toward a higher goal, the realization of higher principles. Material forces left to themselves will produce chaos and confusion. Consequently, the wonderful unity, order, and harmony in the world could not be produced in a random way. Without a willful purpose and goal, the process of evolution could not occur. The complex adaptation, selection, combination, and gradation found in this world, are brought about by a teleological evolutionary process under the guidance and control of Brahman-God, the supreme intelligence. While the Universal Cosmic Mind possesses the omnipotence and omniscience to create and maintain the universe, the human mind, which is a limited fragment of the Cosmic Mind, has the strength and understanding to create lesser things. “The evolution of Life in Matter must have been produced and governed not by a material principle, but by a Life-principle working in and upon the conditions of Matter and applying to it, its own laws, impulses, necessities.... For the Force that builds the world is conscious Force, the Existence which manifests itself in them is conscious Being and a perfect emergence of its potentialities in form is the sole object which we can rationally conceive for its manifestation of this world of forms.”⁵²

Two American professors of the history of philosophy at the University of California, San Diego, Richard Popkin (1923-2005) and Avrum Stroll (1921-2013) summarized that the Teleological Explanation is an attempt “to establish the existence of God from an examination and induction from information that we have gained about the universe.” It is an example of inferential *a posteriori* reasoning, moving from the effect (the universe) back to the cause (God). This theory assumes an analogy of being, some likeness between a human and a Divine Being. “Nature reveals an orderliness and a pattern in the features of the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of the world.” This order and design greatly resemble the order and design of a human invention such as a clock. Each part is perfectly synchronized, so that the clock functions in an orderly manner. There are many regular patterns found in nature such as Newton’s law of gravitation. Since there is a similarity between the effects of intelligent human planning and the entities and events of the natural world, we can infer a similarity in the causes that produce these effects. “Therefore, there must be some kind of intelligent Deity who is the author or cause of the effects in the universe. Since the amount of design or order in the natural world and its complexity far exceeds human ingenuity, the cause of this must also be of greater wisdom.”⁵³

These ideas are supported today by British theoretical physicists and Anglican priest John Polkinghorne (as reported by Chad Meister), “If all of this is true, then evolutionary developments didn't occur by mere randomness and chance, but instead reflect directedness and perhaps even rationality—a teleological process guiding unthinking matter toward higher levels of complexity, consciousness, value, and goodness. All of this is consistent with, if not supportive of, a theistic worldview. There need be no war between science and religion. In fact, they can make wonderful conversation partners [2000].”⁵⁴

Philip Clayton of Claremont University in Southern California expanded on the Teleological Explanation. He writes because God an omnipotent, super-rational Divine Mind designed the universe it answers these three questions: (a) why the universe is inherently rational and knowable by the use of human reason; (b) why human agents exist with the capacity to understand the universe and form true beliefs; and (c) why there is a universe rather than nothing. In addition, religion clarifies why people should be ethical, and seek both religious experience and the meaning of life.⁵⁵ An atheist might reply nature is a “brute fact” that cannot be explained. A theist employing the idea of design would answer because the universe was created by an omnipotent and omniscient Divine Mind for which all of this is possible.

The teleological theory for the existence of God is based on observable features in the cosmos such as intelligent design, law, order, regularity, purpose, and systematic interconnection between entities found in nature. Life and the universe did not arise by chance but were designed and created by an intelligent entity. Reasoning from effect to cause this rational process reveals a universe created by an omniscient Brahman-God with these characteristics. Our world is understandable to the human intellect, because Brahman-God has created it using some of the formal patterns (exemplars) eternally present in the Divine Mind. Brahman-God both creates the materials and is the architect of the universe. Scientific evidence of evolution in nature indicates that events and life follow a purposive development and goal toward which they are progressing. According to modern astrophysics, in order to produce human life the fine-tuning of the force of the Big Bang explosion and the fundamental physical constants of the universe have to be so precise that the probability of this occurring by chance is enormously unlikely. If the constants were even very slightly different, intelligent life would not be possible in our cosmos.⁵⁶ Ordered entities and laws that exist in the

universe are not taken as brute, unexplainable realities, but by many religions as the product of an intelligent Divine Mind. Another important fact is the consistency of nature, that the laws of nature and reasoning do not change from day to day, which creates stability in our life.

Various forms of intelligent design found in the world include: “the intricacy of the laws of nature and their orderly, regular application to phenomena in the natural world; the order present in various aspects of reality (e.g., the orbit of the planets, various biological structures such as the eye); the delicate concurrence of a number of factors (e.g., cosmic constants, conditions on earth, the properties of water) that serve as necessary conditions for life to appear; the presence of aspects of the world beneficial to life; the simplicity of the world and the laws describing it, along with the complexity of the world (e.g., the complex interaction of various parts in living organisms that cooperate with one another for certain ends such as allowing the organism to see); the information content in DNA; the trustworthiness of the senses and intellect as truth-gatherers from the world around us, as well as the aptness of that world to be known by those senses and intellect; and the beauty and elegance of the various aspects of the world and of the equations used to describe the world.”⁵⁷

Design Theory (Teleological) deals with the existence of Brahman-God and not with Its nature (the onmi- characteristics). Does it imply that Brahman-God is omniscient?

Generally, we think of Brahman-God’s involvement in the creation of the world as an ongoing continuous process. An opposing idea of Deism was held particularly during the Enlightenment, the view that God created the universe and after which did not intervene and let it run itself. At the moment of creation it would have been possible for Brahman-God the First Cause to create the initial conditions including the physical constants and laws and then let the finely-tuned universe run itself without interference. We can think of a person or a machine manufacturing a watch or a clock and then letting it run by itself as suggested by William Paley in 1802.⁵⁸ In this case there would be no need for God to intervene at a later date. But the future events of the watch are determined and there is no free will.

From another perspective, an alternative view expressed by Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86) is that the world as experienced by humans is more like a play, a drama freely created by God, than a logical or mathematical system. For this reason the laws of human history have not been discovered, and future personal and historical events are often difficult to predict. Ramakrishna expounded, “God has created the world in

play, as it were.” “The Divine Mother is always playful and sportive. The universe is Her play.” “Infinite are the ways of God’s play.” “This world is the lila [Divine play] of God. It is like a game. In this game there are joy and sorrow, virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance, good and evil.”⁵⁹

In relation to the idea of a Divine play, some scientists today think of the future of the world as open-ended and flexible, and not rigidly determined. The cosmic drama is an unfolding process in which both creatures and the creator participate. Brahman-God has relinquished some of His omnipotence (kenotic self-limitation) permitting creaturely improvisation. Cosmic history is an unfolding continuous creation, characterized by new possibilities not previously realized. The creator has endowed creation with often unpredictable new modes of manifestation and fruitfulness.⁶⁰

From the standpoint of the Moral Teleological (Design) Theory, in the cosmos there is consciousness, intelligence, moral law, objective values, and belief in the existence of Brahman-God. This is highly unlikely to occur as a result of naturalistic causes. For example, the existence of the moral law of karma indicates that the universe was created by the Divine Mind that has a moral sense in addition to an intellect and will. There is purpose and meaning in the universe and the sooner one finds this out the better off they are. Morality is grounded in Brahman-God and a Divine Self (Atman), and only subsequently in the laws of nature.

2. Creation from Divine Words

Indian: “I [Vac the Goddess of Speech] bring forth the Father [heaven or sky produced from Vac] ... I hold together all existence” (RV 10:125.7-8). “He [Prajapati] said ‘bhuh’: this word became the earth; ‘bhuvah’: this became the air; ‘svah’: this became yonder sky” (SB 11:1.6.3). “This is earth, he said, and created the earth” (Tait. Br. 2:2.4.2). “In the beginning he assigned their several names, actions, and conditions to all (created beings), even according to the words of the *Veda*” (LM 1:21).

Old Testament: “God said, Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made ... he spoke and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth” (Ps. 33:6, 9; cf. 148:5). New Testament: “In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (Jn. 1:1-3).

The first letter of the alphabet. Indian: Among words, I [Krishna] am the sacred syllable OM [AUM] (BG* 10:25, p. 115). “Of letters I [Sri Krishna] am the letter A” (BG 10:33). New Testament: “I [Jesus Christ] am the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev. 1:8; 21:6).

The Indian Perspective

The seer-philosopher Shankara apprehended that the eternal spiritual wisdom and principles called the *Vedas* are uncreated, infallible and of transcendental origin. At the beginning of each cosmic cycle, the Vedic words in the mind of Brahman (God) are the archetypical ideas, used to create the names and forms of the genera of all things in the universe. “It is on the basis of the inborn relationship between words and their meanings from the very beginning that the validity of the *Vedas* has been established ... the validity of the Vedic words, which is based on the perception of an eternal relation between eternally present words with their eternal meanings.... the universe, consisting of the gods and others, originates verily from the Vedic words.... He [Brahman] was intent on creation, the Vedic words flashed in His mind before creation and then He created the things according to these. In confirmation of this a Vedic text states, ‘He uttered the symbol *bhuh*, He created the earth’ (Tai. Br. II, 2:4.2), which shows the creation of the worlds—the earth and the rest—from the word’s *bhuh* and so on, coming to his mind.”⁶¹ *Bhuh* is not a conventional word designation, but is the natural intrinsic name or sound symbol of the earth. It is the sound, which represents the subtle vibrational form that contains the earth within its structure. Form and structure of an object are inherent in its natural intrinsic name, as a gross effect is embodied in a subtle cause. God created the universe through the Vedic words and phrases, which comprise the basic sound vibrations that constitute the structure of the phenomenal universe. When expressing the heavenly language, God uses the words of the *Vedas*, in order to produce the corresponding phenomenal forms, which are its objectification. Since the universe is created out of the beginningless Vedic words, the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet of which they are composed are eternal. An eternal intrinsic connection exists between a Vedic word and the meaning that it signifies, between a name (*nama*) and the form (*rupa*) that it designates. Name is the internal aspect of the form in the mind of God and form is the outer aspect of the name. “The

relationship between such generic words and their meaning, as for instance cowhood and cows, is seen to be eternal.... Words are connected with the general characteristics and not with the individuals; for the individuals are infinite, and it is impossible to comprehend the relation of a word (with all of them). Thus, even though the individuals are born, the distinctive general characteristics (or features) remain constant, so that this creates no difficulty about the eternity of the word cow, etc.”⁶²

Swami Vivekananda pointed out that Word or Name is an intermediary between God and the universe. “In every religion the power of the word is recognized, so much so that in some of them creation itself is said to have come out of the Word. The external aspect of the thought of God is the Word, and, as God thought and willed before He created, creation came out of the Word.” “You cannot think without words. Wherever there is thought, there must be words.”⁶³ Vivekananda then describes the traditional Indian view. “The words of the *Vedas*. These are the eternal words out of which the whole universe has been produced. There cannot be any thought without the word. Thus, whatever there is in this world is the manifestation of thought, and thought can only manifest itself through words. This mass of words by which the unmanifested thought becomes manifest, that is what is meant by the *Vedas*. It follows that the external existence of everything [depends on the *Vedas*, for thought] does not exist without the word. If the word ‘horse’ did not exist, none could think of a horse. [So] there must be [an intimate relation between] thought, word, and the external object. What are these words [in reality]? The *Vedas*. They do not call it Sanskrit language at all. It is Vedic language, a Divine language. Sanskrit is a degenerate form. So are all other languages. There is no language older than Vedic. You may ask, ‘Who wrote the *Vedas*?’ They were not written. The words are the *Vedas*. A word is *Veda*, if I can pronounce it rightly. Then it will immediately produce the [desired] effect. This mass of *Vedas* eternally exists and all the world is the manifestation of this mass of words. Then when the cycle ends, all this manifestation of energy becomes finer and finer, becomes only words, then thought. In the next cycle, first the thought changes into words and then out of those words [the whole universe] is produced.”⁶⁴

