

## V

### CHRISTIAN AND MODERN

In Christianity, the significance of the Present is asserted by the words of Christ, "Let the dead bury their dead"<sup>1</sup> and "Take no thought for the morrow" (Mat. 8. 22 and 6. 34). Aristotle's *ἄτομος νῦν* is unmistakable in I Cor. 15. 51, 52 "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (*ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ*), at the last trump... the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"<sup>2</sup>; a dictum that also reminds us of the Buddhist "Single-instant Awakening" (*eka-kṣaṇa-sambodhi*). For, again, just as for Aristotle and the Buddhists, corruptibility is inseparable from any existence in time; and to be "raised incorruptible" can only imply a passing over from the flux of temporal exist-

the "indivisible now"  
the "atom of now"

<sup>1</sup> Who are "the dead"? "Dead is the man of yesterday, for he has died into the man of today; and the man of today is dying into the man of to-morrow" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 392 D).

<sup>2</sup> This can be applied by no means only to the resurrection of the body in the distant future but (as in Islām) to the present moment of enlightenment, when "the soul which lay dead in a living body doth rise again" (St. Augustine, *Sermo [De scrip. N. T.]* 88, 3. 3), or as St. Thomas expresses it to "the first instant that grace inheres".

ence to a present eternity in which there is neither any yesterday nor a to-morrow, and in which the Christian has already lived in so far as he has been able to fulfil the commands of Christ to have done with the past and to take no thought for the morrow. I think it is in just this sense that A. A. Bowman observes that “the religious preoccupation with life is specifically the preoccupation with a life of experience which is momentarily reborn in every fleeting instant”<sup>3</sup>: and it would appear that the true Christian is really expected to be, and will be, as much as the Ṣūfi, a “son of the moment”, and as much as the Buddhist Arahant a Freedman, “for whom there is neither past nor future” (S. 1.141)<sup>4</sup>. The reality of the eternal present is bound up also with that of the Holy Ghost, whose operation is immediate,—“And suddenly (ἄφνω) these came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind” (Acts 2. 2)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> A. A. Bowman, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, 1938, 2. 346. Cf. René Guénon “he who cannot escape from the standpoint of temporal succession is incapable of the least conception of the metaphysical order” (*La métaphysique orientale*, Paris 1939, p. 17).

<sup>4</sup> “Think on God and thou wilt find ‘is’ where ‘has been’ and ‘shall be’ cannot be” (St. Augustine, *In Joan. Evang.* 38. 10).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Acts 22. 6 “Suddenly (ἐξαίφνης) there shone from heaven a great light”, and II Cor. 6. 2 “Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation” (ἰδοῦ, νῦν καιρὸς εὐ-πρόσδεκτος, ἰδοῦ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας).

“Sudden” (*sub-it-aneus*) is literally “going stealthily”; and ἄφνω also has the meaning “mysteriously”; and we find these ideas also in India with reference to the divine procession and immanence, for example, in RV. 1. 145. 4 where Agni *sadyo*

In this connection St. Thomas, discussing the problem, Whether the Justification of the Ungodly Takes Place in an Instant or Successively (*Sum. Theol.* I-II. 113. 7) decides that such justification is “not successive, but *instantaneous*”<sup>6</sup> [i.e. just what the Buddhist would have called a “single-instant awakening”]; for such a justification depends upon the movement of Grace, which is sudden, and man’s free-will “whose movement is by nature instantaneous”<sup>7</sup>; the justification cannot be successive, because “to will and not to will—the movements of the free-will—are not successive, but instantaneous”<sup>8</sup>. In answer to the further objection that opposite conditions cannot coincide in the same instant and so there must be a last instant in the state of sin

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*jātas tatsāra*, for which Grassmann writes “kaum geboren schlecht” and one might say “like a thief in the night”, or Muṇḍ. Up. 1. 1. 6 and 2. 2. 16, *adreśyam agrāhyam ... sūśūkmam ... guhācara ... antas carate bahudhā jāyamānaḥ*, as in Maitri Up. 2. 5 *sa va eṣa sūkṣmo’grāhy’drśyaḥ ... ihaivāvartate*.

Further, as to this speed: “Even now when I (God) am present here, I stand at the same time also there” (Philo, *Sacr.* 68); “it (νοῦς) has not moved as one moves from place to place, but it is there” (Hermes Trismegistos, 16. 2. 19); “the One, immobile, is swifter than the mind ... past others running, *this goes standing*” (Īsā Up. 4).

<sup>6</sup> St. Thomas’ “instant” is strictly atomic, and his argument rests upon the fact that such instants are not parts of time.

<sup>7</sup> In the things above time no interval whatever divides cause from effect or beginning from end. It would be an interesting hermeneia—not, of course, an etymology—to connect “repentance” with *repente*.

<sup>8</sup> “The journey of the spirit is unconditioned with respect to time and space” (Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, 3. 1980).

and another in the state of grace, he replies that “the succession of opposites in the same subject must be looked at differently in the things that are subject to time and in those that are above time. For in those that are in time, there is no ‘last instant’ in which the previous form inheres in the subject; but there is the last time, and the first instant that the subsequent form inheres in the matter or subject; and this for the reason, that in time we are not to consider one instant as immediately preceding another instant, since neither do instants succeed each other immediately in time, nor points in a line, as is proved [by Aristotle] in *Phys.* VI. 1. But time is *terminated* by an instant. Hence in the whole of the previous time wherein anything is moving towards its form, it is under the opposite form; but in the last instant of this time, which is [also] the first instant of the subsequent time, it has the form which is the term of the moment. But in those things that are above time it is otherwise... That which is justified is the human mind, and this is above time, though it is subject to time accidentally, in so far as it understands with continuity and time<sup>9</sup>... We must therefore... say that there is no last instant that sin inheres, but a last time; whereas there is a first instant

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<sup>9</sup> In other words, aeviternal, like the angels or, as reason mortal, and as intellect immortal (though “reason” is sometimes used in the sense of “intellect”, and had originally this higher meaning). On the “two minds” (mortal and immortal) cf. my “On Being in One’s Right Mind” in *Review of Religion* 7, 1942, 32-40: “metanoia” is a change, i.e. transformation, of mind.

that grace inheres; and in all the time previous sin inhered”.

All this might have been expressed, and perhaps even more clearly, in terms of the circle (*ὁ τροχὸς τῆς γενέσεως*, *bhava-cakra*) and its (seventh) ray; temporal succession corresponding to motion along its circumference and the *ex tempore* motion of free-will to centrifugal motion (fall or descent into matter) and centripetal motion (ascension or resurrection).

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* I. 14, 15 St. Thomas discusses the eternity of God. He bases his argument on the assertions of God’s *immutability* in Malach. 3. 6, Jac. 1. 17 and Num. 23. 19; he quotes Aristotle, “time is the enumeration of motion” (*Phys.* 11-5-219 B) and points out that only those things that are in time can be measured, but “God does not move at all, and so cannot be measured by time; neither does he exist ‘before or after’ or no longer exist after having existed, nor can any succession be found in Him... but has the whole of His existence at once (*simul*); and that is the nature (*ratio*) of eternity”; and he concludes with Ps. 101. 13 (102. 12) “But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever” and 28 (27) “But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end”.

