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בראשית

AN ESSAY IN ONTOLOGY

WITH SOME REMARKS ON CEREMONIAL MAGIC

בראשית

O Man, of a daring nature, thou subtle production!
Thou wilt not comprehend it, as when understanding some common thing.
ORACLES OF ZOROASTER.

IN presenting this theory of the Universe to the world, I have but one hope of making any profound impression, viz.—that my theory has the merit of explaining the divergences between the three great forms of religion now existing in the world—Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, and of adapting them to ontological science by conclusions not mystical but mathematical. Of Mohammedism I shall not now treat, as, in whatever light we may decide to regard it (and its esoteric schools are often orthodox), in any case it must fall under one of the three heads of Nihilism, Advaitism, and Dvaitism.

Taking the ordinary hypothesis of the universe, that of its infinity, or at any rate that of the infinity of God, or of the infinity of some substance or idea actually existing, we first come to the question of the possibility of the co-existence of God and man.

The Christians, in the category of the existent, enumerate among other things, whose consideration we may discard for the purposes of this argument, God, an infinite being; man; Satan and his angels; man certainly, Satan presumably, finite beings. These are not aspects of one being, but separate and even antagonistic existences. All are equally real; we cannot accept mystics of the type of Caird as being orthodox exponents of the religion of Christ.

The Hindus enumerate Brahm, infinite in all dimensions and directions—indistinguishable from the Pleroma of the Gnostics—and Maya, illusion. This is in a sense the antethesis of noumenon and phenomenon, noumenon being negated of all predicates until it becomes almost extinguished in the Nichts under the title of the Alles. (Cf. Max Müller on the metaphysical Nirvana, in his Dhammapada, Introductory Essay.) The Buddhists express no opinion.

Let us consider the force-quality in the existences conceived of by those two religions respectively, remembering that the God of the Christian is infinite, and yet discussing the alternative if we could suppose him to be a finite God. In any equilibrated system of forces, we may sum and represent them as a triangle or series of triangles which again resolve into one. In any moving system, if the resultant motion be applied in a contrary direction, the equilibrium can also thus be represented. And if any one of the original forces in such a system may be considered, that one is equal to the resultant of the remainder. Let *x*, the purpose of the universe, be the resultant of the forces *G*, *S*, and *M* (God, Satan, and Man). Then *M* is also the resultant of *G*, *S*, and *-x*. So that we can regard either of our forces as supreme, and there is no reason for worshipping one rather that the other. All are finite. This argument the Christians clearly see: hence the development of God from the petty

joss of Genesis to the intangible, but self-contradictory spectre of to-day. But if *G* be infinite, the other forces can have no possible effect on it. As Whewell says, in the strange accident by which he anticipates the metre of *In Memoriam:* "No force on earth, however great, can stretch a cord, however fine, into a horizontal line that shall be absolutely straight."

The definition of God as infinite therefore denies man implicitly; while if he be finite, there is an end of the usual Christian reasons for worship, though I daresay I could myself discover some reasonably good ones. [I hardly expect to be asked, somehow.]

The resulting equilibrium of God and man, destructive of worship, is of course absurd. We must reject it, unless we want to fall into Positivism, Materialism, or something of the sort. But if, then, we call God infinite, how are we to regard man, and Satan? (the latter, at the very least, surely no integral part of him). The fallacy lies not in my demonstration (which is also that of orthodoxy) that a finite God is absurd, but in the assumption that man has any real force.[1]

In our mechanical system (as I have hinted above), if one of the forces be infinite, the others, however great, are both relatively and absolutely nothing.

In any category, infinity excludes finity, unless that finity be an identical part of that infinity.

In the category of existing things, space being infinite, for on that hypothesis we are still working, either matter fills or does not fill it. If the former, matter is infinitely great; if the latter, infinitely small. Whether the matter-universe be 10^{10000} light-years in diameter or half a mile makes no difference; it is infinitely small—in effect, Nothing. The unmathematical illusion that it does exist is what the Hindus call Maya.

If, on the other hand, the matter-universe is infinite, Brahm and God are crowded out, and the possibility of religion is equally excluded.

