



On the One and Only Transmigrant

Man is born once; I have been born many times.

Rûmi

Bei Gotte werden nur die Götter angenommen.

Angelus Silesius

Liberation is for the Gods, not for men.

Gebhard-Lestrangle

Ātmety evopāsita, atra hy ete sarva eṅam bhavanti

BU 1.4.7

N'atthi koci satto yo imamha kaya anyam kayam sanḅamati

Mil 72, cf. 46.

I

Śaᅅkarācārya's dictum, "Verily, there is no other transmigrant but the Lord" (*satyam, neśvarād anyah saᅅsārī*, BrSBh 1.1.5),¹ startling as it may appear to be at first sight, for it denies the reincarnation of individual essences, is amply supported by the older, and even the oldest texts, and is by no means an exclusively Indian doctrine. For it is not an individual soul that Plato means when he says: "The soul of man is immortal, and at one time comes to an end, which is called dying away, and at another is born again, but never perishes . . . and having been born many times has acquired the knowledge of all and everything";² or that Plotinus means when he says: "There is really nothing strange in that reduction

[This study was published in supplement No. 3 to the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1944.—ED.]

¹ Cf. T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II (Madras, 1914-1916), p. 405, "When Īśvara absorbs in himself, he is known as the Puruᅅa, and as Saᅅsārī when he has manifested himself." Cf. n. 66.

² *Meno* 81bc, where this is cited as the doctrine of learned priests and priestesses, and is approved by Socrates. Of the same sort is Agni's omniscience as Jātavedas, "Knower of Births," and the Buddha's, whose *abhiññā* extends to all "former abodes." He who is "where every where and every when is focused" (Dante) cannot but have knowledge of every thing.

(of all selves) to One; though it may be asked, How can there be only One, the same in many, entering into all, but never itself divided up";³ or by Hermes who says that "He who does all these things is One," and speaks of Him as "bodiless and having many bodies, or rather present in all bodies."⁴

The "Lord" of whom Śaᅅkarācārya speaks is, of course, the Supreme and Solar Self, Ātman, Brahma, Indra, "of all beings Overlord, of all beings King," whose omniformity is timeless and whose omnipresence enables us to understand that He must be omniscient (*sarvānubhūh*, BU 11.5.15, 19, cf. IV.4.22 and AĀ XIII); Death, the Person in the Sun, Indra and Breath of Life, "One as he is Person there, and many as he is in his children here," and at whose departure "we" die (ŚB x.5.2.13, 16); the Solar Self of all that is in motion or at rest (RV 1.115.1); our Immortal Self and Inner Controller "other than whom there is no seer, hearer, thinker or knower" (BU 111.7.23, 111.8.11); the solar Indra of whom it is said that whoever speaks, hears, thinks, etc., does so by his ray (JUB 1.28, 29); Brahma, of whom it is said that our powers "are merely the names of his acts" (BU 1.4.7, cf. 1.5.21); the Self, from whom all action stems (BU 1.6.3; BG 111.15); the Self that knows everything (MU VI.7).⁵

Whether as Sūrya, Savitᅅ, Ātman, Brahma, Agni, Prajāpati, Indra, Vāyu or *madhyama* Prāᅅa—*yādᅅg eva dadᅅᅅe tādᅅg ucyate* (RV v.44.6)⁶—this Lord, from within the heart here,⁷ is our mover, driver and actuator (*iri-*

³ Plotinus, IV.9.4, 5 (condensed); cf. 1.1, *passim*. In our Self, the spiritual Self of all beings, all these selves and their doings are one simple act of being; hence it is not the separated selves and acts, but rather the Real Agent that one should seek to know (BU 1.4.7, Kauᅅ. Up. 111.8, Hermes, *Lib.* XI.2.12A). "Thou hast seen the kettles of thought a-boiling; consider also the fire!" (*Mathnawī* v.2902).

⁴ Hermes, *Lib.* v.10A (cf. BU 1.5.21), and XI.2.12A (cf. KU 11.22).

⁵ In "Recollection, Indian and Platonic" [the preceding essay in this volume—ED.], we have shown that timeless omnipresence and providential omniscience are interdependent and inseparable notions. The related thesis of the present article is that the omnipresent omniscient is "the only transmigrant," and that in the last analysis this "transmigration" is nothing but his knowledge of himself expressed in terms of a duration. If there were really "others," or any discontinuity within the unity, each "other" or "part" would not be omnipresent to the rest, and the concept of an omniscience would be inconceivable.

⁶ "He is given names that correspond exactly to the forms in which He is apprehended." Cf. "All names are names of Him, who has no name, for that he is their common Father," Hermes, *Lib.* v.10A.

⁷ "Who takes up his stand in every heart" (*hydi sarvasya adhiᅅᅅhan*, BG XIII.17); "Questi nei cor mortali è per motore, questi la terra in se stringe ed aduna," Dante, *Paradiso* 1.116—*stringe*, as in ŚB VIII.7.3.10, etc.

tah,⁸ codayitr,⁹ kārāyitr¹⁰) and whole source of the evanescent consciousness (*cetana* = *saṃjñāna*)¹¹ that begins with our birth and ends with our death (MU II.6b, III.3).¹² We do nothing of ourselves and are merely his vehicles, and instruments (as for Philo, *passim*).

This "higher" (*para*) Brahma is that "One, the Great Self, who takes up his stand in womb after womb (*yo yonim yonim adhiṣṭhātī*¹³ *ekah . . . mahātma*) . . . as the omniform Lord of the Breaths (*viśvarūpaḥ* . . .

⁸ Cf. the "potter's wheel"; cf. Mund. Up. II.2.6; BU II.5.15; Plotinus, VI.5.5; Isa. 64:8, etc.

⁹ Of the "chariot," cf. RV VI.75.6; KU III.3 ff.; J VI.252; Plato, *Laws* 898c, "Soul is the driver of all things." In MU II.6, the driver's "reins" or "rays" (*raśmayah*) are the intelligential powers (*buddhīndriyāni*) by which the equine powers of sensation (*ḥarmendriyāni*) are governed. Similarly, Hermes, *Lib.* x.22b, "The energies of God are, as it were, His rays," and XVI.7, "His reins are (His rays)." Cf. Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae* IV.11, "Hic regum sceptrum dominus tenet, Orbisque habenas temperat, Et volucrum currum stabilis regit, Rerum coruscus arbiter"; *Mathnawī* I.3268, 3273, 3575-3576. "Under the theory of presence by powers, souls are described as rays" (Plotinus, VI.4.3). This is "the living doctrine that ascribes to God the totality of all powers," and to be distinguished from "the pierced and cloven doctrine that is conscious of a man's own mind at work" (Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, I.93, 94).

¹⁰ Of the "elemental self" (*bhūtātman*) as "agent" (*kartr*) of the Inner Man. "He is blind indeed who sees only the active self" (*kartāram ātmānam kevala tu yah paśyati . . . na sa paśyati*, BG XVII.16), whereas "He sees indeed, who sees the Overlord who is the same in all beings, imperishable in those that perish . . . the Overself who, although present in the body, neither acts nor is contaminated by action" (*na karoti na lipyate*, BG XIII.27, 31).

¹¹ "The dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). *Na pretya saṃjñāsti* (BU II.4.12); *saññā, bhikkhave, loke lokadhammo*, S III.140, cf. Sn 779, 1071, and M I.260. The Self is indestructible (BU IV.5.14; BG IV.13), but "consciousness" in terms of subject and object is a contingency, and loses its meaning "where everything has become just the Self" (BU II.4.14), "actively Itself when it is not intelligizing" (Plotinus, IV.4.2).

¹² "Spirit (*rūh*), concealing its glory and pinions and plumes, says to the body, 'O dunghill, who art thou? Through my beams (cf. n. 9) thou hast come to life for a day or two. . . . The beams of the spirit are speech and eye and ear'" (*Mathnawī* I.3267-3273).