The Swami continues, “In the universe, Brahma or Hiranyagarbha [Brahman as the creator] or the cosmic Mahat [Mind] first manifested Himself as name, and then as form i.e., as this universe. All this expressed sensible universe is the form, behind which stands the eternal inexpressible Sphota, the manifester as *Logos* or Word. This eternal

Sphota [Logos, Sound-Brahman], the essential eternal material of all ideas or names, is the power through which the Lord creates the universe; nay, the Lord first becomes conditioned as the Sphota [Logos, Sound-Brahman], and then evolves Himself out as the yet more concrete sensible universe. This Sphota has one word as its only possible symbol, and this is the [Sanskrit] Om. And as by no possible means of analysis can we separate the word from the idea, this Om [pronounced Aum] and the eternal Sphota are inseparable; and, therefore, it is out of this holiest of all holy words, the mother of all names and forms, the eternal Om, that the whole universe may be supposed to have been created.”⁶⁵ “Disciple: But, sir, if one cries out ‘jug,’ ‘jug,’ that does not cause any jug to be produced! Swami Vivekananda: No, nothing is produced if you or I cry out like that; but a jug must be revealed if the idea of it rises in Brahman, which is perfect in Its creative determinations. When we see even those established in the practice of religion (Sadhakas) bring about by willpower things otherwise impossible to happen, what to speak of Brahman with perfect creativeness of will? At the point of creation Brahman becomes manifest as Shabda (Idea), and then assumes the form of ‘Nada’ [Sound] or ‘Om.’ At the next stage, the particular Shabdas or ideas, that variously existed in former cycles, such as Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, cow, man, etc., begin to come out of the ‘Om.’ As soon as these ideas appear in Brahman endowed with perfect will, the corresponding concrete things also appear, and gradually the diversified universe becomes manifest.”⁶⁶ “Form is the grosser and name the finer state of a single manifesting power called thought. But these three are one; it is the Unity and the Trinity, the three degrees of existence of the same thing. Finer, the more condensed, and most condensed. Wherever the one is, the others are there also. Wherever name is, there is form and thought. It naturally follows that if the universe is built upon the same plan as the [human] body, the universe also must have the same divisions of form, name, and thought. The ‘thought’ is the finest part of the universe, the real motive power. The thought behind our body is called soul, and the thought behind the universe is called God [Divine Mind]. Then after that is the name, and last of is the form which we see and feel [external universe].”⁶⁷ “Psychologically, in the mind-stuff of man, there cannot come the idea of name without the idea of form, and there cannot come the idea of form without the idea of name. They are inseparable; they are the external [form] and the internal [name] sides of the same wave. As such, names have been exalted and worshipped all over the world—consciously or unconsciously, man found the glory of

names.”⁶⁸

Swami Satprakashananda (1888-1979) leader of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, Missouri, mentioned that in the Vedic *Brahmanas* it is written “In the beginning the Lord of the Universe alone existed. With him Vak [Word or Speech] was the second, and Vak is verily the Supreme Brahman.”⁶⁹ Vak is “the only begotten Son of God” who manifests as an incarnation of God (Avatara) in human form in every age. There is a general creation of all terrestrial things (John 1:3) from the Logos [Word of God], and there is a special creation of the Logos as an incarnation of God (John 1:14). Hindus maintain that Jesus was not the only Divine Incarnation of the Logos, that “Vak is not identified with one particular historical form.”⁷⁰

On this subject Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976) the founder of the Vedanta Society of Southern California indicated, “The expressed sensible universe is the form behind which stands the eternal Sphota [Sound Brahman], the inexpressible, the Logos or Word. The word Om which is the mother of all names and forms is the eternal symbol of the Sphota. This eternal Sphota, the essential material of all ideas or names, is the power through which God creates all things. Ishvara, Brahman conditioned by maya [Saguna Brahman, Personal God], first manifests Himself as Sphota, the inexpressible Word, out of which He then evolves as the concrete, sensible world. The Christian Logos, on the other hand, is not regarded as the material cause of the universe, for God, according to Christianity, is only an efficient cause.... The Christian Logos was incarnate once, in the person of Jesus, whereas the Sphota of the Hindus was and is and will be incarnate in all persons—and not in persons only but in all other beings, throughout the universe.” In the general production of all things the creative aspect of the Sphota manifest, and the redemptive aspect in the special manifestation of an Incarnation of God (Avatara) in human form.⁷¹

Westerners on the Subject

For Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.-50 A.D.) the ideal language is identical with God’s reason (Logos) and is therefore eternal and unchanging. It is the archetype for a human language, which is accurate to the extent that it derives from and corresponds to God’s Logos. The Divine Logos is the heavenly *Torah* without chapters, verses, and words. The earthly *Torah* is the most authentic mimesis (imitation,

representation) of that Divine language. Being a Divine emanation, language structures the universe and contains the essence of all things.⁷²

Sufi Ibn al-‘Arabi (1165-1240) born in Muslim Spain professed that the world creation is a process of the externalization of the internal Names and Attributes of God. Divinity is the inward and hidden aspect of reality and the phenomenal world its outward form. “The (phenomenal) forms of the world are simply outwardly manifested forms of the Names and Attributes. These latter are the real inner forms of the world. All sensible things are but outward, individualized forms; they are ever changing imprints and external shapes, while the (inner forms) are permanent and everlasting, never changing. The former are transitory forms, surface phenomena, while the latter are the inner meanings and spirits of the former. All the Names by which God has named Himself, such as Living, Knowing, Willing, Powerful, are there in the world. All the Attributes with which He has qualified Himself, such as Life, Knowledge, Will, Power, are there in the world. Thus God governs the outside of the world by its inside.”⁷³ It is important to realize that the Muslim nondualism and qualified nondualism of Ibn al-‘Arabi were the dominant schools in Muslim India particularly between 1500 and 1829. More studies along this line would bring about better relations between Hindus and Muslims in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.⁷⁴

It was specified by the German Protestant Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546), that the Word or Logos proceeds in five different stages. First, is the eternal internal Word, the second member of the Trinity, the perfect inner Self-manifestation of God that is hidden from humans. Next is the dynamic energy and power of God objectified in the creation of the world. Third, is Jesus Christ the visible Word who has become flesh and is a historical reality. Next is the Word spoken by the prophets, Jesus and the apostles, which constitutes much of the *Bible*. Last is the proclamation of the Word in the scriptures to the believers. The Word is both the action and power of God and His Self-disclosure. Given that the oral preaching can be heretically distorted, the written scripture is necessary to preserve the text in an undistorted form.⁷⁵

Jewish Kabbalistic teachers concluded that the *Torah* serves as the primordial plan of creation. It is the source of all laws through which the various worlds and entities were created. Some Kabbalists believe that the letters inscribed in the *Torah* are gross manifestations of subtle letters, which abide in the heavenly realm as configurations of the celestial light.

“The whole work of creation was enacted through the combinations of the Hebrew letters that were inscribed on the sphere of heaven and engraved in the spirit of God. Every process in the world is a linguistic one, and the existence of every single thing depends on the combination of letters that lie hidden within.”⁷⁶

In an extensive study Barbara Holdrege (b. 1950) professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara articulated, “In [Jewish] Rabbinic texts the notion that the *Torah* constitutes the plan or blueprint of creation is generally depicted in three ways: (1) as the plan that God ‘looked into’, as an architect consults his blueprint, in order to create the world; (2) as the mental plan of creation conceived in the mind of God; or (3) as the plan that reflects the laws and structure of the universe.” According to Rabbinic texts, “Hebrew is the holy tongue, the language of God himself, which he inscribed in the *Torah* and which he used to create the world.... The cosmogonic role of the Divine language is often depicted in Rabbinic texts in terms of the twenty-two constants of the Hebrew alphabet that compose the *Torah*, which constitute the basic structural element of creation.... When viewed from the perspective of their sound the letters become intimately linked with the creative power of the Divine speech. God simply spoke and the different aspects of creation came into being.” “The Lord spoke the name and the corresponding form appeared. In this portrayal of creation, we find a progressive development from unspoken thought to spoken utterance to concrete form. The *Torah* as the Word of God embraces both the cognitive and phonic dimensions of the Word, both unspoken thought and spoken utterance.” “It is God’s wisdom which contains within itself the ideal plan of the universe. This plan conceived in the mind of God contains the ‘ideas’ of all the forms in creation. These ideas are then spoken out by God, expressed by him in speech utterances, which are then precipitated to form the concrete phenomena of creation. From unspoken thought to vocalized speech utterances to concrete forms: this is the progressive process of creation which the *Torah* participates at every stage.”⁷⁷

Barbara Holdrege explains the *Torah* in three ways. Number (1) implies that God and the plan are two separate entities. Number (2) is the most widely held idea in Vedanta and Christianity, that the plan is conceived in the Divine Mind. Number (3) is to view the laws and structure of the universe as reflections of the plan.