In the *Summa Theologica* I. 10 “On the Immutability of God”, St. Thomas distinguishes more fully between time, aeviternity, and eternity. “The idea of time consists in the numbering of before and after in movement; so likewise in the apprehension of the uniformity of what is outside movement, consists the idea of eternity. Further, those things are said to be measured by

time which have a beginning and end in time... But as whatever is wholly immutable can have no succession, so it has no beginning and no end... Eternity is called 'whole', not because it has parts, but because it is wanting in nothing... the expression 'simultaneously whole' is used to remove the idea of time, and the word 'perfect' to exclude the *now of time*... The *now that stands still* is said to make eternity<sup>10</sup>... Aeviternity differs from time, and from eternity, as the mean between them both... The angels, who have an unchangeable being as regards their nature with changeableness as regards choice... are measured by aeviternity... Time has before and after; aeviternity in itself has neither before nor after, which can, however, be annexed to it; while eternity has neither before nor after, nor is it compatible with such at all. [But] aeviternity is sometimes taken for 'age', that is, a space of a thing's duration; and thus we say 'many aeviternities' when we mean 'ages'".

"Aeviternity", then, is the term that could be applied to the lifetime of the Indian Gods "born with a life (*āyus*, cf. *αἰών*)<sup>11</sup> of a 'thousand years'; even as one

<sup>10</sup> "The *now of time* is the same as regards its subject in the whole course of time, but it differs in aspect... as being here and there... Likewise the flow of the *now* as alternating in aspect, is time. But eternity remains the same according to both subject and aspect; and hence eternity is not the same as the *now of time*" (I. 10. 4 ad 2). This is, of course, Aristotelian, as well as according to Boethius.

<sup>11</sup> Etymologically cognate, both words can mean either "life" or "age". The IE root is *l*, to "go", (present also in *αἰών*, *ἀεί*, *aevum*, *aeternus*, *ewig*, *ever* and *aye*); in its fre-

might see in the distance the farther shore, even so did they behold the farther shore of their own life" (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11. 1. 6. 15, cf. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 5. 7. 3f.); their "not dying" (*amṛtattva*) contrasting on the one hand with that of the man who lives for a hundred years, "not dying" prematurely, and on the other with the timeless immortality of Brahma.

Further (*Sum. Theol.* I. 10. 6), "time is one". Not because it is a number, "for time is not a number abstracted from the thing numbered, but existing in the thing numbered"<sup>12</sup>; otherwise it would not be continuous; for ten ells of cloth are continuous not by reason of the number [ten], but by reason of the thing numbered". The position is quite Aristotelian; the piece of cloth does not stop being a piece of cloth at the end of each yard and then begin again; it is one piece of cloth; and so in the case of any extent, whether

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quantitative sense, that of continuation in a given state, it implies to "exist" or "be". When Agni is contrasted with the other Gods, as "the only immortal", he can be called *viśvāyus*, "the whole of life", and this totality is analogous to fulness of a man's "whole life" (*sarvam āyus*) who does not die before old age.

On *αἰών* as [like *āyus*] the complete period, either of each particular life or of all existence, v. Aristotle, *De Coelo* 1. 9. 15; on *αἰών* and *χρόνος* cf. Philo 1. 496, 619" (Liddell and Scott).

<sup>12</sup> This seems also to have been William of Ockham's view: "his main purpose in the *Tractatus de successivis* is to show that motion, place, and time are not entities separate from the respective realities, viz., the moved body, the located body, and the moved body in time. Ockham thinks this the true opinion of Aristotle" (P. Boehner, *The Tractatus de Successivis attributed to William of Ockham*, St. Bonaventura, N. Y., 1944, p. 30).

of time or space. *Time and space are continuous*. Both, like numerical unity, are infinitely divisible.

“Examine”, St. Augustine says, “the mutations of things and thou wilt find everywhere ‘has been’ and ‘will be’. Think on God and thou wilt find ‘is’ where ‘has been’ and ‘will be’ cannot be . . . Being is a term for immutability . . . There is primal and absolute life, in which it is not one thing to exist and another to be, but the same thing to be and to exist; and primal and absolute intelligence, in which it is not one thing to be living, another to understand, but to understand is to live, and is to be, and all things are one” (*In Joan. Evang.* 28, 10; *Sermo* 7.7; *De Trin.* 6. 10. 11). Again, in God, “nothing is past, as if it were no longer; nothing is future, as if it existed not yet. Whatever is there, simply *is*” (*In Ps.* 101, *Sermo* 2. 10). And: “What is *the same*, save that which *is*? . . . Nobody hath *the same* from himself . . . the body that he hath is not *the same* . . . Nor doth the human soul itself *stand* . . . Man’s mind itself, which is called rational, is mutable, is not *the same* . . . ‘But Thou art always the self-same’ (*Ps.* 101. 27f.) . . . Man in himself *is not*, for he is changed and altered if he does not participate in Him ‘Who is the same’. He *is* when he sees God. He is when he sees Him WHO IS<sup>13</sup>; and by seeing Him WHO IS,

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<sup>13</sup> “I am that I am” is the Greek version of what was really in Hebrew “I become what I become”; the Greek considering Him as “He is in Himself”, the Hebrew as “He is turned toward us”, becoming “the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”. Both concepts are common in the Vedic tradition; on the one hand, “HE IS, by that alone can He be apprehended”



he also begins, according to his measure, to be . . . But how? Through charity” (*In Ps.* 121) <sup>14</sup>.

Perhaps even more striking in its wording: “Behold we speak and say ‘in this year’ . . . Say rather to-day, if you would speak of anything in the ‘present’ . . . This, too, amend, and say ‘in this hour’. But of ‘this hour’ what have you got? Some moments of it are already past, and those that future have still to come. Say ‘in this moment’. But in *what* moment? . . . What then have we got of these ‘years’?” (*In Ps.* 76. 8).

Time and eternity had been admirably discussed by Boethius, who is often cited by St. Thomas. To begin with, in *De Trin.* I. 4 he remarks that “God is ‘ever’ (*semper*) because ‘ever’ is with Him a term of present time, and there is this great difference between the ‘now’ which is our present, and [the ‘now’ which is] the divine present, that *our* ‘now’ connotes changing time and sempiternity; while God’s ‘now’ abiding, unmoving, and self-subsistent makes eternity. Add *semper* to *aeternitas*, and you get the ever-flowing, incessant ‘now’ and therefore perpetual course of time that is

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(KU. 6. 13), on the other “Thou, Agni, art Varuṇa at birth, and becomest (*bhavasi*) Mitra when kindled” (RV. 5. 3. 1) and “Became (*abhavat*) the Sun of men” (RV. 1. 146. 4, cf. John 1. 4).

<sup>14</sup> “Through charity”; for example, the practise of *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā* in the Buddhist *brahma-vihāras* (cf. in my *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, pp. 147, 148); for as Meister Eckhart says, “Alsô minnet got alle créature gelîch und erfüllet sie mit sînem wesenne. Und alsô sullen wir mit minne fliezen ûf alle créâtûren. Des vindet man vil an den heidenen, daz sie zuo disem minnerîchen friden nâtiurlîcher bekenntnüsse kâmen” (Pfeiffer p. 273).