[1] Lully, Descartes, Spinoza, Schelling. See their works.

We may now shift our objective. The Hindus cannot account intelligibly, though they try hard, for Maya, the cause of all suffering. Their position is radically weak, but at least we may say for them that they have tried to square their religion with their common sense. The Christians, on the other hand, though they saw whither the Manichean Heresy[1] must lead, and crushed it, have not officially admitted the precisely similar conclusion with regard to man, and denied the existence of the human soul as distinct from the divine soul.

Trismegistus, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Boehme, and the mystics generally have of course substantially done so, though occasionally with rather inexplicable reservations, similar to those made in some cases by the Vedantists themselves.

Man then being disproved, God the Person disappears for ever, and becomes Atman, Pleroma, Ain Soph, what name you will, infinite in all directions and in all categories —to deny one is to destroy the entire argument and throw us back on to our old Dvaitistic bases.

I entirely sympathise with my unhappy friend Rev. Mansel, B.D.,[2] in his piteous and pitiful plaints against the logical results of the Advaitist School. But, on his basal hypothesis of an infinite God, infinite space, time, and so on, no other conclusion is possible. Dean Mansel is found in the impossible position of one who will neither give up his premisses nor dispute the validity of his logical processes, but who shrinks in horror from the inevitable conclusion; he supposes there must be something wrong somewhere, and concludes that the sole use of reason is to discover its own inferiority to faith. As Deussen[3] well points out, faith in the Christian sense merely amounts to

[1] The conception of Satan as a positive evil force; the lower triangle of the Hexagram.

[2] *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Art. Metaphysics.

[3] "The Principles of Metaphysics." Macmillan.

being convinced on insufficient grounds.[1] This is surely the last refuge of incompetence.

But though, always on the original hypothesis of the infinity of space, &c., the Advaitist position of the Vedantists and the great Germans is unassailable, yet on practical grounds the Dvaitists have all the advantage. Fichte and the others exhaust themselves trying to turn the simple and obvious position that: "If the Ego alone exists, where is any place, not only for morals and religion, which we can very well do without, but for the most essential and continuous acts of life? Why should an infinite Ego fill a non-existent body with imaginary food cooked in thought only over an illusionary fire by a cook who is not there? Why should infinite power use such finite means, and very often fail even then?"

What is the sum total of the Vedantist position ? "'I' am an illusion, externally. In reality, the true 'I' am the Infinite, and if the illusionary 'I' could only realise Who 'I' really am, how very happy we should all be !" And here we have Karma, rebirth, all the mighty laws of nature operating nowhere in nothing !

There is no room for worship or for morality in the Advaitist system. All the specious pleas of the Bhagavad-Gita, and the ethical works of Western Advaitist philosophers, are more or less consciously confusion of thought. But no subtlety can turn the practical argument; the grinning mouths of the Dvaitist guns keep the fort of Ethics, and warn metaphysics to keep off the rather green grass of religion.

That its apologists have devoted so much time, thought, scholarship and ingenuity to this question is the best proof of the fatuity of the Advaita position.

There is then a flaw somewhere. I boldly take up the glove against all previous wisdom, revert to the most elementary ideas of cannibal savages, challenge all the most vital premisses and axiomata that have passed current coin with philosophy for centuries, and present my theory.

I clearly foresee the one difficulty, and will discuss it in advance. If my conclusions on this point are not accepted, we may at once get back to our previous irritable agnosticism, and look for our Messiah elsewhere. But if we can see together on this one point, I think things will go fairly smoothly afterwards.

Consider[1] Darkness ! Can we philosophically or actually regard as different the darkness produced by interference of light and that existing in the mere absence of light ?

Is Unity really identical with .9 recurring?

Do we not mean different things when we speak respectively of $2 \sin 60°$ and of $\sqrt{3}$?

Charcoal and diamond are obviously different in the categories of colour, crystallisation, hardness, and so on; but are they not really so even in that of existence ?

