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VII. Panentheism and Transformational Pantheism

1. The Universe as a Modification of Brahman-God

Defined broadly, Qualified Nondualism (Vishistadvaita) is the doctrine that everything in the universe (including both matter-body and thought-mind) is a manifestation, transformation, mode, aspect, idea, word or sound vibration, name, form, secondary attribute, fragment, limitation, particularization, division, contraction, externalization, objectification, grossification, modification, emanation, projection, reflection, shadow, image, and/or ectype of Brahman (God) (or Ultimate Reality) to varying degrees. Future study is necessary to synthesize these relationships. Like *creatio ex nihilo*, Brahman does not work with external pre-established materials and It alone is both necessary and sufficient for the existence of the natural universe. The transformation process is due to the Self-caused inherent nature of Brahman. This process involves an essential change in substance and form, and not an accidental change, in the production of the universe from Brahman. A continuous one-way flow occurs from the substantial cause (Brahman) to its effect. There is identity since the universe derives its being from Brahman, and difference because as an effect the nature of the universe differs considerably from that of Brahman the cause (Identity-in-difference). The creative process of the universe is one of devolution or privation since the effect is always less than the cause. For this reason anything that is truly great in this world must have something of the higher in it.¹ The Divine Being is both the efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*) and material (substantial) cause (*samavayi-karana*) of the universe. Law is the will of Brahman who manifests as the Law of Causation. Brahman does not experience earthly things in the way in which the creatures do, but they are contained in Brahman “virtually and eminently” as in their First Cause. An analogy is

given in the *Upanishads* between a spider and its web. The web proceeds from the spider, yet the latter is not directly affected by the conditions of the former. The spider is qualitatively and quantitatively superior to its web. We can call this Transcendental-Immanent Pantheism since it states that a perfect Brahman is more than the universe, being both transcendent and immanent, and therefore is not exhausted by, dependent on, or tarnished by the defects of the universe. A more moderate form of Qualified Nondualism (Vishistadvaita) is the idea that Brahman-God pervades (or interpenetrates) the universe as its background (Vivekananda) or ground (Eckhart, Schelling, Tillich) (See: Chapter V, Section 1. It is the Immutable Background-Substratum-Ground (Foundational Cause) of All Existence; and the universe is a part of the Universal Cosmic Mind and Body (Mahat), Vivekananda's cosmology covered in Chapter's VII and VIII).

Ramanuja stresses, "The individual soul is a part of the highest Self [Brahman]; as the light issuing from a luminous thing such as fire or the sun is a part of that body or as the generic characteristics of a cow or horse, and the white or black colour of things so coloured, are attributes and hence parts of the things in which those attributes inhere; or as the body is a part of an embodied being.... a distinguishing attribute is a part of the thing distinguished by that attribute.... Hence there is no contradiction between the individual and the highest Self—the former of which is an attribute of the latter—standing to each other in the relation of part and whole, and their being at the same time of essentially different nature."² A more moderate form of Qualified Nondualism called Panentheism is discussed in the next section.

To avoid the difficulties of a crude type of Pantheism and to maintain the ontological distinction between Brahman (God) and this world, Ramanuja is quick to point out that in the creative process Brahman remains perfect. "The highest Brahman is essentially free from all imperfection whatsoever ... the entire complex of intelligent and non-intelligent beings (souls and matter) in all their different states is real, and constitutes the form, i.e. the body of the highest Brahman ... It follows that the highest Brahman, although entering into the 'effected' condition, remains unchanged for its essential nature does not become different ... While the highest Self thus undergoing a change in the form of a world comprising the whole aggregate of sentient and non-sentient beings—all imperfection and suffering are: limited to the sentient beings constituting part of its body, and all change is restricted to the non-sentient things

which constitute another part.... their inner Ruler and Self is in no way touched by their imperfections and changes.”³ When Ramanuja writes the individual soul (mind) is part of Brahman he does not mean it is an extension or a piece, of Brahman, which has no shape or form.⁴ The universe is not a physical or mental part of Brahman’s body and mind, which remain undefiled by our irrational or impure thoughts.

Concerning Ramanuja’s philosophy, S. Radhakrishnan adds, “The relation of body to soul is said to bring out roughly the nature of the dependence of the world on God. Since the body (sarira) decays when the soul departs, it has only derivative being; the movements of the body are subject to the will of the soul. The world stands in the same relation to God, deriving its being from Him and subject to His will. Ishvara [God] exists, with the jiva (soul) as His inner and the world as His outer body.”⁵

With great originality Swami Vivekananda brilliantly and creatively explains the Qualified Nondualism (Vishistadvaita) philosophy of Ramanuja. “The answer given by another party was that the soul was a part of the infinite Divine Existence. Just as this body is a little world by itself, and behind it is the mind or thought, and behind that is the individual soul, similarly, the whole world is a body, and behind that is the Universal Mind, and behind that is the Universal Soul. Just as this body is a portion of the Universal Body, so this mind is a portion of the Universal Mind, and the soul of man a portion of the universal Soul. This is what is called the Vishistadvaita, qualified monism.” “Then comes another view which I have just shown to you. Man begins to find out that if God is the cause of the universe and the universe the effect, God Himself must have become the universe and the souls, and he is but a particle of which God is the whole. We are but little beings, sparks of that mass of fire, and the whole universe is a manifestation of God Himself. This is the next step. In Sanskrit, it is called Vishistadvaita. Just as I have this body and this body covers the soul, and the soul is in and through this body, so this whole universe of infinite souls and nature forms, as it were, the body of God. When the period of involution comes, the universe becomes finer and finer, yet remains the body of God. When the gross manifestation comes, then also the universe remains the body of God. Just as the human soul is the soul of the human body and mind, so God is the Soul of our souls. All of you have heard this expression in every religion, ‘Soul of our souls.’ That is what is meant by it. He, as it were, resides in them, guides them, is the ruler of them all. In the first view, that of dualism, each one of us is an individual, eternally separate from God and nature. In the second view, we

are individuals, but not separate from God. We are like little particles floating in one mass, and that mass is God. We are individuals but one in God. We are all in Him. We are all parts of Him, and therefore we are One. And yet between man and man, man and God, there is a strict individuality, separate and yet not separate.”⁶ “Every cell in your body has a soul conscious of the cell. It is a separate entity. It has a little will of its own, a little sphere of action of its own. All [cells] combined make up an individual. [In the same way,] the Personal God of the universe is made up of all these [many individuals].” “The sum total of all the cells in an organism is one person; so each soul is like one cell and the sum of them is God, and beyond that is the Absolute.”⁷ Thus, a single person and God the sum total of all people, vary greatly both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Swami Abhedananda (1866-1939) another monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna cautioned that, “We must not forget the truth, discovered and established by ancient and modern science, that something cannot come out of nothing, consequently to a scientific mind creation out of nothing has no meaning.... Ishvara [God] is called the creator because He projects out of His own being the powers existing there potentially and makes them active. Thus, the word “creator” means the projector of all forces and of all phenomenal forms, which potentially existed as eternal energy in Ishvara. That projection from the potential into the kinetic or active state takes place gradually through the process of the evolution of the Maya or the cosmic energy, which dwells in the Ishvara of Vedanta.... He does not create matter, but matter is only a certain state or mode of motion of the universal Divine energy. [This was published in 1903 two years prior to Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity]. When the dormant power of Maya begins to manifest, all material forms commence to appear.”⁸ “When we realize that nature or the material [substantial] cause is nothing but a part of the manifested Divine Energy, we understand that God does not, like a carpenter or a potter, create or fashion the phenomena out of the materials which exist outside of Himself, but that he projects by the process of evolution everything out of His own body wherein dwell all the matter and forces of the world.”⁹

Abhedananda continues, Ishvara is “the material [substantial] cause of the universe and also the efficient cause. He projects through the process of evolution and out of his own. That is the cosmic energy, which contains potentially all the forms, forces, ideas, and thoughts. Then he becomes the ruler of the universe. He is the internal ruler, just the same

as the individual may be called the ruler of his own form.... the ruler of the universe is the knower of the universe. That ruler is not only outside of nature, but immanent and resident in nature also. He transcends nature as well as lives in nature. He is nothing but that portion of Divine energy, which has taken so many forms and appears as so many forces. His physical body is the gross physical form of the universe, which includes the infinite variety of the manifestations of forces, and powers that we perceive with our senses. The innumerable suns, moons, stars and planets make up the gross physical body of that Ishvara. He is the all-knowing and all-intelligent Cosmic Ego. As the individual ego is the knower of the body, He is also the knower of all acts that can be performed by body, mind or senses. So the Cosmic Ego performs all the acts that are to be observed in this world of phenomena. His mind is the Cosmic Mind, and Cosmic Intellect is his intellect... He dwells in every object and gives reality to it, but, at the same time, is not the same as the object itself."¹⁰

That Brahman is both the formal and material (substantial) cause of the universe is paralleled in the Christian idea that the Divine exemplars are the cause of both the form and material substance of all things.

A Monist agrees with a Pluralist (like Bertrand Russell or G. E. Moore) that the empirical world is composed of a variety of real differing objects. But the Monist also maintains that in the ontological creative process these objects are derived from a single unitary source. The world is real, but the source is Ultimate Reality.

The various schools of monism include:

1) Transformational Monism: Brahman-God transforms into the world and its substantial-material cause (Qualified Nondualism).

2) Mereological Monism: The integrated Whole (Mahat, Universal Mind and Body) is ontologically prior to and subdivides into Its parts that constitute the universe.

3) Panentheistic (all-is-God) Monism: Everything is within Brahman-God.

4) Foundational Monism: Brahman-God is within (Antaryamin) or pervades everything as its background or ground. Theopanistic (God-in-all). There is nothing ontologically or chronologically prior to the foundation.

5) Substantial Monism in Western philosophy everything is composed of a single basic substance be it matter (Materialism), thought (Idealism), or a neutral entity (Neutral Monism).¹¹

In Vivekananda's philosophy there is the transformation of Akasha (Primal Matter-Substance) and Prana (Primal Energy) first into the substance of extended subtle mental matter-substance and energy and then into gross physical matter and energy. Akasha is in a state of potentiality, for example as clay it is a potential statue that becomes a statue. Brahman remains free of all of the imperfections of the world though operating in it. We might think of electricity that operates through a lamp yet is not affected by a faulty light bulb.

Our body is a fragment of the Universal Body and our Mind of the Universal Mind. A quantitative difference based on a whole-part relationship, results in a qualitative difference. Vivekananda's analogy comparing a body to a cell within it is an example of a difference in quality. The Whole is omniscient comprising the totality of knowledge. Our minds and thought system is limited to a lesser number of ideas. The Universal Cosmic Mind has an omniscient intellect, omnipotent and omnibenevolent will, and omniblissful feelings. Fragments of the Universal Mind and Will that make up the creation possess these virtues to varying degrees. Our will and what we will are parts of the Universal Cosmic Will. Improving our ideas, will, and feelings can only occur by becoming more in harmony with the Universal Mind and Will. According to Augustine the Bishop of Hippo's (354-430) Theory of Privation of the Good (Privatio boni) evil is unsubstantial, it is due to the absence or lack of good. 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.¹²

Vivekananda tells us, "Our universe is that portion of existence which is characterized by what the Sanskrit psychologists call Desha-kala-nimitta, or what is known to European psychology as space, time, and causation. This universe is only a part of infinite existence, thrown into a peculiar mould, composed of space, time, and causation. It necessarily follows that law is possible only within this conditioned universe; beyond it there cannot be any law. When we speak of the universe, we only mean that portion of existence which is limited by our mind--the universe of the senses, which we can see, feel, touch, hear, think of, imagine. This alone is under law; but beyond it existence cannot be subject to law, because causation does not extend beyond the world of our minds. Anything beyond the range of our mind and our senses is not bound by the law of causation, as there is no mental association of things in the region beyond

the senses, and no causation without association of ideas. It is only when "being" or existence gets molded into name and form that it obeys the law of causation, and is said to be under law; because all law has its essence in causation.... So, when we speak of man as no other than that infinite being which is manifesting itself, we mean that only one very small part thereof is man; this body and this mind which we see are only one part of the whole, only one spot of the infinite being. This whole universe is only one speck of the infinite being; and all our laws, our bondages, our joys and our sorrows, our happiness's and our expectations, are only within this small universe."¹³ Is Vivekananda saying that Ontologically that we and the world are infinite, but epistemologically viewed through the human intellect (buddhi) and senses are limited (finite). They impose space, time, and causation (finitude) on the infinite reality.