She writes in the *Zohar* a Jewish text of the 13th century it is written about God, “When He resolved to create the world He looked into the

Torah, into its every creative word, and fashioned the world correspondingly; for all the worlds and all the actions of all the worlds are contained in the *Torah*.... It is written in the *Torah*: ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;’ He looked at this expression and created heaven and earth.... The *Torah* describes four main stages in the manifestation of the Divine language—thought, inaudible voice, audible voice, and vocalized speech.” “In the *Zohar* all three aspects of the *Torah* are allotted a role in creation. The primordial *Torah*, *Hokmah* [Wisdom], the point of Divine thought, contains the totality of creation in potential form and is said to be the source of both the Written *Torah* and the Oral *Torah*. From the primordial *Torah*, *Hokmah*, the supernal letters of the Hebrew alphabet issue forth and become crystallized as the engravings of the Written *Torah*, *Tip eret*. The Written *Torah*, *Tip eret* is said to have produced the world from the power of the writing that issues forth from *Hokmah*, while the Oral *Torah*, the *Shekhinah*, is responsible for completing and preserving the world.”⁷⁸

The *Zohar* which is part of the Kabbalah first appeared in Spain in the 13th century. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* states, “It is necessary to ascertain where and when the Jews became intimately acquainted with the Hindu philosophy, which more than any other exercised an influence on the *Zohar*.... This mystic movement did not fail to exercise an influence upon the Persian Jews, and there arose among them various sects, such as the Isawites, the Yudghanites, etc., the tenets of which, so far as can be ascertained from the scanty information concerning them that is available, bore more or less the stamp of the Vedanta philosophy. Thus, the Yudghanites abstained from meat, led ascetic lives, set aside the literal meaning of the *Torah* for a supposed mystic interpretation, and believed in metempsychosis, etc. All these sects had their sacred writings, which they kept secret; and these writings probably formed the nucleus of the *Zohar*.”⁷⁹

Similarities Between Indian, Jewish, and Christian Beliefs

A Catholic priest in India, Antony Edanad (b. 1938), CMI pointed out that the *Rig Vedic* (RV) *Vak* is the Word, the Goddess of Speech and the *Vedas* (Wisdom) that shares the following similar characteristics with the Christian Logos (RV X:71, 125). Both are pre-existent, generated from Brahman and the Father respectively, personified and of Divine origin coexisting with God, are the omnipresent life giving principle involved in

the creation of the world; hold together all entities, serve a revelatory and salvific function; and are identified with truth and wisdom (RV X:125.3-8). They differ in that Vak is feminine and not a Son of God, and never incarnated in a human body. It is the source of all Divine and human words and languages.⁸⁰ Edanad adds that both the Vedic Vak and Jesus Christ existed with God before the creation (Jn. 1:1-2; Br. Up. I:2.4-5), are the supreme Word brought forth from the bosom of the Father (Jn. 1:18; AV IV:1.3), one with the Father (Jn. 10:30; Br. Up. I.3.21), through whom God produced this whole world (Jn. 1:3; Br. Up.); are the truth (Jn. 1:14; RV I: 164.37), the eternal symbol containing and expressing the scriptures, law and the prophets (Jn. 1:45; RV I:164.39), the source of human words about God who makes them meaningful (Jn. 14:7, 9; 15:15; 17:6; RV X:125.3), deserving the same worship as the Father (Jn. 5:22-23; RV X: 125.3), understood only by those people who have the Word abiding within themselves (Jn. 5:37-38; RV X:71.4-6), the life-giving, dynamic and immanent principle to those who abide in him (Jn. 15:4; RV X:125.4), and bring unity to all who receive Him (Jn. 17:21-24; RV X:125.7-8).⁸¹

Barbara Holdrege of the University of California at Santa Barbara pointed out many similarities between the Indian and Jewish views concerning this subject:, “The body of Brahman is described in certain Vedic and post-Vedic texts as constituted by the Vedic mantras, and in particular by the forty-eight varna-sounds of Sanskrit that compose the mantras.... Veda and Torah are not only identified, respectively, with the essence of the ultimate reality, but are associated more specifically with that aspect of the Divine which is responsible for bringing forth the phenomenal world. On this level, each is represented as the undifferentiated totality of knowledge or wisdom that serves as the immediate source of creation. The Veda is at times identified with the creator Prajapati or Brahma, the demiurge principle, who is extolled as the embodiment of knowledge and Veda incarnate. The Torah is personified in certain Rabbinic texts as Hokmah [Chokmah, Sophia in Greek], primordial wisdom, which serves as God’s architect or co-worker in creation.... Veda and Torah are each at times depicted as the subtle plan or blueprint of creation, its constituent sounds or letters constituting the primordial elements of the Divine language from which the realm of forms is structured. On this level the Word has differentiated from its original state of unity; the one Word has given rise to words. On the most subtle level these words are the ‘ideas’ of all

the forms of creation conceived in the mind of the creator as the ideal plan of the universe. These ideas are then uttered by the creator as vocalized words, which are then precipitated to form the multiplicity of phenomena. The Vedic mantras are represented in certain Vedic and post-Vedic accounts as the primordial utterances through which the creator brings forth the universe. In the post-Vedic texts, this notion is articulated in the image of the Vedas as the archetypal plan that the creator recites in order to manifest the names, forms, and functions of all beings. In the parallel conception found in certain Rabbinic and Kabbalistic texts, the Divine architect consults his blueprint, the Torah, 'looking into,' contemplating, and/or uttering its words in order to bring forth the phenomenal world. This subtle blueprint, Veda or Torah, is at times represented as multidimensional, its various forms reflecting the laws and the structure of the various levels of creation.... Another significant parallel concerns the conception of an all encompassing sound or Name that is identified with Veda or Torah and that is the basis of all creation and the source of all language. In certain Vedic and post-Vedic texts the symbol Om [pronounced Aum] is said to represent the sound embodiment of Brahman and in this sense corresponds to the Veda as Shabda Brahman [Sound Brahman].... In certain Kabbalistic schools the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, is identified with the Torah as the one great Name of God."⁸²

In summary the Indian Sphota (Word), Goddess of Speech (Vak) and *Vedas*; the Jewish Torah, Law, and Wisdom; and the Christian Logos (Word), Pre-existent Messiah, and Divine Incarnation each share the following characteristics. Being pre-existent, of Divine origin, and generated from and coexisting with Brahman-God. As the Power of Brahman-God they are involved in the creation of the world and are the life-giving principle that holds all entities together. They are identified with wisdom, truth, and goodness and function in revelation and the process of liberation-salvation.

General Discussion

Shabda refers to speech sound (phonetic utterance), words and their meaning (ideas), and reliable verbal testimony which includes the religious scriptures. Patanjali (c. 100 B.C.-300 A.D.) considered the permanent aspect of shabda to be meaning (sphoṭa) the idea it expresses, while sound, acoustics (dhvani) is ephemeral. Following the Shabda-Brahman

position of Bhartrhari (c. fl. 450) founder of the Grammarian school of philosophy two entities are referred to as shabda, one the notion of cognition (idea) and the other linguistic performance (word sound). It is both the underlying cause of articulated sounds and the expression their meaning. Shabda Brahman is eternal Word, the world creator; that actualizes as sound, language, and word meanings. This idea shows some similarities with the Greek concept of logos, which is the Divine reason (idea) and the Divine word that are involved in the creation of the universe.⁸³

Concerning Sanskrit, Vivekananda stated, "Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race." "The only solution to be reached was the finding of a great sacred language of which all the others would be considered as manifestations, and that was found in the Sanskrit." Still in existence are over 30 million Sanskrit manuscripts, making it the largest cultural tradition that any civilization has produced prior to the invention of the printing press. Over 3,000 Sanskrit works have been composed since India became independent in 1947 along with more than 90 weekly, biweekly, and quarterly publications.⁸⁴

A sacred language (e.g., Sanskrit, Pali, Ecclesiastical Latin, Classical Arabic, Rabbinic Hebrew) is considered to be Holy for the following reasons, it: a) is the language the religious scriptures were originally written in, b) is used in religious services, c) is part of the worship, and d) was written and spoken in the society where the religion's sacred texts were first set down. It vested with a solemnity and dignity that the vernacular lacks. Because sacred languages are ascribed with special virtues, all efforts are made to preserve their original form, unlike vernacular languages that are subject to change. The training of clergy is required to maintain the purity of the language that is known only to a limited number of people.⁸⁵

Pali is the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism. It is a hybrid language showing some resemblance to Sanskrit in terms of word-stems and grammar. They use mantras in their meditation. Sanskrit or a hybrid form of it was used in Mahayana Buddhism scholarship which was popular in China. For example, Nagarjuna (c. 150-250) used Classical Sanskrit as the language for his texts. The Dalai Lama referred to Sanskrit as the "elegant language of the gods" and mentioned it was used to transmit the "profound wisdom of Buddhist philosophy" to Tibet. The mantras used in

Tibetan Buddhist practice are often in Sanskrit, to preserve the original sound.⁸⁶

Either the Divine language was created by a Personal Brahman-God who preceded it, or Brahman-God in Its highest form manifests equally as both a Divine Personal Brahman-God and the Divine Language. It is easier for most devotees to relate to a Personal Brahman-God than to an Eternal Principle, and for that reason they are apt to give more honor and place on a higher status to the Person more than the Principle. Conversely, philosophers are often more likely to prefer the Principles-knowledge attributes of the Divine and scientists the Power aspect (energy, force), both sometimes rejecting the Personal manifestation. Principles include the Eternal Truths-*Vedas* and the higher values. Brahman-God also manifests as a Divine light, which the mystics and yogis relate to, and as goodness that appeals to active people. When Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14.6) he refers to himself as the truth (Principle), not that truth is something separate from him that he participates in. Existence, consciousness, bliss, goodness, substance, form, meaning, etc. in their most perfect state are not separate from the Divine Mind, they are Brahman-God in another form.

Swami Vivekananda brings out the important point that every human language is an imperfect form of the Divine language. We might think of all terrestrial entities as being imperfect forms of the Divine Archetypes. A possible sequence of creation follows. First are the Divine Ideas, followed by the sounds of the individual letters (e.g., the three sounds A-U-M become the universe). Next the letters as sound symbols combine to form creative words (e.g., *bhur* the Sanskrit name of the earth becoming the earth), followed by combinations of words (using an example in English, black horse, white horse becoming their respective entities). What follows are sentences (producing relationships between the created entities), and finally groups of sentences. At each of these six stages in the creative process, the world becomes more complex and detailed. If the world is created when Brahman (God) breathes out from the throat to the lips the sound A-U-M, does this mean at the dissolution of the universe the Lord would breathe in the reverse sound M-U-A, which resembles the name for mother in some languages? First comes the spoken word (sound) and then the written word (visualized).

According to an Indian view, Ideas in the mind of Brahman (God) are composed of causal spiritual vibrational material that has the properties of

extension and energy. In the creation process, these Ideas transform into the substance of subtle mental matter and energy. This matter in turn converts into gross physical matter and energy out of which the gross universe is produced. Once you have an actual universe then properties, propositions, numbers, and states of affairs must exist. When creating the universe Brahman can manifest the Word through thought, speech, or both.

Sankhya philosophy of Kapila teaches that shabda (sound) is the primary form of the substance of subtle matter (tanmatra). From sound comes ether the primary gross form of matter (mahabhuta). When the universe is created ether transforms into heat vibrations, gas, liquidity, and solidity. The five stages of physical creation are:

Tanmatras	Mahabhutas	Swami	John
Subtle Matter ⁸⁷ Dobson (Energy) ⁸⁹	Gross Matter	Vivekananda ⁸⁸	
shabda (hear-sound)	akasha (ether)	ether	gravitational
sparsha (touch)	vayu (air)	heat vibrations	kinetic
rupa (sight) radiational	tejas (fire)	gaseous	
rasa (taste)	ap (water)	liquid	electrical
gandha (smell) magnetic	prithivi (earth)	solid	

The mahabhuta physical elements of gross matter are combined from the tanmatra subtle elements in the following way, “Ether from sound, Air from sound and touch, Fire from sound and touch and sight, Water from sound and touch and sight and taste, and Earth from sound and touch and sight and taste and smell.”⁹⁰ The whole world constantly changes because these elements coexist, and combine and rearrange with each other in various ways. Does sound refer to the sound vibrations of speech, the Word of Brahman-God by which the creation came into being? According

to modern science the universe did not arise from sound so more study is required to make this idea compatible with contemporary thought.

When something is given a new name such as “Internet” or “YouTube” the decision is not arbitrary. The macro-universe (and possibly micro) is all law. Some unknown law-like process in the namer’s unconscious, subconscious, and conscious mind (three modes-aspects of a single mind) decided to select that term out of other possibilities. The selection is based on the laws of the mind that are a result of the person’s prior thoughts and actions. The name also has an accompanying sound vibration.