‘sempiternity’”; and he doubts whether God’s ‘ever’ is a form of time at all. In *De consol.* V. 6 he remarks that the common judgment of those who live by reason is that God is eternal (*aeternum*)<sup>15</sup> and so “let us consider what eternity is... It is the perfect possession of an interminable life *all at once (tota simul)*... whereas there is nothing placed in time which can embrace the whole of its life at once... For it is one thing to be led through an interminable life (which Plato attributed to the world)<sup>16</sup>, and another thing to embrace the whole of an interminable life present in all its complexity”. Of the transitory moments of time he says that in a way they imitate the now that stands still, so that at every moment a thing “seems to be”. And so, “following Plato, let us call God ‘eternal’ and the world ‘everlasting’ (*perpetuum*)”. Then he points out that God’s “foreknowledge” [so called] ought rather to be called “the knowledge of a never fading instant than a *foreknowledge*, as if of the future. Wherefore it is not called a *prevision (prae-videntia)* or *foresight* but rather an *onsight (provi-*

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<sup>15</sup> In the Loeb edition, misrendered “everlasting”. For Boethius, eternity is in-finite, i.e. without beginning or end, but not a duration, not “lasting”; it is time that “lasts”.

<sup>16</sup> It does not seem necessary to discuss the problem of the “eternity of the world” in the present context. I will only observe that the Christian “world without end” seems to refer to the world in one sense (that in which time can be called “interminable”), and to *this* world in another sense (that in which a given time has a beginning and end). Just as in tradition, there are cycles that begin and end, but the series of of cycles has neither beginning nor end.

*dentia*)<sup>17</sup>, because, placed far from lower things, it overlooketh all things, as it were, from the highest summit of things... and so not disturbing the quality of things which to Him are present, but in respect of time are future”.

On this basis Boethius is able to deal effectively with the problem of free-will and “pre”-destination. For “God beholds those ‘future’ things which proceed from freewill, [not as future but] as present”; and freedom to will or nill is no more impugned by this present inspection or on sight than are the acts of a man in a distant field controlled by our looking on at what he is doing.

To understand this more fully it must be remembered that as Boethius has already said (V. 1) “freedom to will or nill” is the work of reason; while the so-called act of choice according to which we “do what we like” is not an exercise of freewill at all but an irrational and passive reaction to external stimuli; and that, as

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<sup>17</sup> Sanskrit *prajñā*, etymologically Greek *προνοία* and Latin *pro-gnosis*, is attributed to the all-seeing, omniscient Spiritual Sun and Self; it is a knowledge of all things, not derived from an observation of their occurrence.

<sup>18</sup> Both here in the sense of *νοῦς*, *intellectus vel spiritus*, as in St. Augustine *De ordine* 2. 50 “If reason is immortal... and if I am reason, then that by which I am called mortal is not mine”; not as reason is sometimes distinguished from intellect, as in Augustine *De Trin.* 15. 25 “the intellectual cognition of eternal things is one thing, the rational cognition of temporal things another” or as in Boethius *De consol.* 1. 6 where he speaks of himself as a “rational and mortal animal” and this means that he “has forgotten what he is”.

St. Thomas says, the operation of reason or the mind (insofar as the latter really acts) is “above time”. In discussing “fate”, Boethius has already (IV. 6) compared time to the circumference of a circle of which the centre (*punctus medius*)<sup>19</sup> is eternity<sup>20</sup>, and pointed out that “everything is by so much the freer from fate, the more it draws near to the pivot (*cardo*)<sup>21</sup> of all things; and if it clings fast to the firmity of the Supernal Mind, being free from motion, it also transcends the necessity of fate”: that is, evades the causal efficacy of acts, which “take place” only in the world, of which the Freedman is no longer, though he may still be *in* it. In other words, the movements of free-will are real, but their occurrence is *ex tempore*<sup>22</sup>:

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<sup>19</sup> Dante’s “punta dello stelo a cui la prima rota va dintorno . . . da quel punto dipende il cielo, e tutta la natura” (*Paradiso* 13. 11, 28. 41); “apri gli occhi . . . e vedrai il tuo credere” . . . nel vero farsi come centro in tondo“ (*ib.* 13. 49).

<sup>20</sup> “Ad id quod est quod gignitur, ad aeternitatem tempus, ad punctum medium circulus, ita est fati series mobilis ad providentiae stabilem simplicitatem”.

<sup>21</sup> The *punctum medium*, referred to above as “indivisible”, i.e. *ἀτομος*.

<sup>22</sup> Not in time; nor in eternity, but between them; for the motion must have ceased when its goal, the centre, has been reached; and so the motion will be, figuratively, spiral. Even the fallen angels could not have fallen for so long as they subsisted in the uncreated life; apart from a “creation”, which necessarily involves some degree of “separation” from the centre, neither a Fall nor a Redemption are conceivable. These are the two “halves” of the cycle of existence; but in eternity extroversion and introversion coincide; and this actually guarantees the final apokatastasis of every “fallen spark”.

and that they seem to us to be past or future is only the effect of our positions relative to the now of eternity.

Meister Eckhart: "God is creating the whole world now, this instant (*nû alzemâle*). Everything God made six thousand years ago and more when He made the world, God makes now instantly (*alzemâle*)... where time has never entered in, and no shape was ever seen... To speak of the world as being made by God yesterday or tomorrow were a folly in us; He makes the world and all things in this present Now (*gegenwürtig nû*)... what was a thousand years ago and what shall be a thousand years hence, all that is there in the present,—all that is overseas as much as what is here" (Pfeiffer pp. 190, 192, 207, 266, 297). Again, "in eternity, there is no before or after... To live in that eternity, so help us God!" (*ib.* 190, 192). In these words Meister Eckhart summarises as briefly as possible the doctrine of Time (time) and Eternity (Time) that we have already followed up through two millennia; and he states its significance for us,—"it is just for this that I was born" (*ib.* p. 284).

Again, "there is a power in the soul untouched by time... for God himself is in this power as in the eternal Now (*in dem ewigen nû*). Were the spirit always joined with God in this same power, a man could never age. For the Now in which God made the first man, and the Now in which the last man shall pass away, and the Now I speak in, all are the same in God in whom there is nothing but one Now... one and the same Eternity... Take the first brief words (of John 4. 23) *venit hora et nunc est*. He who would worship

the Father [in spirit and in truth] must set him in Eternity with his longings and his hopes. There is one, the highest part of the soul, that stands above time and knows nought of time or body. All that happened a thousand years ago, the day that was a thousand years ago is in Eternity no farther off than the very hour I am in now; nor is the day to come a thousand or as many years hence as could be counted any farther off in Eternity than is this very hour that I am in” (Pfeiffer pp. 44, 45, 57).

So also when he speaks of the world as a “circle”<sup>23</sup>, centred upon God, whose works are its circumference. “This is the circle that the soul runs round, all that the Holy Trinity hath ever wrought... and, as it says in the Book of Love, ‘When I found it ever endless, then I cast myself into the centre of the round (*daz punt des zirkels*)... That point is the power of the Trinity, where it hath done all its work, itself unmoved. Therein the soul becomes omnipotent... therewith atoned (*geeiniget*) she is capable of all things... the essential point, where God is just as far from as he is near to all creatures<sup>24</sup>... there is she eternally insistent” (*êwiklîche dar bestêtiget wirt, ib.* pp. 503, 504).