Brahman-God's Universal Mind (the mental universe) controls Brahman-God's Universal Body (the physical universe), as our mind controls our body. In addition, the Universal Mind works through our mind telling it to raise our hand, which is a part of the Universal Body. The Universal Body is to a human being as our body is to a cell within the body. Yet, we do not have direct contact or control over our cells as Brahman-God does over us.

The philosophy of Mereology is the study of parts and the wholes they form. Composition principles take us from parts to a whole and Decomposition principles from a whole to its parts. Transitive means a part of a part of a whole is itself a part of that whole. Remainder is the difference between a whole and its proper parts. Simple is an entity with no proper parts.¹⁴

This differs from the interpretation of Protestant Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) where God is the Eternal Perceiver. Following this idea we are not fragments of the Eternal Perceiver, but God is the efficient cause of sense data that are 'imprinted' on the senses of finite beings.

Following the metaphysics of the German Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (Cusanus) (1401-64), all things are contained within God and He is immanent in all things. Without Him creatures are nothing and all things are essentially dependent on God. The world is a contraction of the Divine Being. "In the creation of the world unity is 'contracted' into plurality,

infinity into finitude, simplicity into composition, eternity into succession, necessity into possibility. On the plane of creation the Divine infinity expresses or reveals itself in the multiplicity of finite things, while the Divine eternity expresses or reveals itself in temporal succession.”¹⁵

Concerning Benedict Spinoza’s (1632-77) system of philosophy, Frederick Copleston, S.J. wrote, “What is implied by the nature of an Infinite Being or Substance? If God were distinct from nature and there were substances other than God, God would not be infinite. Conversely, if God is infinite, there cannot be other substances. Finite things cannot be understood or explained apart from God's causal activity. They cannot, therefore, be substances in the sense in which Spinoza has defined the term 'substance.' They must, then, be in God. 'Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can exist or be conceived without God' (Spinoza’s *Ethics*, I:15).... what Spinoza meant was that finite beings are modifications of God, the unique substance. God possesses an infinity of attribute, each of which is infinite; and of these two are known to us, namely, thought and extension. Finite minds are modes of God under the attribute of thought, and finite bodies are modes of God under the attribute of extension. Nature is not ontologically distinct from God; and the reason why it cannot be ontologically distinct is that God is infinite. He must comprise in Himself all reality.... if we thus proceed still further to infinity, we can easily conceive that all nature is one individual whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways without any change of the individual as a whole' (*Ethics*, II:13).... 'It is apparent that our mind, in so far as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another mode of thinking, and this one again by another, and so on to infinity: so that they all constitute at the same time the eternal and Infinite Intellect of God' (*Ethics*, V:40).... The difference between God, the Infinite Substance, and finite things is that God is not determined in His existence or actions by any external cause (there is no cause external to God which could act upon Him) whereas finite things, being modifications of God, are determined by Him in respect of their existence, essence and actions.... 'God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things', (*Ethics*, I:18) for all things exist in God or Nature. But this does not mean that God exists apart from the modes and can interfere with the chain of finite causes. The chain of finite causality is the Divine causality; for it is the modal expression of God's self-determination.... It is not empirical Nature, that is identified with God but rather Nature in a particular sense, namely,

as the Infinite Substance, which lies behind the transitory modes.”¹⁶

Gustav Fechner (1801-87) an early experimental psychologist was also a philosopher who in 1851 supported what today is known as Panentheism (all-in-God). “So God may be viewed as a unitary inclusive spirit, as absolute, universal spirit, superior to and contrasted with the individual created spirits which are Its members, in the same way that the spirit of man as a whole is known to include under it separately intelligible and distinguishable ideas as its constituent members. But it would be just as erroneous to think of the individual spirits created by God as outside of Him as to think of the ideas, created by our spirits, as outside of ourselves. It is a purely internal or abstract contrast with which we are here concerned, that between the unitary whole and its members—the very opposite of a real or external contrast. However, the individual member always remains disposed to confuse the two; for, since he sees the constituents of the whole, other than himself, as outside himself, or does not see them at all, he supposes himself in general to have an outward contrast with the whole, while he nevertheless forms an essential ingredient of it.... Because, however, nothing in the world is so particular that it is not subordinated in this or that aspect to some general principle, likewise all particular combinations of conditions, and the laws of happening and acting valid for them, universalize themselves and finally subordinate themselves to the most universal, which is Itself bound by no special determination, but binds everything. Therefore, there is also, far above gravitation, something possessing the attributes which we admired in that—something single, eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, omnigoverning, ever acting.... binding nature and the spirit world into one.... However high any being stands, it still has an external world; other beings, similar to it, limit it; only as it rises higher does it contain more within itself, exist more purely within itself, possess more self-determination, because it includes more of the determining grounds of existence within itself. But God, as the totality of being and acting, has no external environment, no beings outside Himself; He is one and unique; all spirits move in the inner world of His spirit; all bodies in the inner world of his body; He exists purely within Himself, He is determined by nothing external to Him, His is a purely inner, self-determination, because He includes the determining grounds of all existence. Each thing, indeed, the more excellent it is, the more does it include of the creative power, the more does it originate out of itself and contain within and under itself ... and the less does it have outside of and

superior to itself, by which its existence is supplemented. But God and only God is self-identically creator and creation; wholly His own creator, wholly His own creation proceeding from nothing, for He is wholly Himself and out of Himself, and is supplemented by nothing else ... yet everything is produced out of Him, is completed within Him, and by Him.... In the consciousness of God everything is finally united and flows together into a unity ... while we think a thought, the higher being thinks it through us, and in us, and God in and through the higher soul. It is a single thought. Just as when circles are within one another, the largest circle contains every smaller circle just as it is in the intermediate circles.”¹⁷

Paul Tillich (1886-1965) points out, that nobody is a pantheist in the sense that all things are identical with God. Rather, pantheism proclaims God as "the Substance" that grounds and unites the world and is the power of the Divine present in all things.¹⁸

According to Isaac Luria (1534-72) the Jewish mystic from Syria, the creation of the world requires God contracting (*Tzimtzum*, *Zimzum*). The act of creation is a concealment rather than an unfolding revelation. The process involves the withdrawal of divinity creating an area where creation can begin.¹⁹ This idea was developed in more detail by Jurgen Moltmann (b. 1926). A commentator writes, “For Moltmann, humiliation and self-emptying (kenosis) not only pertain to the incarnation of Christ but also inhere originally in God's creating.... If God is truly infinite, and omnipresent, the argument goes, there can be no ‘outside’ of God. Instead we must ‘assume a self-limitation of the infinite, omnipresent God, preceding His creation.... God must have made room for this finitude beforehand, in Himself.’ The ‘nothing’ or nonbeing that the term *creatio ex nihilo* refers to is the primordial result of Divine contraction. ‘It is only God's withdrawal into himself which gives that *nihil* the space in which God then becomes creatively active.’... The synthesis of God's self-negation and creativity in turn constitutes the time, space, existence, and freedom of finite creatures within God. ‘Has God not therefore created the world ‘in Himself,’ giving it time in his eternity, finitude in his infinity, space in his omnipresence and freedom in his selfless love?’... ‘God makes room for his creation by withdrawing his presence ... a partial negation of the Divine Being.’ "Nothingness" is therefore "the non-being of the Creator.’.... time originates in God's self-limitation. God ‘withdraws His eternity into Himself in order to give His creation its time.’... Time, space, heaven, and earth are

‘in God’ because they are self-modifications of God but are not part of his eternal nature.”²⁰

Jurgen Moltmann describes the creative process in terms of God’s self-emptying (kenosis), self-limitation, contraction, withdrawal, self-negation, and self-modifications. Vivekananda’s involution (later adopted by Sri Aurobindo) is a more precise and scientific term. Evolution involves the creation advancing toward God, and devolution is the reverse process of going away from God. They differ in that evolution takes aeons and the original devolution was quite likely instantaneous. Privation (*privatio boni*) is a related concept, in the creative process good becomes evil, an unsubstantial entity which is no more than the absence of the good.

Robert Oakes of the University of Missouri cites Thomas Aquinas who wrote, “Every finite thing depends existentially on God at every moment of its existence, and if the Divine conserving activity were withdrawn, it would at once cease to exist.” Oakes provided a host of quotes to confirm this idea from Augustine, Moses Maimonides, Duns Scotus, Gottfried Leibniz, and George Berkeley. He thinks these theists are confirming pantheism unwittingly without knowing it. Next in opposition to theism, Oakes takes this idea one step farther stating that it justifies the pantheistic idea that all contingent objects including ourself are aspects or modifications of God. This includes intentional, emotional, and perceptual states. He mentions George Berkeley’s theocentric immaterialism where all sensible objects are “mind-dependent,” they are conserved in existence by the activity of the mind of Infinite omnipresent Spirit. They are aspects or modifications of Infinite Spirit upon whom they derive their continuing existence. Anything that is an aspect or modification of God, at every moment depends for its existence on this conserving power.²¹

But if we reverse the word order, does this mean everything that depends for its existence on God (Brahman), is an aspect or modification of God as Oakes assumes? To answer this question we would have to have a better idea of how Brahman-God maintains the continued existence of any object. How are they related to each other? We can create something, but if we perish it will remain. Yet, this is not true according to these thinkers of the Brahman-God relationship with phenomenal objects. The watchmaker-watch analogy has been used, but the latter continues after the former perishes. If we think of Brahman-God as the Divine Mind and the world as thoughts in that mind, obviously the latter requires the former to remain in existence.

Devolutionary Ontological Panentheism indicates that in the creative

process each stage is less than the prior one. There is a withdrawal and negation of Divine qualities. Was the creation of the universe a form of de-emergent devolution? Of the emergent evolutionary process in reverse? At the level of the substance of extended subtle matter and energy or in the causal level, self-reflective consciousness is presently involved (as in the worm) and will some day manifest itself. It is in an unmanifested and potential state.

Ontologically and chronologically, knowledge or anything else cannot precede Brahman-God who is the first cause. Either Brahman-God as first cause precedes knowledge, or Brahman-God and perfect knowledge are one and the same thing. In the former case, Brahman-God is the creator of causation. In the latter case, Brahman-God is both personal and impersonal. As impersonal, Brahman-God is identical with perfect knowledge, power; and with the transcendental Law, Scriptures, Wisdom and Truth. Brahman-God as the Logos manifests personally as a human Divine Incarnation, and impersonally as the religious scriptures of the world. We can say that Brahman-God is the cause of or creates or manifests as causation; and/or causation is an attribute of God. In other words, either Brahman-God precedes causation or causation is part of Brahman-God's nature.