Some modern thinkers think the universe was created not out of words, but from mathematical entities. Mathematical realists like Kurt Godel (1906-78) believe that mathematical entities exist independent of the human mind. Thus, mathematics is not invented but is discovered. Mathematical Platonists hold that abstract mathematical objects exist independently of humans and their language, thought, and practices. Max Tegmark a Professor of Physics at MIT advances the cosmology that we are living inside an all-encompassing mathematical universe. Everything that exists including ourselves is a mathematical structure that is continually creating and rearranging the universe.⁹¹

In answer to the question how does the phenomenal world gain its existence from Saguna Brahman-Personal God we have the following answers. By Creation (Christian, Aquinas), Projection (Ramanuja, Vivekananda), Divine Ideas (Abhinavagupta, Sayana, Vivekananda) (Philo Judaeus, Augustine, Aquinas), and Word-Logos (Shankara, Vivekananda) (Philo Judaeus, Ibn al-‘Arabi).

Because of the close relationship between language and thought modern psychologists study their relationship. Language-thought theories rely on the belief that mental representation has a linguistic structure. Thoughts are "sentences in the head," meaning they take place within a mental language that is called mentalese. Thought is to some extent impacted by the lexical, syntactical, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics of language. A weaker form of this hypothesis has become dominant, since empirical studies have shown that the relationship between language and thought is weaker than originally theorized.⁹² For example, Martin Heidegger thought that Greek and German are the two best languages suited for the study of and expression of philosophy. This is questionable. When Paul Tillich received a job offer in the United States, he learned the English language. After reading his essays written in

German, he thought them out in the English language, rewrote them and was able to express his ideas in a clearer writing style.

Saguna Brahman creates the universe not only through Divine Ideas and Divine Words, but through a process of a manifestation, transformation, modification; fragmentation, particularization, division; externalization, objectification, grossification, projection; and as a reflection, image, copy. For more details see: Gopal Stavig, “Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman and the Creation of the Universe,” *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission of Culture* (Nov. 2023), pp. 15-20; (Dec. 2023), pp. 6-14.

3. The Imperfections of the World (Theodicy)

In his work *Théodicée* (1710, Justifying God), Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) stated that God created “the Best of all Possible Worlds.” Leibniz offers the following reasons why an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God created a world that contains evil. 1) The existence of evil is responsible for a greater good. For example, without evil to challenge us, there can be no courage. 2) Imperfection in a part is necessary for the perfection of the whole. 3) If everything were good it would be the normal thing and not be appreciated. 4) Evil is not a thing but is the absence of good (privation). It is like the hole in a donut. The donut was created but the hole was not created. 5) The existence of evil allows for free will, the capacity for people to choose among alternative forms of action. 6) If humanity were perfect, they would be on the same level as God, and there would be no need for Divine grace.⁹³

By “possible” is Leibniz implying that God is limited in His creative activity? No matter what type of world is created, is it possible for God to create a better one or is there an upper limit to this? If this is the “Best of all Possible Worlds,” many critics have shown that it is very difficult for the human intellect to explain why it is so.

Expressed more broadly, why did a perfect Brahman-God create an imperfect world? Concerning the imperfections, as a very broad generalization (with many exceptions), Christians emphasize the active evil and sin, Hindus the mental ignorance, and misunderstanding (avidya), and Buddhist the feeling of suffering and pain (dukkha) in the world. Theodicy generally concentrates on attempting to explain why evil exists, but the existence of pain and ignorance should also be considered. This concerns

moral evil, but there are also natural events such as disease, famines, and earthquakes that cause much unhappiness.

Since the time of Leibnitz many attempts have been made to justify the existence of evil, ignorance, and unhappiness. The view taken is determined by the person's metaphysical position and theology.

The existence of unhappiness and evil are supported by the following ideas:

1) Problems and obstacles are necessary for personal growth and self-development, since we would not change if we are satisfied with our present state.

2) If this world were a svarga (a lower heaven) and we lived happy lives without sorrow there would be less motivation to seek liberation-salvation.

3) If evil were nonexistent, much good would be absent from the world (Aquinas).⁹⁴ There can be no virtues like compassion if some people are not suffering.

4) Due to His "Permissive Will" God voluntarily surrenders some of His Omnipotence to allow for human free will (some Protestants). Does All-powerfulness imply that Brahman-God has the power to limit Its power or is this paradoxical? Evil exists because people have free will and some people do the wrong things. By means of His "permissive will," God provides humans with free choice and allows (permits) them to sin.⁹⁵ Allowing for human free will does not justify the existence of natural disasters like earthquakes or diseases.

5) God employs "Divine persuasion" rather than forcing someone to do something (Whitehead, Hartshorne).

6) Deism was held particularly during the Enlightenment, the view that God created the universe and after which did not intervene and let it run itself. At the beginning of creation it would have been possible for Brahman-God the First Cause to create the initial conditions including the laws and physical constants and then let the finely-tuned universe run itself without intervention. Consider a person or a machine manufacturing a watch or a clock and then letting it run by itself as suggested by William Paley in 1802.⁹⁶ In this case there would be no need for God to intervene at a later date. But the future events of the watch and clock are determined and there is no free will.

7) God is the Final Cause (goal) and not the First Cause (creator) of the universe (George Howison). He did not create people who are co-eternal with Him, but is the goal and ideal of human existence toward

which all existence is struggling. This is a kind of spiritual attraction. God is the supreme end, the absolute Final Cause,⁹⁷ the goal, ideal, and supreme end of human existence toward which all existence is struggling.

8) A limited finite God is not omnipotent (Zarathustra, William James, Edgar Brightman), According to Theistic Finitism God is omnibenevolent but not omnipotent. This idea was taught by William James (1842–1910) of Harvard University who held conversations with Swami Vivekananda whom he admired and by Edgar S. Brightman (1884–1953) a professor at Boston University and Methodist Minister who “had a deep and personal appreciation and affection for” Swami Akhilananda (1894-1962) the leader of the Boston-Providence Centers. Brightman stated that Theistic Finitism originated with Plato and was later supported by Marcion, Mani, and Manichaeism, Pierre Bayle, John Stuart Mill, H. G. Wells, and others. Plato through Socrates wrote, “God is not the cause of all things but only of good things.” For Brightman, though God is an infinite personal spirit his power is limited. If God were infinite and the all-inclusive whole of reality, then He would include both good and evil, what is true and what is false.⁹⁸ Following this line of thinking, God is not the first cause (cosmological argument) nor the creator of all aspects of the universe. The universe has no beginning or end so nothing existed prior to it to cause it. It is not created ontologically at each instant since creation involves a degeneration from the perfect to the imperfect.

9) God is like the light of the sun that reflects off dirty water and loses its luster. Vivekananda mentioned, “The mind is, as it were, the reflecting mirror of the Soul [Atman]. My mind reflects to a certain extent the powers of my Soul; so your Soul, and so everyone's. That mirror which is clearer reflects the Soul better. So the manifestation varies according to the mind one possesses; but the Souls in themselves are pure and perfect.”⁹⁹

10) People suffer due to their bad karma. The law of karma tells us why good and bad things happen to people, but it does explain why evil exists. If Brahman-God cannot override the law of karma, then He/She is not omnipotent, assuming that Brahman-God and the law of karma are two separate entities. But if the law of karma were part of Brahman-God's nature there would be no need to change the former.

11) What appears to be evil from a limited perspective is good when viewed from the standpoint of the whole (Aquinas, Vivekananda, Abhedananda). Abhedananda explained, “When we look at the phenomena of nature by piecemeal, without recognizing their connection, we do not

get the proper explanation of events. But if we look at the same phenomena as related to one another and to the whole universe, then we discover the true explanation.... It is limitation, the inability to recognize the relation of the part to the whole.”¹⁰⁰

12) Evil, ignorance, and pain are an illusionary appearance of mortal mind. Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) wrote, “Standing within the shadow of death-valley, I learned these truths in Divine Science; that all real being is in God, the Divine Mind, and that Life, Truth, and Love are all-powerful and ever-present; that the opposite of Truth called error, sin, sickness, disease, death--is the false testimony of false material sense of mind in matter.... As mind is immortal, the phrase mortal mind implies something untrue and therefore unreal.”¹⁰¹ Immanuel Kant taught that in sense perception the human mind sees a phenomenal representation of the object, rather than the Thing-in-Itself. Using Kant’s terminology, for Mary Baker Eddy the mortal mind sees a false phenomenal representation of the world. Only the Divine Mind sees and experiences the things-in-themselves, the world as it really is.

13) Things are not evil in their inherent nature or essence, but as a Privation or an absence of the good (Plotinus, Origen, Augustine, al-‘Arabi, Aquinas, Vivekananda).

The Church Father Augustine (354-430) who had a Neo-Platonic background upheld the Theory of Privation that, “Evil is not a natural thing, it is rather the name given to the privation of good (*privatio boni*). Thus there can be good without evil, but there cannot be evil without good.... Therefore, when we call a thing good, we praise its inherent nature; when we call a thing evil, we blame not its nature, but some defect in it contrary to its nature which is good.” “For what is evil by reason of a defect must obviously be good of its own nature. For a defect is something that is contrary to nature, something which damages the nature of a thing—and it can do so only by diminishing that thing’s goodness. Evil therefore is nothing but the privation of the good. And thus it can have no existence anywhere except in some good thing.”¹⁰² An evil will is not an efficient cause, but a deficient cause since evil is the absence of the good, a negative condition of privation without any positive characteristics. Privation is the absence of the virtue that should be present in the object. Evil is ontologically inferior to and dependent on the existence of the good. Similarly, darkness is nothing but the absence of light, ignorance of knowledge, and pain of happiness.¹⁰³

To quote Thomas Aquinas, “Evil is the absence of good which is

natural and due to a thing.... But Evil has no formal cause, but is rather a privation of form. So, too, neither has it a final cause, but is rather a privation of order to the proper end.”¹⁰⁴ Nothing is wholly evil, for the reason that it is not possible for corruption to fully consume what is good. “Now in things, each one has so much good as it has being, for good and being are convertible.”¹⁰⁵ “The highest good is the cause of every being. Therefore there cannot be any principle opposed to it as the cause of evils.... Nothing can be evil in its very essence.... every being, as such is good, and that evil can exist only in good as its subject.... every evil is caused by good ... evil can be only an accidental cause and thus, it cannot be the first cause, for the accidental cause is subsequent to an essential cause.”¹⁰⁶ Privation is not a substance or an essence, but its negation, “as privation of sight is called blindness.” God and His creation would be equal in perfection, if the supernatural power fully objectified in His effects. Each entity receives only a portion of Divine goodness since, “His effect is always less than His power,” and is ordered according to a hierarchical scale of partial perfection. “The evil that accompanies one good is the privation of another good. Never therefore would evil be sought after, not even accidentally, unless the good that accompanies the evil were more desired than the good of which the evil is a privation.”¹⁰⁷ If evil were nonexistent, much good would be absent from the universe. For example, “The life of a lion would not be preserved unless the ass were killed. Neither would avenging justice nor the patients of a sufferer be praised if there were no injustice.” God allows evil to exist, but he skillfully creates a greater good from it. “The judgment, however, of the goodness of anything does not depend upon its reference to any particular thing, but rather upon what it is in itself, and on its reference to the whole universe, wherein every part has its own perfectly ordered place.”¹⁰⁸ A person desired evil because they mistakenly think it is good.