<sup>23</sup> St. James’ *ὁ τροχὸς τῆς γενέσεως*, and Indian *bhava-cakra*; the cycle of time. On the symbolism of the circle cf. Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 5. 6; St. Thomas Aquinas, *De principio scientiae Dei* 14; René Guénon, *Le symbolisme de la croix*; and my “Vedic Exemplarism” in *HJAS* I. 45.

<sup>24</sup> *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 10. 5. 2. 17 “Both near and far away; for inasmuch as He is here on earth in the flesh He is near, and inasmuch as He is That One in yonder world He is also far away”.

This is the point that St. Bonaventura speaks of when he compares God to a circle, of which the centre is everywhere (*Itin. mentis* 5); Dante's *punta*, a cui la prima rota va dintorno; and the *bindu* that marks the centre of every Indian *maṇḍala* and *yantra*.

And, further, as regards this Point, which is *the* Point of Time, "to know it we must be in it, beyond the mind and above our created being; in that Eternal Point where all our lines begin and end, that Point where they lose their name and all distinction, and become one with the Point itself, and that very One which the Point is, yet ever remain in themselves nought else but lines that come to an end" (Ruysbroeck, *De septem custodiis*, ch. 19).

All this symbolism is bound up with the doctrine that equates the persons of the "severalty of Gods" (Viśve Devāḥ i.e. the hierarchy of Angels, Intelligences or Powers), and likewise the Justified Deceased with the rays of the Intelligible Sun<sup>25</sup>: as, e.g. in RV. 1. 109. 7 "there be the very rays with which the Fathers of old were united", 10. 64. 13 "where we are met together at the Nave, Aditi confirms our kinship"; ŚB. 1. 9. 3. 10 "the rays of Him who glows yonder are the Perfected (*sukṛtaḥ*)<sup>26</sup>, and what highest light there is<sup>27</sup>, that is Prajāpati", and 2. 3. 1. 7 "the rays, indeed, are the Several Gods, and what highest light there is,

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<sup>25</sup> "Not the sun whom all men see, but Him whom few know with the mind", AV. 10. 8. 14; for parallels, see *Psychiatry* 8, 1945, p. 288, Note 7.

<sup>26</sup> "As a Perfected (*sukṛta* = τέλειος) Self, I passed into the uncreated Brahma-world" (CU. 8. 13).

that is verily Prajāpati, or Indra”<sup>27</sup>; so that “under the theory of procession by powers, souls are described as rays” (Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.4.3), and “there shalt thou back into thy Centre fall, a conscious Ray of that eternal All” (*Manṭiqu’ṭ Ṭair*). It will be observed that these, together with the concept of “motion at will” (passing in and out) preclude any pantheistic interpretation on the heretical sense of the word<sup>28</sup>; were there no multiplicity in unity, to “pass in and out” would be meaningless; what the doctrine implies is a “fusion without confusion” or “distinction without difference” (*bhedābheda*), —one end of any ray is confused with its centre, the other distinct from it, and the Perfected are both.

Dante, when he is speaking of Eternity, makes many references to this “essential point” or “moment”. All times are present to It (*il punto a cui tutti li tempi son presenti, Paradiso* 17.17); there every where and every when are focussed (*dove s’appunta ogni ubi ed ogni quando, ib.* 29.12). “The nature of the universe, such that it stills the centre and moves all the rest around, hence doth begin as from its turning-post” (*meta, ib.* 27.106)<sup>29</sup>, and “from that point depend heaven and

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<sup>27</sup> I.e. the Sun himself, represented by the solar disk, the Sun-door.

<sup>28</sup> In the proper sense, of course, a “pantheism” is inevitable; for if God be less than All, there will be something external to his essence, by which he will be, not infinite, but limited.

<sup>29</sup> In this metaphor of a chariot race, a “circus”, I think *meta* is not literally the starting-point, but the post round which the turn is made.



all nature” (28. 41) <sup>30</sup>; It is a flaming point of light, and “round it there wheeled a circle of fire so rapidly it has surpassed the motion which doth swiftest gird the universe” (28. 25) <sup>31</sup>, and this heaven “hath no other *where* than the divine mind” (27. 109) <sup>31</sup>; “there, perfect, ripe and whole is each desire; in it alone is every part there where it ever was, for it is not in space, nor hath it poles... whereby it thus doth steal it from thy sight” (22. 64). Also, he says, “neither before nor after was God’s ‘moving on the face of the waters’” (29. 20),—and, to cite Philo Judaeus, “there is an end, then, of the notion that the universe came into being ‘in six days’” (LA. 1. 20): “every moment the world is renewed, life is ever arriving anew” (Rūmī, *Mathnawī* 1. 1142).

“Nor hath it poles”, that is, contraries, or pairs of opposites; this is “the Paradise in which Thou, God, dwellest”, of which the wall, as Nicolas of Cusa says, “is built of the contradictories”—of which the past and future are, from the present standpoint, the most significant pair, “veiling us from the vision of God”, as Rūmī says—and whoever would enter in must first have overcome the highest Spirit of Reason that guards the strait gate that distinguishes them (*De vis. Dei* Ch. 9) <sup>32</sup>. These contraries, of which the extended world

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<sup>30</sup> “Imperishable Brahma, flame, less than the least, wherein are set the worlds and all things in them” (Muṇḍ. Up. 2. 2. 2), “like a sparkling fiery wheel” (Maitri Up. 6. 24).

<sup>31</sup> It is only in this sense that God can be thought of as a “place”: *τόπος* in Gnostic texts, *loka* in the Upaniṣads.

<sup>32</sup> The Logos: “I am the door, by me...”.

is made, are the Symplegades, that must be passed by every traveller homeward bound. Moreover, Cusa says, "Whatever is seen by us in time, thou, Lord God, didst not *pre-conceive*, as it is. For in the eternity in which thou dost conceive<sup>33</sup>, all temporal succession coincides in one and the same Eternal Now. So there is nothing past or future where past and future coincide in the present... Thou indeed, my God, who art thyself Eternity absolutely, art, and speakest [thy Word] above the now and then" (*ib.* ch. 10). And so: "Draw me, O Lord, for none can reach thee save he be drawn by thee; free me from this world and join me (*jungar*, Skr. *√yuj*) unto thee, God absolutely, in the eternity of glorious life. Amen" (*ib.* ch. 25).

At this point it will be convenient to consider briefly the curious resistance that contemporary mentalities oppose to the concept of a static being definable only by negations of all limiting affirmations, all procedure from one experience to another. The most striking aspect of this resistance is the fact that it is almost always based on feelings: the question of the truth or falsity of a traditional doctrine is hardly ever raised, and all that seems to matter is whether one likes the doctrine or not. This is the sentimentality of those who would rather than arrive at any goal, keep on going not merely until it is reached, but "throughout all time", and who confuse their activity, which is only an un-

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<sup>33</sup> Of this conception Meister Eckhart speaks elsewhere as "the act of fecundation latent in eternity". It coincides with the eternal birth of the Word "by whom all things were made".

finished procedure from potentiality to act, with a *being* in act.