¹³ The body being the domain or garden (*ārāma*, BU IV.3.14) or platform (*adhiṣṭhānam*, CU VIII.12.1) of the unseen, incorporeal, and impassible Self. *Adhiṣṭhā* (sometimes *avasthā*, *āruh*) is regularly employed in connection with the "mounting" of the psycho-physical vehicle (*ratha*) by the Spirit (*ātman*), e.g., AV x.8.1, (Brahma) *śarvam . . . adhiṣṭhātī*; AĀ III.3.8.5b, *prāna adhiṣṭhātī (devaratham)*; KU II.22, *śarīreṣu avasthitam . . . ātmānam*; BG XIII.17, *hr̥di . . . adhiṣṭhan*. At the same time *adhiṣṭhā* implies administration, management, as in *Prāna Up.* III.0: similarly *anuṣṭhā* in KU V.1.

prānādhipaḥ)¹⁴ he wanders about (*saṃcarati* = *saṃsarati*)¹⁵ by his own actions, the fruition of which he enjoys (*upabhoktr*),¹⁶ and, being associated with conceptuality and the notion 'I am,' is known as the 'lower' (*apara*). . . . Neither male nor female nor neuter, whatever body he as-

¹⁴ Not, as understood by Deussen and Hume, the "individual soul," which is not a "Lord" but a compound of the Breaths or Beings that are the subjects (*svāh*) of the Great Being or Breath from which they arise and into which they return (JUB IV.7; MU III.3, *bhūtagana*). It would be an antinomy to describe the composite individual soul, subject to persuasion, as a sovereign power. "The Lord of the Breaths," who is "the Leader of the Breaths and of the body" (*prānasarīranetr*, Mund. Up. II.2.8) is much rather *the* Being and Breath that is "Lord of all (*prānāḥ . . . bhūtāḥ sarvasya-śvarāḥ*, AV XI.4.1.10)," the "Lord of the gods (powers of the soul) who enters the womb and is 'born again' (*yonim aiti sa u jāyate punaḥ, sa devānām adhipatir babhūva*," AV XIII.2.25) or "Lord of Beings" (*bhūtānām adhipatīḥ*, AV IV.8.1; TS VI.1.11.4; MU V.2), i.e., the imperial Breath on whose behalf the "other Breaths" function as ministers (*Prāna Up.* III.4), and the Brahma whom all things hail as king (BU IV.3.37). The "Lord of the Breaths" (*prānādhipaḥ*) is *the* Breath whose superiority to all the other Breaths (*prānāḥ = devāḥ, bhūtāni*) is again and again insisted upon in the contests of the Breaths for supremacy (*Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads*, *passim*), and other than the subjected elemental self (*bhūtātman*) that is a host of beings (*bhūtagana*, MU III.3). The Lord of the Breaths, "neither male nor female," is the Breath thus described in AĀ II.3.8.5, in whom all the gods (Breaths or powers of the soul) are unified (AĀ II; Kauś. Up. III.3; cf. BU I.4.7), the Breath that mounts the bodily vehicle and is regularly identified with the Sun, Brahma, Ātman, Vāmadeva, Indra, etc. This Lord of the Breaths is likewise the Inner Person (*antahpuruṣa = antarātman* of Svet. Up. III.13; KU V.9-13, VI.17) who wanders (*carati*) from body to body un-overcome by the fruits of the actions that determine the aughty or naughty wombs in which the elemental self alone suffers (MU III.1-3).

When at death this Self recollects itself (BU IV.4.3, VI.1.13, etc.)—*ὄμωσ εἰς ἑν ἀνατρέχει ἀποστάντος τοῦ σώματος* (Plotinus IV.9.2)—then "we" are no more (BU II.4.12, IV.4.3; CU VIII.9.1, etc.), "we who in our junction with our bodies are composites and have qualities shall not exist, but shall be brought into the regeneration by which, becoming joined to immaterial things, we shall become incomposite and without qualities" (Philo, *De cherubim* 113 ff.; cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 78c ff.).

¹⁵ Cf. nn. 26, 40.

¹⁶ *Upabhoktr* = *bhoktr* in KU III.4 (Ātman) and MU II.6 (Prajāpati). This fruition does not necessarily involve a subjection: insofar as it remains a spectator (*abhi cākaṣīti*, RV I.164.20; *prekṣada*, MU II.7; Pāli *upekḥaka*), or in other words disinterestedly enjoys only the flavor of life (*aḥāmo . . . rasena tṛptah*, AV x.8.44), the governing and immortal Self of the self, or Inner Self (*amṛto 'syātmā, antarātman*), remains immune (KU V.13; MU III.2, etc.). As Experient (*bhoktr*) this immanent Person (*puruṣo 'ntasthah*) is himself without qualities (*nirguna*), while the elemental self (*bhūtātman*) with its three qualities (*triguna*)—i.e., the individual soul—is his "food" (*annam*, MU VI.10). The contemplative Experient is both the Giver-of-being and a Mighty Lord (*bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca . . . bhoktā mahesvarah*, BG IX.24, 13, 22); the All-soul that "suffers no hurt whatever by furnishing the body with the power to existence" (Plotinus, IV.8.2; cf. KU V.1 and BG XIII.32).

sumes, therewith he is connected (*yujyate*):¹⁷ through the delusions of concept, touch, and sight, there is birth and growth of the Self by the rain of food and drink;¹⁸ the embodied Self (*dehī*)¹⁹ assumes functional forms in their stations in regular order (*ḥarmāṇugāny anukramena dehī sthāneṣu rūpāny abhisampadyate*)²⁰ . . . and because of conjunction with

For, as Meister Eckhart says, "With the love with which God leaves Himself, He loves all creatures, not as creatures but more: creatures as God. . . . God tastes (Skr. *bhūṅkte*) himself in all things. . . . Men as creatures taste as all creatures in measures and quantities, as wine and bread and meat. But my inner man tastes not as a creature, but more: as a gift of God. But my innermost man does not taste it as a gift of God, but more: as eternity" (Pfeiffer ed., 180).

¹⁷ *Yujyate*, like *samyoga* below, as in BG 1.26, where every birth is said to depend upon a "connection" or "yoking" (*samyoga*) of the Knower of the Field with the Field. Conversely, *asamyoga*, "liberation," "unyoking," MU VI.21.

¹⁸ "The nourishment of 'sense-perception' which he (the author of Gen. 2:5) figuratively calls 'rain'" (Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, 1.48). Here with reference to the falcon-brought Soma, and the "Shower of Wealth (*vasor dhārā*)." "Touch," because "all experience is contact-born" (BG v.21); cf. Coomaraswamy, "Note on the Stickfast Motif," 1944.

¹⁹ The embodied Self (*dehī*) of BG 11.18 ff., and quick or vibrant (*vipaścit*) Self of KU 11.18, 19, that never becomes anyone, but passes over from body to body, and is not slain when the body is slain, unborn though it can be thought of as continually born and continually dying. This is precisely the doctrine of the immortal Soul, which Plato cites as that of learned priests and priestesses: "They say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time ends, which they call 'dying away,' and at another is born again, but never perishes" (*Meno* 81AB). The embodied Self (*dehī*, *paramātmā* . . . *śarīrasthāh*) is to be distinguished from the elemental self (*bhūtātman*, *bhūtāgana*, MU 11.2, 3). The former is the unperishing (*avinaśyat*) Self of CU VIII.5.3 and BG XIII.27, the latter arises out of the elements and perishes (*vināśyati*) with them (BU 11.4.12).

²⁰ These words describe the entry of the Self into any one body and its extension therein in the form of the Intelligences (Breaths, powers of the soul) that work through the doors of the senses, as in MU 11.6, etc. *Karmānugāni*, "corresponding to the variety of actions to be performed," as in BU 1.5.21, "I am going to speak," began the Voice," etc. The powers of speaking, seeing, thinking, etc., "are just the names of His acts" (BU 1.4.7)—not "ours" (BG 11.27). "Stupefied by the notion of an 'I that acts,' the self believes that 'I am the actor'"; similarly, countless Buddhist texts: cf. Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, 1.78, "I deem nothing so shameful as to suppose that 'I know and 'I perceive. My own intellect the author of its own intelligizing, how could that be?" *Anukramena*, like *yathāyatanam* in Kauṣ. Up. 11.3 and Ait. Up. 11.3, and *yathāḥkramena* in MU VI.26, "As rays from Sun, so from him (immanent Brahma, Fire of Life) his Breaths and the rest come forth continually here in the world in due order (*tasya prānādayo vai punar eva tasmād abhyuc-carantiha yathāḥkramena*)." *Sthāneṣu*, "in their places," as in Praśna Up. 11.2, *sthānam*. *Rūpāni*, "forms," i.e., "Prajāpati's breath-forms" (*prānarūpā*, Sāyana on RV x.90.16, and as in BU 1.5.21, where the Breaths are the "forms" of the median Breath and called after him; similarly in Praśna Up. 11.12).

the qualities, both his own and of action, he seems to be 'another' " (*teṣāṃ samyogahetur aparo*²¹ 'pi dṛṣṭah, Śvet. Up. v.1-13, condensed).