The third example is to my mind the best. $2 \sin 60°$ and $\sqrt{3}$ are unreal and therefore never conceivable, at least to the present constitution of our human intelligences. Worked out, neither has meaning; unworked, both have meaning, and that a different meaning in one case and the other.

We have thus two terms, both unreal, both inconceivable, yet both representing intelligible and diverse ideas to our minds (and this is the point !) though identical in reality and convertible by a process of reason which simulates or replaces that apprehension which we can never (one may suppose) attain to.

Let us apply this idea to the Beginning of all things, about which the Christians lie frankly, the Hindus prevaricate, and the

[1] Or, as the Sunday-school boy said: "Faith is the power of believing what we know to be true." I quote Deussen with the more pleasure, because it is about the only sentence in all his writings with which I am in accord.—A.C.

[1] Ratiocination may perhaps not take us far. But a continuous and attentive study of these quaint points of distinction may give us an intuition, or direct mind-apperception of what we want, one way or the other.—A.C.

Buddhists are discreetly silent, while not contradicting even the gross and ridiculous accounts of the more fantastic Hindu visionaries.

The Qabalists explain the "First Cause"[1] by the phrase: "From 0 to 1, as the circle opening out into the line." The Christian dogma is really identical, for both conceive of a previous and eternally existing God, though the Qabalists hedge by describing this latent Deity as "Not." Later commentators, notably the illustrious[2] Mac-Gregor-Mathers, have explained this Not as "negatively-existing." Profound as is my respect for the intellectual and spiritual attainments of him whom I am proud to have been permitted to call my master,[2] I am bound to express my view that when the Qabalists said Not, they meant Not, and nothing else. In fact, I really claim to have re-discovered the long-lost and central Arcanum of those divine philosophers.

I have no serious objection to a finite god, or gods, distinct from men and things. In fact, personally, I believe in them all, and admit them to possess inconceivable though not infinite power.

The Buddhists admit the existence of Maha-Brahma, but his power and knowledge are limited; and his agelong day must end. I find evidence everywhere, even in our garbled and mutilated version of the Hebrew Scriptures, that Jehovah's power was limited in all sorts of ways. At the Fall, for instance, Tetragrammaton Elohim has to summon his angles hastily to guard the Tree of Life, lest he should be proved a liar. For had it occurred to Adam to eat of that Tree before their transgression was discovered, or had the Serpent been aware of its properties, Adam would indeed have lived and not died. So that a mere accident saved the remnants of the already besmirched reputation of the Hebrew tribal Fetich.

When Buddha was asked how things came to be, he took refuge in silence, which his disciples very conveniently interpreted as meaning that the question tended not to edification.

I take it that the Buddha (ignorant, doubtless, of algebra) had sufficiently studied philosophy and possessed enough worldly wisdom to be well aware that any system he might promulgate would be instantly attacked and annihilated by the acumen of his numerous and versatile opponents.

Such teaching as he gave on the point may be summed up as follows. "Whence, whither, why, we know not; but we do know that we are here, that we dislike being here, that there is a way out of the whole loathsome affair—let us make haste and take it!"

I am not so retiring in disposition; I persist in my inquiries, and at last the appalling question is answered, and the past ceases to intrude its problems upon my mind.

Here you are! Three shies a penny! Change all bad arguments.

I ASSERT THE ABSOLUTENESS OF THE QABALISTIC ZERO.

When we say that the Cosmos sprang from 0, what kind of 0 do we mean ? By 0 in the ordinary sense of the term we mean "absence of extension in any of the categories."

When I say "No cat has two tails," I do not mean, as the old fallacy runs, that "Absence-of-cat possesses two tails" ; but that "In the category of two-tailed things, there is no extension of cat."

Nothingness is that about which no positive proposition is valid. We cannot truly affirm: "Nothing-ness is green, or heavy, or sweet."

Let us call time, space, being, heaviness, hunger, the categories.[1] If a man be heavy and hungry, he is extended in all these,

[1] An expression they carefully avoid using.—A.C.

[2] I retain this sly joke from the first edition.