Thus R. A. Nicholson protests that “to our minds the atoms, which have extension neither in space nor in time, seem insubstantial enough” (*Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 1921, p. 154). The objection may be with special reference to the Ash‘arite atoms as constituents of real magnitudes, but applies as well to the unique Atomic Time or Now of Eternity that we have been considering”. As W. H. Sheldon remarks, “men *feel* that what cannot be put in terms of time is meaningless”: but, he continues, “the notion of a static, immutable being ought to be understood rather as signifying a process so intensely vivacious, in terms of time as extremely swift, so as to comprise beginning and end at one stroke” (*Modern Schoolman* 21. 133). We cannot and may not, in fact, ignore that these who speak of a static, immutable, and timeless being above the partiality of time, also speak of it as an immediately beatific experience and possession of all things that have ever been or shall ever come into being in time; not to mention the realisation of other possibilities that are not possibilities of manifestation in time; it is a more and not a less “life” that subsists in the “naught” that embraces all things, but is “none” of them. In the same way men recoil from Nirvāṇa (literally, “despiration”), although it pertains to the definition of Nirvāṇa to say that “he who finds it, finds all” (*sabbam etena labbhati*, KhP. 8) and that it is the “supreme beatitude” (*paramam sukham*, *Nikāyas*, *passim*)!

“Eternal time” (Time, as distinct from the time that flies), as Boethius says, “is the total and perfect possession of interminable life in its simultaneity”. The answer to what men “feel” when they shrink from “eternity”, just as they shrink from the “self-naughting” that shocks them only because they have not, in themselves, distinguished between the Self that “never became anyone” from the inconstant Ego of “this man, so and so”, is to be found in such words as those of Meister Eckhart: “to have all that has being and is lustily to be desired and brings delight; to have it simultaneously and partless (*zemâle ungeteilet*) in the soul entire and that in God, revealed in its unveiled perfection, where first it burgeons forth<sup>34</sup> and in the ground of its essence, and all there grasped where God grasps himself,—that is happiness. And yet another

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<sup>34</sup> *In dem êrsten ûzbruche*: so, neither yet displayed (future) nor still hidden (past), but unmanifest-manifest (*vyaktâvyakta*). On this state of perfect promise and eternal bloom, the state of highest tension conceivable, which is also the paradigm of an ideal art, see my “Theory and Practise of Art in India”, *Technical Studies* 3, 1934, p. 75. This perfect moment occurs at “Dawn”, cf. Mayûra’s *Sûryaśataka* 26 “Rather, at the time of beginning, when the splendour of the Sun, like a painter’s brush uncloses, as it were [an opening eye or flower] the whole world picture”. It is like the archer’s stance at the moment of release, when the arrow is on the point of leaving; and as in Chinese art “the movement represented is the pause before the action begins when the body is [still] tense” (H. Fernal in the *Burlington Magazine*, Jan. 1936, p. 26). It is remarkable that the Shakers also held that that beauty is best which is “peculiar to the flower”, not that “which belongs to the ripened fruit”.

Fulness of Time: if someone had the art and the power to gather up the time and all that ever happened in six thousand years or that shall be until the end of the world<sup>35</sup>, all this assembled in one present Now (*ein gegenwertic nû*), that would be the 'Fulness of Time'. That is the Now of Eternity (*daz nû der êwikeit*), when the soul knows all things as they are in God, as new and fresh and lovely, as I find them now" (Pfeiffer p. 105).

Such is the Fulness, from which, as the Upanishad puts it, "if Fulness be taken, Fulness still remains" (BU. 5. 1). No Şūfī, no one in *samādhi*<sup>36</sup>, no Western mystic, *raptus*, ever felt diminished by his "moment of illumination". To see "the world in a grain of sand, and eternity in an hour"—if one only could—for whom would it not be enough? Freedom to be as and where and when one will, or everywhere, or nowhere—does such a liberty as this imply a privation only because the word *in*-dependent states a positive good in the negative terms of a freedom from all limitations, the existence of which is inseparable from any form of existence in time and space? How can one "feel" that there must be something wanting in an "eternity" that by definition "wants for nothing"? In this "all-obtaining" (*sarvāpti*)<sup>37</sup> there remain no desires whatever un-

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<sup>35</sup> I.e. throughout all time, in the then generally accepted sense: but rather, as a Hindu might express it, throughout all times, of which the present world-age is only one. It would have been the same for Origen.

<sup>36</sup> Literally and etymologically, "synthesis".

<sup>37</sup> "The Spirit of Life (*prāṇa*) is the Prognostic Self (*prajñ-*

satisfied; nor can one imagine a being “without desire” otherwise than when all desires are satisfied, desire then being at rest in its object. It is a matter of experience for those who speak of it so certainly, and those who live as they lived will see what they saw; but for others, is such an experience one to be shunned, or one to be desired? <sup>38</sup>

*Here*, because “all change is a dying”, as Plato (*Euthydemus* 283 D, cf. *Parmenides* 163 A, B), Meister Eckhart, and our whole tradition recognize, every meeting is a meeting for the first time, and every parting is for ever. Meetings and partings (of which birth and death are but special cases) are only possible in time, and they please or grieve us only because “we” are or, rather, mistakenly identify ourselves with, the mutable psycho-physical tabernacles that our Self assumes, and so think of ourselves as creatures of time. It is

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*ātman*), Life and Immortality together . . . Whoever approaches Me as Life and Immortality, he lives out his life in this world, and obtains inexhaustible (*akṣiti*) immortality in the world of heavenly-light . . . This is the ‘All-obtaining’ in the Spirit of Life” (Kauṣ. Up. 3. 2. 3).

<sup>38</sup> I am aware that there are modern men for whom the satisfaction of all possible desires would not suffice; beyond that, they want to entertain and to pursue others not yet satisfied. These are those who have never known what it means to be *contented* with a little, and cannot imagine a state of contentment even though possessed of everything there is to be desired; men “who would not like to live without hunger and thirst if they could not also *suffer* the natural consequences of these passions” (Plato, *Philebus* 54 E); men who forget that nothing *more* can be added to infinity.

as creatures of time that the fading of flowers and the death of friends distresses us. There are such and such desires or loves (*kāmāḥ*) that men feel: and these “are real (or true), but overlaid by falsity (or unreality) . . . For, indeed, whoever of one’s loves deceases, one no more gets a sight of *here*. But those who are still alive here, and those deceased, and whatever else one wishes for but does not get, all this he finds who enters in *there*” (Chāndogya Up. 8. 2. 1, 2). This does not mean that “here” and “there” are simply here and now on the one hand, and there and hereafter (post mortem) on the other; for the universe itself, “all beings and all these desires *are* content (*samāhitāḥ*)<sup>39</sup> in this ‘City of God’ [the living body], in the ether of the heart<sup>40</sup>. But what is left over (*atiśiṣyate*)<sup>41</sup> of the ‘city’ when age overtakes it and it breaks up?<sup>42</sup> What is left over

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<sup>39</sup> *Samāhita*, “in *samādhi*”: literally and etymologically, “synthesised”.

<sup>40</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is within you”.