The Doctrine of Privation is supported by Ibn al-‘Arabi (1165-1240), “Evil is the opposite of good, and nothing emerges from the good but good; evil is only nonexistence of good. Hence, all good is existence, while evil is nonexistence ... Ignorance consists of the lack of knowledge, nothing else. Hence it is not an ontological quality.”¹⁰⁹

There are degrees of privation. For example, dimness is a lesser degree of the privation of light than darkness.

14) Human reason is too limited to understand the workings of God. All of these ideas presuppose that human reason has the ability to explain the defects of the world. By contrast, Skeptical Theism is the view that

because of the limits of human reason we cannot draw conclusions of why Brahman-God does certain things such as allow evil to exist. These things are beyond human comprehension.¹¹⁰ If human reason were perfected would it be equal to Divine reason? If Brahman-God's way of thinking is altogether different from perfected human reasoning then Skeptical Theism would still exist. Is Skeptical Theism a more perfected form of reason or is it something different from reason? Theodicy assumes the universe is created by Saguna Brahman, a Personal God, the Divine Mind whose intellect is analogous to human reason. But if Saguna Brahman exists prior to the human intellect as Its creator, Its mode of thinking may not be analogous to the human mind. If the universe is due to Nirguna Brahman that transcends all conceptions of the human intellect, then theodicy will not provide an unambiguous understanding of why a perfect Brahman-God creates an imperfect universe. Many times Sri Ramakrishna emphasized, "Can we ever understand all these ideas with our little intellect? Can a one-seer pot hold four seers of milk?"¹¹¹ Skeptical Theism is supported by John Calvin (1509-64) who taught, "If we heard God speaking to us in His majesty, it would be useless to us, for we would understand nothing. Therefore, since we are carnal, He has to stutter or otherwise, He would not be understood by us." Swami Vivekananda concurred stating, "Even if a book were given by God which contained all the truth about religion, it would not serve the purpose because nobody could understand the book."¹¹² We might think of the logic of a child or of an adult's night dream, where events are connected in a sequence following a logic we are not familiar with. Religious philosophy makes every attempt to explain things using human reason and if successful avoids Skeptical Theism which is the desired goal. Skeptical Theism also relates to Descartes idea that God can create a world not limited by the law of non-contradiction, were for instance where the part is larger than the whole.

Relativity of Good and Bad

Another issue is that good and bad are relative terms based on other factors. Swami Vivekananda insightfully ascertained that good and evil are not independent of each other as commonly thought, "They are the diverse manifestations of one and the same fact, one time appearing as bad, and at another time as good. The difference does not exist in kind, but only in degree. They differ from each other in degree of intensity....

The same phenomenon will produce pleasure in one, and pain in another. The eating of meat produces pleasure to a man, but pain to the animal which is eaten.” “The difference between virtue and vice is one of degree ... all differences in this world are of degree and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything. All is One, which manifests Itself” in various ways.¹¹³ “There are no two Gods. When He is less manifested, it is called darkness, evil; and when He is more manifested, it is called light. That is all. Good and evil are only a question of degree: more manifested or less manifested.... It is all a manifestation of that Atman; He is being manifested in everything; only, when the manifestation is very thick we call it evil; and when it is very thin, we call it good.”¹¹⁴ Though the light of the Atman shines through all people, its perfection is expressed more in the saint than in the sinner. Humans have only a partial view of good and evil, given that things are perceived in relation to the five senses and understood in reference to restricted mental conceptions. “We only know the universe from the point of view of beings with five senses. Suppose we obtain another sense, the whole universe must change for us.” Because we interrelate with only a small portion of the universe, it appears to be inharmonious.¹¹⁵

According to Swami Abhedananda what is considered to be a virtue in one society may be deemed a vice in another. “That which fulfills our interests is called good, and that which brings us misery or anything which we do not want, is called evil.... If we judge everything from our standpoint, we can never know whether it is really good or evil, because our standard is limited and imperfect. Those who do not recognize the results of acts from different standpoints are liable to all kinds of error. If I judge the whole universe by my standard, my judgment will be very poor. But when I look at things from various standpoints, I can understand how the same event can produce good and evil in relation to different conditions.”¹¹⁶ “The difference between good and evil is not one of kind, but of degree, like the difference between light and darkness. Again the same thing can appear as good and as evil under different circumstances. That which appears as good in one case, may appear as evil if the conditions change and the results be different.”¹¹⁷

4. The Divinity of the World

The world is perfect (objective), but the human mind misperceives it (subjective) as imperfect. Sri Ramakrishna transmitted spiritual energy to

Swami Vivekananda through a touch and he had the following remarkable religious experience. “The magic touch of the Master that day immediately brought a wonderful change over my mind. I was astounded to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God! I saw it quite clearly, but kept silent to see whether the impression would last; but it did not abate in the course of the day. I returned home, but there too, everything I saw appeared to be Brahman. I sat down to take my meal, but found that everything—the food, the plate, the person who served, and even myself—was nothing but That.... While walking in the streets, I noticed cabs plying, but I did not feel inclined to move out of the way. I felt that the cabs and myself were of one stuff.... This state of things continued for some days. When I became normal again, I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita state. Then it struck me that the words of the scriptures were not false. Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the Advaita philosophy.”¹¹⁸

Vivekananda’s teaching the divinity of humans was not only a product of reason or accepting the authority of a religious scripture. It was based on spiritual experience like the one just described.

There are two types of Savikalpa Samadhi. Vivekananda experienced Combined Savikalpa Samadhi incorporating both the supersensuous and the sensuous realm. Ramakrishna was in this state when he saw that everything including the cat was full of blissful consciousness. This differs from Transcendental Savikalpa Samadhi, which Ramakrishna often attained, where he was in the supersensuous state and not in the sensuous realm that he had transcended.

When Ramakrishna touched Vivekananda, he experienced the world epistemologically through his spiritual senses, that it is pervaded and interpenetrated by a blissful Divine consciousness. This is the way the Divine Mind perceives the world. Following Vivekananda’s realization the world is already perfect and Brahman-God-like; we simply do not perceive or comprehend that. With the mind in a spiritual state of vibration one sees and experiences the world as Brahman-God. In a material state of vibration the world appears to be imperfect. Saguna Brahman-God has ontologically become the universe while epistemologically there is a false perception of imperfection. Maya veils the true reality (Saguna Brahman) and projects a false one that can only be terminated by a spiritual vision. In addition, Ramakrishna saw Brahman-God in other persons, but they did not realize this. This allows the mystic to reverse the epistemological process and to experience the world as it actually is in its a higher state.

Brahman-God has become or transformed into the perfect universe without impurities, but our idea of an imperfect universe is only a resemblance of the real universe as it truly is. In the West pantheism is generally denied because they believe that this means it teaches that God has become all of the impurities and vices of the world. A few of their saints have recognized the spirituality of the world. The mystic has some realization of this when he/she perceives the world through the spirit. People experience the world as imperfect. This is due to the limited nature of their perceptive apparatus and the imperfect thoughts in their mind that they project into the outside world (maya). Is it paradoxical that the world is objectively perfect, while subjective perception is imperfect?

The more an entity resembles Brahman-God the closer to Reality it is. It manifests to some degree the purity, humility, omnibenevolence, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibliss of Brahman-God. The fact that we manifest Brahman-God to varying degree (Scale of Being) means there is some likeness between the highest Reality and us. As we evolve we manifest more of Brahman-God.

Gottfried Leibniz also believed that only God perceives the world as it really is, while humans perceive it confusedly in an infinite number of ways.¹¹⁹ In other words, God perceives the spiritual world and we the imperfect physical world. Some may disagree, stating that the omniscient mind of God must experience everything, in both the perfect Divine and the imperfect human way. With the qualification, if God experiences the imperfect as we do, he knows it is a misconception.

Is the physical interpretation of the world an imperfect copy, phenomenal manifestations, or representations of the spiritual interpretation? Is this false perception due to maya that veils the true reality and projects a false one, which can only be terminated by a spiritual vision? Our mind is a fragment of the Universal Mind (Mahat). Does a quantitative difference (being a part) bring on a qualitative difference that causes our misperception to fall short of Brahman-God's correct perception?

That this world is Divine is an example of Substitution (the opposite of superstition a term coined by Terry Pratchett), meaning that which is true but believed by only a few. This is the opposite of superstition that which is believed by many but is untrue.¹²⁰

5. A Cosmological Interpretation of the Biblical Genesis Creation and Flood Narratives

Based on traditional Indian cosmology, Swami Vivekananda developed a theory of the physical creation of the universe that involves five stages, which are comparable to the creation narrative presented in the Book of Genesis 1:1-10.

1) “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. 1:2): Lutheran Scholastics theologians distinguished between two stages, “(1) *creatio prima*, the first creation, corresponding to Gen. 1:1-2, during which God drew out of nothing the *materia prima*, or *materia inhabilis*, the primary or unformed matter (Sk. Akasha); and (2) *creatio secunda*, according to which God produced individual beings by imparting form and life to the *materia prima*.” God freely and not out of necessity created the formless and qualityless prime matter out of nothing. For both Lutheran and Catholic theologians prime matter “is utterly potential and is devoid of all attributes or qualities.”¹²¹

Vivekananda stated, “At the beginning and at the end of a cycle everything becomes Akasha, and all the forces that are in the universe resolve back into the Prana [Primal Energy].” Akasha is a motionless, homogeneous, formless, eternal, infinite ocean of all-pervading Primal Matter-Substance.¹²²

2) “The Spirit [or Wind] of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2): The Hebrew word “*ruach*” means both spirit and wind. Some translators prefer this translation, “a wind from God sweeping over the water,” which provides a closer parallel to the Babylonian texts.¹²³ For Lutheran and Catholic Scholastics, “Individualization rests, first, on the informing of prime matter with the *forma substantialis*, or substantial form, that distinguishes the substance of one species of things from the substance of another species. This union of *materia prima* with *forma substantialis* results in *materia secunda*, second matter, the basis of all material existence.”¹²⁴ For example, a substance such as Socrates is this human being in virtue of having this substantial form of a human being, which is different from accidental forms that vary from one person to another.

Vivekananda continues, “In the beginning of a cycle, this Prana, as it were, sleeps in the infinite ocean of Akasha. It existed motionless in the beginning. Then arises motion in this ocean of Akasha by the action of this Prana [the Wind of God], and as this Prana begins to move, to vibrate, out of this ocean come the various celestial systems, suns, moons, stars, earth, human beings, animals, plants, and the manifestations of all the

various forces and phenomena.”¹²⁵

3) “Let there be light and there was light” (Gen. 1:3).

4) “In the midst of the waters” (Gen. 1:6).