[1] I cannot here discuss the propriety of representing the categories as dimensions. It will be obvious to any student of the integral calculus, or to any one who appreciates the geometrical significance of the term x^4.—A.C.

besides, of course, many more. But let us suppose that these five are all. Call the man X; his formula is then $X^{t+s+b+h+h}$. If he now eat; he will cease to be extended in hunger; if he be cut off from time and gravitation as well, he will now be represented by the formula X^{s+b}. Should he cease to occupy space and to exist, his formula would then be X^0. This expression is equal to 1; whatever X may represent, if it be raised to the power of 0 (this meaning mathematically "if it be extended in no dimension or category"), the result is Unity, and the unknown factor X is eliminated.

This is the Advaitist idea of the future of man; his personality, bereft of all qualities, disappears and is lost, while in its place arises the impersonal Unity, The Pleroma, Parabrahma, or the Allah of the Unity-adoring followers of Mohammed. (To the Musulman fakir, Allah is by no means a personal God.)

Unity is thus unaffected, whether or no it be extended in any of the categories. But we have already agreed to look to 0 for the Uncaused.

Now if there was in truth 0 "before the beginning of years," THAT 0 WAS EXTENDED IN NONE OF THE CATEGORIES, FOR THERE COULD HAVE BEEN NO CATEGORIES IN WHICH IT COULD EXTEND! If our 0 was the ordinary 0 of mathematics, there was not truly absolute 0, for 0 is, as I have shown, dependent on the idea of categories. If these existed, then the whole question is merely thrown back; we must reach a state in which this 0 is absolute. Not only must we get rid of all subjects, but of all predicates. By 0 (in mathematics) we really mean 0^n, where n is the final term of a natural scale of dimensions, categories, or predicates. Our Cosmic Egg, then, from which the present universe arose, was Nothingness, extended in no categories, or graphically, 0^0. This expression is in its present form meaningless. Let us discover its value by a simple mathematical process!

$$0^0 = 0^{1-1} = \frac{0^1}{0^1}\left[\text{Multiply by} 1 = \frac{n}{n}\right]$$

$$\text{Then } \frac{0^1}{n} \times \frac{n}{0^1} = 0 \times \infty.$$

Now the multiplying of the infinitely great by the infinitely small results in SOME UNKNOWN FINITE NUMBER EXTENDED IN AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF CATEGORIES. It happened, when this our Great Inversion took place, from the essence of all nothingness to finity extended in innumerable categories, that an incalculably vast system was produced. Merely by chance, chance in the truest sense of the term, we are found with gods, men, stars, planets, devils, colours, forces, and all the materials of the Cosmos: and with time, space, and causality, the conditions limiting and involving them all.[1]

Remember that it is not true to say that our 0^0 existed; nor that it did not exist. The idea of existence was just as much unformulated as that of toasted cheese.

But 0^0 is a finite expression, or has a finite phase, and our universe is a finite universe ; its categories are themselves finite, and the expression "infinite space" is a contradiction in terms. The idea of an absolute and infinite[2] God is relegated to the limbo of all similar idle and pernicious perversions of truth. Infinity remains, but only as a mathematical conception as impossible in nature as the square root of -1. Against all this mathematical, or semi-mathematical, reasoning, it may doubtless be objected that our

[1] Compare and contrast this doctrine with that of Herbert Spencer ("First Principles," Pt. I.), and see my "Science and Buddhism" for a full discussion of the difference involved. —A. C.

[2] If by "infinitely great" we only mean "indefinitely great," as a mathematician would perhaps tell us, we of course begin at the very point I am aiming at, viz., Ecrasez l'Infini. —A.C.

whole system of numbers, and of manipulating them, is merely a series of conventions. When I say that the square root of three is unreal, I know quite well that it is only so in relation to the series 1, 2, 3, &c., and that this series is equally unreal if I make $\sqrt{3}$, π, $\sqrt[3]{50}$ the members of a ternary scale. But this, theoretically true, is practically absurd. If I mean "the number of a, b, and c," it does not matter if I write 3 or $\sqrt[3]{50}$; the idea is a definite one ; and it is the fundamental ideas of consciousness of which we are treating, and to which we are compelled to refer everything, whether proximately or ultimately.