<sup>41</sup> The same question is asked in Kāṭha Up. 4. 3, 5. 4, and answered, “That”, i.e. Brahma, God. If St. Paul could say, “I live, yet not *I*, but Christ in me”, what would have been “left over” when this man Paul died? “The body of man is subject to overmastering death, but the image of Eternity (*αἰῶνος εἶδωλον*) *remaineth* (*λείπεται* = *atiśiṣyate*) alive” Pindar, *Dirge* 131. “It is in the soul of man, that is, the rational or intellectual soul, that we must find that image of the Creator which is immortally planted in its immortality . . . And this image of God . . . when, finally, it shall altogether adhere to Him . . . will be ‘one spirit’ [I Cor. 6. 17] . . . then, it will live immutably” (St. Augustine, *De Trin.*).

<sup>42</sup> “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Hebr. 13. 14).

of it is the true (or real) 'City of God'<sup>43</sup>,—the sorrowless, ageless, deathless Self (*ātman*)<sup>44</sup> whose desire is true (or real), whose concepts are real<sup>45</sup>. . . . Those who fare away having already found (or known) here the Self and those true desires (or loves), they become 'movers-at-will' in every world" (*ib.* 8. 1. 1-6)<sup>46</sup>. And this concept of the "two cities" and of true and false desires is Augustinian, but before him, Platonic; for

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<sup>43</sup> "Two loves have created these two cities . . . the earthly . . . and the heavenly . . . Wherefore let every man question himself as to what he loveth; and he shall find of which he is a citizen" (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 14. 28 and *In Ps.* 64. 2); and "right is he who should grieve without a limit, who, for the love of what endureth not, eternally doth strip him of this love, the love that breathes aright" (*Paradiso* 15. 10-13 + 2).

<sup>44</sup> "the self-subsistent, undesirous, youthful Self, unaging and undying, whom if one knows, he fears not death" (Atharva Veda 10. 8. 440). For the "City of God" (*brahmapura*, see *ib.* 10. 2. 28-33).

<sup>45</sup> The last words, descriptive of the Self, are repeated and further expanded in *Maitri Up.* 7. 7.

"The objects of earthly loves are mortal, hurtful and loves of shadows that change and pass, for these are not what we really love, not the good that we are really in search of. But there is the true object of our love, where we can be with it, grasp it and really possess, where no covering of flesh excludes", Plotinus, *Enneads* 6. 9. 9.

<sup>46</sup> I.e. "shall pass in and out, and find pasture" (John 10. 9); *Taitt. Up.* 3. 10. 5 "up and down these worlds, eating what he will and assuming what aspect he will"; *RV.* 1. 113. 9 "where there is motion at will"; *Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. 59 "so subtle in body and in soul together, that we shall be then swiftly where us list bodily, as we be now in our thought ghostly".



“there are false pleasures in the souls of men, imitations or caricatures of the true pleasures” (*Philebus* 40 C); of which the false pleasures (*ψευδεῖς ἡδοναί*) are affects, mixed with pain, and the true (*ἀληθεῖς*)<sup>47</sup> those that are taken in beauty, primarily as exhibited in mathematical forms, and those of learning<sup>48</sup>, in which there is no admixture of pain (*ib.* 51). In other words, Augustine’s, while we are thinking of eternal things, the things that do not change, we are participating in eternity. Eternity is not far away from us, but nearer than time, of which both parts are really far away, one far ahead of us and the other far behind us; whatever is true, however, was always true and will be true for ever. “Truth”, alike in Brahmanism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity is as much as Eternity one of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ὁ γε τὸ ὄν λέγων καὶ τὰ ὄντα ἀληθῆ λέγει, *Euthydemus* 284 A; Verum mihi videtur id quod est, St. Augustine, *Soliloq.* lib. 2, c. 5, n. 8. But the truth of facts and the truth of principles pertain to different levels of reference. Skr. *satyam* (*√as*, to “be”), “truth” or “reality” can likewise be predicated either relatively of temporalia or absolutely of immutable being. For a fuller discussion see above, pp. 2, and 25, n. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Not, of course, a mere erudition, but “the learning that draws the soul away from becoming to being”, knowledge of the “essence that is for ever, and is not made to wander between generation and destruction” (Plato, *Republic* 485 B, 521 D): “all true knowledge is concerned with what is colourless, formless, and intangible... not such knowledge as has a beginning and varies as it is associated with one or another of the things that we now call ‘realities’, but that which is really real” (*Phaedrus* 247), “really real” corresponding to *satyasya satyam, paramārtha-satyam, ens realissimum, τὸ ὄντως ὄν*.

names of God, and it is only our forgetfulness that makes us need to pray “O thou who changest not, abide with me”, as a Ṣūfī might desire to make his *waqt*, *ḥāl*. If the eternal basis of existence—*dhamma*—is both here and now (*diṭṭhe dhamme*) and timeless (*akāliko*), it might be well to see what it “feels” like here and now, before “feeling” so much afraid of it. If, indeed, we do not participate in eternity *now*, perhaps we never shall<sup>49</sup>.

There is also another way in which the nature of the experience of eternity can be suggested. It can be assumed that a given mind cannot think of more than one thing at a time. But this does not mean that the life of the intellect is only arithmetical. Even the giving of names to things, an intellectual power, is the endowment of many successive events with a kind of permanent identity, even though a pseudo-identity, apart from time; without this, the communication of feelings would be possible, but not a communication of thoughts; and this already indicates that the intelligible world has more to do with eternity than with time. And in the same way spatially, consider the complexity of the art in the artist, that is to say, of the form in the artist’s mind, where although it is there one, this one form is the form of many things that could be and will be afterwards thought of separately. For example, in thinking of a “house”, one also thinks of many other things, at least of a floor, walls, and roof. A more complex example is afforded by the well-known, although far

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<sup>49</sup> BU. 1. 4. 15, 4. 4. 14; CU. 7. 25. 2, 8. 1. 6; BG. 18. 58.

from unique, instance of Mozart, who heard his compositions first not phrase by phrase, but as a *totum simul*, and thought this “actual hearing of the whole together” better than the subsequent hearing of the whole extended. The most complex example is that of Dante’s vision of “the universal form” of the world picture<sup>50</sup> of which he says that “within its depths I saw interned, bound up by love into one volume<sup>51</sup>, all the scattered leaves of the whole world, substances and accidents and their successions, as it were together (*insieme*)<sup>52</sup> fused in such a way that what I speak of is one simple flame ... Such at that light doth man

<sup>50</sup> Plato’s “eternal paradigm” on which the sensible world is modelled, *Timaeus*, 29: “the world-picture (*jagac-citra*) painted by the Spirit (the Self of all beings) on the canvas of the Spirit, and in which it takes a great delight” (Śaṅkarācārya, *Svātmanirūpaṇa* 95),—just as for Empedocles (Diels fr. 23) and for Plato (*Timaeus* 55 C) the Creator paints, and in Islam is called a painter (*muṣawwir*, qur’ān 53. 24) or, to employ Philo’s equivalent, just as the ideal pattern of the thing that is to be is as it were “engraved” on the maker’s mind (*Opiḡ*. 16-22).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Empedocles (Diels fr. 26) “all brought together in one order by Love”.