Pantheists believe that the Absolute Infinity and Unlimitedness of Brahman-God's Divine Substance must be ontologically comprehensive including all of Reality in its entirety. Nothing can exist which is not ultimately included or subsumed within the Being of Brahman-God. How could the plentitude of the Divine Substance be maximal, if it allowed for "metaphysical space" for the existence of other things distinct from Brahman-God? For a maximally infinite Being there is no room for separate entities. Therefore, the Divine Substance's maximal plenteousness ensures the necessary reduction of all finite objects to modes, aspects, or manifestations of Brahman-God.²² Conversely, theists believe that while Brahman-God is infinite, finite beings exist separately sharing the same space but in a different way.

An important teaching of transformational pantheism is that in spite of the world's imperfections, at a deeper level beneath the surface the sacred and spiritual are everywhere present.

When Brahman-God creates a universe It creates possibilities and from them It selects out which ones to actualize. Its nature determines the sorts of possibilities that will come into existence. Within the being of Brahman-God lie the rational principles and archetypes that will manifest.

Within Brahman-God is an element of creative spontaneity that can freely generate new ideas, just as a human artist improvises new tunes or objects of art. These creative acts are not rigidly determined, but are free and spontaneous within the limits of Its own nature.

For more on this subject see, Chapter IX, Section 1A. The Soul (Self) as a Part (Fragment) of Divinity.

2. Panentheism: The World Within Brahman-God and Brahman-God Within the World

Indian: “It is within all, and It is without all. He who sees all beings in the Self [Atman], and the Self in all beings hates none” (Isha Up.* 5-6, p. 4). “Formless, He dwells within all and without all” (Mund. Up.* II,1.2, p. 62). “That yogi sees me in all things, and all things within me” (BG* 6:30, p. 84). ““Devotion to him in whom all creatures exist, and by whom the universe is pervaded” (BG* 8:22, p. 98). Arjuna “beheld the entire universe, in all its multitudinous diversity, lodged as one being within the body of the God of gods” (BG* 11:13, p. 120). “One indestructible Substance is seen in all beings, undivided in the divided” (BG 18:20).

New Testament: “Yet he is not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live, and move, and have our being’” (Acts 17:27-28). “We though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Rom. 12:5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:27).

A more moderate form of Qualified Non-Dualism is the doctrine of Panentheism (all-in-God) that the universe is contained within Brahman-God. Most often, this is combined with the idea of Theoenpanism (God-in-all) that Brahman-God is within (saksin) (or pervades) the universe. This coinherence is possible because the Supreme Being is Omnipresent. It is also possible to accept Panentheism or Theoenpanism and not both. Brahman-God and the world are ontologically different. The Divine Being is more than the universe, being both immanent and transcendent and therefore not exhausted by, dependent on, or tainted by the imperfections of the world. The Apostle Paul said of God, “In him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). The modern Doctrine of Panentheism arose from the writings of Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), was significantly developed by Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000), and later expanded by Arthur Peacocke and Philip Clayton, with additional contributions from many other religious thinkers. This differs from

Creationism whereby the Lord creates the phenomenal world *ex nihilo* (from nothing). Most important, working independently of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), panentheists have added confirmation to some of the ideas he taught over a century ago. While Brahman-God dwells within us, this does not necessarily mean we dwell within It.

As the British biochemist and theologian Arthur Peacocke (1924-2006) from Oxford and Cambridge Universities wrote, “God is best conceived of as the circumambient Reality enclosing all existing entities, structures, and processes; and as operating in and through all, while being more than all. Hence, all that is not God has its existence within God's operation and Being.” The Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in the Divine Reality.²³

Philip Clayton a professor at Claremont School of Theology in Southern California signified, “Finite space is contained within absolute space, the world is contained within God; yet the world is not identical to God. Precisely this is the core of Panentheism. In this sense, the world is not outside of God who immediately perceives everything through His omnipresence.” Traditional theistic (Indian dualistic) systems often stress the difference between Brahman-God and the world, while Panentheism emphasizes Brahman-God’s active presence in the world. Creatures though different from God, receive their existence through participation in the Infinite being of God. There is a similarity-in-difference between Brahman-God and humans, remaining distinct in regards to Infinite/finite, necessary/contingent, and perfect/imperfect.²⁴

A Panentheistic Brahman-God who contains the entire world is apt to show more concern for it than a Brahman-God who exists separate from it. Brahman-God reacts to the human situation as a Divine Incarnation (Avatar), being affected by what people do. Its intension is to liberate-save people and to improve human conditions on earth.²⁵ We exert an influence on Brahman-God for example, when the Divine Being responds to our prayers.

Vivekananda agrees we live in Brahman-God, “We cannot objectify Him, for we are always living and moving in Him, whether we know it or not. Whatever we do is always through Him.”²⁶ He also indicates that the ongoing creation of the universe originates from within:

A second explanation of knowledge is that the explanation of a thing must come from inside and not from outside. There had been the belief that, when a man threw up a stone and it fell, some demon dragged it

down. Many occurrences that are really natural phenomena are attributed by people to unnatural beings. That a ghost dragged down the stone was an explanation that was not in the thing itself, it was an explanation from outside; but the second explanation of gravitation is something in the nature of the stone; the explanation is coming from inside. This tendency you will find throughout modern thought; in one word, what is meant by science is that the explanations of things are in their own nature, and that no external beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the universe. The chemist never requires demons, or ghosts, or anything of that sort, to explain his phenomena. The physicist never requires anyone of these to explain the things he knows, nor does any other scientist. And this is one of the features of science which I mean to apply to religion. In this religions are found wanting and that is why they are crumbling into pieces. Every science wants its explanations from inside, from the very nature of things; and the religions are not able to supply this. There is an ancient theory of a personal deity entirely separate from the universe, which has been held from the very earliest time. The arguments in favour of this have been repeated again and again, how it is necessary to have a God entirely separate from the universe, an extra-cosmic deity, who has created the universe out of his will, and is conceived by religion to be its ruler. We find, apart from all these arguments, the Almighty God painted as the All-merciful, and at the same time, inequalities remain in the world. These things do not concern the philosopher at all, but he says the heart of the thing was wrong; it was an explanation from outside, and not inside. What is the cause of the universe? Something outside of it, some being who is moving this universe! And just as it was found insufficient to explain the phenomenon of the falling stone, so this was found insufficient to explain religion. And religions are falling to pieces, because they cannot give a better explanation than that.... It is unnecessary to seek for any cause outside. This also is breaking down religion. What I mean by breaking down religion is that religions that have held on to the idea of an extra-cosmic deity, that he is a very big man and nothing else, can no more stand on their feet; they have been pulled down, as it were. ²⁷

Vivekananda adds that the idea that the universe was created by a Personal God outside of nature, "holds that the effect is not the cause, that the cause is entirely separate from the effect. Yet all human

knowledge shows that the effect is but the cause in another form.”
 “Everything should be explained from its own nature. There may have been people who thought that every apple that fell to the ground was dragged down by a ghost, but the explanation is the law of gravitation; and although we know it is not a perfect explanation, yet it is much better than the other, because it is derived from the nature of the thing itself, while the other posits an extraneous cause. So throughout the whole range of our knowledge; the explanation which is based upon the nature of the thing itself is a scientific explanation, and an explanation which brings in an outside agent is unscientific.” “Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples.” “The nature of ignorance to seek for causes outside of effects. If a stone falls, it has been thrown by a devil or a ghost, says the ignorant man, but the scientific man says it is the law of nature, the law of gravitation.... Science means that the cause of a thing is sought out by the nature of the thing itself. As step by step science is progressing, it has taken the explanation of natural phenomena out of the hands of spirits and angels. Because Advaitism has done likewise in spiritual matters, it is the most scientific religion. This universe has not been created by any extra-cosmic God, nor is it the work of any outside genius. It is self-creating, self-dissolving, self-manifesting, One Infinite Existence, the Brahman.”²⁸

An essential task of the Panentheists is to explain how God works on the universe. Applying the scientific ideas of the New Biology and other realms of modern science Arthur Peacocke came to the following conclusions that echo Vivekananda teachings. “The world system is causally closed.... In this model the proposed kinds of interactions of God with the world system would not be from 'outside' but from 'inside' it. That's why the world system is regarded as being 'in God.’”²⁹ Peacocke continues:

We have to emphasize anew the immanence of God as creator ‘in with, and under’ the natural processes of the world unveiled by the sciences in accord with all that the sciences have revealed since those debates in the nineteenth century. At no point do modern natural scientists have to invoke any nonnatural causes to explain their observations and inferences about the past.... God is creating at every moment of the world's existence through perpetually giving creativity to the very stuff

of the world. All of this reinforces the need to reaffirm more urgently than at any other time in Christian (and Jewish and Islamic) history that, in a very strong sense, God is the immanent creator creating through the processes of the natural order.... The processes revealed by the sciences are in themselves God acting as creator, and God is not to be found as some kind of additional influence or factor added on to the processes of the world God is creating. This perspective can properly be called "theistic naturalism" and is not Deism *redivivus* [reborn], for it conceives of God as actively and (in the light of an analogy developed below) personally creating through the processes of the world.³⁰

Working from within, Brahman-God's action as part of the processes themselves are revealed by the studies of the physical, biological, and other sciences. Even if an omniscient scientist were able to explain all physical events by natural causation, still it would be Brahman-God who pervaded the process and made it occur in the way it does. Brahman-God is the power (including thought and feeling) of our being that causes all of our actions. Every power we have is Brahman-God's power. It is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "God exists in everything ... as an agent is present to that in which its action takes place.... he it must be who properly causes existence in creatures, just as fire sets other things on fire."³¹ Through God works within and through our consciousness, there is a veil that separates us.

As Benedict Spinoza (1632-77) realized, "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can exist or be conceived without God.... God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things." More recently Arthur Peacocke mentioned, "The world system is causally closed.... In this model the proposed kinds of interactions of God with the world system would not be from 'outside' but from 'inside' it. That's why the world system is regarded as being 'in God.'" According to modern science, the universe as a whole is a closed system of matter and energy, not open to input from outside since its total energy remains constant (the principle of the conservation of energy). If God acted from outside the universe, It could not add in additional energy.³²

Likewise for traditional Hinduism, Sushanta Sen pointed out that:

One distinctive feature of the Hindu conception of the Creator God lies in that, after creating the world, God does not stand outside but remains within it. The concept of a God residing in Heaven above the

universe and occasionally interfering with the affairs of the world at moments of crisis is quite alien to the Hindu mind. God, according to Hinduism, remains in the very bosom of the Universe, pervades and permeates the whole of it, and controls it while remaining within it. Hence God has been described in the Hindu scriptures as the inherent creator and inner controller of the world, or the Antaryamin.... though God resides within the world and pervades the whole of it, God's being is not wholly exhausted in it; God is also beyond the world. God is both immanent and transcendent in relation to the world.³³

It should be mentioned that some Panentheistic ideas were anticipated by the Dutch Reformed (Calvinist) theologian Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) who wrote:

Augustine and others teach that God is transcendent above space—for space is a mode of existence pertaining to Creatures—and immanent in space: filling every unit of space with the Whole of his being, not diffused through space like light or ether.... Just as the soul is present in its entirety in the body as a whole and also in every part of the body, just as one and the same truth is acknowledged everywhere, thus, by way of comparison, God is present in all things and all things are present in God.... Some of the implications of the doctrine of God's omnipresence: God is transcendent above all space. He is immanent in all space. Space itself presupposes God's immensity.... In connection with God's immensity we must avoid on the one hand the error of pantheism, namely, that God is really the substance of all things and that he is spatial; and on the other hand, the error of deism, namely that God is omnipresent in power but not in essence and nature. Though God is essentially distinct from his creatures, he is not separate from them. Every particle of matter and every point of space require God's immensity to sustain them in their existence. The deistic idea that God dwells in a place far distant from the world and thence governs all things by his omnipotence does injustice to the proper conception of the being of God. In reality this representation is in conflict with all of God's attributes: with his simplicity, immutability, infinity etc.; accordingly, God becomes man, and creation becomes independent. It needs to be emphasized that God is not present in creation as a king in his realm or a captain aboard his ship. He does not act upon the world from a distance; but with his whole being, he is

present powerfully here and everywhere with respect to his essence and power.... Because his essence, though omnipresent, is of a character different from that which pertains to creatures, he remains pure in the presence of all impurity.³⁴