This transmigrating "Lord of the Breaths" is the Breath (*prāna*), "the most excellent (*vasiṣṭha*, BU VI.1, 14),"²² Brahma, Prajāpati, he who divides himself five- and manifold to support and sustain the body, to awaken his children, to fill these worlds (Praśna Up. 11.3; MU 11.6, VI.26), remaining nevertheless undivided in things divided (BG XIII.16, XVIII.20). To him as Prajāpati it is said, "Tis thou, thyself, that art counterborn (*pratijāyase*),²³ to thee all thy children (*prajāh* = *raśmayah*, *prāṇāh*, *devāh*, *bhūtāni*) bring tribute (*balim haranti*),²⁴ O Breath" (Praśna Up.

²¹ *Apara*, "lower" or "other" as in MU 11.2 (Ātman), and to be contrasted with *para* (Brahma) in verse 1 = *para* (Ātman) of Praśna Up. 11.7. For the "one essence and two natures" of Brahma see BU 11.3, Praśna Up. v.2, MU VI.3, 22, 23 and VII.11.8, *dvaitībhāva*). This is the doctrine of Hermes, viz. that to say that "God is both One and All does not mean that the One is two, but that the two are One" (*Lib.* XVI.3). Similarly Plotinus, IV.4.10, "The ordering-and-governing-principle (τὸ κοσμοῦν = Plato, *Phaedo* 97c, ὁ διακοσμῶν τε καὶ παντῶν αἴτιος) is twofold, one that we call Demiurge and one the Soul of All (τοῦ παντός ψυχή); we speak of Zeus sometimes as Demiurge (Creator) and sometimes as the Leader of all (ἡγεμών τοῦ παντός); which is as much as to say that we speak of Varuṇa sometimes as such and sometimes as Mitra or Savitr (*netr*, RV v.50.1 = *prāṇasarīranetr*, Mund. Up. 11.2.8 = *ātmano 'tmā netāmṛtākhyah*, MU VI.7), of Brahma as *parāpara*, *dvirūpa* and *dvaitībhāva*, of Agni as *Indrāgnī*, and of Prajāpati as *parimitāparimita*, *nirukṭānirukṭa*, etc., in the same way imputing two contrasted natures to one and same essence. And just as in one of these natures the deity is immortal and impassible and in the other mortal and passible, so in the one he is without needs and in the other has ends to be attained. At the same time, in him these are not two, but one simple essence; the distinction is "logical but not real." So Nicholas of Cusa speaks of the "wall of Paradise" that conceals God from our sight as constituted of the "coincidence of opposites" and of its gate as guarded by "the highest spirit of reason, who bars the way until he has been overcome" (*De visione Dei* IX, XI)—as in JUB 1.5.

²² Implying Agni who as the "Fire of Life" is the "Breath of Life," cf. Heraclitus, fr. 20, and Coomaraswamy, "Measures of Fire" [in this volume—ED.].

²³ BU 11.1.8 *pratirūpo 'smāj jāyase*; cf. Śvet. Up. 11.16, v.11. The Self is the Father of the Breath and consubstantial (MU VI.1); like the human father and son, in accordance with the normal doctrine that the father himself is reborn in his progeny (RV v.4.10, VI.70.3; BD VII.50; AB VII.13; AĀ 11.5; BG IV.7, 8, etc.), the only Indian doctrine of rebirth on earth. It is a character that is thus reborn; it is in his "other self" that the father departs at death; and we are often reminded (*ŚB paśim*) that the dead have departed "once for all." The heredity of vocation is connected with the traditional (for it is not only Indian) doctrine of progenitive rebirth. In the same way *in divinis*, the Father is reborn as the Son; cf. the Christian *Alma redemptoris Mater* . . . *tu quae genuisti tuum sanctum genitorem*.

²⁴ Cf. AV x.7.38, 39, x.8.15, XI.4.19; ŚB VI.1.1.7; JUB IV.23.7, IV.24.1-7; BU VI.1.13; Kauṣ. Up. 11.1. The various names by which the recipient and the tributaries are referred to in these contexts all imply the Breath and the Breaths, i.e., God and gods under various aspects. Hence "All these gods are *in me*" (JUB 1.14.2; ŚB 11.3.2.3;

11.7). By this Prajāpati this body of ours is set up in possession of consciousness (*cetanāvat*), he as its driver passing on from body to body (*pratiśarīreṣu carati*), unovercome by the bright and dark fruit of his acts, or rather those acts of which he, as our Inner Man (*antaḥ puruṣa*),²⁵ is the actuator (*kārayitr*) and spectator (*prekṣaka*) rather than the doer (MU 11.6-11.3). This Prajāpati is likewise "the divine Breath who, whether or not transmigrating (*saṃcaraṅś cāsaṃcaraṅś ca*),²⁶ is neither injured nor distressed, and whom all beings serve," and with respect to whom it is further said that "however his children may suffer, that pertains to them alone, good only goes to him, evil does not reach the gods" (BU 1.5.20).

Thus this One, spoken of by many names, is everywhere born and re-born. "Unseen, Prajāpati moves in the womb (*carati garbhe antaḥ*) and is multifariously born" (*bahudhā vi jāyate*, AV x.8.13, cf. Muṇḍ. Up. 11.2.6); "The Person expires²⁷ and suspire in the womb, and then is he

AĀ 11.1.5, etc.). The *prajā* of AV x1.4.19 (like Praśna Up. 11.7) are not "human beings" (Whitney), but the "rays" by which "we" are ensouled and energized (JUB 1.28, 29), the Viśvedevāḥ (TS 11.3.1.26). These rays are withdrawn at our death (BU v.5.2; AĀ 11.2.4, etc.), viz. when Death himself, the Breath, withdraws his "feet" from our heart and "we" are cut off (ŚB x.5.2.13); for the Breaths cannot live without him (BU vi.1.13 = CU v.1.12). It is true that we are children of the Sun in the sense that our life depends upon him who is our real Father (JUB 11.10.4; ŚB vii.3.2.12, etc.), but we are naturally sons of our own fathers, and until we have acquired a second self or Self, born of the sacrifice (JB 1.17, etc., cf. John 3:3) we do not "really become the immortal children of Prajāpati" (ŚB v.2.1.11, 14), his natural sons (ŚB ix.3.3.14), or himself (ŚB iv.6.1.5). "That art thou" is always true, but only potentially for us, for so long as we are "this man, So-and-so." We are ensouled and quickened by the rays of the Sun, the Breaths, the All-Gods, but it can only be said of the perfected that they *are* those rays of the Sun (ŚB 1.9.3.10, cf. RV 1.109.7), his sons (JUB 11.9.10).

²⁵ The *puruṣo 'ntasthaḥ* of MU vi.10; *puruṣaḥ sarvāsu pūrṣu puriṣayah* of BU 11.5.18; *sarveṣāṃ bhūteṣāṃ antaḥpuruṣaḥ* of AĀ 11.2.4, described as the unseen seer, etc., and as "unbowed" (*anata*), i.e., *anabhibhūta* as in MU 11.7; Vāmadeva *garbhe . . . śayānaḥ* of AĀ 11.5; Agni *a yaḥ puram narminīm adidet . . . śatatmā* of RV 1.149.3. For the distinction of this Inner Man from our outer man (the elemental self, *bhūtātman*) cf. 11 Cor. 4:16, "Is qui foris est noster homo corrumpitur tamen is qui intus est renovatur de die in diem," like MU 11.2. Undoubtedly John 1:14 should be understood to read "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt *in* us" (*ἐν ἡμῖν*) rather than "amongst us," by which "amongst" the Incarnation would be considered only historically.

²⁶ I.e., whether immanent or transcendent; whether he "wanders in the Field, together with his acts (*kṣetre saṃcarati . . . svaḥkarmabhiḥ*, Śvet. Up. v.3, 7)," or remains aloof.

