

Mind and the Ineffable Godhead

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To understand what is happening to humanity at this time of accelerating evolutionary change, we need to stand outside ourselves, transcending time itself, and view ourselves and the world we live in through the eyes of God. There is now no separation between the Divine and us as individual human beings. We can say, with the pre-eminent Christian mystic Meister Eckhart, “the eye with which I see God is the same as that with which he sees me.”¹

We are now in the presence of the ineffable Godhead. The word *presence* derives from the Latin *praesense*, consisting of two parts, *pra*, ‘before’ and *esse*, ‘to be’. So *presence* literally means ‘before being’ or ‘prior to existence’. In this Space of absolute Stillness² in the eternal Now,³ nothing exists, not even the Godhead. There is nothing to experience, for there is no experiencer, no knowing being.

How then can we put into words that which cannot be named? Well, we can follow the lead of Shakyamuni Buddha and use words as “a raft used to cross to the other shore or a finger pointing to the moon.”⁴ In this way, we can endeavour to speak about what Lao Tzu called the Tao: “Tao can be talked about, but not the Eternal Tao. Names can be named, but not the Eternal Name.”⁵

Mystics of all ages and spiritual traditions have found words related to their cultures to express our immanent Essence. The Buddhists refer to Ultimate Reality as *Shunyata*, meaning ‘Emptiness’.⁶ The Rishis in the Indus Valley, who wrote the *Upanishads*, referred to the formless Absolute as *Brahman*.⁷ J. Krishnamurti used the word *Truth*, which he described as a ‘pathless land’ when dissolving the organization that wanted to make him the ‘world teacher’.⁸

The opening words of the book of Genesis, which is part of the Jewish Torah and the Christian Bible, refer to the Buddhist Void in these words: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void.” (Gen. 1:1–2.) But in Reality, there is no separation between the beginning and end of time; they are just two sides of the same coin. So we can say, with John the Divine in the last chapter of Revelations, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” (Rev. 22:13.)

This sentence is an example of the fundamental design principle of the Universe: *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*, which is the closest we can come to expressing the absolute Truth in words, for it is true in all possible worlds. Unifying all opposites is the ultimate yoga and moral imperative of our times, for the Sanskrit word *yoga*, which is cognate with the English words *yoke* and *join*, means ‘union’.

The all-inclusive Principle of Duality, which has become popular through the Taoist concepts of yin and yang, applies to the most fundamental pair of opposites—nonduality and duality—which unify in nonduality. So the nondual Godhead is primary, with the dual world of form being secondary, contrary to current scientific beliefs, which assert that the physical universe is primary, with Consciousness being an epiphenomenon.

Consciousness, which etymologically means ‘knowing together’, the second morpheme being cognate with *science*, is the unifying word I use to provide the overall context for all religions and

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cultures. Consciousness is the Ultimate Cosmic Vision revealed to Arjuna by Krishna in the Hindu classic, *Bhagavad Gita*, for “Arjuna saw all the manifold forms of the universe united as one.”⁹

Consciousness is all there is, the only true Reality, as the Advaita sage and former President of the Bank of India, Ramesh S. Balsekar,¹⁰ and many other teachers of the Truth emphasize in their discourses. Everything in the relativistic world of form, including our bodies and concepts, the global economy, the human race, the Earth, and the physical universe, is thus just an appearance in or abstraction from Consciousness, destined to dissolve back into Consciousness in the course of time, like waves in the ocean.

The entire world of form is thus nothing but an illusion, called *maya* in the East, as Vijai Shankar, another Advaita sage and former medical practitioner, emphasizes in his teaching.¹¹ The Hindus delightfully refer to all activity in the manifest world as *lila*, the play of the Divine. As Shakyamuni Buddha discovered with his three marks of being (*trilakshana*), nothing in this world is permanent (*anitya*), and we shall suffer (*dubkha*) if we are not free of the sense of a separate self (*anatman*).¹² There is thus no individual being in the Universe, including the Supreme Being, which can be said to be enlightened.

Because of our separation from the Divine, we human beings have suffered dreadfully through the ages. How has this tragic situation arisen? Why is it that we still do not know the Truth, which makes us free, (Matt. 6:32.) as Jesus of Nazareth taught? Why have we put what a fourteenth-century English Christian mystic called a cloud of unknowing between us and the Godhead?¹³ Why are we still trapped in *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death, ignorant (*avidya*) of what it truly means to be a human being, of cosmic Reality?¹⁴ Why are we still egoically attached to the ever-changing world of form, especially our bodies and our belief systems about God, life, and money?