5) “God called the dry land Earth” (Gen. 1:10). Vivekananda states, “The Akasha, acted upon by the repeated blows of Prana, produces Vayu or vibrations. This Vayu vibrates, and the vibrations growing more and more rapid result in friction giving rise to heat [and light], Tejas. Then this heat ends in liquefaction [water], Apah. Then that liquid becomes solid [earth].”¹²⁶

John Dobson (1915-2014) an astronomer and theoretical physicist did not make the following comparison with Genesis. Using his ideas we might identify the gravitational energy of hydrogen with “the face of the deep,” kinetic energy of motion with the “wind of God,” radiational energy with “light,” electrical energy with “waters,” and magnetic energy with “earth.”¹²⁷

Indian religious scriptures often interpret the flood story not as an earthly, but as a celestial cosmic event. It is a widely held belief in the ancient Indian scriptures that the all pervading, celestial, cosmic, primordial waters (apah) are the stuff out of which the world was created (RV 10:82.6; 129.1-3; SB 6:1.1.10; 11.1.6.1; Br. Up. 1:2.1; 5:5.1; LM 1:8-10). According to the Indian deluge narrative in the *Mahabharata* (186), after the great cataclysm of the flood, “There was water everywhere and the waters covered the heavens and the firmaments also.” In the next section (187) there is mention of the great dissolution of the universe.... When neither the sun, nor the moon, nor fire, nor earth, nor air, nor sky remains, when all the world being destroyed looketh like one vast ocean.” The earth is destroyed by a fire called Samvartaka that “consumeth this world.” Next came the rains where “those masses of vapor then flood with water the whole Earth with her mountains and forests and mines.... [and] soon flood the entire surface of the earth.” “The universe becomes one dead expanse of water, when all mobile and immobile creatures have been destroyed ... when the firmament itself has ceased to exist.” In the *Mahabharata* (313) the Earth is described as being inundated by Water, Fire dries up the Waters, Wind consumes the Fire. “Then Space of immeasurable extent swallowed up that Wind of transcendent energy.” Next Space dissolves into Mind, Consciousness swallows up the Mind, which in turn dissolves into Mahat-soul (the Universal Mind), and eventually only God remains.¹²⁸

Though the Biblical narrative of Noah and the deluge occurs on earth,

one might interpret it as a cosmic event. In the creation story it is mentioned that "the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen.1.2) and that God created a firmament separating the waters of heaven from the waters of the earth (Gen. 1.6-10). Tehom that is translated as "the deep" (Gen. 1.2) refers to the vast area of water, from which the waters above and below the firmament were separated and on which dry land later emerged. It is mentioned in the *New Testament* that the earth was formed out of water (2 Pet. 3.5). Origen considered the waters above the firmament to be a spiritual substance. Thomas Aquinas believed that "the waters" in Gen. 1.2 signify formless matter and that air was extended over the face of the waters. Levi Ben Gerson (Gersonides, 1288-1324) a Jewish philosopher equated the water that was divided by the firmament, with the primal formless matter that transforms into heavenly bodies and the four earthly elements. Arnold Guyot (1807-84) a Swiss-American geologist and Augustus Strong (1836-1921) an American Baptist theologian, affirmed that the waters mentioned in Gen. 1.2, 7 and possibly Ps. 148.4 refer to the primordial cosmic material. Thus, the cosmic waters described in the first chapter of Genesis, denotes formless matter, the primordial cosmic material used to create the world.¹²⁹ The Egyptians and Babylonians also believed that the world emerged from the primeval waters.

In the *Vishnu Purana* (6:3-4), at the end of a world cycle (kalpa) the universe is described as being deluged by torrents of water that pours down for more than a one hundred-year time period. It persists in an unmanifested state and after a long period of time, Brahma recreates the world. The sequence of events during the period of dissolution is exactly the reverse of that of the creation process. During the period of the flood, water swallows up the universe, which in turn is destroyed by fire, fire by air and wind, and finally only primal matter-substance remains.¹³⁰

Swami Vivekananda compares primal matter-substance to the waters of a lake and relates this to the creation and dissolution of the universe or a portion of it such as a solar system. At the end of a cycle (during the cosmic flood) everything becomes part of the lake of primal matter-substance called Akasha. "This universe, according to the theory of the philosophers, proceeds in the form of waves; it rises, and again it subsides, melts away, as it were; then again it proceeds out in all this variety; then again it slowly returns. So it goes on, like a pulsation.... Just as this ether encompasses us everywhere and we are interpenetrated by it, so everything we see is composed of this ether, and we are floating in

the ether like pieces of ice floating in a lake. They are formed of the water of the lake and float in it at the same time. So everything that exists is composed of this Akasha and is floating in this ocean. In the same way we are surrounded by this vast ocean of Prana—force and energy.”¹³¹

6. Eternity of the World and Cosmic Cycles

Indian: “Never will there be a time hereafter when any of us shall cease to be” (BG 2:12). “That which is can never cease to be” (BG* 2:16, p. 40).

Old Testament: “I will give to you, and to your descendants ... the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:8). “Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken” (Ps. 104:5). “The earth remains forever” (Eccl. 1:4; cf. 3:14-15; Dt. 33:15; Ps. 148:5-6).

The Mimamsa philosophers accepted that there might be general periods of development and decline within parts of the world, but there was no total dissolution of the universe, and thus no need for complete re-creation, and no interruption in the transmission of the teaching since people continue to exist somewhere. As Bhattacharyya notes, “The Mimamsa posits that the world with its ramification is in existence at all times of creation and there has not been a point of time when the order of the universe, as it exists to-day, was not in existence.”¹³²

Madhva (1190/1238-1276/1317) the founder of Dvaita (Dualistic) Vedanta like Thomas Aquinas believed that the existence and nature of the universe are an expression of the freedom of the Divine Will, and are not caused by any Divine necessity. With His absolute power, Brahman (God) can make and unmake the universe at will. According to B. N. K. Sharma’s commentary, “Madhva would concede that, theoretically, there is nothing impossible or absurd in agreeing that God can create a world out of nothing, that He could bring into existence a universe not unlike the one with which we are now familiar, without the aid of a pre-existent matter or souls. But the fact remains that He has not, in His infinite wisdom, chosen to do so. And all our philosophy has necessarily to take note of this and respect it. Similarly, He does not choose to destroy the eternal existence of matter and souls and other entities, even though they are all dependent on Him.... Madhva looks upon the orderly realm of natural process as having neither a beginning nor an end. The cosmos is as

everlasting as the God on whom it depends. The changing no less than the Unchangeable is an ultimate component of reality as a whole.”¹³³

The following statements of Swami Vivekananda support the idea of the eternity of the universe. “We believe in nature being without beginning and without end; only at certain periods this gross material of the outer universe goes back to its finer state, thus to remain for a certain period, again to be projected outside to manifest all this infinite panorama we call nature. This wavelike motion was going on even before time began, through eternity, and will remain for an infinite period of time.”¹³⁴

“Everything begins, as it were, from certain seeds, certain rudiments, certain fine forms, and becomes grosser and grosser as it develops; and then again it goes back to that fine form and subsides. The whole universe is going on in this way. There comes a time when this whole universe melts down and becomes finer and at last disappears entirely, as it were, but remains as superfine matter. We know through modern science and astronomy that this earth is cooling down, and in course of time it will become very cold, and then it will break to pieces and become finer and finer until it becomes ether once more. Yet the particles will all remain to form the material out of which another earth will be projected. Again that will disappear, and another will come out. So this universe will go back to its causes, and again its materials will come together and take form, like the wave that goes down, rises again, and takes shape. The acts of going back to causes and coming out again, taking form, are called in Sanskrit Sankocha and Vikasha, which mean shrinking and expanding. The whole universe, as it were, shrinks, and then it expands again. To use the more accepted words of modern science, they are involved and evolved. You hear about evolution, how all forms grow from lower ones, slowly growing up and up. This is very true, but each evolution presupposes an involution [e.g., a tree becomes a seed]. We know that the sum total of energy that is displayed in the universe is the same at all times, and that matter is indestructible. By no means can you take away one particle of matter. You cannot take away a foot-pound of energy or add one. The sum total is the same always. Only the manifestation varies, being involved and evolved. So this cycle is the evolution out of the involution of the previous cycle, and this cycle will again be involved, getting finer and finer, and out of that will come the next cycle. The whole universe is going on in this fashion. Thus we find that there is no creation in the sense that something is created out of nothing. To use a better word, there is manifestation, and God is the manifester of the universe. The universe, as it were, is

being breathed out of Him, and again it shrinks into Him, and again He throws it out.”¹³⁵

To defend the idea of the future eternity of the universe, Swami Abhedananda indicated, “Let us be contented with the study of science; we do not know whether there is an eternal energy out of which matter, mind and everything have come into existence; but we simply know, matter is indestructible, energy is indestructible.” When a portion of the physical world is temporarily destroyed, it returns to the causal state of existence. Eventually, the subtle matter and energy will reobjectify into a new physical form and perpetuate the eternal existence of the universe. “The time will come when she [the earth] will grow cold and lifeless and will eventually fall back into the sun. But do you think the basic material, the substance of this earth will be destroyed or annihilated. No, it will remain in its primordial condition and in course of time a new form will emerge.” “Kapila also proved that the dissolution of a thing means nothing but the reversion of an effect to its original causal state.”¹³⁶

In defense of the eternity of the world, Philo Judaeus of Alexandria articulated that, “All things which are liable to perish are subject to two fundamental sources of destruction, the external and the internal.... Now if the world is destroyed it will necessarily be through either some force from without or some of those which it contains within itself, and both of these are impossible. For there is nothing outside the world since all things have been brought into contribution to fill it up ... If there is anything outside it will necessarily be a void, the impassive form of existence, which cannot be acted on or act. Neither again will anything internal cause its dissolution. First, because if it did the part would be greater and stronger than the whole, which is against all reason. For the world while exerting a force which nothing can surpass propels all its parts and is propelled by none.”¹³⁷ “People who are accustomed to define things have rightly explained time as what measures the movement of the universe, and since this is correct, the world is coeval with time and its original source. But nothing can be so preposterous as to suppose that there was a time when the world was when time was not. Time by its nature has no beginning or end, since these very terms ‘was, time when, when,’ involve the idea of time.... It is necessary therefore that both should have subsisted from everlasting without having any beginning in which they came into being and things which are from everlasting are not susceptible of destruction.”¹³⁸

Origen (c. 185-254) the Greek Christian philosopher of Alexandria, from a Vedantic standpoint was an outstanding Church Father. A great truth seeker, he belonged to the philosophical school of Middle-Platonism that came after Platonism and was followed by Neo-Platonism. His range of knowledge was vast, for example, to increase his understanding of the *Old Testament* he studied under the Rabbi's of Alexander, Egypt. Writing against the conception that the world came into existence at a particular time, Origen stated that God is eternally active and perpetually creates the world from His own nature. "It is absurd and impious to suppose that these powers of God have been at any time in abeyance for a single moment.... During the whole of God's existence his creatures have existed also ... without a beginning.... all genera and species have forever existed, and some would say even individual things; but either way it is clear that God did not begin to create after spending a period in idleness."¹³⁹ If one believed that at a specific period, "the present creation did not exist, he would undoubtedly prove that in those ages or periods God was not almighty, but that he afterwards became almighty from the time when he began to have creatures over whom he could exercise power. Thus God will apparently have experienced a kind of progress.... is it anything but absurd that God should at first not possess something that is appropriate to him and then should come to possess it?"¹⁴⁰ "What was God doing before the world began? For it is alike impious and absurd to say that God's nature is to be at ease and never to move, or to suppose that there was a time when goodness did not do good and omnipotence did not exercise its power.... God did not begin to work for the first time when he made this visible world, but that just as after the dissolution of this world there will be another one, so also we believe that there were others before this one existed." "This world, however, which is itself called an 'age', is said to be the end of many ages."¹⁴¹

In Plotinus' (c. 205-70) system, "The universe has always existed before and will always exist." "Of necessity, then, all things must exist forever in ordered dependence upon each other.... Things that are said to have come into being did not just come into being [at a particular moment] but always were and always will be in process of becoming." "This universe is everlasting and has never not existed." The One [Nirguna Brahman] is always perfect and therefore produces everlastingly; and its product is less than itself."¹⁴² There is an endless succession of world cycles each with a beginning and end. The universe "completes its course periodically according to everlastingly fixed rational principles, and

everlastingly returns to the same state, period by period.” “When all things come to an end, there will be another beginning” when all of the forming principles (*logoi*) have been unfolded.¹⁴³

Aquinas' position was that through reason one could conclude that the universe is temporal or that it is eternal and he accepted the former as an article of faith.