Arthur Peacocke has emphasized that God as the perpetual creator of the universe is maintaining and changing the universe at each instance of time:

But to speak thus is to recognize also that God is creating now and continuously in and through the inherent, inbuilt creativity of the natural order, both physical and biological a creativity that is itself God in the process of creating. So we have to see God's action as being in the processes themselves, as they are revealed by the physical and biological sciences, and this means we must stress more than ever before God's immanence in the world. If the world is in any sense what God has created and that through which he acts and expresses his own inner being, then there is a sense in which God is never absent from his world and he is as much in his world as, say Beethoven is in his Seventh Symphony during a performance of it.... Thus the inorganic, biological, and human worlds are not just the stage of God's action-they are in themselves a mode of God in action, a mode that has traditionally been associated with the designation "Holy Spirit," the creator Spirit.³⁵

New modes of existence come into being, and old ones often pass away. In the world new entities, structures and processes appear in the course of time, so that God's action as Creator is both past and present: it is continuous. Any notion of God as Creator must now take into account, more than ever before in the history of theology, that God is continuously creating, that God is *semper* [always] *Creator*. In this respect, God has to be regarded as related to created time as the continuously creating Creator. Thus it is that the scientific perspective obliges us to take more seriously and concretely than hitherto in theology the notion of the immanence of God as Creator - that God is the Immanent Creator creating in and through the processes of the natural order.³⁶

In continuously modifying every aspect of the universe at each moment of time, Brahman-God is simultaneously involved in creation of

the new, and preservation or destruction of the old. They represent a single not three separate events.

These ideas are in agreement with Swami Vivekananda's statements on the subject in his criticism of Deism. "It is not that this world was created the other day, not that a God came and created the world and since that time has been sleeping; for that cannot be. The creative energy is still going on. God is eternally creating--is never at rest. Remember the passage in the Gita [(3:24)] where Krishna says, 'If I remain at rest for one moment, this universe will be destroyed.' If that creative energy which is working all around us, day and night, stops for a second, the whole thing falls to the ground. There never was a time when that energy did not work throughout the universe."³⁷

A distinction must be drawn between the notion that the Supreme Being guides and controls the laws of nature that are external to It, and the more advanced idea that the laws of nature and causation are an internal manifestation of the will of Brahman-God. Natural laws and regularities are expressions of the Supreme Being's nature and wishes and are not independent of them. The laws of causation are not separate from Brahman-God but proceed from It own being. The Divine Being is immanent in nature acting from within, conserving and directing the development of the universe. Brahman-God as immanent pervades the gross physical realm and is of a subtler mental nature. This raises the question; do the laws of nature as known by the Divine Being differ from our understanding of them? We observe the operations of the laws of nature "from the outside," while Brahman-God experiences and knows them "from within" in all of their internal relationships. Human knowledge is often an approximation of the underlying relationships and hidden regularities operative in the Supreme Being's world of creation.³⁸

When Brahman-God intervenes in the world as an act of grace, It works internally through the laws of nature. The Divine Being reacts to prayer by altering both external events and our thought process. Neither of these require the suspension of any law of nature. The great mystics experienced Brahman-God consciousness making contact with the internal nature of Brahman-God that brought about a transformation in them. People who meditate regularly have some awareness of this. Though internal causation is the dominant method of Divine action, one cannot limit Brahman-God's activity and say that external causation is not employed. For example, an Avatar-Divine Incarnation while living on earth utilizes external causation when dealing with other people.

Philip Clayton makes the point, “The infinite may without contradiction include within itself things that are by nature finite, but it may not stand outside of the finite.... There is simply no place for finite things to ‘be’ outside of that which is absolutely unlimited. Hence an Infinite God must encompass the finite world that He has created, making it in some sense ‘within’ Himself.” A fully Infinite God cannot be limited by something external to Itself.³⁹

Clayton also discerned:

The concept of the infinite can be understood in a determinate and an indeterminate sense. In the latter case it becomes merely the indefinite extension of number, space, or time [infinite yet never reaching the end]; in the former, it refers to a particular reality that is qualitatively distinct from the finite. This determinate sense can in turn be taken negatively - as the negation of the finite - or positively, as that which precedes and grounds all finite things. Finally, the positive view can be construed monistically (the One excludes any independent existences) or dualistically (a world of finite objects can exist apart from the infinite) or as some combination of the two (the world is within God, though God is also more than the world).... it inclines one toward a world-within-God (Panentheism) rather than the separation of world and God.... one can best speak of the ‘transcendental’ infinite: the infinite is prior to finite things in that it is the condition of the possibility for conceiving them as what they are.... the infinite would have to exclude the finite - unless the finite could be understood as existing within the infinite. But if we exist ‘within’ God then we are not really separate from the Divine; we are in some sense modes of the One.... if the world really participates in God, there is no place for a final ontological separation of the participating beings from their participated source. For Spinoza and Schelling, God is the All; there is no ‘space’ outside God (if one wishes to speak in spatial terms); hence the world is within God, as are we. Yet theism requires that the world not be identical with God. Here we reach perhaps the most difficult question: How is one to specify the world's difference from God? Theologians have not always seen that this is the crucial issue: not how the world can be connected to its infinite source, but rather how things in the world are to be individuated given such a source. We have found that the logic of the infinite is inescapable: the absolute can only differentiate Itself into self and other, infinite and finite, God and world. The reason an adequate theism remains

inescapably dialectical is that what results must both be not-God (as finite) and God. Given that there can be nothing outside the infinite, whatever becomes remains in some sense still part of the infinite. How then is one to separate God and creatures? The answer lies in the understanding of God as the ground of being. We are the beings that stem from this ground.

The world emerges out of its infinite ground—although it never attains an existence outside or completely separate from this ground, it has a different nature than its source (viz. a finite one). It is also true that God-as-personal emerges from the infinite Divine Ground; as a being involved in actual relations with the world.... It is also required by the logic of the absolute: things could only be distinguished from an absolute by being derived from it, not by being ultimately different from it.... To allow division within the infinite as I have done, to include within it the potential to be manifested as finite or limited being, does come closer to acknowledging an ontological—and axiological—dualism in God than most of the theological tradition has been willing to do.... Yet, in another sense, God remains different from the world—indeed, absolutely different, since he has an infinite nature whereas the world's is finite. The greater the difference between God and world—be it spatial, essential, or temporal vs. atemporal—the more difficult it is to develop a coherent theory of Divine action.... God's relation to the world, [is] understood neither as external to God (for what could be external to infinity?) nor as identical to God (since the essential features of the absolute such as eternality and necessary existence certainly cannot be predicated of us as finite individuals).... Of course, if Divine influence were not limited in frequency and scope, humans would lose all ability to distinguish the natural order from its Divine source; thus the influence must remain somewhat isolated and limited in scope.⁴⁰

If the finite world is within the infinite it cannot limit it in any way or to any extent. Therefore, from the pantheistic standpoint the finite world must be a part or fragment of the infinite. Yet, the infinite whole and finite part differ so radically both qualitatively and quantitatively there is little or no similarity between them. Some might hold the position that it is not possible for the finite to be part of the infinite, though a single number is part of a series of numbers with no maximum value the potentially infinite number is never reached.⁴¹

Vivekananda explains the infinite-finite relation differently. “The whole universe is a play of unity in variety, and of variety in unity. The whole universe is a play of differentiation and oneness; the whole universe is a play of the finite in the Infinite. We cannot take one without granting the other.... That is the peculiar claim--not that this unity has to be made, but that it already exists, and that you could not perceive the variety at all, without it. God is not to be made, but He already exists. This has been the claim of all religions. Whenever one has perceived the finite, he has also perceived the Infinite. Some laid stress on the finite side, and declared that they perceived the finite without; others laid stress on the Infinite side, and declared they perceived the Infinite only. But we know that it is a logical necessity that we cannot perceive the one without the other. So the claim is that this sameness, this unity, this perfection--as we may call it--is not to be made, it already exists, and is here.”⁴²

These ideas are supported by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) the modern Vedantic philosopher, “The *Upanishads* nowhere say that the Infinite excludes the finite. Wherever they assert that Brahman is the sole reality they are careful enough to add that the world is rooted in Brahman, and as such has a share of reality. ‘The finite is in the infinite. This Atman is the entire universe (Chandogya Up. II:4.26).’... The infinite is inherent in the finite. That is why the finite is ever struggling to break down its finiteness and reach out to the fullest freedom, and when the freedom of spirit is reached all is overcome.”⁴³

The infinite-finite distinction not only applies to space and time, but also to power, knowledge, will, feelings, values, etc. Each of these characteristics has both a quantitative and qualitative dimension. Our limited finite ideas are part of and an aspect of Brahman-God’s omniscient infinite ideas. Finite space, time and all entities, structures and processes are within the infinite. Nevertheless, there is an ontological distinction between the infinite Supreme Being and the finite though intimately interrelated. Consequently, the world is absolutely dependent on Brahman-God for its existence and sustenance at every instant. Nothing has independent existence apart from the Divine Being. There is also an Infinite without parts that has no finite dimensions.

Arthur Peacocke believes that even God does not know the future of quantum events. “The predominant view among practising physicists - to abbreviate ludicrously a sharp and unsettled question - is that this unpredictability of the effect of measurement on quantum-level systems is inherent. If one takes this view, then there is no definite knowledge of

which, say, radium atom will split up in the next smallest possible time interval - only probabilistic knowledge is available. In that case there is no definite fact of the matter even for God to know, so God logically cannot know it, for omniscience is the ability to know all that it is logically possible to know. One would have to conclude that God has so made the world that God knows the outcome of such events only in a probabilistic manner. That is, God is omniscient, with only a probabilistic knowledge of the outcomes of some events. Clearly this postulate depends on the belief that God also does not know the future.”⁴⁴

Peacocke is to be praised for raising these important topics, but his view is in direct contradiction to the doctrines of Indian dualism and Western theism. Brahman-God is far more than a perfected or a master quantum physicist. The Omnipotent Being (Ultimate Reality) is the First cause, the ongoing and continuous creator of the universe that includes the quantum world. As the immanent creator, the Divine Being pervades the quantum world and is ontologically prior to all quantum events. The quantum world is not exterior to the Lord as it is for the physicist. Brahman-God is not subject to quantum events, but they are determined by the Divine Will that for example decides which radium atom will next decay. Being omniscient, the Divine Being has complete understanding of every facet of quantum physics in its entirety including its future states. The Supreme Being’s act of creating and knowing are one and the same. Quite possibility quantum events are subject to a law that the contemporary scientists have not yet discovered. According to the law of karma, even events that appear to be random are causally determined. If atheists/agnostics do not care for the word God or Ultimate Reality, they can coin another term for that entity that ontologically pervades and continuously manifests the laws of nature and the quantum world. Brahman-God pervades the quantum, atomic and mental world and controls all three from within. The causality of the Divine Being operates both in a top-down and a bottom-up direction.⁴⁵