So also my equation, fantastic as it may seem, has a perfect and absolute parallel in logic. Thus: let us convert twice the proposition "some books are on the table." By negativing both terms we get "Absence-of-book is not on the table," which is precisely my equation backwards, and a thinkable thing. To reverse the process, what do I mean when I say "some pigs, but not the black pig, are not in the sty" ? I imply that the black pig is in the sty. All I have done is to represent the conversion as a change, rather than as merely another way of expressing the same thing. And "change" is really not my meaning either; for change, to our minds, involves the idea of time. But the whole thing is inconceivable—to ratiocination, though not to thought. Note well too that if I say "Absence-of-books is not on the table," I cannot convert it only "All books are on the table" but only to "some books are on the table." The proposition is an "I" and not an "A" proposition. It is the Advaita blunder to make it so; and many a schoolboy has fed off the mantelpiece for less.

There is yet another proof—the proof by exclusion. I have shown, and metaphysicians practically admit, the falsity alike of Dvaitism and Advaitism. The third, the only remaining theory, *this* theory, must, however antecedently improbable, however difficult to assimilate, be true.[1]

"My friend, my young friend," I think I hear some Christian cleric say, with an air of profound wisdom, not untinged with pity, condescending to pose beardless and brainless impertinence: "where is the *Cause* for this truly remarkable change?"

That is exactly where the theory rears to heaven its stoutest bastion! There is not, and could not be, any cause. Had 0^0 been extended in causality, no change could have taken place.[2]

Here then, are we, finite beings in a finite universe, time, space, and causality themselves finite (inconceivable as it may seem) with our individuality, and all the "illusions" of the Advaitists, just as real as they practically are to our normal consciousness.

As Schopenhauer, following Buddha, points out, suffering is a necessary condition of this existence.[3] The war of the contending forces as they grind themselves down to the final resultant must cause endless agony. We may one day be able to transform the categories of emotion as certainly and easily as we now transform the categories of force, so that in a few years Chicago may be importing suffering in the raw state and turning it into tinned salmon: but at present the reverse process is alone practicable.

How, then, shall we escape? Can we expect the entire universe to resolve itself back into the phase of 0^0 ? Surely not. In the first place there is no reason why the whole should do so; $\frac{x}{y}$ is just as convertible as x. But worse, the category of causality has already been formed, and its inertia is

[1] I may remark that the distinction between this theory and the normal one of the Immanence of the Universe, is trivial, perhaps even verbal only. Its advantage, however, is that, by hypostatising nothing, we avoid the necessity of any explanation. How did nothing come to be ? is a question which requires no answer.

[2] See the Questions of King Milinda, vol. ii. p. 103.

[3] See also Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics."

sufficient to oppose a most serious stumbling-block to so gigantic a process.

The task before us is consequently of a terrible nature. It is easy to let things slide, to grin and bear it in fact, until everything is merged in the ultimate unity, which may or may not be decently tolerable. But while we wait?

There now arises the question of freewill. Causality is probably not fully extended in its own category,[1] a circumstance which gives room for a fractional amount of freewill. If this be not so, it matters little; for if I find myself in a good state, that merely proves that my destiny took me there. We are, as Herbert Spencer observes, self-deluded with the idea of freewill; but if this be so, nothing matters at all. If, however, Herbert Spencer is mistaken (unlikely as it must appear), then our reason is valid, and we should seek out the right path and pursue it. The question therefore need not trouble us at all.

Here then we see the use of morals and of religion, and all the rest of the bag of tricks. All these are methods, bad or good, for extricating ourselves from the universe.

Closely connected with this question is that of the will of God. People argue that an Infinite intelligence must have been at work on this cosmos. I reply No ! There is no intelligence at work worthy of the name. The Laws of Nature may be generalised in one—the Law of Inertia. Everything moves in the direction determined by the path of least resistance ; species arise, develop, and die as their collective inertia determines; to this Law there is no exception but the doubtful one of Freewill; the Law of Destiny itself is formally and really identical with it.[2]

As to an *infinite* intelligence, all philosophers of any standing are agreed that all-love and all-power are incompatible. The existence of the universe is a standing proof of this.