²⁷ The descent into the blind darkness of the womb, into hell (*niraya*, MU 11.4); from which one comes into being again, being saved from that first death by the

born again when thou, O Breath, givest life" (AV x1.4.14, cf. JUB 11.8.10-11.1); "Thou alone, O Sun, art born about the whole world" (*eko viśvam pari bhūma jāyase*, AV x11.2.3);²⁸ "One God indwelling the mind, of old was he born and is even now in the womb" (AV x.8.28 = JUB 11.10.12). Similar texts could be cited at greater length, but it will suffice for the present to observe the emphasis laid upon the fact that it is always *One* that is diversely and recurrently born: He, that is, who is "undivided in, though *as it were* divided by his presence in divided beings" (BG x11.16 and xviii.20), being "One as he is in himself, and many as he is in his children" (ŚB x.5.2.16), who are not Beings independently, but Beings by participation.²⁹

All this is also the oldest Saṃhitā doctrine, where it is the Sun or Fire that enters into the womb and transmigrates:³⁰ thus RV x.72.9, where Aditi "bears Mārtāṇḍa unto repeated birth and death (*prajāyai mrtyave tvat punaḥ*)"; viii.43.9, "Thou, O Agni, being in the womb, art born again (*garbhe san jāyase punaḥ*)"; x.5.1, where Agni is "of many births (*bhūri- janmā*)"; 11.1.20, where as Jātavedas he is "set down in birth after birth (*janmañ-janman nihitaḥ*)," i.e., as Sāyaṇa adds, "in all these human beings." As Jātavedas he is omniscient of births (1.70.1, 1.189.1, vi.15.3), and necessarily so because, as ŚB ix.5.1.68 paraphrases, "he finds birth again and again (*jātam jātam vindate*)." In the same way "filling the (three) light-realms of this,³¹ the mobile and immobile, he cometh manifoldly into being, the Sire in these wombs" (*purutrā yad abhavat, sūr ahaibhyo garbhebhyaḥ*, RV 1.146.1, 5), "yet in one semblance manifold, as giver-of-being to all thy people³² (*viśo viśvā anu prabhuḥ*, RV viii.11.8)."

Sun (JUB 11.9.1, 11.10.4). Cf. St. Bernard, *prius morimur nascituri* (*De grad. humilitatis* 30). AV *apānati* = JUB *mriyate*.

²⁸ Who as the sacrificial Person "was poured out upon the earth from East to West" (*aty aricyata paścād bhūmin atho puraḥ*, RV x.90.5).

²⁹ "Et inspexi cetera infra te, et vidi nec omnino esse nec omnino non esse: esse quidem, quoniam abs te sunt, non esse autem, quoniam id quod es non sunt" (St. Augustine, *Confessions* vii.11). This "is and is not" is essentially the Buddhist doctrine of *satto*, "existence."

³⁰ Throughout the present article and elsewhere we are careful to distinguish transmigration from reincarnation; the former implying a transition from one state of being to another, the latter to the transmission or renewal of a former state of being. Cf. n. 23, and Coomaraswamy, "Measures of Fire."

³¹ I.e., as Prajāpati divides himself to fill these worlds.

³² *Viśaḥ*, i.e., Viśvedevāḥ, Maruts, *prānaḥ*, *prānāgnayah* directly and hence to *prāninaḥ*, "living beings," indirectly. *Viśvam tvayā dhārayate jāyamānam . . . prajā*

It need not be demonstrated here that the Samhitās do not know of a "reincarnation" (individual rebirth on earth) since it is generally accepted that even the Brāhmaṇas know nothing of such a doctrine (cf. the Keith edition of AĀ, Introduction, p. 44)—except, of course, in the normal progenitive sense of rebirth in one's offspring (RV v.4.10, vi.70.3; AB vii.13; AĀ ii.5). Our concern is rather to point out that the Veda speaks both of transmigration and of a one and only transmigrant, and distinguishes "liberation" from "coming back again" (*vimucam nāvrtam punah*, RV v.46.1). Our argument is that the expressions *punarmṛtyu* and *punarjanma* which occur already in RV and the Brāhmaṇas do not in the later scriptures acquire the new meanings of "dying again" (elsewhere) and "being born again" (here) that are generally read into them. In the majority of cases the references of "repeated death" and "repeated birth" are to this present life or "becoming," as in AB viii.25, *sarvam āyur eti, na punar mriyate*, and ŚB v.4.1.1, *sarvān . . . mṛtyūn atimucyate*, where it is the relative immortality of not dying prematurely that is involved, and there is no question of never dying at all. In "becoming" (*bhava*, γένεσις) we die and are reborn every day and night, and in this sense "day and night are recurrent deaths" (*punarmṛtyū . . . yad ahorātre*, JB i.11). *Punarmṛtyu* is not some *one* other death to be dreaded as ending a future existence but, together with *punarbhava* or *janma*, the condition of *any* form or type of contingent existence; and it is from this process, this wheel of becoming (*bhavacakṛa*, ὁ τροχός τῆς γενέσεως in James 3:6) here or hereafter, and not from any one death only, that liberation is sought.³³

We have so far considered the Transmigrant, Parijman, only as the Great Catalyst who remains unaffected by the actions he empowers. The Supreme Lord and Self who is seated one and the same in all beings' hearts (BG x.20, xiii.27), the citizen in every "city" (BU ii.5.18; Philo,

tatra yatra viśvā 'mṛto 'si, MU vi.9. "La circular natura, ch'è sugello alla cera mortal, fa ben sua arte, ma non distingue l'un dall' altro ostello," Dante, *Paradiso* viii.127-129 (ostello = *nivāsa*, esp. in the Pāli Buddhist expression *pubbenivāsan anussarati*). "One Divine Life, mov'd, shin'd, sounded in and thro' all," Peter Sterry (V. de Sola Pinto, *Peter Sterry, Platonist and Puritan*, Cambridge, 1934, p. 161).

³³ Cf. Coomaraswamy, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, 1942, n. 35. On James 3:6, cf. R. Eisler, "Orphisch-Dionysische Mysterien-Gedanken in der christlichen Antike," in *Vorträge der Bib. Warburg* II (1922-1923), 86 ff.; P. Deussen, *Vier philosophische Texte des Mahābhārata* (Leipzig, 1906), 272 ff.; Plato, *Sophist* 248a, *Timaeus* 29c (contrast γένεσις and οὐσία); and O. Kern, *Orphicorum fragmenta*, fr. 32 (1922), κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλείοιο.

De cherubim 121), participating in action not because of any need on his part but only sacrificially and to maintain the world process (BG iii.9, 22), wherein as it were disporting (BrSBh ii.1.32, 33)³⁴ he remains undivided amongst divided beings and indestructible amongst the destructible (BG xiii.16, 27). So long as he (Makha, the Sacrifice) is One, they cannot overcome him (TA v.1.3); but as One he cannot bring his creatures to life, and must divide himself (MU xii.6). We are repeatedly told, indeed, that he, Prajāpati, "desired (*akāmayat*)" to be many, and so, as it seems to us, it is not quite disinterestedly³⁵ but "with ends not yet attained and with a view to enjoying the objects of the senses" that he sets us agoing (MU ii.6d). But this is a dangerous enterprise, for being their experient, he is carried away by the flood of the qualities of the primary matter (*prakṛtair gunaiḥ*) with which he operates;³⁶ and as the corporeal (*śarīra*) elemental self (*bhūtāt-*

³⁴ Cf. Coomaraswamy, "Līlā," 1941, and "Play and Seriousness," 1942 [both in this volume—ED.]. Cf. Dante, *Purgatorio* xxviii.95, 96:

Per sua diffalta in pianto ed in affanno
cambiò onesto riso e dolce gioco

and *Mathnawī* i.1787, 1788:

Thou didst contrive this "I" and "we" in order that
Thou mightest play the game of worship with Thyself,
That all "I"s and "thou"s should become one life.

When, as in MU ii.6-iii.2, we speak of Him as having ends still to be attained, we also conceive that *He* is caught in the net, and that *He* is liberated again, and this is the truth in terms of human thinking. But like all else that pertains to the *via affirmativa*, this is a truth to be finally denied. For the *viae*, see MU iv.6.

³⁵ Whenever we explain the existence of the world not directly by God's being, or by His knowledge of Himself, but as a consequence of His Will, i.e., "of expression," as here, or when it is said that "Prajāpati desired (*akāmayat*), May I be many" (Brāhmaṇas, *passim*), we are speaking metaphorically as if He really had ends to be attained, as is explicit in MU ii.6, and, just as in dividing effect from cause, we impose our duration upon His eternity. More truly, "There is nothing whatever that I might obtain that I am not already possessed of" (*na . . . me kīmcana anavāptam avāptavyam*, BG iii.22): "Non per aver a sè di bene acquisto, ch'esser non può" (Dante, *Paradiso* xxix.13, 14).