3. Cosmic Mind (Mahat) and the Creation of the Universe (Akasha-Prana)

Swami Saradananda tells us about Sri Ramakrishna in the state of bhavamukha, “It was as if innumerable waves of ideas were rising, floating, playing, and dissolving within the Cosmic Mind. He felt that his own body, mind, and I-consciousness—as well as those of other beings—formed waves in that Cosmic Mind.... [concerning] insentient matter ... he saw Its

true nature and experienced It as the living, conscious ... Not only that, the Master saw innumerable waves of ideas arising in the Cosmic Mind because of that Cosmic I.... The Master saw that the individual little 'I's exist and function by the power of the Cosmic I."⁴⁶

Vivekananda disclosed, "The whole of the universe is built upon the same plan as a part of it. So, just as I have a mind, there is a Cosmic Mind. As in the individual, so in the universal. There is the Universal Gross Body; behind that, a Universal Fine Body; behind that, a Universal Mind; behind that, a Universal Egoism, or consciousness; and behind that, a Universal Intelligence. And all this is in nature, the manifestation of nature, not outside of it." "We have seen that it is the Universal Cosmic Mind that splits itself into the Akasha [Matter] and Prana [Energy], and beyond mind we have found the Soul in us. In the universe, behind the Universal Mind, there is a Soul that exists, and it is called God. In the individual it is the soul of man. In this universe, in the cosmos, just as the Universal Mind becomes evolved into Akasha and Prana, even so, we may find that the Universal Soul Itself becomes evolved as mind."⁴⁷ This is a type of Neutral Monism where existence consists in one type of primal substance (Mahat), which itself is neither Akasha or Prana but manifests as them.⁴⁸

Swami Abhedananda (1866-1939) explains the relationship between the Cosmic God and our individual self. "All the manifestations of forces are nothing but the expressions of one universal force, which may be called the Divine or Cosmic Will. The whole physical universe is his body. He is the one stupendous power and everything is a part of that one infinite power. Our bodies are parts of that Universal Body, our individual mind is a part of the Cosmic Mind, our individual Intellect is a part of the Cosmic Intellect, and our individual will is a part and parcel of the Divine Will."⁴⁹ Mental telepathy or thought transference is possible because, "There is a Cosmic omnipresent Mind, and our individual minds are but little eddies in that Cosmic Mind. Our individual minds are connected through the Cosmic Mind.... The Universal Mind is the source of all the powers, which have been shown by different individuals on the human plane. That Universal Mind is also called the Cosmic Mind. There is one eternal current of the Cosmic Mind which is flowing from eternity to eternity. The individual minds are related to this Cosmic Mind, as eddies and whirlpools are related to the current. The eternal current of the Cosmic Mind is flowing and producing eddies or whirlpools, which are our own individual minds. These eddies of the individual minds are connected with other eddies through the Cosmic Mind. The waves of power that are

manifested in different forms of psychic forces, rise from the Cosmic Mind, which is below our ordinary conscious plane. It is the subconscious [unconscious] mind. They rise up to our conscious plane from this unconscious or subconscious or subliminal self. Then we become conscious of them. Then afterwards they go down again to the subconscious realm. It has already been said that the subconscious realm is a vast realm, greater than our conscious plane. Our consciousness lies on the crest of these waves, which are rising from the subconscious or unconscious plane and going back again to it. All the powers that rise in our conscious plane practically, belong to the subconscious realm. They are unknown to us at present, but in time, under certain conditions and circumstances, they manifest themselves on the conscious plane. Then we know, their existence.... Geniuses manifest their powers which they draw from the Cosmic Mind.”⁵⁰

He continues, “The sum total of all energy forms the Cosmic Body of God. Therefore all forces, mental and physical, are only expressions of that all energy God.... The energy that is manifested through sunlight and heat, are no other than the expressions of that one eternal energy, which forms the body of God. So all the activities are the workings of the Divine force or energy, what right have we to claim the results of works as our own?... You must realize that you are the Spirit, and are related to the Universal Soul. You should realize that your body and mind are only the instruments, through which the higher Spirit, with all the Divine energy, is working and manifesting its powers. As you are an instrument, you will be uplifted by this, instead of being discouraged.”⁵¹ “Our will is “a part and parcel of that one Will which is moving the universe from the minutest atom to the biggest solar system, and our bodies are nothing but so many small instruments through which that all-pervading Will is expressing itself.... We are like so many cells in the Spiritual Body of the Infinite Being.... nothing exists outside of God, because he is omnipresent. He is all in all.”⁵²

One approach to the “One and the Many” relationship, is to start with the fundamental unity and explain how it was fragmentized. Another is to begin with plurality and to ask how it is ultimately unified. Mahat the Universal Body and Mind (Hiranyagarbha) is related to the individual bodies and minds as: Whole-Part, One-Many, and Universal-Particular. According to the whole-part framework, our mind is part of the Universal Mind and our body of the Universal Body. We are minute fragments of the Universal Mind and Body somewhat analogous to our relationships with the cells of

our body. The mind of a worm is a part of the omniscient universal mind, yet qualitatively and quantitatively there is little resemblance between them. As the human mind controls the body, so also the Universal Mind directs the activities of the Universal Body and uses it for its own purposes.

If Mahat is the totality of all spatial bodies, is It of time also? The omniscient Universal Mind is the totality of all thought and ideas. Thus, our minds being a fragment of it have limited knowledge-gaining power. This is an example of a quantitative difference producing a qualitative difference.

Two other possible models of the Mahat-Universal relationship are Subtle-Gross and Internal-External, where in both cases the first member has direct influence over the second. Three additional models are: Archetype-Ectype where the universe is an imperfect copy of Mahat; Original-Reflection the universe a partial reflection of Mahat, and Original-Participate the things of the universe participate in Mahat. All five of these models consider the universe to be real but not Ultimate Reality. In each case we have a Perfect-Imperfect, Greater-Lesser, Primary-Secondary, Unity-Diversity, Independent-Dependent, Cause-Effect, Free-Determined relationship.

Another view professed by Ramanuja, is that the universe (composed of minds and bodies) is the body of Brahman (God). According to Ramanuja, “Brahman, which has for its body all sentient and non-sentient beings, whether in their subtle or their gross state, is always—in its effected as well as in its causal condition—free from all shadow of imperfection, and a limitless ocean as it were of all exalted qualities. All imperfections, and suffering, and all change belong not to Brahman, but only to the sentient and non-sentient beings which are its modes.”⁵³ Meaning that the Universal Mind and Body are not affected by the imperfections of its parts. Following Ramanuja’s cosmology can we also say that the Universal Mind and Body pervade the universe and rule it as the Inner Controller (Antaryamin) from within?⁵⁴

In relation to Its parts, Mahat the Cosmic Mind and Body, the supreme individual, possesses a qualitatively superior substantial existence, functions autonomously and independently of them, and has a causal power to bring about changes in them. The whole is indeed qualitatively greater than the sum of its parts. It is absolute consciousness that includes all finite consciousnesses as its components. Mahat works through the law like regularities of nature It has created, in determining the structure, organization, and form of Its parts. The laws of nature

result from the will of Mahat, the Universal Mind. It has a downward effect on lower level events and substances. The law determines the manner in which the dynamic prana (energy) works on the inert and passive akasha (matter), bringing about various forms and interacting events. Not only are physical entities generated by Mahat, but also the human mind with its particular rational system of reason and its psychological system of emotional responses.

Mahat the Cosmic Mind and Body, exerts a causal influence on the parts of the system which is the universe. It is the immanent cause and goal of nature, distinct from each finite particular, yet It includes them all within Its Own Being. Mahat certainly is far more than being reducible to, the organization of the parts interrelated in a certain manner. Everything that exists constitutes a unity and this all-inclusive unity is Mahat. Because the world is derived from Mahat the Divine, religion enjoys in a sense an ontological and epistemological priority over other disciplines.

The devolutionary process of creation involves fragmentation from the highest to lower levels of organization, complexity, structure, interaction of components, and process. Through the process of fragmentation, It loses Its unity and becomes less organized. It is the exact opposite of the emergence process from lower to higher levels of organization.

Through extreme concentration, geniuses are able to go beyond the limitations of the egoistic boundaries of their own mind and make meaningful superconscious contact with ideas within the Cosmic Mind. The result is intuition, insight, and inspiration.

Just as the ripple is part of the ocean (whole), yet has far less power and its awareness is confined to a much smaller area; so we in our limited perspective have much less power and knowledge than Brahman-God the totality of existence.

In Chapter XIII. Reincarnation, the Pre-existence of the Soul (Self), and the Law of Karma, Section 1, it mentions the physical universe is an outgrowth of the substance of the subtle mental universe. Likewise can we say the Cosmic Body is but the gross form of the internal, or subtle Cosmic Mind? Are they two aspects of a single entity with the Cosmic Body being the effect and the Cosmic Mind the cause?

In the West, Plotinus (c. 205-70) expressed the idea that that the higher level of reality, the cause must contain more perfection than any of its effects. The effect participates in and is a likeness of the cause. Since the effect derives that it is and its nature of what it is from its cause, it is

in some ways like its cause but in a far less perfect the farther it is removed from God. Each level of existence is an image or expression on a lower level of the realm above it. All-Soul [World-Soul, Universal Cosmic Mind and Body] is “an image of Intellect [Nous, Divine World and Mind], as its life is a reflection and likeness of it.” “It contains everything and there is nothing it can change into or anything outside which could fall upon it and destroy it, then by this argument we shall grant indestructibility to the Whole and the All.” “The offspring of Intellect is a rational form and an existing being, that thinks discursively.”⁵⁵ The “All is a ‘single living being which encompasses all the living beings that are within it; it has one soul which extends to all its parts, in so far as each individual thing is a part of it.... This one universe is all bound together in shared experience and is like one living creature.... Each individual part is preserved by the whole.” “Since all souls derive from the same from which the soul of the Whole derives too, they have a community of feeling.” Because of the unity of souls “we do share each other’s experiences when we suffer with others from seeing their pain and feel happy and relaxed [in their company] and are naturally drawn to love them.”⁵⁶ Simultaneously, the All-Soul looks upward and contemplates the Divine Ideas of the Nous [Ishvara], and downward in generating the physical universe. It is the lowest aspect of the Divine realm, the connecting link between the spiritual and material worlds. All-Soul is the agent through which the Forms of the Nous are actualized in the phenomenal world. As the active formative power the All-Soul creates, organizes and maintains the corporeal world. It is immanent in all entities of the sensible, world giving them life, motion and growth. All-Soul never descends into the sensible world, but illuminates it from above.⁵⁷ Can we say that the Nous is the internal nature of God that is not aware of the Creation and the All-Soul is the external nature of God connected with the Creation?

Jiva Goswami the great Bengal Vaishnava thinker referred to the One as Brahman, Nous as Bhagavat, and the All-Soul as Paramatman (Great Self). The latter is the indwelling spirit of the world, its creator, preserver, and destroyer. Paramatman is an intermediary between Bhagavat the Supreme Personal God and the phenomenal world that does not affect it.⁵⁸ In the *Upanishads* we have Brahman, Ishvara, and Hiranyagarbha (World-Soul) the creative aspect of Brahman-God.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan relates Hiranyagarbha with the Logos, the image and word of God through whom the world is created. “This is a logical succession and not a temporal one. The world-spirit must be there

before there can be the world. We thus get the four poises or statuses of reality, the Absolute Brahman, (2) the Creative Spirit, Ishvara (3) the World-Spirit, Hiranyagarbha, and (4) the World This is the way in which the Hindu thinkers interpret the integral nature of Supreme reality.” Ishvara is “the causal principle of all differentiation,” and Hiranyagarbha “the innermost essence of the world.”