To answer these questions, we first need to recognize that each of us is the product of some fourteen billion years of evolution, which has been unfolding since the most recent big bang, since Life or God the Creator brought the physical universe that we know today into existence. If all the atoms, molecules, cells, plants, animals, species, and cultures had not evolved over all these years, none of us would be where we are today, living in the way we do.

We can simply understand the way that evolutionary processes have been accumulating at an exponential rate during all this time by using the periods identified by the French palæontologist and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. He saw the whole of evolution from Alpha to Omega in four periods: ‘Pre-life’, ‘Life’, ‘Thought’, and ‘Super-life’.¹⁵

Each transition phase between these periods contained a major evolutionary turning point. The first occurred some 3.5 billion years ago, when the first self-reproducing forms of life emerged on this planet. Materialistic science believes that Life itself emerged at this time, but this is a fundamental misconception. So Teilhard’s ‘Pre-life’ is a misnomer.

The second transition phase began about 40,000 years ago, when our ancestors acquired reflective intelligence, as evidenced by cave drawings from this time, enabling them to look within themselves as well as outwards. It is this characteristic of *Homo sapiens sapiens* that most clearly distinguishes us from the other animals.

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The basic reason why reflective intelligence emerged is that this is a prerequisite for evolution to reach its glorious culmination at the end of time. But to return Home to Wholeness, our species has experienced immense confusion and turbulence over the years, as we struggled to understand what was happening to us, to make sense of the world we live in, to give meaning to our lives.

It is only today that we are truly learning to understand ourselves, for we are in the middle of the third and final transition phase, with all the diverse strands of evolution converging into a great megasynthesis at the end of time, much as Teilhard prophesied. Jan Christiaan Smuts, the South African statesman, philosopher, and general, had a similar perspective, which he called ‘holism’: “evolution is nothing but the gradual development and stratification of progressive series of wholes, stretching from inorganic beginnings to the highest levels of spiritual creation.”¹⁶

To understand the implications of the cosmic, evolutionary event that is currently happening to us all, we need to look briefly at how we human beings have reached where we are today. When our ancestors first acquired reflective intelligence, they were like babies in adult bodies. They lived in natural union with the ineffable Divine, with the Godhead, but with no conceptual understanding of what was happening to them. They lived simply through their innate innocence and natural intelligence in a state of Grace.

Gradually, during the millennia succeeding the birth of reflective intelligence, the analytical, categorizing mind began to emerge. The dominant evolutionary process of the second period, biogenesis, the development of forms of life, gave way to noögenesis, the development of the mind. In this way, human beings became the least instinctive of all the animals.¹⁷ Virtually all our behaviour is learned, principally through concepts, but our feelings and emotions also play a key role.

The conceptualizing mind took a long time to become fully effective. It was not until about 5,000 years ago, marked by the Fall in the mythical Garden of Eden, that the mind reached its full power at the dawn of human history, when written language first appeared. We can say that this point in human phylogeny corresponds roughly to a seven-year-old in human ontogeny, when we first learn to think for ourselves. It is at this age that Roman Catholic children are confirmed, while the protestant churches and the Jews wait until puberty for corresponding rites of passage.

By all accounts, the long transition phase between biogenesis and noögenesis was comparatively peaceful.¹⁸ While a Great Mother figure played a dominant role in pre-historic religions, these were not matriarchal societies in the way that men came to dominate women during the patriarchal epoch.¹⁹

So what has been going on for the past few thousand years? Why are “we are the cruellest and most ruthless species that has ever walked the earth?”²⁰ Why is humankind “the only species that is a mass murderer, the only misfit in his own society?”²¹ As the psalmist asked, “Why do the nations so furiously rage together?” (Ps. 2:1.) words that Handel so magnificently set to music in the *Messiah*. Why have we spent so much time fighting holy wars, wars about the Whole, namely God?

The answer to all these questions is very simple: the egoic mind separated us from the Godhead. We lost touch with our immortal Ground of Being. This had two major effects. The first was that

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we developed false immortality symbols as a substitute for Reality to assuage our fear of death, to give us comfort in an uncertain world. In the early years of human existence, it was the beliefs, myths, and rituals of the major religions of the world that provided these immortality symbols, most particularly, in the East, the belief in reincarnation, and, in the West, the belief in everlasting life after death.

The primary immortality symbol in today's secular society is money.²² We live in a society where people's sense of security and identity in life is based on economic structures that are obsessively driving humanity to extinction before we have realized our fullest potential as a species; an existential double bind. It is therefore not surprising that Erich Fromm pointed out fifty years ago that the normal behaviour of humankind is pathological;²³ we live in a grievously sick society.

Secondly, when the mind became separate from the Godhead, we did not yet have the consciousness to understand what was happening to us as a species. In British terminology, we were still at primary school. We were thus unable to take full responsibility for our actions, which is only possible when we know ourselves, when we have an in depth understanding of what causes us to behave as we do.