So Pentheus conceives that Dionysius can be bound; but He declares that "Of himself the Daimon shall release me when I will," and later, that "I myself myself did save, full easily and painlessly" (Euripides, *Bacchae* 498, 613). The "Daimon" is, of course, "himself."

³⁶ Just as the Man (*ἄνθρωπος*), Son of the Father, is seduced by the reflection of the divine beauty in the mirror of Nature, and loving it becomes involved in it (Hermes, *Lib.* i.14, 15; TS v.3.2.1; AB iii.33; PB vii.8.1). The "flood of qualities by which the soul is swept away" (*gunaughair uhyamānah*) corresponds to Plato's "river of sensations" (*Timaeus* 43b); to the "crossing over" (*διαπορεία* = *tarana*)

man),³⁷ knowing subject over against ostensibly external objects of perception, and composite of all desires (*sarvakāma-maya*),³⁸ he is bemused and does not see the bountiful Giver-of-being and Actuator within him,³⁹ "but conceives that 'this is I' and 'that is mine,' and therewith binds himself by himself like a bird in the net (*jāleneva khacarah*)⁴⁰ and so wanders around (*paribhramati* = *samsarati*, *samcarati*) in wombs both aughty and

of which there is a reference in *Epinomis* 894E; and to Philo's river of the objects of sense that swamps and drowns the soul under the flood of the passions until "Jacob" (*yoûs*) crosses it (*Legum allegoriae* III.18 and *De gigantibus* XIII). Cf. St. Augustine's *cum transierit anima nostra aquas, quae sunt sine substantia* (*Confessions* XIII.7).

³⁷ As in CU VIII.12.1, cited above.

³⁸ "The Person of desires composite" (*kāmamayam evāyam puruṣam*), BU IV.4.5.

³⁹ Apart from whom the soul is bound "because of its enjoyment" (*bhokṛtvāt*, Śvet. Up. 1.8), deadly for those who conceive that the experience is their own.

⁴⁰ "A little Bird ty'd by the Leg with a String, often flutters and tries to raise itself. . . . Thus a Soul fixt in a *Self-principle* . . . is snatched down by that String of *Self*, which ties it to the Ground," Peter Sterry (de Sola Pinto, *Peter Sterry*, p. 169). "Tomb'd in my self: my self my grave. . . . My self even to my self a slave" (Phineas Fletcher)—"the prisoner himself being the main occasion of his own imprisonment" (Plato, *Phaedo* 83A, cf. *Mathnawī*, I.154).

The net (or spider's web, Śvet. Up. VI.10; Mund. Up. 1.7; KB XIX.3, etc.) that he himself has spread (*ya eko jālavān*, Śvet. Up. III.1), the one and only net that he manywise transforms and "in which field he wanders" (*samcarati*, Śvet. Up. V.3, 7, i.e., *samsarati*, "transmigrates" rather than Deussen's "wieder entzieht" or Hume's "draws it together").

Insofar as the Only Transmigrant is overcome by the notions "This is I" and "Those are others," the Bird is conceptually one of many, and no longer "the One Controller of the created many" (Śvet. Up. VI.13), and we, who are preeminently subject to these delusions, speak of the liberation of a plurality of individuals, e.g., "Many are the essences that are bound by wanting, like a bird in the net (*icchā-baddhā puthusattā pāsena sakuni yathā, ti*)" (S 1.44).

That "A being is a flux, action is its passing over" (*satto samsāram āpādi, kāmam tassa parāyanam*, S 1.38, cf. *sadasad yonim āpadyate*, MU III.2) taken together with Mil 72, "There is no particular essence (*n'atthi koci satto*) that reincarnates (*imamhā kāyā aññam kāyam sankhamati*)," means that there is no constant individuality that treads the round; as how might there be, when even today our personality is "other" than it was yesterday (S II.95, 96)? It is not a life, but the fire of life that is transmitted (BrSBh IV.4.15; Mil 71; cf. Heraclitus, fr. 20). The Comprehensor of the Buddha's teaching will not ask himself either What was "I"? or What shall "I" become? (S II.26, 27).

Khacara is almost literally "skylark"; *kha* is anagogically Brahman as unlimited "Space" (*ākāśa, quintessentia*), or *τόπος*, as in Bruce Codex, C. A. Baynes, tr., *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 3. Cf. BU V.1; CU I.9, III.12.7-9, IV.10.4, VII.12, VIII.1.14; and Coomaraswamy, "Kha and Other Words Denoting 'Zero,' in Connection with the Indian Metaphysics of Space" [in this volume—ED.].

naughty (*sadasat*),⁴¹ overcome by the fruits of actions and by the pairs of opposites" (MU III.2, VI.10).⁴²

There is, indeed, a corrective (*pratividhi*) for this elemental self, viz. in the study and mastery of the wisdom of the Vedas and in the fulfilment of one's own duty (*svadharma*)⁴³ in its regular stages (*āśrama*, MU IV.3). "By the knowledge of Brahman, by ardor (*tapas*) and contemplation (*cintā* = *dhyāna*) he getteth everlasting bliss, yea, when this 'man in the cart' (*rathitaḥ*)⁴⁴ is liberated from those things with which he was filled up⁴⁵ and by which he was overcome, then he attains to conjunction with the Spirit (*ātman eva sāyujam upaiti*, MU IV.4)," i.e., "being very Brahma enters into Brahma (*brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*, BU IV.4.6),"⁴⁶ and thus "authentically Brahma-become, abides (*brahmabhūtena attanā viharati*, A II.211)." That is Nicholas of Cusa's *deificatio*, for which the *sine qua non* is an *ablatio omnis alteritatis et diversitatis*.⁴⁷

⁴¹ "For the movement of the Kosmos varies the birth of things, and gives them this or that quality; it fouls with evil the births of some and purifies with good the births of others" (Hermes, *Lib.* 9.5).

Asat as "evil," here and elsewhere, corresponds exactly to English "naughty," in accordance with the principle *ens et bonum convertuntur*.

⁴² Conversely, "liberated from the pairs of opposites" (BG XV.5, cf. VII.27), and "becoming a bird, the sacrificer goes to the world of heaven" (PB V.3.5, cf. XIV.1.13). With this whole context, cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* I.1, especially I.1.12.

⁴³ As in BG III.35, XVIII.41-48. This is the *τὸ ἐαυτοῦ πράττειν, κατὰ φύσιν* that Plato makes his type of justice.

⁴⁴ Apparently pp. of *rath*, not otherwise known as a verb, and signifying "embodied" (KU III.3 *viddhi śariram ratham*; MU II.3 *śakātam ivācetanam idam śariram*). That to "be carted about" is a traditional punishment and disgrace involving loss of honor and legal rights is metaphysically significant, and corresponds to the subjection of the free spirit to the body and senses; while conversely, it is a royal procession when the spirit drives the vehicle to a destination that it itself wills (as in BU IV.2.1). On the Royal Road, cf. Philo, *De posteritate Caini* CI, and on how one strays, *Legum allegoriae*, IV.79 ff.

The ignominy (like that of crucifixion) is one to which the Solar Hero may have to condescend in his pursuit of the imprisoned Psyche; and Lancelot's "hesitation" in the *Chevalier de la charrette* corresponds to Agni's reluctance to become the charioteer of the Sacrifice (RV X.51), the Buddha's hesitation to "turn the wheel," and Christ's "May this cup be taken from me."

⁴⁵ *Yaih paripūrṇah*, as in CU IV.10.3 *vyādhibhiḥ paripūrṇo 'smi*, "I am filled up with diseases." For "the body fills us up with loves and passions and all kinds of images and folly, so that, as they say, it verily and really prevents our ever understanding anything" (Plato, *Phaedo* 66c); from which plethora we ought to purify ourselves as far as possible "until the God himself delivers us" (*Phaedo* 67A).

⁴⁶ *Qui autem adhaeret Domino, unus spiritus est*, I Cor. 6:17.

⁴⁷ "If you cannot equate yourself with God, you cannot know Him; for like is known by like" (Hermes, *Lib.* XI.2.208).