He adds, “This Intellectual principle [nous] of Plotinus is the Ishvara of the *Upanishads*. This universal intelligences makes possible the multiple" universe. For Plotinus this principle is the totality of Divine thoughts or Ideas in Plato's sense. These Ideas or thoughts are real beings, powers. They are the originals, archetypes, intellectual forms of all that exists in the lower spheres. All the phases of existence down to the lowest ultimate of material being or the lowest forms of being in the visible universe are ideally present in this realm of Divine thoughts. This Divine intellectual principle has both being and non-being. It has, for Plotinus, two acts, upward contemplation of the One [Nirguna Brahman] and generation towards the lower.” Hiranyagarbha (Mahat) is the World-Soul of Plotinus. It “fashions material universe on the model of Divine thoughts, the ideas laid up within the Divine Mind [Nous, Ishvara]. It is the eternal cause of the cosmos, the creator and therefore the vital principle of the world. God [Nous, Ishvara] is envisaged as something apart from the world, its creator or artificer. Human ideas of God are centered round him. Plotinus does not make the sensible world a direct emanation from the Intelligible World. It is the product or the creation of the World-Soul, the third person of the Neo-Platonic trinity, Herself an emanation from the Intelligible World, the Nous. Our souls are parts or emanations, of the World-Soul.” It is possible that Mahat responds to phenomenal events and is conditioned by them as the Christian Panentheists teach.⁵⁹ Emanation meaning to "to flow from" begins with the Highest Reality and then undergoes a series of descending stages to less pure, less perfect levels of existence. Eventually the process must reach the lowest stage which is formless prime matter a state of pure potentiality. Is this state formless, characterless, indefinite, indeterminate, chaotic, and unintelligible? This is the exact opposite of the process of evolution that proceeds from the less to the more perfect.

Process theology of the American Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) is based to some extent on the process philosophy of English-American Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947). According to Hartshorne’s Panentheism, God’s creation is internal not external. The universe is within God and consequently, He is related to the universe in a manner similar to

the way a person is related to the cells of their body. The relation of God to any non-Divine creature is a relation of whole to part. Thus, God's scope of interaction is universal, whereas the scope of interaction for any creature is localized. Since there is nothing external to God, no outside source can threaten Divine existence. God interacts with the changing universe and is affected by the events of the world (passible). For example, due to Divine initiative in the *Old Testament* God enters into numerous covenants with the Hebrews. God then reacted to the way the people fulfilled the covenant.⁶⁰ It is possible to describe an entity as a noun (substance) or as a verb (to act) which Whitehead preferred,

Vedanta like all major religions is based on the hierarchical nature of both the world and the self. Donald Rothberg states, "Reality is tiered or layered both in its outer and inner manifestations; there are different levels of both world and self, and these exemplify different grades of being, power, and value.... Higher levels of the hierarchy are more real, more causally effective, and reveal more good than lower levels.... a higher level somehow integrates the achievements of lower levels, over-comes its systematic structural problems, and differentiates a new structure which shifts identity to the higher level of movement downward (i.e., emanation, devolution). There is commonly a notion of 'vertical causation'; a higher level somehow brings into being or causes a lower level."⁶¹ The higher level has increasing structural organization, integration, unity, awareness, and consciousness.

Following Vivekananda's cosmology one might ask how does Mahat the Universal Mind and Body, effect individual minds and bodies and the universe of matter [Akasha] and energy [Prana]? Though Arthur Peacocke did not teach the ideas of a Cosmic Mind and Body, nevertheless his idea of whole-part downward causation supplies a possible answer to this question that should be considered. His approach is based on the concepts of modern science and the New Biology:

A number of terms have in recent years been applied to this effect of the higher level whole on the behaviour of its constituents, for example 'downward causation' or 'top-down causation' or my preferred term, 'whole-part influence.'... Here the term whole-part influence will be used to represent the net effect of all those ways in which a system-as-a-whole, operating from its higher level, is a causal factor in what happens to its constituent parts, the lower level. We have seen that causality in complex systems made up of units at various levels of interlocking

organization can best be understood as a two-way process. There is clearly a bottom-up effect of the constituent parts on the properties and behaviour of the whole complex. However, real features of the total system-as-a-whole are frequently an influence upon what happens to the units (which may themselves be complex) at lower levels. The units behave as they do because they are part of these particular systems. What happens to the component units is the joint effect of their own properties, explicable in terms of the lower-level science appropriate to them, and also the properties of the system-as-a-whole which result from its particular organization. When that higher level can also be understood only in terms not reducible to lower-level ones, then new realities having causal efficacy can be said to have emerged at the higher levels. We have also seen that the world-as-a-whole may be regarded as a kind of overall System-of-systems, for its very different (e.g. quantum, biological, cosmological) components systems are interconnected and interdependent across space and God's interaction with the world time, with wide variations in the degree of coupling. There will therefore be an influence on the component unit systems, at all levels, of the states and patterns of this overall world-system and of its succession of states and patterns.... If God interacts with the world-system as a totality, then God, by affecting its overall state, could be envisaged as being able to exercise influence upon events in the myriad sublevels of existence of which it is made without abrogating the laws and regularities that specifically apply to them.

Any such interaction of God with the world-System would be initially with it as a whole. One would expect this initial interaction to be followed by a kind of 'trickle-down' effect as each level affected by the particular Divine intention then has an influence on lower levels and so on down the hierarchies of complexity to the level at which God intends to effect a particular purpose.... which occurs between God and the totality of the world-System and this, from a panentheistic viewpoint, is within God's own Self.... But one has to recognize that there will always be a distinction, and so gulf, between the nature of God and that of all created entities, structures, and processes.... The model is propounded to be consistent with the monist concept that all concrete particulars in the world-System are composed only of basic physical entities, and with the conviction that the world-System is causally closed. There are no dualistic, no vitalistic, no supernatural levels through which God might be supposed to exercising special Divine activity. In this model, the

proposed kind of interactions of God with the world-System would not, according to panentheism, be from 'outside' but from 'inside' it. The world-System is regarded as being 'in God.'... But if God incorporates both the individual systems and the total System-of-systems within Godself, as in the panentheistic model, then it is readily conceivable that God could interact with all the complex systems at their own holistic levels. God is present to the wholes as well as to the parts.⁶²

One idea is that bottom-up causation proceeds from physics to chemistry, biology, psychology (via neuroscience), and to mind/brain (or cognitive science). There is a corresponding development from quark, molecule, cell, multicellular entity, life, conscious being, and self-conscious being. As we move up the scale there is an increase in size and inter-relationship complexity between the parts.⁶³ At each stage, new laws, concepts, and generalizations are required.

An example of a “downward causal effect” is mental phenomena affecting the body, such as the mind causing the bodily movements like speaking or raising the arm.⁶⁴ As Nobel Prize winning scientist Roger Sperry (1913-94) stated, “As things stand, I no longer need to believe, as a scientist, that I and my world are governed solely from below upward through the ‘fundamental forces of physics’ in a totally mindless and purposeless cosmos, indifferent to human concerns. In our new downward-control paradigm we are moved and surrounded in the modern world by higher, more-evolved vital, mental cultural, and other social forces.”⁶⁵ According to Roger Sperry, the mind-brain interaction is mutually reciprocal between the mental and neural levels. It involves the downward causally determined influence of higher the emergent mental level exerting an active control over lower level neural entities, each with their own kinds of laws and forces. Evolution adds new phenomena with new properties and forces regulated by new scientific principles and laws. “Once generated from neural events, the higher order-mental patterns and programs have their own subjective qualities and progress, operate and interact by their own causal laws and principles which are different from, and cannot be reduced to those of neurophysiology.” Simpler electric, atomic, molecular, and cellular forces and laws though still present and operating have been superseded by the configurational forces of higher-level mechanisms.⁶⁶

Bottom-up causality is generated by the energy interaction of the constituent parts of a system. Top-down causality such as the experience of human agency also requires information so that the whole brings about coherent activity in the parts. Nancey Murphy emphasizes God's intended action as bottom-up causation working from within. At the quantum level, governing the movements of the electrons in its atoms can cause usual or extraordinary events.⁶⁷

Following the idea of a nested hierarchy of emergent systems, parts are contained within wholes, which become parts within greater wholes, and so forth, from quantum particle through atoms, molecules, cells, organs, organisms, etc all of the way up to Brahman-God as Mahat the cosmic universal mind and body. There is also a hierarchy of levels, matter, life, mind, and spirit each embracing and containing the one below it.

According to emergence theory, higher-level entities, properties, forces, potentials, laws, teleological organizing principles, etc. come into existence without being determined by lower-level entities; and limit, replace, or change the behaviour of the latter. Wholes represent a real explanatory level within science because they possess properties not ascribable to their parts that compose them and because they exercise causal powers over them. In this model, the world is conceived as internal to Brahman-God. Each upward hierarchal stage shows increasing structural organization, complexity, differentiation, and integration; unity, holism, function, and coherence; and in the higher levels, awareness, consciousness, intelligence, and spirituality. This process occurs on the physical, mental, social-cultural, psychological, moral, and religious levels. Physicalism begins at the bottom and conceives of the world as physically based on the laws of physics and chemistry, and each higher level is the result of upward causation and emergent evolution. Religions start with perfected Brahman-God at the top followed by creation, a process of devolution the reverse of evolution. Brahman-God is conscious because It cannot be metaphysically less than what It has created. Through downward causation, Brahman-God affects the world and each higher state influences its lower components. Each part appears to have quasi-autonomous functions.

Following another approach, Arthur Peacocke suggests God's relationship to the world as analogous to the way in which the mind influences the body. "This psychosomatic, unified understanding of human personhood partly illuminates the use of a panentheistic model for God's

relation to the world. For, according to the model, God is internally present to all the world's entities, structures, and processes in a way analogous to the way we as persons are present and act in our bodies. This model, in the light of current concepts of the person as a psychosomatic unity, is then an apt way of modeling God's personal agency in the world as in some sense 'personal.'"⁶⁸

Philip Clayton, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the Claremont School of Theology, adds, "Thus an analogical relationship suggests itself: the body is to the mind as body-mind combination—that is, human persons—is to the Divine. The world is in some sense analogous to the body of God. God is analogous to the mind which dwells in the body, though God is also more than the natural world taken as a whole.... there would be no qualitative or ontological difference between the regularity of natural law conceived as expressing the regular or repetitive operation of Divine agency and the intentionality of special Divine actions." God controls the world like our mind and thought controls our body through willing intentions. "The regularities of natural law represent the autonomic or, as it were, habitual operation of Divine action apart from God's specific or focal intentions.... Natural regularities within God's universe, then, would be roughly analogous to autonomic responses within an individual's body [e.g. breathing]—the things that one's body does without conscious interference or guidance. In one sense, such behaviors are still one's own "actions," even though they occur through the body's operating in a regular or autonomic manner and one thus performs them unconsciously."⁶⁹ Just as human thought can bring about changes in the physical world, so also God can do the same. Seeing the world as God's body is compatible with the modern ideas of ecology and respect for nature.

There are also some important qualifications and limitations to the Brahman-God-world and human mind-body analogy since: a) Brahman-God has perfect knowledge (omniscience) and control (omnipotence) over the world, which humans do not have over their physical body; b) The human mind does not transcend the body, in the way Brahman-God transcends the world; c) The world is within Brahman-God, while the body is not within the mind; d) Brahman-God controls the world from within, while humans most often (not in psychosomatic cases) have external control over their bodies; e) There are things beyond the body, but not beyond the entire world (Brahman-God's body); and f) The body does not have a conscious relation with the person, unlike parts of the cosmos (humans)

with God.⁷⁰ We might ask, is the effect of the world on God, less than our bodies on us and is the world as Brahman-God's body an integrated organism like our body? Some form of resemblance (analogy) between Brahman-God's action and ours is absolutely necessary or we would not be able to make comprehensible statements about the subject.