The Deist needs the Optimist to keep him company; over their firesides all goes well, but it is a sad shipwreck they suffer on emerging into the cold world.

This is why those who seek to buttress up religion are so anxious to prove that the universe has no real existence, or only a temporary and relatively unimportant one; the result is of course the usual self-destructive Advaitist muddle.

The precepts of morality and religion are thus of use, of vital use to us, in restraining the more violent forces alike of nature and of man. For unless law and order prevail, we have not the necessary quiet and resources for investigating, and learning to bring under our control, all the divergent phenomena of our prison, a work which we undertake that at last we may be able to break down the walls, and find that freedom which an inconsiderate Inversion has denied.

The mystical precepts of pseudo-Zoroaster, Buddha, Çankaracharya, pseudo-Christ and the rest, are for advanced students only, for direct attack on the problem. Our servants, the soldiers, lawyers, all forms of government, make this our nobler work possible, and it is the gravest possible mistake to sneer at those humble but faithful followers of the great minds of the world.

What, then, are the best, easiest, directed methods to attain our result? And how shall we, in mortal language, convey to the minds of others the nature of a result so beyond language, baffling even imagination eagle-pinioned? It may help us if we endeavour to outline the distinction between the Hindu and Buddhist methods and aims of the Great Work.

The Hindu method is really mystical in the truest sense; for, as I have shown, the Atman is not infinite and eternal: one day

[1] Causality is itself a secondary, and in its limitation as applied to volition, an inconceivable idea. H. Spencer, *op. cit.* This consideration alone should add great weight to the agnostic, and *à fortiori* to the Buddhist, position.

[2] See H. Spencer, "First Principles," "The Knowable," for a fair summary of the facts underlying this generalisation; which indeed he comes within an ace of making in so many words. It may be observed that this law is nearly if not quite axiomatic, its contrary being enormously difficult if not impossible to formulate mentally.

it must sink down with the other forces. But by creating in thought an infinite Impersonal Personality, by *defining* it as such, all religions except the Buddhist and, as I believe, the Qabalistic, have sought to annihilate their own personality. The Buddhist aims directly at extinction; the Hindu denies and abolished his own finity by the creation of an absolute.

As this cannot be done in reality, the process is illusory; yet it is useful in the early stages—as far, at any rate, as the fourth stage of Dhyana, where the Buddha places it, though the Yogis claim to attain to Nirvikalpa-Samadhi, and that Moksha is identical with Nirvana ; the former claim I see no reason to deny them; the latter statement I must decline at present to accept.

The task of the Buddhist recluse is roughly as follows. He must plunge every particle of his being into one idea : right views, aspirations, word, deed, life, will-power, meditation, rapture, such are the stages of his liberation, which resolves itself into a struggle against the laws of causality. He cannot prevent past causes taking effect, but he can prevent present causes from having any future results. The exoteric Christian and Hindu rather rely on another person to do this for them, and are further blinded by the thirst for life and individual existence, the most formidable obstacle of all, in fact a negation of the very object of all religion. Schopenhauer shows that life is assured to the will-to-live, and unless Christ (or Krishna, as the case may be) destroys these folk by superior power—a task from which almightiness might well recoil baffled !—I much fear that eternal life, and consequently eternal suffering, joy, and change of all kinds, will be their melancholy fate. Such persons are in truth their own real enemies. Many of them, however, believing erroneously that they are being "unselfish," do fill their hearts with devotion for the beloved Saviour, and this process is, in its ultimation, so similar to the earlier stages of the Great Work itself, that some confusion has, stupidly enough, arisen ; but for all that the practice has been the means of bringing some devotees on to the true Path of the Wise, unpromising as such material must sound to intelligent ears.

The esoteric Christian or Hindu adopts a middle path. Having projected the Absolute from his mind, he endeavours to unite his consciousness with that of his Absolute and of course his personality is destroyed in the process. Yet it is to be feared that such an adept too often starts on the path with the intention of aggrandising his personality to the utmost. But his method is so near to the true one that this tendency is soon corrected, as it were automatically.