<sup>52</sup> *Insieme*, “in-same”, as regards both time and place. “The centre of the whirl, wherein all things come together, so as to be one only” (Empedocles, Diels fr. 35, 36): “all are the same there and nevertheless distinct; in the same way that the soul possesses the knowledge of many things without confusion, each fulfilling its own task when the need arises” just as in the case of the “powers” that inhere in a seed (Plotinus. *Enneads* 6. 9. 6): “Nû sint alliu dinc gelîch in gote unde sint got selber” (Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer p. 311). One might say, plures, non tamen multa, sed unum.

become that to turn thence to any other sight never could he by any possibility consent!" (*Paradiso* 33. 85-100). One thinks also of the immediate operation of "mathematical genius"; and of a Buddha's vision that "does not work in terms of the composites" but alights where he wishes, "'just as one might skip the sequence of a text', coming to the point at once" (*Vism.* 411). There is also the mystery of the possibility of the communication of ideas from one apparently circumscribed mind to another, hardly understandable unless on the assumption of some transcendent element common to both<sup>53</sup>. And, finally, there is the fact that is "a single knowledge of contrary things", of which the intellect can be aware at the same time, when, for example, it entertains the idea of "temperature", in which the notions of hot and cold are included<sup>54</sup>; from which an inkling can be had of what it might mean to be "liberated from the pairs of opposites", for example, from a knowledge only in terms of the past and

<sup>53</sup>"All human properties proceed from One... otherwise one man could not understand another in the sound" (Jacob Boehme, *Sig. Rer.* 1. 2). "In all conversations between two persons tacit reference is made to a common nature. That third party, or common nature, is not social, it is impersonal; it is God" (Emerson, *Varieties of Religious Experience*): "Self [of the self], who controls the speech from within... the un-understood Understander" (*BU.* 3. 8. 17, 23). "Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown" (Erwin Schrödinger, *What is Life?* 1945, p. 90). More generally, W. M. Urban, *The Intelligible World* (1929) and *Language and Reality* (1939).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* 1. 75. 6, where this supplies an argument for the incorruptibility (immortality) of the *anima intellectiva*.

future that, as we have seen, “are a veil to thee from God”. And though omniscience may be nothing quantitative, and not a mere aggregate of knowledges of things, it still holds good that the synoptic and synthetic powers of the merely human intellect provide us with an analogy of what it might be like to see and know all things at once, not in contradistinction of subject and object, but where “to know and to be are the same thing”<sup>55</sup>. One does not imagine that the

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<sup>55</sup> This was not, as is generally supposed, first enunciated by Parmenides, fr. 5. His τὰ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι simply means that “that which can be thought is the same as that which can be” (see Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. 1930, p. 173, n. 2). Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5. 9. 6 quotes Parmenides’ words, but although by this time it was possible for the infinitive to be the subject of a sentence and, in fact, Plotinus uses τὸ εἶναι as subject (*Enneads* 3. 7. 6), his citation of Parmenides’ words is to show that “in the immaterial knowledge and the known are the same”, and while this implies that *there* the knower, knowledge, and the known are the same, what is actually predicated is hardly more than the Scholastic *adequatio rei et intellectus*,—Plato’s “making that in us which thinks like unto the objects of its thought”, which, *if* they be eternal and divine, will restore our being to its “original nature” (*Timaeus* 90). It seems to have been St. Augustine who first explicitly enunciated that *in divinis* to live, to know, and to be are one and the same thing (*De Trin.* 6. 10. 11, *In Joan. Evang.* 99. 4, and *Conf.* 13. 11). To be what one knows is not a given status, but one to be achieved. What is presently true is that “as one’s thinking is, such he *becomes*” (*yac cittas tanmayo bhavati*); and it is because of this that thinking should be purified and transformed, for were it as centred upon God as it now is on things sensibly perceptible, “Who would not be liberated from his bondage?” (*Maitri Up.* 6. 34. 4, 6).

Divine intellect is a sort of dictionary, but much rather a Word or a Form that is the form of many different things, to use the language of exemplarism<sup>56</sup>.

In conclusion, although much could be added to what has already been said<sup>57</sup>, I shall only trace the persist-

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. my "Vedic Exemplarism," *HJAS* 1, 1936, 44-64. The Angels, as Meister Eckhart says, have fewer ideas and use less means than men. God has only one idea and is but that one, and needs no means at all.

<sup>57</sup> I have made only a limited use of F. H. Brabant's admirable and comprehensive *Time and Eternity in Christian Thought*, 1937. G. E. Mueller's "Experimental and Existential Time" (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 6, 1946, 424-435) deals with Greek and Christian sources. I do not understand his words, "Over against this absolute affirmation of being in the recurrences of natural time lies the Hindu negation of time"; for it is hardly a "negation of time" to say that "time and the timeless" are *both* forms of God, who is similarly "*both* formed and formless, "audible and silent" and so on, and it is certainly as true of India as of Greece that "the beauty and substance of human culture is made manifest in the seasonal celebrations and festivals of the year of the soul". There is a valuable discussion of our subject by Alberto Rougés, in his *Las Jerarquías del Ser y la Eternidad*, Tucumán, Argentina, 1943. Alexander's *Space, Time, and Deity* I have not seen. Joseph Katz in his "Eternity—Shadow of Time" (*Review of Religion* 11, 1946, 36-45) tries to invert the Platonic and traditional concept of time as being an image or imitation of eternity, and also makes the very common mistake of supposing that because the satisfaction of all desires is only possible "beyond time" such a satisfaction must be "postponed", forgetting that the *nunc aeternitatis* is as present here and *now* as it ever was or will be; actually, it is the secular utopiast, who believes in the perfectibility of human society, that postpones his felicity, while the *Ṣūfi* "son of the moment" "takes the

ence of the traditional concept of time and eternity in some of the English metaphysical poets. For example, Herrick:

O yeares! and Age! Farewell,  
Behold I go,  
Where I do know  
Infinitie to dwell

And there mine eyes shall see  
All times, how they  
Are lost i'th'Sea <sup>58</sup>  
Of Vast Eternitie

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cash and lets the credit go". Katz, moreover, thinks that the satisfaction of all desires would be "meaningless" because the needs that prompted them would be lacking; Traherne supplies the answer,—admitting that "no joy could ever be were there no want", he says of God that "He infinitely wanteth all His joys... and all those wanted pleasures He infinitely hath... His life in wants and joys is infinite, And both are felt as His Supreme Delight"!

<sup>58</sup> On the "everlasting day", see above, p. 13. Cf. also Meister Eckhart's "Plunge in, this is the drowning". It should be needless to say that "drowning", "anonymity", "becoming no one" are of two utterly different kinds, according to whether it is into the upper or the nether waters that one plunges. One shrinks from the upper waters only because because of attachment to the empirical and transient Ego that "is not my Self"; one should shrink from a drowning in the nether waters, for this implies the loss *even* of one's individuality, so that one has no longer, properly speaking, a name, but only a number, like a convict, or as in proletarian societies, becomes a statistical unit and no longer a person. To have "lost one's self" in the infinite, and to have lost one's self in the in-

Where never Moone shall sway  
The Starres; but she,  
And Night, shall be  
Drown'd in one endless Day,

Herrick's second verse combines the thought of  
Joshua Sylvester's

To-day, To-morrow, Yesterday  
With Thee are one, and instant aye,

and Angelus Silesius:

When you put a name to the drop in the wide ocean

Wenn du das Tröpflein im grosse Meere nennen,  
Denn wirst du meine Seel' im grossen Gott erkennen<sup>59</sup>;

Then will you recognise my soul in the ocean of God

and also Labadie's beautiful last testament,

“I surrender my soul heartily to God, giving it back  
like a drop of water to its source, and rest confident  
in him, praying God, my origin and ocean, that he  
will take me into himself and engulf me eternally in  
the abyss of his being”<sup>60</sup>.