According to Vedanta similarities between the world as Brahman-God's body and our physical body include: a) Brahman-God existed before the world and we existed before our physical body; b) Brahman-God created the world, and our subtle body created our physical body at conception; c) The world is ontologically distinct from God, and we are ontologically distinct from our physical body; and d) Brahman-God continues in existence after the world ends as we do after the death of the physical body.

Mahat (the Universal Mind) creates the physical and mental world through a process of fragmentation and differentiation of space, knowledge, and values. In the creation of the world process, we are spatially a part of Mahat's omnipresence. From Albert Einstein's perspective space and time are curved. An aspect of the fully coherent and comprehensive omniscient Mahat (God) fragments into more and more limited and contradictory levels of thought. Part of the omnipotent Mahat diffuses its power, and through a process of transformation, a facet of the omnipresent Mahat becomes localized. Such is the case for goodness, love, and all other virtues. Yet, Mahat remains ontologically distinct from the creation. While Brahman-God is present everywhere in the world, yet Its manifestation varies in degree and content from place to place. Mahat subdivides into the consciousness of living beings. It perpetually continues to exert "downward causation" on the contents of the lower level minds.

According to this idea, the truths of reality are found not in ultimate simples, the smallest units comprising a phenomenon but in organized wholes. Emphasis is on the unity and singularity of the Divine world. Mahat is the cosmic "system of systems," a totality, independent of and not a member of the many. It endures as the whole of wholes, persistent in Its essential character, despite the perpetual coming and going of Its parts. Hence, Its knowledge is not inferential but direct and complete.

Vivekananda stated, "When men are in a certain frame of mind, they see this very existence as the earth, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and all those who are in the same state of mind see the same things. Beyond you and me there may be millions of beings on different planes of

existence. They will never see us, nor we them; we only see those who are in the same state of mind and on the same plane with us.”⁷¹ From our standpoint of being a small part (sub species pars) of the universe, there are many planes of existences and possibly many space-time continuums. From the standpoint of Brahman-God the Totality, the Whole (Sub species totum), there is only one world.

Mahat is the First Cause (Cosmological Argument), the reason for rational design in the universe (Teleological Argument), and what makes the holistic approach correct.

Because the universe originates in Mahat the Universal Body, it is a highly integrated unified whole and holistic in structure. Being that the conceptual universe begins with Mahat the Universal Cosmic Mind, it is a unified system of thought based on the laws of reason. According to science there is only one valid system of reason. This is an extension of the Teleological (Design) Argument for the existence of Brahman-God. Following the doctrine of Priority Monism concerning concrete objects the whole is prior to its parts. The substantial unity of the universe is inferred from the causal interrelatedness of all of its parts. The nature and existence of the parts are posterior to, grounded in, and dependent upon the whole. This idea of unity is supported by quantum entanglement where two quantum particles are anticorrelated, yet they do not interact since this activity occurs faster than the speed of light. Since the universe is one system with nothing outside, it is not interdependent with anything else.⁷²

The interrelatedness of all things is brought out in the following three quotes. Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) discerned, “If one particle of matter be annihilated, the whole of Extension would forthwith vanish.” Concerning extended physical things Harold Joachim (1868-1938) a British Idealist wrote in 1901, “Neither in its existence nor in its nature has it any independence. It owes its existence to an indefinite chain of causes, each of which is itself a finite body and the effect of another finite body; it owes its nature to its place in the whole system of bodies which together constitute the corporeal universe.” The British philosopher C. E. M. Joad (1891–1953) formulated in 1936, “The individual is a dependent fragment of that world. Everything in the universe is bound up with everything else in a network of relations which ... penetrate into their being and make them what they are. Change a thing and you change its relations; you change, therefore, everything in the universe. Change the relations of a thing and you change the thing.”⁷³

In a whole-part relationship Mahat the cosmic body and mind fragmentizes and localizes into human bodies and minds. The principle of individuation occurs and the sense of ego arises. The universal differentiates into particulars. According to another theory of creation as presented by the German Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64), by a process of contraction God the Absolute Unity issues the unity of creation, followed by genera, then species, and finally individuals. This is a descending series from universal to particular, from unity to multiplicity.⁷⁴

4. The Interaction Between Mahat and the Phenomenal Universe in Relation to the Ideas of F. H. Bradley and A. E. Taylor

Many of these ideas are based on ideas first taught by F(rancis) H(erb)ert Bradley (1846-1924) of Oxford University and later significantly developed and expanded on by his supporter A(lfred) E(dward) Taylor (1869-1945). Taylor wisely emphasizes the “reality” rather than the “appearance” aspects of Bradley’s philosophy. Similar ideas express the relation of Mahat to Akasha-Prana (Matter and Energy) discussed in the above Section 3. Cosmic Mind (Mahat) and the Creation of the Universe (Akasha-Prana). Brahman-God as Mahat (the Cosmic or Universal Mind) is a self-consistent organized systematic Whole forming a single individual experience with a harmonious internal structure of Its own (Holistic Principle). For Bradley, the Absolute (Mahat) is coherent system of eternally existing finite members, embracing them in an all-inclusive harmony. Thus, there is a perfect unity of all Its aspects. Being a substantial totality beyond all relations, It is not the sum of things but a unity that transcends and yet contains every manifold entity. Consequently, the Absolute (Mahat) is a higher experience above the distinctions which it includes. Each phenomenal member contributes, and is an essential and necessary factor for the unity of the Whole (Absolute). In the Absolute they are one and undivided.⁷⁵ Being omniscient the Absolute (Mahat) comprehends the totality of existence harmoniously, without contradictions between any Its components or internal relations within Its total system of beliefs. Every belief in the coherent system of ideas entails all the others. It is all-inclusive without any external restrictions. Meaning it is infinite in the sense that it is not bounded by anything else. Approaching Mahat involves more complex, configurational, holistic, logically consistent, organized, relational, and systemic, ways of thinking. The Absolute (Mahat) as the totality is not a separate limited

being among other beings.⁷⁶ Thus, Mahat must be one, for it cannot be a combination of independent elements and events that somehow by chance form a coherent system. Mahat as first cause transforms Itself into (according to some creating) the phenomenal universe. In a systematic unity, the parts have no independent being, except as the Whole (Mahat) expresses Itself through them. Though the phenomenal universe is not the Whole, the Whole is present in each of its parts or aspects (omnipresent), manifesting Itself in a particular way thus determining the characteristics of each of Its components. A single perfectly determinate principle expresses Itself in a vast multiplicity of variations. Mahat as a harmonious systematic unity pervades, permeates, and manifests itself in the lesser unities that are configurations and transformations within the phenomenal universe. Consequently, approaching Mahat through evolutionary development, involves more systemic, complex, organizational, relational, configurational, holistic, and collective ways of thinking.

Some lesser unities reveal more of the nature of the Whole to which they belong than others. For example, a human mind expresses more of the nature of Mahat than the mind of an insect. Each aspect of the phenomenal universe is less inclusive (incomplete), coherent (unsystematic and contradictory), powerful, and blissful than the Whole. Consequently, Mahat is a higher experience above the distinctions which It includes. From the standpoint of the Whole, all of Its components without contradiction or discrepancy form a coherent system. Thus, Mahat and the phenomenal universe are not two absolutely distinct entities.⁷⁷ Mahat is an omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and omniblissful genuine individual (See Chapter VIII, Section 5. Vivekananda's Mahat and David Bohm's Super-Implicate and Implicate Order for more details concerning Mahat's nature). It is perfect in that it cannot be improved upon. The universe is a transformation of Mahat, a unity-in-plurality and therefore, everything is interconnected following determinate laws. As universal intelligence Mahat is responsible for the design in the universe, a uniform and regulated existence that follows a logical and law like pattern. If not, the world would be one of unpredictable chaos and confusion. The will of Mahat combined with Its omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, is the first cause of all events in the universe.

Statements of A. E. Taylor the British philosopher fit well into an explanation of the relation between the Cosmic Mind (Mahat) and an individual person, though he did not express these ideas for that purpose:

To be a system at all, it [Cosmic Mind, Mahat] must be the development or expression in detail of a single principle. Therefore it must most certainly be one; it cannot be a medley of independent elements which somehow luckily happen to form a coherent collection. But again, because it is a system, it cannot be a mere unit; it must be the expression of a single principle in and through a multiplicity of terms or constituents. Not only must it be both one and many, but it must be many precisely because it is truly one, and one because it is truly many.... each particular element in the multiplicity is necessitated or logically implied by the character of the unity. In a complete system no single member can be missing or be other than it is without the fundamental law of construction of the whole being changed.” “In so far as they [Configurations of Akasha-Prana] are genuine systems at all, they are not mere ‘parts’ of a whole, but each is the expression, in a concrete conscious life, of the nature of a larger whole from a special ‘point of view’.... The whole if not equally in every part, is yet as a whole present in every part, and precisely for that reason the category of part and whole is inadequate to express their relation.⁷⁸

Reality [Mahat, Cosmic Mind], we have seen, is to be thought of as a systematic whole forming a single individual experience, which is composed of elements or constituents [Configurations of Akasha-Prana] which are in their turn individual experiences. In each of these constituents the nature of the whole system [Mahat, Cosmic Mind] manifests itself in a special way. Each of them contributes its own peculiar content to the whole system, and as the suppression or change of any one of them would alter the character of the whole, so it is the nature of the whole which determines the character of each of its constituents. In this way the whole and its constituent members are in complete interpenetration and form a perfect systematic unity. In the happy phrase of Leibniz, we may say that each of the partial experiences reflects the whole system from its own peculiar ‘point of view.’” “If our conviction that Reality [Mahat, Cosmic Mind] is a single systematic unity pervading and manifesting itself in lesser systematic unities [Configurations of Akasha-Prana] is correct, we shall expect to find that some of the lesser systematic unities with which we have to deal in practical life and in the various sciences exhibit more of the full character of the whole [Mahat, Cosmic Mind] to which they belong than others. The ‘points of view’ from which each minor system

reflects the whole, though all true, need not be all equally true. Though the whole, in a genuine system, must be present as a whole in every part, it need not be equally present in all ... it does not follow that all manifest the structure of that whole with equal adequacy and fullness.⁷⁹

Another view as expressed by Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) is that God receives the data from the empirical world, formulate His thinking, and then reacts back onto the world. This is an ongoing reciprocal process.

The substantial unity of Mahat is the reason for the interdependence of all its parts within the universe. Mahat is basic and independent and its parts are finite and dependent. They owe their existence to a chain of causes and their nature to their place in the whole system of entities that together constitute the universe. Living beings are both quantitatively and qualitatively less than Mahat. Each phenomenal member of the universe (which includes us) contributes its own particular content to the total system, and is thus an essential and necessary factor for the unity of the Whole (Mahat). An alteration in any component would then change the configuration of the Whole. In this way Mahat and its constituent members, interpenetrate one another and form a perfect systematic structure. The unity (Mahat) and the multiplicity (the phenomenal universe) of the system are interdependent. Thus, each partial experience reflects the total structure from its own particular perspective. In a comprehensive system, no single member can be missing or different from what it is, without altering the basic configuration of the entire unified system. Each particular entity is necessitated or logically implied by the nature of the totality. There are no totally isolated independent effects and causes in the world of events, each component of the system can only be completely determined by its connections with all other entities to various degrees. According to the Principle of Universal Relatedness, to some extent everything is related to everything else. An omniscient understanding of the entire cause of any event, would take into account all of its connections with everything else in the universe. Since our ideals and ideas are but so many expressions of our place in the system and our relation to the rest of it, the system itself must certainly be their concrete harmonious embodiment. To some extent, Mahat is like an organism that has a systematic character of its own that manifests itself in and through the different elements or members that constitute the entire universe.⁸⁰

For one thing, Mahat particularizes Itself into localized minds and bodies with limited power, knowledge, spatial dimensions, happiness, and freedom.