In order to ensure that society could function with a modicum of harmony, the patriarchal religions developed sets of rules to govern people's behaviour, such as the Buddhist precepts²⁴ and the ten commandments of Judaism and Christianity. (Exod. 20:7–17.) To enforce these rules, the priests took moral authority for the way that society ran. This was absolutely essential, for otherwise societies would not have been able to function at all. Yet, sadly, despite the emphasis on forgiveness in spiritual circles, such authoritarian attitudes have led to today's guilt-ridden, blaming, vindictive, and litigious society, which can hardly be called healthy.

However, not everyone followed these rules. A tiny minority in each society withdrew from the world to become mystics, seeking to return Home to the Godhead. In the East, these mystics were revered, often being consulted by kings, who wanted assistance in ruling their realms. Not so in the West. *Mysticism* can be used as a word of reproach, implying self-delusion or the assumption of mysterious agencies of which no rational account can be given.²⁵

The principal reason for this tragic situation is that in the West the separation between mind and Godhead became enshrined in holy scripture. As F. C. Happold tells us, "To Jew, Christian, and Moslem, a gulf is felt to exist between God and man, Creator and created, which can never be crossed. To assert that 'Thou' art 'That' [as the Hindus do] sounds blasphemous."²⁶

So the mystics of these monotheistic religions have needed to be very careful about what they said if they were not to incur the wrath of the Church authorities. As Elaine Pagels tells us, "Even the mystics of Jewish and Christian tradition ... often are careful to acknowledge the abyss that separates them from their divine Source."²⁷

So when the Dominican prior Meister Eckhart spoke the Truth as he experienced it, he was found guilty of heresy and would no doubt have been excommunicated or burnt at the stake if he had not died before sentence could be passed. The Sufi Mansur Hallaj did not escape so lightly. In tenth-century Baghdad, he suffered a gruesome death when he declared, "I am the Truth."²⁸

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But it is a mistake to think that the monotheistic religions no longer believe that God is separate from us. Western religious leaders are still perpetuating this split between the Divine and the individual, leading inevitably to schizoid behaviour out of touch with Reality. For instance, Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Faith and Reason* published on 14th September 1998,²⁹ said that if reason is to be fully true to itself, it must be grounded in the “fear of God”, a fear that arises when God is other.

Then, as recently as 3rd February 2003, the Vatican published a report on the Christian view of the New Age movement, *Jesus Christ, The Bearer of the Water of Life: A Christian Reflection on the “New Age”*,³⁰ the title being an obvious reference to the Age of Aquarius.

The central issue of this report is that “man is essentially a creature and remains so for all eternity, so the absorption of the human I in the divine I will never be possible.” But why do the Christians claim that the word of God, as expressed by the authoritarian priests, has a higher claim than people’s experience of the Divine, a question similarly asked by Elaine Pagels.³¹ According to this Catholic pamphlet, such a divine experience “results in distorting His Word and replacing it with purely human words”.

But are the priests not human? What gives them the right to claim that they alone know the word of God? Isn’t it the essence of scientific inquiry that it is based on human experience rather than on dogmatic statements that have no basis in Reality? Are we to deny our gnostic experiences just because they do not conform to the scriptures or to scientific paradigms?

In this respect, there is a marked contrast between Western and Eastern religious practices. For instance, Christianity is a religion designed to *prevent* its members from revealing Christ Consciousness, which is the birthright of each of us, in contrast to Buddhism, the central focus of which is to *empower* its followers to realize full Buddhahood.

Aldous Huxley, in his classic study of what Leibnitz called *philosophia perennis*, asks, “Why should what Abbot John Chapman calls ‘the problem of *reconciling* (not merely uniting) Mysticism and Christianity’ be so extremely difficult?” He answers this question by saying that the immediate insights of the mystics were rationalized into Christian theology by “speculative barristers and metaphysical jurists”, “more hopelessly impervious to Reality, than almost any class of human beings except the rich”.³²

Thankfully, the mystics of the monotheistic religions are beginning to speak out, to challenge the theological doctrines of the faiths that they belong to. For instance, the Benedictine monk David Steindl-Rast has said that one of his great concerns is that the Western God-view is warped and makes us sick. The idea of God as being separate from us is an extremely dangerous view.³³ On this crucial point, it is thus quite possible for us all to recognize that our true Essence is Love and Consciousness, no matter what our religious and scientific conditioning might be.

Indeed, this is very much what is happening in the world today. Not only are numerous people in the West turning to the East to find spiritual fulfilment, both within Eastern traditions and outside, recognizing, with Vijai Shankar, that the truly religious person is one with no religion, but also the

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members of the organized religions are engaging in interreligious dialogue. *Interreligious Insight* is a prime example of this inevitable evolutionary process.