(The mathematical analogue of this process is to procure for yourself the realisation of the nothingness of yourself by keeping the fourth dimension ever present to your mind.)

The illusory nature of this idea of an infinite Atman is well shown by the very proof which that most distinguished Vedantist, the late Swami Vivekananda (no connection with the firm of a similar name[1] across the street), gives of the existence of the infinite. "Think of a circle !" says he. "You will in a moment become conscious of an infinite circle around your original small one." The fallacy is obvious. The big circle is not infinite at all, but is itself limited by the little one. But to take away the little circle, that is the method of the esoteric Christian or the mystic. But the process is never perfect, because however small the little circle becomes, its relation with the big circle is still finite. But even allowing for a moment that the Absolute is really attainable, is the nothingness of the finity related to it really identical with that attained directly by the Buddhist Arahat? This, consistently with

[1] The Swami Vive Ananda, Madame Horos, for whose history consult the Criminal Law Reports.

my former attitude, I feel constrained to deny. The consciousness of the Absolute-wala[1] is really extended infinitely rather than diminished infinitely, as he will himself assure you. True, Hegel says: "Pure being is pure nothing !" and it is true that the infinite heat and cold, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, and all the other pairs of opposites,[2] cancel one another out: yet I feel rather afraid of this Absolute ! Maybe its joy and sorrow are represented in phases, just as 0^0 and finity are phases of an identical expression, and I have an even chance only of being on the right side of the fence!

The Buddhist leaves no chances of this kind; in all his categories he is infinitely unextended; though the categories themselves exist; he is in fact $0^{A+B+C+D+E+..+N}$ and capable of no conceivable change, unless we imagine Nirvana to be incomprehensibly divided by Nirvana, which would (supposing the two Nirvanas to possess identical categories) result in the production of the original 0^0. But a further change would be necessary even then before serious mischief could result. In short, I think we may dismiss from our minds any alarm in respect of this contingency.

On mature consideration, therefore, I confidently and deliberately take my refuge in the Triple Gem.

Namo Tasso Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa![3]

Let there be hereafter no discussion of the classical problems of philosophy and religion! In the light of this exposition the antitheses of noumenon and phenomenon, unity and multiplicity, and their kind, are all reconciled, and the only question that remains is that of finding the most satisfactory means of attaining Nirvana—extinction of all that exists, knows, or feels; extinction final and complete, utter and absolute extinction. For by these words only can we indicate Nirvana: a state which transcends thought cannot be described in thought's language. But from the point of view of thought extinction is complete: we have no data for discussing that which is unthinkable, and must decline to do so. This is the answer to those who accuse the Buddha of hurling his Arahats (and himself) from Samma Samadhi to annihilation.

Pray observe in the first place that my solution of the Great Problem permits the co-existence of an indefinite number of means: they need not even be compatible; Karma, rebirth, Providence, prayer, sacrifice, baptism, there is room for all. On the old and, I hope, now finally discredited hypothesis of an infinite being, the supporters of these various ideas, while explicitly affirming them, implicitly denied. Similarly, note that the Qabalistic idea of a supreme God (and innumerable hierarchies) is quite compatible with this theory, provided that the supreme God is not infinite.

Now as to our weapons. The more advanced Yogis of the East, like the Nonconformists at home, have practically abandoned ceremonial as idle. I have yet to learn, however, by what dissenters have replaced it! I take this to be an error, except in the case of a very advanced Yogi. For there exists a true magical ceremonial, vital and direct, whose purpose has, however, at any rate of recent times, been hopelessly misunderstood.

Nobody any longer supposes that any means but that of meditation is of avail to grasp the immediate causes of our being ; if some person retort that he prefers to rely on a Glorified Redeemer, I simply answer

[1] Wala, one whose business is connected with anything. *E.g.* Jangli-wala, one who lives in, or has business with, a jungle, *i.e.* a wild man, or a Forest Conservator.