Mahat is an omniscient, all-encompassing, coherent, and individual system that experiences the totality of existence directly with complete internal consistency, but without any relation to anything beyond Itself. Not being determined by any outside force, It is a genuine free individual. It is more of an individual than Its components that are within It. Nothing is outside Mahat, since It is all-in-all. Being that all reality is interconnected, every finite component of the phenomenal universe is somewhat dependent on the reality outside of itself, and thus cannot be completely explained from within itself. As A. E. Taylor expresses it, "Because all Reality is ultimately a single coherent system the more there is outside any partial system the greater must be the dependence of its constituents for their character upon their connection with reality outside, and the less capable must the system be of complete explanation from within itself. The more the partial system embraces, the less will its constituents be determined by relation to anything outside itself, and the more completely will its organisation be explicable by reference to its own internal principle of structure."⁸¹ Being complete in Itself, Mahat forms a single and direct experience, while Its component experiences are more fragmentary and less immediate. There can be nothing in the Whole which does not in some way affect the experience of each of its members. The all-embracing experience that constitutes Mahat is a concrete individual, being a unified Whole totality determined by reference to Its own internal structure. The lesser individual experiences that constitute the phenomenal universe can never be entirely individual and self-determined in themselves with free-will, since they are not a completely self-contained system. Thus, the more individuality a thing has, the more fully it exhibits Immanent Causality in its internal structure, and the less will be the modifications that structure undergoes due to its relations with other entities. The totality of existence is a single coherent system in which each part of the phenomenal universe is determined by the nature of the Whole (Mahat). Thus we seek the ground of the entire process not in temporally preceding events (the cause), but in its own underlying principle (the law) by which it operates. In which case the past is determined by the future (teleology) just as the future is determined by the past (causation). Since both are stages of the same continuous logical process, if you know the principle of the process (the law) in its totality

(from every aspect) you can gain an understanding of its nature equally well from the beginning, middle, or the end. The spiritual seeker strives to become more compatible and harmonious with the ideals of the Whole (Ishvara, God). The degree of saintliness, goodness, and truthfulness of an individual is proportionate to the degree of correspondence between the individual mind and the Cosmic Mind. Egoism and egotism separates us from the totality. The purpose of yoga is to increase this correspondence, congruence, and compatibility.⁸² Human feelings and thought are then transmuted into a far more joyful and understanding state, into a state of total fulfillment.

All phenomena in the world are different manifestations of the one ultimate reality (Mahat), so that the universe is a complicated web of relations between the parts of a unified whole. The universe is a unity with mutual interconnectedness and interdependence to various degrees of all things and events. Within the unity there is a balance of forces of pairs of opposites forming polarities. At the same time there are forces in opposition producing change and congeries of unrelated entities

Georg Hegel (1770-1831) the German philosopher taught that all events in the world are due to internal development of the Universal Spirit, which to some extent is comparable to Mahat. The process of history is the unfolding of Mahat, the Universal Mind within the empirical world. It is an immanent, Self-cognizant, Self-determining, Self-changing, and Self-directing rational process of Mahat manifesting Itself. Reason is both the substance and the energizing power of the universe. What Hegel did not realize is that the Universal Spirit (Universal Mind, Mahat) is already perfect in the Divine realm, but its manifestation and objectification is imperfect in the empirical world, gradually processing from potentiality to actuality. In the beginning, a potential Brahman-God without Self-consciousness, knowledge, and power could never have transformed into or created the universe.⁸³

Endnotes

¹ This idea comes from a Swami Sarvapriyananda lecture.

² VS, II, 3:42, 45-46, pp. 559-60, 563-64.

³ VS, I, 1:1, 4:29, pp. 88, 142, 405-06; cf. VS, II, 3:18, p. 544.

⁴ VS, III, 2:14, pp. 610-11.

⁵ Radhakrishnan, II, p. 685.

⁶ CW, II:413, 430.

⁷ CW, VI:52; VII:27.

⁸ Abhedananda (1947), pp. 52-54.

⁹ Abhedananda (1947), p. 97.

¹⁰ Swami Abhedananda, *Religion Revelation and God* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1968), pp. 42-43.

¹¹ Web: www.philosophybasics.com/branch_monism.html;
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monism

¹² Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absence_of_good

¹³ CW, I:95-96.

¹⁴ Web: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mereology/>

¹⁵ Copleston, III, pp. 239-40.

¹⁶ Copleston, IV, pp. 217-22, 226.

¹⁷ C. Hartshorne and W. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Humanity Books, 2000), pp. 244-45, 247, 249-50.

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. 93-94.

¹⁹ Web: www.wikipedia.com/wiki/Tzimtzum

²⁰ Cooper, pp. 247, 252-54.

²¹ Robert Oakes, "Does Traditional Theism Entail Pantheism?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* (20) (Jan. 1983), pp. 105-112.

²² Robert Oakes, "The Divine Infinity: Can Traditional Theists Justifiably Reject Pantheism," *The Monist* (80) (April 1997), pp. 251-52, 257. Concerning emanation Robert Oakes, "Emanation Ex Deus: A Defense," *American Philosophical Quarterly* (29) April (1992), pp. 163-71 is also worth reading.

²³ Peacocke 1, pp. 139, 56-58, 138, 140-42, 145-46. For an overview of Panentheism see Web: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism>

²⁴ Clayton 2, pp. 89-91, 102-05.

²⁵ Clayton 2, p. 94.

²⁶ CW, II:135.

²⁷ CW, I:370-72.

²⁸ CW, II:330; III:423-24.

²⁹ Peacocke 1, p. 147.

³⁰ Clayton 1, pp. 143-44.

³¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica*, tr. Anton Pegis (2 vols.; New York: Random House, 1945), I, 8.a1; Clayton (2004), p. 23.

³² *Ethics*, 1:15, 18; Peacocke 1, p. 147; Clayton 3, p. 187.

³³ *Concepts of the Ultimate*, ed. Linda Tessier (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 92, 94.

³⁴ Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, tr. William Hendriksen (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 158, 161-62. Bavinck's statements on the Divine Attributes are quiet enlightening, particularly pp. 133-41, 152-71, 197-99.

³⁵ Russell, p. 139.

³⁶ Peacocke 2, p. 105.

³⁷ CW, II, pp. 122-23.

³⁸ Clayton 4, pp. 348-49.

³⁹ Clayton (1997), p. 99.

⁴⁰ Philip Clayton, *The Problem Of God In Modern Thought* (Cambridge, U.K.; William B. Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 177, 179, 400, 477-78, 488-89, 505.

⁴¹ For the pantheist side see: W. L. Craig, "Pantheists in Spite of Themselves," in J. K. Beilby, ed., *For Faith and Clarity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), pp. 135-56. The opposing view is presented by: William Rowe, "Does Panentheism Reduce to Pantheism? A Response to Craig," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 61 (Apr. 2007), pp. 65-67.

⁴² CW, I:433-34.

⁴³ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (2 vols.; Delhi: Oxford University, 1923, 1992), I, pp. 190, 339.

⁴⁴ Peacocke 1, p. 59.

⁴⁵ A good portion of this section appeared in an article by G. Stavig in the BRMIC (June 2017), pp. 35-39, (July 2017), pp. 19-27.

⁴⁶ Saradananda, pp. 408, 446-47.

⁴⁷ CW, II:440, 267.

⁴⁸ Web: www.philosophybasics.com/branch_monism.html

⁴⁹ Abhedananda (1968), pp. 113-14.

⁵⁰ Swami Abhedananda, *True Psychology* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1965), pp. 16, 59-60, 62.

⁵¹ Abhedananda (1960), pp. 192, 199.

⁵² Swami Abhedananda, *Attitude of Vedanta Towards Religion* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1947, 1990), pp. 32, 159.

⁵³ VS, II:3.18.

⁵⁴ Ankur Barua, "God's Body at Work: Ramanuja and Panentheism," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* (2010), pp. 1-30

⁵⁵ Enneads, V, 3.8; II, 1.1; V, 1.7.

⁵⁶ Enneads, IV, 4.32; IV, 3.8; IV, 9.3; G. Stavig, "Plotinus and Indian Philosophy", BRMIC (Aug. 2002), pp. 313-18; (Sept. 2002), pp. 360-64.

⁵⁷ Pritibhushan Chatterji, "Plotinus and Sri Aurobindo," in R. Harris ed., *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought* (International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982), pp. 261-62; Antonia Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Plotinus and Origen* (Roslyn Heights, NY: Libra Publishers, Inc., 1978), pp. 51-55.

⁵⁸ Sudhindra Chakravarti, *Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaishnavism*, Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1969, pp. 79-83.

⁵⁹ S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upanishads*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953, pp. 60-66, 71-72.

⁶⁰ Web: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/process-theism>

⁶¹ Donald Rothberg, "Philosophical Foundations of Transpersonal Psychology: An Introduction to Some Basic Issues", *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (1986), pp. 2-3.

⁶² Peacocke 1, pp. 52, 108-11, 138-40.

⁶³ Web: <http://inters.org/reductionism>

⁶⁴ Clayton 3, p. 201.

⁶⁵ Swami Jitatmananda, "Science Consciousness and Human Evolution," in Pradip Sengupta, ed. *History of Science and the Philosophy of Science: A Historical Perspective* (Delhi: Pearson, 2010), pp. 677-78.

⁶⁶ Roger Sperry, *Science And Moral Priority* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 87-89, 92.

⁶⁷ Russell, pp. 345-49.

⁶⁸ Peacocke 1, p. 140.

⁶⁹ Clayton 3, pp. 128, 108, 148.

⁷⁰ Clayton 1, pp. 6-7, 150-51; Peacocke 3, pp. 137-39.

⁷¹ CW, II:278.

⁷² Jonathan Schaffer, "The Internal Relatedness of All Things," *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 119, No. 474 (April 2010), pp. 341-76.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Henry Bett, *Nicholas of Cusa* (London: Methuen, 1932), pp. 137-38.

⁷⁵ F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 123, 141, 172, 180, 364, 404, 414-15, 431-32.

⁷⁶ Bradley (1966), pp. 130, 152, 321-22, 394-97, 468, 473. Bradley stresses the paradoxical nature of human thought and then for some reason goes on to assume the world is an appearance. Contrary to this idea, paradox arises because of the real (not apparent) limitations of the human mind. The omniscient Divine Cosmic Universal Mind comprehends the world in a totally coherent, all-inclusive, and non-paradoxical way. From this standpoint Bradley's Absolute is the Divine Cosmic Mind and the world is not an appearance. T. Sprigge, "Bradley's Doctrine of the Absolute," in *Appearance Versus Reality*, ed. Guy Stock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 194-95.

⁷⁷ A. E. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1903, 1961), pp. 34, 94-95, 104-07, 394.

⁷⁸ Taylor (1961), pp. 94-95, 101.

⁷⁹ Taylor (1961), pp. 104, 106-07.

⁸⁰ Taylor (1961), pp. 97, 104, 167-68, 181, 394.

⁸¹ Taylor (1961), p. 110.

⁸² Taylor (1961), pp. 34-35, 95-99, 104, 109-18, 175, 190, 394, 408-09; cf. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893, 1966), pp. 123, 130, 141, 172, 180, 322-23, 364, 371, 394-97, 404, 414-15, 431-32, 453, 460, 468, 470, 473, 488-89; Sprigge (1998), pp. 195-201; T. L. S. Sprigge, *James and Bradley* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1992), pp. 264-69, 354-55, 439-41, 500-09, 565-67.

⁸³ SCD, IV, pp. 633-35.