Regarding the theory of world cycles, the author of the Jewish Zohar (13th century) maintained, “The worlds which preceded ours and were destroyed, were like sparks that scatter and die away when the forger strikes the iron with his hammer.” According to the Kabbalist doctrine of cosmic cycles (*shemittot*) presented in the *Sefer ha-Temunah* (c. 1250), “The Book of the Image,” there is a long and possibly infinite cycle of recurrent world creations each with a fixed period of time. After a 50,000-year jubilee the cosmic cycle comes to an end. Then the physical universe and seven levels of emanations will be dissolved and absorbed into the universal Cosmic Intelligence (*Binah*), which is the third highest emanation from God. Each *shemittot* is subdivided into lesser cycles designated as sabbatical years, in which the same heavenly *Torah* is revealed in different forms. Nahmanides (1194-1270) the Spanish Kabbalist expressed the view that, this present world will return to a chaotic state and will later be renewed by the Lord.¹⁴⁴ Isaac Abrabanel (1437-1509) a Spanish Jewish religious philosopher and his son Judah Abrabanel (alias Leo Hebraeus, Leone Ebreo; c. 1465-1523) believed that prior to the creation of this world, God had created a series of worlds each with a limited duration.¹⁴⁵

The eternity of the world is concerned with whether the world has a beginning in time or has existed from eternity. In Genesis 1:1 it states, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” is interpreted by many Indians such as Vivekananda to refer to the beginning of a new world cycle. If God first created the universe some time in the far distant past, did time or change exist prior to that event?. The answer is yes, since there was a God, a Trinity, and a Kingdom of Heaven that experience some form of change. *Creatio ex nihilo* means the universe was created not out of God or any pre-existent materials, but out of nothing. That is God relies on nothing existing independently of His creative power for the generation of the universe. Some qualifications to this theory should be mentioned. First, an alternative translation of the passage at the beginning of the book of Genesis that is sometimes provided is, “When God began to create the heaven and the earth, the earth being unformed and void, with

darkness over the surface of the deep” (Gen. 1:1-2), which implies that something already existed when God commenced to create the universe.¹⁴⁶ Outside of the *Bible*, many ancient cosmologies conceived of the world as being created out of pre-existent materials and not out of nothing. According to the apocryphal book of Wisdom (Wisd. 11:17) God “created the world out of formless matter.” This concurs with the Indian theory of the eternity of matter, which was also held by the ancient Babylonians who influenced the theory of creation as presented in the book of Genesis.¹⁴⁷

Following the second law of thermodynamics the universe is irreversibly running out of thermal energy for conversion into mechanical work. If the universe had an infinite past, it would have reached an equilibrium state of disorder or randomness, which it has not done. Consequently, our present universe began a finite number of years ago, but according to the above thinkers it was preceded by other universes.¹⁴⁸

While most Indians believe the universe is post-eternal (a parte post) in the future; like Aristotle and the Neo-Platonists they also maintain that it is beginningless, being pre-eternal (a parte ante) in the past. It is only the universe as a whole that is beginningless, while its parts such as our space-time continuum goes through cycles which include a gross physical origination such as the Big Bang.

If the world is pre-eternal it would be post-eternal only in theory since it has no end point. Each moment the infinite amount of time would increase in size. Christian philosophers like John Philoponus (6th century) wrote against an eternal world since an infinite number cannot actually exist. It cannot be 1) completed by successive addition, 2) be counted, 3) be traversed, 4) or be increased in size.¹⁴⁹ Consequently, the Indians teach an infinite number of cycles each with a limited duration.

7. Devas and Angels

Swami Vivekananda equates the Indian Vedic Devas (lower gods or deities) with the Judeo-Christian angels. “In the lunar sphere the Jiva becomes what we call a god [Devas], or what the Christians or Mohammedans call an angel.” Elohim-Jahveh “has appointed different ‘Devas’ or angels to preside over different functions of nature.” “The Devas are like your angels.”¹⁵⁰

This idea has received strong confirmation from the Spanish Jesuit Henry Heras (1888-1955) who was a revered teacher in India for many

years.¹⁵¹ In the *Rig Veda* there is a class of luminous deities called “angiras,” which is probably a cognate of the Latin “angelus” meaning angels. Angiras are a group of deities higher than humans and less than God, who are associated with light (RV 5:8.4). Angiras is also a name of Agni “the brightly-shining One” and “Lord of Light” (RV 8:19.1-4, 22; 44.18), who like an angel is often mentioned as a messenger and herald of Brahman (God) (RV 1:12.1, 8; 36.3-4; 8:19.21; AV 4:16.4), and is a protector of humans (RV 10:87.19-22).

1) Their relation to Brahman-God: Both Vedic devas and angels were created by God, possibly before the existence of the material universe (Indian: AV 10:7.25; SB 10:4.2.2; 11:1.6.14; 11:2.3.1; Ait. Up. 1:2.1; Br. Up. 1:4.11/ Bible: Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16); are subordinate to Brahman-God (Indian: Svet. Up. 6:7/ Bible: Col. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:22); dwell in the heaven above (Indian: RV 1:25.9; 154.4-6; 9:113.7-11; 10:14.8/ Bible: 1 Pet. 3:22); and form a heavenly council composed of devas (RV 1:25.10) or God and angels (Ps. 82:1).

2) Their characteristics: Vedic devas and angels are incorporeal spirits with celestial bodies (Lk. 24:39; Heb. 1:14); possess strength and intelligence that are superior to that of humans (2 Sam. 14:20; Ps. 103:20; 2 Thes. 1:7; 2 Pet. 2:11); are immortal (Indian: RV 5:3.4; 10:90.2; 172.5/ Bible: Lk. 20:36); and have bodies of light (Indian: RV 8:19.4, 22; 44.18/ Bible: Mt. 28:3; 2 Cor. 11:14). The word “devas” is etymologically derived from the root Sanskrit word “div” meaning “to shine.” It is a cognate of the Greek word theos, the Latin word deus and the English word deity.¹⁵² Furthermore, devas and angeles are divided into a number of different groups of varying ranks and functions (Col. 1:16). In Judeo-Christianity the higher angels are called archangels like Michael and Gabriel (1 Thes. 4:16; Jude 9). Lower level Devas and angels can fall from their state of purity through sin (Indian: SB 4:5.4.1/ Bible: Is. 14:12-15; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). According to Indian writings Ravana held a high rank in the heaven of Vishnu. He committed a grave error and had to be born on the earth to expiate his sin. He was given a choice of living three lives as the enemy of the Divine Incarnation or seven as his friend. Ravana chose the former so he could then return to heaven quicker.¹⁵³

3) Their functions: Vedic devas and angels preside over the celestial bodies like the sun and the sky, and the forces of nature like fire and water. The Kabbalah teaches that angels control the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies. Other angels are in charge of fire, water and the other physical elements. Devas and angels derive their name from these

celestial bodies;¹⁵⁴ do the Lord's work (Ps. 103:20-21; Mt. 25:31; 28:2 Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19); serve as messengers from Brahman-God to humans (Indian: RV 1:25.13/ Bible: Hag. 1:13; Lk. 1:26-38) and survey the world and report conditions on earth to Brahman-God (Indian: RV 7:87.3; AV 4:16.4/ Bible: Zech. 4:10).

4) Their relation to humans: Both Vedic devas and angels are worshiped by humans through religious rites, for the purpose of intercession (BG 7:23). This belief is qualified by the Catholics who render supreme adoration (latria) to God as the creator, sustainer, and end of humanity; special honor to Mary the Mother of Jesus (hyperdulia); and a lower form of adoration to saints and angels (dulia).¹⁵⁵ In the *Bible* both Paul (Col. 2:18) and an angel (Rev. 22:8-9) criticized angel worship. Lord Krishna mentioned that, "But these men of small understanding only pray for what is transient and perishable. A worshiper of the devas will go to the devas. So, also, my devotees will come to me" (BG* 7:23, p. 92). Devas and angels occasionally appear to humans (1 Kings 19:5-7; Dan. 6:22; 8:15-17; 9:21; Mt. 4:11; 28:2-7; Lk. 1:19-20, 26-38); and protect people as guardian angels (Indian: RV 1:22.5 /Bible: Ps. 91:11).¹⁵⁶

There are also some differences between devas and angels. Indians distinguish between different levels of heavenly beings. Highest are the manifestations of Brahman (God) such as Durga, Kali, Shiva, Ganesha, and Vishnu who have the power to liberate-save people. Next are those great souls who worship and contemplate God, execute the Lord's will, act as His messenger and heavenly sages, help humans to attain liberation-salvation, and assist and protect devout religious believers. It is possible that some saints on earth who passed on now serve the Lord in his salvific and liberating work. The *Bible* does mention angels who are ministering agents that assist those souls who will be saved (Lk. 15:10; 16:22; 22:43; Heb. 1:14). At a lower level are the polytheistic devas who often fulfill the various limited functions of nature. They hold a temporary position for a cosmic cycle, and are eventually replaced.

Thomas Aquinas wrote on the hierarchy of nine different types of angels. There is a higher, middle, and lower hierarchy each with three separate types of angels in descending order of rank.¹⁵⁷

8. Polytheism

Max Müller (1823-1900) the German-British Indologist coined the term henotheism to mean an intermediate state between polytheism and

monotheism. Henotheism like monotheism involves the worship of one supreme God, and like polytheism does not deny the existence of other lesser gods. Over the centuries, different individual devas were alternatively considered to be the supreme God. For example, Varuna the Vedic deity who most resembles the Hebrew Yahweh (Jehovah), held the position of chief of the devas and at a later time in history was reduced in status.¹⁵⁸ Müller also coined the term adeism, to mean the denial of the existence of the devas, corresponding to atheism meaning a rejection of the one God.¹⁵⁹

Indians distinguish between different levels of heavenly beings. Highest are the manifestations of Brahman (God) such as Durga, Kali, Shiva, Ganesha, and Vishnu who have the power to liberate-save people. Next are those great souls who worship and contemplate God, execute the Lord's will, act as His messenger and heavenly sages, help humans to attain liberation-salvation, and assist and protect devout religious believers. It is possible that some saints on earth who passed on now serve the Lord in his salvific and liberating work. The *Bible* does mention angels who are ministering agents that assist those souls who will be saved (Lk. 15:10; 16:22; 22:43; Heb. 1:14). At a lower level are the polytheistic devas who often fulfill the various limited functions of nature. They hold a temporary position for a cosmic cycle, and are eventually replaced.