We can see how this compassionate, nondualistic process is happening by noting that the native English word for *nature* is *kind*.³⁴ Kindliness, not the original sin of Christianity, is our natural state of being, as Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, often tells his wide circle of followers. It is through kind, loving relationships that we can work harmoniously together with a common vision and so generate the synergy that will create the miracle necessary to carry humanity into an eschatological epoch of quite exquisite beauty, when we shall all be living in Love and Peace with each other in the eternal Now at the end of time.

So where has whatever wisdom this article might contain come from? Well, for over twenty years I have been consciously living at the Omega point of evolution. All the diverse streams of evolution have converged within me in a magnificent burst of uninhibited creativity arising from our divine Source. By starting afresh at the very beginning, evolution has taught me to integrate all knowledge in all cultures and disciplines at all times into a coherent whole.

I call this transcultural, transdisciplinary synthesis of everything *panosophy*, from the Greek *pansophos* meaning ‘all-wise’. This word was used as early as 1642, albeit with a slightly different spelling, to mean “universal or cyclopædic knowledge; a scheme or cyclopædic work embracing the whole body of human knowledge”.³⁵ The divisions that the categorizing mind makes between all the different religions, philosophical schools of thought, scientific theories, and economic ideologies no longer exist for me. Reason and mysticism have become united in Consciousness. Panosophy is thus the holy grail of human learning, the ultimate Theory of Everything that many scientists³⁶ and philosophers³⁷ are searching for today.

This revelation has come about because in 1980, when I was marketing management information systems with IBM in London, I saw that the invention of the stored-program computer is incompatible with the materialism of capitalism and communism and both would collapse within thirty years. For the computer is essentially an extension of the mind, unlike the many tools that we have invented over the millennia to extend our rather limited physical abilities. And as human beings are essentially mystics, not machines, artificial intelligence, consciousness, and life are an unreachable dream. It is thus not true that technological development can drive economic growth indefinitely, as the business world believes today.

Using the business modelling techniques familiar to me from my career in the information technology industry, I have spent the past twenty-five years developing a comprehensive science of evolutionary change, which can tell us where we human beings have come from and where we all heading in such a frantic rush. I have thus found God through computer science, a process that has some similarities to the path of *jnana-yoga*, the path of abstract knowledge.³⁸

As an evolutionary pioneer, I am now living, as much as possible, according to the life-enhancing principles of the final period of evolution, which will come into being when the global economy self-destructs in the next five to ten years, giving way to the Sharing Economy. This will be an apocalyptic transformation, from the Greek word *apokaluptein* meaning ‘uncover’ or ‘reveal’. What

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will be revealed is that Western civilization is living in a fantasy world, further removed from Reality than any other civilization in human history.

If we are to heal our grievously sick society, the only way forward for humanity is to end the separation between the mind and the ineffable Godhead, which has bedevilled human affairs throughout human history. The only practical solution to the great crisis facing humanity today is for ordinary people to become mystics while still pursuing their particular vocations. As the Canadian psychiatrist Richard Maurice Bucke foresaw in 1901, “Churches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual man and God will be permanently replaced by direct unmistakable discourse.”³⁹ In such a sane society, it will not be necessary for mystics and priests to wear distinguishing clothes and to be addressed by reverential titles. We shall lovingly respect all our fellows, knowing that it is only enlightenment that can save us from suffering.

I call the nondualistic epoch that is emerging from the death of Western civilization, the Paragonian Society. I coined *paragonian* in 1984 from the Greek words *para*, ‘beyond’, and *agon* ‘contest’ or ‘conflict’, which we also see in the English words *agony* and *antagonistic*. So *paragonian* means ‘beyond conflict and suffering’, a healthy, liberated, and awakened way of being that we can realize when we live consciously in union with the Divine. There are then no enemies, a notion that has been the direct cause of all the wars in human history, a reflection of the wars that are waged within the protagonists. For as Krishnamurti observed, it does not need two to have a conflict; it needs only one.⁴⁰

Of course, whether the Paragonian Society actually becomes manifest is not in our hands for there is no such thing as free will.⁴¹ When we live in union with the Godhead, we realize, with the Advaita sages, that there is no doership, no separate entity, including the Divine, itself, that can be said to be doing anything.⁴² The Universe is intelligently designed, but there is no designer thereof.

All we can do under these circumstances is to trust in Life that the power of Love will see us through the cosmic transition between the mental-egoic age (me-epoch) and the age of universal spirituality (us-epoch) as compassionately as possible. For as the Sufi poet Rumi wrote, “Love is the sea of not-being and there the intellect drowns.”⁴³

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