This well-known motif—“the dewdrop slips into the  
shining sea”—has, like the analogous concept of the  
sparks of the divine fire that arise from and return to it,  
and like that of the exile returning home, a long *παράδοσις*,

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determinate are, literally, worlds apart, as, far apart as heaven  
from hell. “When shall I come to be again in Varuna?” RV.  
7. 86. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinische Wandersmann* 2. 25.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted by Dean Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, 2nd ed.  
1. 121.



traceable through Ruysbroeck <sup>61</sup>, Meister Eckhart <sup>62</sup> and Dante <sup>63</sup> to Greek sources in the West, and in the East to the Ṣūfīs, notably Shams-i Tabrīz <sup>64</sup> and Rūmī <sup>65</sup>, and to Buddhist <sup>66</sup>, Vedic <sup>67</sup>, and also Chinese <sup>68</sup> sources. For example, in the *Praśna Upaniṣad* 6. 5 (of which a Buddhist version in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* 4. 198 is an almost literal equivalent) we find:

“Just as the flowing streams that move towards the sea, on reaching it, are coming home, their name-and-shape are broken down, and one speaks only of the ‘Sea’, even so of this Witness (*paridraṣṭr*) <sup>69</sup> the six-

<sup>61</sup> See below. Ruysbroeck makes constant use of the term “immersion”, an exact equivalent of Pali *ogadha*, in the common expression *amat’ogadha* “immersion in, or plunge into, the Undying”, thought of as an “unfathomable sea”.

<sup>62</sup> “As the drop becomes the ocean, so the soul is deified, losing her name and work, but not her essence”, Pfeiffer p.314.

<sup>63</sup> “Nostre pace, è quel mare, al qual tutto si move”, *Paradiso* 3. 85, 86.

<sup>64</sup> “Enter that Ocean, that your drop may become a Sea that is a hundred ‘seas of ‘Omān’”, *Diwān* (Nicholson, Ode XII).

<sup>65</sup> *Mathnawī* 4. 2616 and passim.

<sup>66</sup> A. 4. 202; Udāna 55; M. 1. 487.

<sup>67</sup> Chāndogya Up. 8. 10. 1, Muṇḍ. Up. 3. 2. 8, and Praśna Up. 6. 5. Cf. RV. 7. 86. 2 “When shall we come to be again in Varuṇa?” (the Sea) = Brahma “whose world is the Waters”, Kauṣ. Up. 1. 7.

<sup>68</sup> *Tao Te Ching* 32 “To Tao all under heaven will come, as streams and torrents flow into a great river or sea”. In the present work I have only neglected Chinese sources for want of sufficient knowledge of them.

<sup>69</sup> The “Witness” and the “Person” are one and the same, but respectively as seen *sub specie temporis* and *sub specie aeternitatis*.

teen parts (*kalā*) that move towards the Person (*pu-ruṣa*)<sup>69</sup>, when they reach the Person, are coming home, their name-and-shape are broken down, and one speaks only of the 'Person'. He (who is a Comprehensor) then becomes without parts (*akalā*), immortal... 'On whom the parts are supported, as spokes are set in the

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“Witness (*upadraṣṭṛ*), yea-sayer, support, experient, Great Lord, and also the Self Supreme, such is the Highest Person called when in this body” (*Bhagavad Gītā* 13. 22); “the experient, immanent Person” (*Maitri Up.* 6. 10). This is “he who looked forth through beings” (*Kaṭha Up.* 4. 6); the “unseen Seer (*draṣṭṛ*) ... other than whom there is none that sees” (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 3. 8. 11). This Person is also Agni as *upadraṣṭṛ*, *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* 3. 261, in whose likeness the Purohita functions as the king’s charioteer and *upadraṣṭṛ* to see that the latter does no wrong, *ib.* 3. 94. So, then, the Witness is our “inner Man”; from whom nothing done by the “outer man” is hidden. Again, “the Person here, the Comprehensor, is himself that Progenitor (*Prajāpati*) who is the Year whose fifteen parts are his properties, the sixteenth part, that which abides (*kṣīyate*, κλιξω); which abiding part, compared to the nave of a wheel, is represented by the new-moon night about which the half-months of waxing and waning revolve (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 1. 5. 14, 15); it is with this residual (*atisiṣṭā*) sixteenth part, when the other parts have been mortified, that one understands the Vedas (*Chāndogya Up.* 6. 7). This is the residual “Person” whose unity (*ekatvam*) is reached by transcending all his aspects (*Maitri Up.* 4. 6), and beyond whom there is nothing more whatever (*Kaṭha Up.* 3. 11). This is also the Residuum (*ucchiṣṭam*) that the Atharva Veda, 11. 7, describes as the “synthesis (*samādhi*) of all things” and “origin of all”; this is the Fons Vitae, and I know of no other text in which the fulness of the *content* of Eternity is so adequately expanded.

hub of a wheel, him do I know as the Person to-be-known,—let not death disturb you!”

As one last illustration of the universality of the ideas that have been discussed above I cite from John of Ruysbroeck's *Sparkling Stone* (ch. 9): “For it we possess God in the immersion of love—that is, if we are lost to ourselves—God is our own and we are his own: and we sink ourselves eternally and irretrievably in our one possession which is God . . . And this down-sinking is like a river, which without pause or turning back ever pours into the sea; since this is its proper resting place”. And from *The Book of Truth* (ch. 10): “And this takes place beyond time; that is, without before or after, in an Eternal Now . . . the home and the beginning of all life and all becoming. And so all creatures are therein, beyond themselves, one Being and one Life with God, as in their eternal origin”.

We have traced, according to ability, the history of the meanings of the concepts of time and of eternity: the one, in which all things come and go, and the other, in which all stand immutable. We can only accept these established meanings without question, if the integrity of communication is to be preserved; except for those who elect to live in a merely existential world without meaning, they have always been, and will always remain an integral part of human experience. For “non-spacial and non-temporal intuition is the condition of the interpretation of the space-time world itself”<sup>70</sup> “all states of being, seen in principle, are simultaneous

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<sup>70</sup> Wilbur M. Urban, *The Intelligible World*, 1929, p. 280.

in the eternal now . . . (and) he who cannot escape from the standpoint of temporal succession so as to see all things in their simultaneity is incapable of the least conception of the metaphysical order”<sup>71</sup>; and in the “unified experience of reality the whole process of creation from the Primal Covenant to the Resurrection is a single timeless moment of Divine self-manifestation”<sup>72</sup>.

OM NAMO ANANTĀYA KĀLĀNTAKĀYA!

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<sup>71</sup> René Guénon, *La métaphysique orientale*, pp. 15, 17.

<sup>72</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *Commentary on Rūmī, Mathnawī*, 1. 2110-2111.