Speaking of the lower devas Swami Vivekananda stated, "What are these gods? They mean certain states, certain offices. For instance, Indra the king of gods, means a certain office; some soul which was very high has gone to fill that post in this cycle, and after this cycle he will be born again as man and come down to this earth, and the man who is very good in this cycle will go and fill that post in the next cycle. So with all these gods; they are certain offices which have been filled alternately by millions and millions of souls, who, after filling those offices, came down and become men."¹⁶⁰ After a long period of time, these souls return to the earth as humans to work out their liberation-salvation.

Traditionally, the polytheistic nature devas have been subdivided into a tripartite division of: 1) celestial deities of the sun, moon, dawn, etc. that are often but are not always the most important (e.g., Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Vishnu, Ushas, Asvin Twins), 2) intermediate atmospheric deities of storms, lightning, the wind, etc. (e.g., Indra, Rudra, Vayu-Vata), and 3) terrestrial deities that represent the natural phenomena of the earth, fire, rivers, mountains, etc. (e.g., Agni, Prithvi,

Sindhu). “May Surya [sun deity] guard us out of heaven, and Vayu-Vata [wind deity] from the firmament, and Agni [fire deity] from the terrestrial spots” (RV 10:158.1). This verse invokes these three deities for protection in each of the three regions of the universe. Many scholars believe that the word Hebrew Elohim should be translated pluralistically as “gods” in those Biblical writings that were composed before the Babylonian Captivity (586-538 B.C.). After the Captivity when monotheism was accepted by the Hebrews, Elohim was understood in the singular sense as God.¹⁶¹

There are the lower deities situated in a single location like the sun, moon, earth, or a river; or with multiple locations like fire or the wind. According to polytheism are these deities’ personifications of these material bodies (e.g. sun, moon) and forces (e.g. fire, wind) or are they in charge of these functions or are they both? One wonders is the personification of nature necessary or do the forces of nature require a living being to make them operate correctly? We refer to them as deities and not as gods since they have limited functions and are not omnipotent like Brahman-God.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) the French sociologist upheld the principle that religious conceptions are to some extent a reflection of human society. Following this line of thinking, Georges Dumezil (1898-1986) “divided the Proto-Indo-European society into three categories: sovereignty, military, and productivity. He further subdivided sovereignty into two distinct and complementary sub-parts. One part was formal, juridical, and priestly, but rooted in this world. The other was powerful, unpredictable, and also priestly, but rooted in the supernatural and spiritual world. The second main division was connected with the use of force, the nobility and military. Finally, there was a third group, ruled by the other two, whose role was productivity: herding, agriculture, and crafts. The heart of the hypothesis is that both Proto-Indo-European society and its mythology were divided in the same way.” Each social class-caste worshiped a deity with a corresponding social function.¹⁶² The *Upanishads* specified certain deities belonging to each of the four castes, with an emphasis on the Kshatriyas (Political-Military) and Vaishyas (Business) (Br. Up. 1:4.11-15).

Some Westerners said the Indians were having problems because they are polytheistic and worship many gods and goddesses. Yet in Italy the rural people who continued worshipping the polytheistic Roman gods used the opposite argument. Christianity became the state religion of the

Roman Empire in 380. The old Pagan religions were suppressed and sometimes persecuted. Soon Rome was sacked in 410 and the last Roman emperor ruled to 476. The Pagans said their gods and goddess protected the Empire and after they were deposed the Empire fell within a century.

Vivekananda mentions, “In these and other ways, men of different types and dispositions, civilised and savage, born with the nature of the Devas and the Asuras have become fused together and form modern society. And that is why we see, in every society.”¹⁶³ Anthropologists have found that some primitive societies tend to be Pure Types, those exhibiting a peaceful Deva nature and others an aggressive warlike Asuric disposition. In modern societies these two groups have inner-married with each other producing a mixed type, some people exhibiting more of one characteristic than another.

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Vivekananda's rapport with the Chinese people in San Francisco is expressed by Marie Louise Burke (1912-2004), "One of the places to which Vivekananda may have sometimes gone alone, however, was Chinatown. He particularly liked to visit this quarter of the city, which in 1900 occupied some twelve square blocks on the lower eastern slope of Nob Hill and which was in many respects more genuinely Chinese than it is today.... The Chinatown he saw and liked to visit was undoubtedly the Chinatown of a cheerful and reserved people, whose age-old traditions, customs, and modes of life would have deeply interested him, as did everything connected with mankind's endlessly inventive cultures. The Chinese were, in turn, fascinated by Vivekananda. The import of his majestic walk and luminous glance would not have been lost on this ancient people: they no doubt recognized him as a holy man from India—a land revered by the Chinese for well over a thousand years for its religion and its sages. 'They would just flock after him,' Mrs. Hansbrough recounted, 'shaking themselves by the hand, as the saying went, to express their pleasure at his presence'" (Burke, VI, pp. 34-36).

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¹⁰⁶ ST, I, 49.3.

¹⁰⁷ ST, I, 48.3;19.9; 25.2.

¹⁰⁸ ST, I, 48.2; 49.3. For another translation see, Web:
www.newadvent.org/summa/1.htm

¹⁰⁹ Chittick, p. 290.

¹¹⁰ Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skeptical_theism

¹¹¹ Sri Ramakrishna, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (hereafter GSR), ed. Mahendranath Gupta, tr. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1952), pp. 153, 257, 864d.

¹¹² Ronald Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1982), p. 3; CW, II, p. 363.

¹¹³ CW, II, pp. 177, 299.

¹¹⁴ CW, II, pp. 355, 420.

¹¹⁵ CW, II, pp. 156, cf. 95-98, 168, 180, 354-55, 448-49; V, p, 285.

¹¹⁶ Abhedananda (1951), pp. 110-13.

¹¹⁷ Abhedananda (1951), p. 109.

¹¹⁸ *The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples* (2 vols; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, V1-2004, V2-1998), I, pp. 96-97.

¹¹⁹ Bertrand Russell, *Philosophy of Leibniz* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1971), p. 146.

¹²⁰ Web: <http://wiki.lspace.org/mediawiki/Substitution>

¹²¹ Muller, pp. 85, 185-86.

¹²² CW, I:147; See the chapter on "The Philosophy of Science" for longer and more detailed quotes.

¹²³ W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), p. 18.

¹²⁴ Muller, pp. 185-86.

¹²⁵ CW, II:264.

¹²⁶ CW, II:435-36.

¹²⁷ John Dobson, *Advaita Vedanta and Modern Science* (Chicago, IL: Vivekananda Vedanta Society, 1983), pp. ii, 7-10, 19, 30-34, 40-42; John Dobson, *Astronomy for Children Under Eighty* (San Francisco: San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers, 1973), pp. 1-5.

¹²⁸ MB, Vana Parva, III, sections 186-87, pp. 394-96, 400; Santi Parva, X, section 313, pp. 447-48.

¹²⁹ ST, I, 68.2-3; For another translation see, Web: www.newadvent.org/summa/1.htm; Isaac Husik, *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916, 1946), p. 358; Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907-09, 1976), p. 395.

¹³⁰ VP, pp. 493-99; N. C. Panda, *Maya in Physics* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), pp. 282-83.

¹³¹ CW, VIII:192-93

¹³² Brown (2008).

¹³³ B. N. K. Sharma, *Philosophy of Sri Madhvacarya* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), pp. 28, 221.

¹³⁴ CW, III:374.

¹³⁵ CW, II:426-27.

¹³⁶ Abhedananda (1990), pp. 103-04, 106.

¹³⁷ Aurobindo, p. 96; Lal, pp. 172-74; O'Neil, pp. 38-39, 43.

¹³⁷ *Philo*, tr. F. H. Colson (12 Vol.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929, 1991), IX, pp. 199-201.

¹³⁸ *Philo* (1991), IX, p. 221.

¹³⁹ FP, I, 4:3-5.

¹⁴⁰ FP, I, 2:10.

¹⁴¹ FP, III, 5:3; II, 3:5; G. Stavig, "Origen and Indian Thought," BRMIC (March 2003), pp.133-40.

¹⁴² Enneads, II, 1.1; II, 9.3; III, 2.1; V, 1.6.

¹⁴³ Enneads, IV, 3.12; V, 7.3; G. Stavig, "Plotinus and Indian Philosophy," BRMIC (Aug. 2002), pp. 313-18; (Sept. 2002), pp. 360-64. For the S. MacKenna translation see, Web: classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.html

¹⁴⁴ Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book, 1974), pp. 116-22; James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909, 1930), I, p. 204; Roth (1972), X, pp. 579, 581-82.

¹⁴⁵ Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), p. 395; Julius Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism*, tr. Franz Rosenzweig (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), p. 298.

¹⁴⁶ Plaut (1981), p. 18; William Lane, "The Initiation of Creation," *Vetus Testamentum* (1963), pp. 69, 72.

¹⁴⁷ Vergilius Ferm, ed., *An Encyclopedia of Religion* (Paterson, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1959), p. 205; Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1942, 1969), p. 89.

¹⁴⁸ Moreland, p. 20.

¹⁴⁹ Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternity_of_the_world

¹⁵⁰ CW, I:398; VIII:150; IX:242.

¹⁵¹ Henry Heras, S.J., "The Devil in Indian Scriptures," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay* 27 (1952), pp. 214-22.

¹⁵² Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Elsevier Publishing, 1971), pp. 198, 207-08, 759; John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 84. Klein refers to Sanskrit as Old Indian (OI).

¹⁵³ Richard Aldington and Delano Ames, tr., *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1969), p. 337.

¹⁵⁴ Christian Ginsburg, *The Essenes the Kabbalah* (New York, Macmillan, 1863, 1956), p. 110.

¹⁵⁵ Ferm (1959), p. 431.

¹⁵⁶ For a general discussion of these similarities mentioned above in relation to angels see Strong (1907-09, 1976), pp. 443-54; Berkhof (1984), pp. 141-49, and in relation to the devas see Heras (1952), pp. 214-41.

¹⁵⁷ ST, I, 108.1-6. For another translation see, Web: www.newadvent.org/summa/1.htm

¹⁵⁸ CW, I:347; Ferm (1959), p. 331; R. C. Majumdar, ed., *History and Culture of*

the Vedic People, the Vedic Age (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), p. 365.

¹⁵⁹ Runes, p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ CW, II:243; cf. CW, II:176; III:127; V:94; IX:258.

¹⁶¹ Majumdar (1965), p. 366; Ferm (1959), p. 247; Ramdat Bhradwaj, *The Philosophy of Tulsidas* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1979), p. 86.

¹⁶² Koenraad Elst, *Indigenous Indians* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1993), pp. 144-45; cf. Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trifunctional_hypothesis

¹⁶³ CW, V:526.