Otherwise stated, Prajāpati “desires (*kam, man*)” to become many, to “express (*srj*)” his children, and having done so is spilled and falls down unstrung (Brāhmaṇas, *passim*). It is “with love (*preṇā*)” that he enters into them, and then he cannot come together (*sambhū*) again, whole and complete, except by the sacrificial operation (TS v.5.2.1); he cannot from his disjointed parts put himself together (*samhan*), and can only be healed through the sacrificial operations of the gods (ŚB 1.6.3.36, etc.). It is sufficiently well known, and needs no demonstration here, that the final purpose of this operation in which the sacrificer symbolically sacrifices himself is to build up together again, whole and complete, both the sacrificer and the divided deity at one and the same time. It is evident that the possibility of such a simultaneous regeneration rests upon the theoretical identity of the sacrificer’s real being with that of the immanent deity, postulated in the dictum, “That art thou.” To sacrifice our self is to liberate the God within us.

In still another way we can illustrate the thesis by referring to those texts in which the immanent deity is spoken of as a “citizen” of the body politic in which he is, as it were, confined, and from which he also liberates himself when he remembers himself and we forget our selves. That the human body is called a “city of God (*puram . . . brahmanah*, AV x.2.28; *brahmapura, passim*)” is well known;⁴⁸ and he who as a bird (*paṅkti bhūtvā*) becomes a citizen in all these cities (*sarvāsu pūrṣu puriśayah*) is hermeneutically *puruṣa* (BU 11.5.18). The Solar Man or Person who thus inhabits us and is the Friend of All is also the beloved Vāmadeva, the Breath (*prāṇa*), “who set himself in the midst of all that is (*sa yad idam sarvam madhyato*⁴⁹ *dadhe*) . . . and protected all that is from evil”⁵⁰ (AĀ 11.2.1); and being in the womb (*garbhe . . . san*) is the knower of all the births of the gods (Breaths, Intelligences, powers of the soul) who serve him (RV 1v.27.1; KU v.3, etc.). He says of himself that “although a hundred cities⁵¹ held me fast,⁵² forth I sped with falcon speed” (RV

⁴⁸ Just as also for Plato, man is a “body politic” (πόλις = *pur*). [Cf. Coomaraswamy, “What is Civilization?” 1946—ED.]

⁴⁹ The immanent Breath is repeatedly referred to as “median” (*madhyama*), i.e., with respect to the Breaths, by whom it is surrounded and served. As in Philo, *Legum allegoriae* 1.51, where “God extends the power that is from him by means of the median breath (διὰ τοῦ μέσου πνεύματος) until it reaches the subject,” on which it stamps the powers that are within the scope of its understanding, thus (*ibid.*, 50) ensouling what was soulless.

⁵⁰ As in BU 1.3.7 ff.

⁵¹ Probably the hundred years of a man’s life, during which time the Breath shines upon him (AĀ 11.5.1). When he departs, we die (ŚB x.5.2.13, etc.), for “as a mighty

1v.27.1),⁵³ and that “I was Manu and the Sun” (RV 1v.26.1; BU 1.4.10, etc.).⁵⁴

“Forth I sped” . . . thus spake Vāmadeva incarnate (*garbhe . . . śayānah = puriśayah*). The Comprehensor thereof, when separation from the body takes place, forth-striding upwards (*ūrdhva utkrāmya*)⁵⁵ and obtaining all desires in yonder world, has come together (*samabhavat*),⁵⁶ immortal” (AĀ 11.5; cf. 1.3.8, conclusion). Vāmadeva is here equated with that “other self (*itara ātmā*)”⁵⁷ which, being all in act (*kṛtakṛtyah*)⁵⁸

stallion might pull out the pegs of his hobbles all at once, even so he pulls up the Breaths all together” (BU 11.1.13, cf. 11.9.26; CU v.1.12)—thus recollecting himself (BU 1v.4.3).

⁵² “Not knowing himself” (Sāyana); “become a *Stranger* to himself,” Peter Sterry (de Sola Pinto, p. 166).

⁵³ “Knowing himself” (Sāyana). “Now that I see in Mind, I see myself to be the All. I am in heaven and on earth, in water and in air; I am in beasts and plants; I am a babe in the womb, and one that is not yet conceived, and one that has been born; I am present everywhere” (Hermes, *Lib.* XIII.11B, cf. XI.2.20B; cf. AV 11.4.20, RV 1v.40.5, etc.).

⁵⁴ With “I was Manu and the Sun” may be compared the verses of Amergin (*Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, ed. D.H.S. Nicholson and A.H.E. Lee, Oxford, 1916, p. 1) and those of Taliesin (John Guenogvryn Evans, *Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, Tremvan, 1915; Robert Douglas Scott, *The Thumb of Knowledge in Legends of Finn, Sigurd and Taliesin*, New York, 1930, pp. 124 ff.). For example, Amergin: “I am the wind which blows o’er the sea, I am the wave of the ocean . . . a beam of the sun . . . the point of the lance in battle, the God who creates in the head the fire,” and Taliesin: “I have sung of what I passed through . . . I sing of true lineage . . . I was in many a guise before I was disenchanted . . . I was the hero in trouble . . . I am old. I am young . . . I am universal, I am possessed of penetrating wit.” There is no doctrine of “reincarnation” here, but of the eternal *avatarāna* and *sarvajñāna* of the “Immortal Soul” (Spirit) of *Meno* 81 and Agni Jātavedas of the Indian texts.

⁵⁵ When Death, the Person in the Sun, the Breath, abandons his stand in the heart and strides off (*utkrāmati*), we are “cut off.” Hence, with reference to the two selves of AĀ 11.5, etc., the question of *Prasna* Up. vi.3, “When I go forth, in which shall I be going forth (*utkrāntah*)?”

⁵⁶ *Samabhavat* is more than just “became”: it is rather “came together, whole and complete.” Contrast TS v.5.2.1, where Prajāpati “cannot come together again (*punar sambhavitum na śaknoti*) out of his children” until the Sacrifice has been performed, of which the sacrificer is born again in the sense of AĀ 1.3.8, *amṛtam evātmanam abhisambhavati, sambhavati*, “is regenerated, yea reborn as (or united with) the Immortal Self.” In the same context Keith misunderstands *ātmanam samskurute*, which is not “adorns this trunk” (as Vairocana might have supposed, CU VIII.8.3) but “integrates, or completes, himself,” as in AB vi.27, where Keith’s “perfects himself” is quite acceptable. Contrast TS v.5.2.1 *punah sambhavitum nāśaknot*.

⁵⁷ “Other” (and “dearer,” BU 1.4.8) than the psycho-physical self that is reborn in the normal course of progenitive reincarnation “for the perpetuation of these worlds and the doing of the holy tasks” (AĀ 11.5)—“thus providing servants

when "old age is reached (*vayogataḥ*), departs (*praiti*) and is regenerated (*punar jāyate = samabhavat*)," i.e., reborn for the third and last time.⁵⁹

The escape of this "Dwarf," Vāmana, the superintendent of the city (*puram . . . anuṣṭhāya*), enthroned in the middle (*madhye . . . āsinam*), and whom the Viśve Devāḥ (Breaths, functional powers of the soul) attend upon (*upāsate*),⁶⁰ is further described in KU v.1-4, where it is asked, "When this immanent unstrung body-dweller is released from the body (*asya visraṅsamānasya*⁶¹ *śarīrasthasya dehinaḥ dehād mucyamānasya*), what survives (*kim pariśiṣyate*)?" and answered: "That," viz. Brahma, Ātman—the predicate of the dictum "That art thou."⁶² Thus "Ātman means that which remains if we take away from our person all that is Not-self";⁶³ our end is to exchange our own limited manner of being "So-and-so" for God's unlimited manner of being simply—"Ego, daz wort ich, ist nieman eigen denne gote alleine in sīner einekeit."⁶⁴

A consideration of all that has been said so far will enable us to approach such a text as that of BU IV.4.1-7 without falling into the error of sup-

(ἐπιήρεται) for God in our own stead, and this we do by leaving behind us children's children" (Plato, *Laws* 773E)—to whom our character and responsibilities are both naturally and ritually transmitted (BU I.5.17 ff., cf. Kaus. Up. II.11).