[2] The Hindus see this as well as any one, and call Atman *Sat-chit-ananda*, these being above the pairs of opposites, rather on the Hegelian lines of the reconciliation (rather than the identity) of opposites in a master-idea. We have dismissed infinity as the figment of a morbid mathematic: but in any case the same disproof applies to it as to God.—A.C.

[3] Hail unto Thee, the Blessed One, the Perfect One, the Enlightened One!

that he is the very nobody to whom I now refer.

Meditation is then the means; but only the supreme means. The agony column of the *Times* is the supreme means of meeting with the gentleman in the brown billycock and frock coat, wearing a green tie and chewing a straw, who was at the soirée of the Carlton Club last Monday night; no doubt ! but this means is seldom or never used in the similar contingency of a cow-elephant desiring her bull in the jungles of Ceylon.

Meditation is not within the reach of every one ; not all possess the ability ; very few indeed (in the West at least) have the opportunity.

In any case what the Easterns call "one-pointedness" is an essential preliminary to even early stages of true meditation. And iron will-power is a still earlier qualification.

By meditation I do not mean merely "thinking about" anything, however profoundly, but the absolute restraint of the mind to the contemplation of a single object, whether gross, fine, or altogether spiritual.

Now true magical ceremony is entirely directed to attain this end, and forms a magnificent gymnasium for those who are not already finished mental athletes. By act, word, and thought, both in quantity and quality, the one object of the ceremony is being constantly indicated. Every fumigation, purification, banishing, invocation, evocation, is chiefly a reminder of the single purpose, until the supreme moment arrives, and every fibre of the body, every force-channel of the mind, is strained out in one overwhelming rush of the Will in the direction desired. Such is the real purport of all the apparently fantastic directions of Solomon, Abramelin, and other sages of repute. When a man has evoked and mastered such forces as Taphtartharath, Belial, Amaimon, and the great powers of the elements, then he may be safely be permitted to try to stop thinking. For, needless to say, the universe, including the thinker, exists only by virtue of the thinker's thought.[1]

In yet one other way is magic a capital training ground for the Arahat. True symbols do really awake those macrocosmic forces of which they are the eidola, and it is possible in this manner very largely to increase the magical "potential" to borrow a term from electrical science.

Of course, there are bad and invalid processes, which tend rather to disperse or to excite the mind-stuff rather than to control it; these we must discard. But there is a true magical ceremonial, the central Arcanum alike of Eastern and Western practical transcendentalism. Needless to observe, if I knew it, I should not disclose it.

I therefore affirm the validity of the Qabalistic tradition in its practical part as well as in those exalted regions of thought through which we have to recently, and so hardly, travelled.[2]

Eight are the limbs of Yoga: morality and virtue, control of body, thought, and force, leading to concentration, meditation, and rapture.

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[1] See Berkeley and his expounders, for the Western shape of this Eastern commonplace. Huxley, however, curiously enough, states the fact in almost these words.—A.C.

[2] A possible mystic transfiguration of the Vedanta system has been suggested to me on the lines of the Syllogism—

God = Being (Patanjali).
Being = Nothing (Hegel).
God = Nothing (Buddhism).

Or, in the language of religion:

Every one may admit that monotheism, exalted by the introduction of the ∞ symbol, is equivalent to pantheism. Pantheism and atheism are really identical, as the opponents of both are the first to admit.

If this be really taught, I must tender my apologies, for the reconcilement is of course complete.—A.C. [There was no citation point for this footnote in the text of my copy of *Berashith*. Its current placing is a guess on my part – T.S.]

Only when the last of these has been attained, and itself refined upon by removing the gross and even the fine objects of its sphere, can the causes, subtle and coarse, the unborn causes whose seed is hardly sown, of continued existence be grasped and annihilated, so that the Arahat is sure of being abolished in the utter extinction of Nirvana, while even in this world of pain, where he must remain until the ancient causes, those which have already germinated, are utterly worked out (for even the Buddha himself could not swing back the Wheel of the Law) his certain anticipation of the approach of Nirvana is so intense as to bathe him constantly in the unfathomable ocean of apprehension of immediate bliss.

AUM MANI PADME HOUM