⁵⁸ "His task performed"; as in MU VI.30, cf. TS I.8.3.1 *ḥarma kṛtvā*, and the corresponding *ḥatam ḥaraṇīyam* in the Buddhist Arhat formula, *passim*. Hence "all in act," without residue of potentiality.

⁵⁹ The third birth that takes place from the funeral pyre (*tato 'nusambhavati prāṇam v eva*, JUB III.10.9) and is the true Resurrection.

⁶⁰ *Viśve devā upāsate* corresponds to RV VII.33.11 *viśve devāḥ . . . adadanta*.

⁶¹ Deussen's "nach des Leibes Einfalls" is impossible, because both *visraṅsamānasya* and *śarīrasthasya* are qualifications of *dehinaḥ*. Hume's "when this incorporate one . . . is dissolved" is inappropriate because the *dehin* is imperishable and indissoluble (BG II.23, 24, etc.). On the other hand, the incarnate principle can be spoken of as "unstrung" in the same way that we are repeatedly told that Prajāpati, having expressed his children and thus become many, is "unstrung" (*vyasraṅsata*) and falls down (AĀ III.2.6 and *passim*).

⁶² Similarly in answer to the questions asked or implied, *kim atīṣyate* or *avasīṣyate*, in CU II.10.3, VIII.1.4, and BU v.1. The Endless (Ananta) Residue (Śeṣa) is that Brahman, Akṣara, etc., who was originally ophidian (*apād*) and endless (AV x.8.21; BU III.8.8; Muṅd. Up. I.1.6; MU VI.17) and now that all semblance of otherness is discarded remains the same World Serpent "endless, for that both his ends meet (*anantam . . . antavac cā samante*, AV x.8.12)"; this Śeṣa being the Uchchiṣṭa of AV XI.7 and Pūrṇam of AV x.8.29. See also Coomaraswamy, "Ātmayajña," Appendix II [in this volume—ED.].

⁶³ P. Deussen, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (Berlin, 1907), 20. As in Buddhist procedure, where each of the five factors of the psycho-physical personality is dismissed with the words, "That is not my Self (*na me so attā*)."

⁶⁴ Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer ed., p. 261.

posing that the "land leech" of verse 3 is an individual and definitely characterized "soul" that passes over from one body to another. Rather, it is the undivided and never individualized Self that having now re-collected itself (*ātmānam upasamharati*, cf. BG II.58), and free from the "ignorance" of the body (with which it no longer identifies itself), transmigrates; this re-collected Self is the Brahma that takes on every form and quality of existence, both good and evil,⁶⁵ according to its desires and activities (verse 5); if it is still attached (*sakṭaḥ*), still desirous (*ḥāmāyamānaḥ*), this Self (*ayam*, i.e., *ayam ātmā*) returns (*punar aiti*) from that world to this world, but if without desire (*aḥāmāyamānaḥ*), if it loves only itself (*ātmakāmaḥ*, cf. IV.3.21), then "being very Brahma, it enters into Brahma (*brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*)," then "the mortal becomes the immortal" (verses 6, 7). The meaning of these passages is distorted, and given a reincarnationist sense, by all those translators (e.g., Hume and Swāmi Mādhavānanda) who translate *ayam* of verse 6 by "he" or "the man," overlooking that this *ayam* is nothing but the *ayam ātmā brahma* of the preceding verse.⁶⁶ The distinction is not of one "man" from another, but of the two forms of Brahma-Prajāpati, "mortal and immortal,"⁶⁷ desirous and undesirous, circumscribed and uncircumscribed, etc. (ŚB IV.7.5.2; BU II.3; MU VI.36, etc.), and of the "two minds, pure and impure" (MU VI.34.6), from one another.⁶⁸ If we were in any doubt on this point, it is made very clear by the words of BU IV.3.35-38, "Here

⁶⁵ As in MU VII.11.8 *carati . . . satyānṛtopahogārthāḥ dvaitībhāvo mahātmanāḥ*, "The Great Self, having two natures, proceeds (moves, circulates, transmigrates) with intent to experience both the true and the false."

⁶⁶ On the interpretation of this *ayam*, cf. Śaṅkarācārya on BU I.4.10, "One must not think that the word 'Brahma' here means 'a man who will become Brahma,' for that would involve an antinomy. . . . If the objection be made that from BU III.2.13 *punyena ḥarmanā bhavati* 'by good deed one becomes good,' . . . it follows that there must be a transmigrating self other than and distinguishable from the Supreme (*parasmād vilakṣaṇo 'nyah samsāri*), . . . we say, No . . . for one thing cannot 'become' another." It can only become what it is. *Ἐνὼθι σεαυτόν; Werde was du bist*.

⁶⁷ RV I.164.38 *amartya martyenā sayoniḥ*. On these two selves (Plato's mortal and immortal souls that dwell together in us) see Coomaraswamy, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, 1942, pp. 72 ff.

⁶⁸ Pure, "by disconnection with desire," impure "by contamination with desire." The pure Mind is the *daivam manas* of BU I.5.19, identified with Brahma in BU IV.1.6 (*mano vai samrāt paramam brahma*) and with Prajāpati in TS VI.6.10.1, ŚB IX.4.1.12, and *passim*. This is Plato's unchangeable Mind "in which only the Gods and but few men participate," as distinguished from irrational Opinion, subject to persuasion (*Timaeus* 51DE). Cf. Coomaraswamy, "On Being in One's Right Mind," 1942.

comes Brahma!", that it is not an individual but God himself that comes and goes when "we" are born or die.

It would be an antinomy to apply to myself—this man, So-and-so—or to any other someone amongst others the words, "That art thou," or to think of myself, *le moi*, as the "I" of Swāmi Nirbhyananda's

I am the bird caught in the net of illusion,
I am he who bows down the head
And the One to whom he bows:
I alone exist, there is neither seeker nor sought.⁶⁹
When at last I realized Unity, then I knew what
had been unknown,
That I had always been in union with Thee.⁷⁰

When the soul-bird at last escapes from the net of the fowler (Psalms 124:7) and finds its King, then the apparent distinction of immanent from transcendent being dissolves in the light of day, and it hears and speaks with a voice that is at once its own and its King's, saying

I was the Sin that from Myself rebell'd:
I the remorse that tow'rd Myself compell'd . . .
Pilgrim, Pilgrimage and Road
Was but Myself toward Myself: and Your
Arrival but Myself at my own door.⁷¹

II

It has been, we think, sufficiently shown that the scriptures of the Vedānta, from the *R̥g Veda* to the *Bhagavad Gītā*, know of but One Transmigrant. Such a doctrine follows, indeed, inevitably from the word Advaita. The argument, "Brahma is only metaphorically called a 'life' (*jīva*, living being) on account of his connection with accidental conditions, the actual existence of any one such 'life' lasting for only so long as He continues to

⁶⁹ "The eternal procession is the revelation of Himself to Himself. The knower being that which is known" (Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., I, 394). "It knew Itself, that 'I am Brahma,' therewith It became the All" (BU 1.4.10).

⁷⁰ I know these lines only from H. P. Shastri, *Indian Mystic Verse* (London, 1941).

⁷¹ Faridu'd-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Mantiq'ul-Tair*; cf. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, 1.3056-3065, and JUB III.14.1-5.

be bound by any one set of accidents" (Śaṅkarācārya on BrSBh III.2.10), is only an expansion of the implications of the logos, "That art thou."

We have also indicated more briefly the *ὁμολογία* of the Indian and Platonic traditions, and have alluded to the Islamic parallels: rather to make the doctrine more comprehensible than to imply any derivation. From the same point of view we have still to refer to the Judaic and Christian doctrines. In the Old Testament we find that when we die and give up the ghost, "Then shall the dust return to the dust as it was: and the spirit (*ruah*) shall return to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Of this, D. B. Macdonald remarks, the Preacher "is heartily glad, for it means a final escape for man."⁷² To be "glad" of this can be thought of only for one who has known *who* he is and in *which* self he hopes to go hence. For the Jews, who did not anticipate a "personal immortality," the soul (*nefes*) always implies "the lower, physical nature, the appetites, the psyche of St. Paul"⁷³—all that in Buddhist terms "is not my Self"—and they must therefore have believed, as Philo assuredly did, in a "soul of the soul," the *πνεῦμα* of St. Paul.⁷⁴

⁷² *Hebrew Philosophical Genius*, Princeton and Oxford, 1936, p. 136.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 139. So in Islam, e.g., Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, 1.1375 ff., "This carnal self (*nafs*) is Hell, and Hell is a Dragon. . . . To God (alone) belongs this foot (the power) to kill it"; 1.3274, "When the Soul of the soul (*jān-i-jān* = God, 1.1781) withdraws from the soul, the soul becomes even as the soulless body, know this"; cf. JUB IV.26, "Mind is a hell, speech is a hell, sight is a hell," etc. The internal conflict of Reason (*'aql* = νοῦς) with the carnal soul (*nafs*) is compared to that of a man and woman living together in one house (*ibid.*, 1.2616 ff.). As Jahangir said in his memoirs apropos of Gosain Jadrūp, Tasawwuf and Vedānta are the same. As R. A. Nicholson (on *Mathnawī* 1.2812) puts it, the Sūfī doctrine is that "God is the essence of all existences . . . [while] everything in the world of contingency is separated from the Absolute [only] by individualization. The prophets were sent to unite the particulars with the Universal."

⁷⁴ With reference to the doctrine elsewhere, A. H. Gebhard-Lestrangé states very correctly that "the transmigration of souls is generally misinterpreted as the passing of a soul from one person to another. . . . What actually takes place is that the Individual[ized] God-Soul incarnates again and again until It attains the aim of incarnating as a Seeker who will go upon the Quest and eventually lose individuality and become one with the freed God-Soul" (*The Tradition of Silence in Myth and Legend*, Boston, 1940, p. 63). Notable repudiations of reincarnationist interpretation will be found in *Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, tr. N. Rowe (London, 1906), v.53; in *Hermes*, *Lib.* x.19-22; and in Marsilio Ficino, who held, in the words of Kristeller, that "wherever Plato seems to speak of a transmigration of the human soul into other natural species, we must understand by it the different forms and habits of human life" (Paul O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, New York, 1943, p. 118). Cf. Eisler, "Orphisch-Dionysische Mysterien-Gedanken," p. 295.

In Christianity there is a doctrine of *karma* (the operation of mediate causes) and of a fate that lies in the created causes themselves, but no doctrine of reincarnation. No stronger abjections of the "soul" are anywhere to be found than are met with in the Christian Gospels. "No man can be my disciple who hateth not . . . his own soul" (ἐαυτοῦ ψυχὴν, Luke 14:26); that soul which "he who hateth in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25), but which "whoever seeks to save, shall lose" (Luke 9:25). Compared with the Disposer (*conditor* = *samdhātr*), other beings "are neither beautiful, nor good, nor are at all" (*nec sunt*, St. Augustine, *Confessions* XI.4). The central doctrine has to do with the "descent" (*avatarāna*) of a Soter whose eternal birth was "before Abraham" and "through whom all things were made." This One himself declares that "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3:13); and says, moreover, "Whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21), and that "If any man would follow me, let him deny himself" (Mark 8:24).⁷⁵

"The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (*ψυχή*) from spirit (*πνεῦμα*, Heb. 4:12)." When St. Paul, who distinguishes the Inner and the Outer Man (11 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16), says of himself, "I live, yet *not I*, but Christ in me" (Gal. 2:20)⁷⁶ he has denied himself, has lost his soul to save it and knows "in whom, when he departs hence, he will be departing"; what survives (*atīśīsyate*) will not be "this man," Paul, but—the Savior himself. In Sūfī terms, "St. Paul" is "a dead man walking."⁷⁷

When the Savior's visible presence is withdrawn he is represented *in*

⁷⁵ "Man should strive for this, that he turn his thoughts away from himself and all creatures and know no father but God alone" (Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer ed., p. 421). Much more is implied than a merely ethical "self-denial." On our two selves, cf. also Jacob Boehme, *Signatura rerum* 1x.65.

⁷⁶ In the same sense St. Paul writes to his disciples, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . who is our life" (Col. 3:3, 4).

For a discussion of the implications of St. Paul's words see É. Mersch, *The Whole Christ*, tr. John R. Kelly (London, 1949), II.274 ff. (1936). Thus for Cajetan they mean that Christ is the sole thinker, seer, actor, etc. in "Paul." Barthélemy of Medina maintained that whatever good works "we" do are really done by Christ in us as sole agent.

⁷⁷ Like Abū Bakr; see Rūmī, *Mathnawī* VI.747-749. In this sense the saying, "Die before ye die," is attributed to Muḥammad.

us by the Counsellor (*παράκλητος*),⁷⁸ "Even the Spirit of Truth (*τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας*) . . . which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, . . . He will lead you into all truth" (John 14:17, 26; 16:13). In him we cannot but see Plato's immanent *Δαίμων* and *Ἠγεμών*,⁷⁹ "who cares for nothing but the truth" and whom God has given to each one of us "to dwell along with him and *in him*" (*Hippias major* 288D, *Timaeus* 90AB); St. Augustine's *Ingenium*, the scholastic *Synteresis*, Dante's *Amor*, and our *Inwyt* or *Conscience* in its fullest (and not merely ethical) significance.

"His world is the World-indeed,⁸⁰ whose Self, the All-maker, All-doer, who indwells this abysmal bodily-composite, has been found and is awakened (*yasyānuvittah pratibuddha ātmā*)⁸¹ . . . the Lord of what hath been and shall be. . . . Desiring him only for their World, the Travellers (*pravrajīn*) abandon this world" (BU IV.4.13, 15, 22)—"lest the Last Judgment come and find me unannihilate, and I be seiz'd and bound and given into the hands of my own selfhood" (William Blake).

Only, indeed, if we recognize that Christ and not "I" is our real Self and the only experient in every living being can we understand the words, "I was an hungered . . . I was thirsty . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 26:35 ff.). It is from this point of view that Meister Eckhart speaks of the man who knows himself as "seeing thy Self in everyone, and everyone in thee" (Evans ed., II, 132), as the *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of the unified man as "everywhere seeing the same Lord universally hypostasized, the Self established in all beings and all beings in the Self" (VI.29 with XIII.28). Were it not that whatever we do to "others" is thus really done to our Self that is also their Self, there would be no metaphysical basis for any doing to "others" as we would be done by; the principle is implicit in the rule and only more explicit elsewhere. The command to "hate" our relatives (Luke 14:26) must be understood

⁷⁸ *Cathedram habet in caelo qui intus corda docet* (St. Augustine, *In epist. Joannis ad Parthos*). *Omne verum, a quocumque dicatur, est a spiritu sancto* (St. Ambrose on 1 Cor. 13:3). *Dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt* (RV III.62.10) . . . *yo buddhyantastho dhyāyīha* (MU VI.34).

⁷⁹ *Ātmano 'tmā netā 'mrtah*, MU VI.7. *Viśvo devasya (savitur) netur marto vurita sakhyam*, RV V.50.1.

⁸⁰ "World" (*loka*) here absolutely (as in BU I.4.15-17, I.5.17; CU I.9.3; MU VI.24; ŚB I.8.1.31, etc., where the contingent and real worlds are contrasted); the Kingdom of Heaven, "within you" (BU III.9.17, 25).

⁸¹ *Pratibuddha* agreeing with *ātmā*, not with *yasya*. Cf. BD VII.57 (n. 85).

from the same point of view: "others" are no more valid objects of love than "I" am; it is not as "our" relatives or neighbors that they are to be loved, but as our Self (*ātmanas tu kāmāya*, BU II.4.5);⁸² just as it is only himself that God loves in us, so it is God we ought to love in one another.

Upon this immanent Spirit of Truth, the Divine Eros, our very life depends, until we "give up the ghost"—the Holy Ghost. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh avails nothing" (John 6:63). "The power of the soul, which is in the semen through the Spirit enclosed therein, fashions the body" (*Sum. Theol.* III.32.11).⁸³ This is the "Sower (ὁ σπείρων) went forth to sow. . . . Some fell upon stony places. . . . But other fell into good ground. . . . The field is the world" (Matt. 13:3-9, 37)—*sadasad yonim āpadyate* (MU III.2).⁸⁴ And is this Divine Eros, the "Knower of the Field" (BG XIII), any other than the Prodigal Son "who was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found"—dead for so long as he had forgotten who he was, and alive again "when he came to himself"⁸⁵ (Luke 15:11 ff.)?

It has been said, "Ye crucify him daily" (cf. Heb. 6:6), and so assuredly does every man who is convinced that "I am" or "I do" and therewith divides up this One conceptually into many independent and possible beings.⁸⁶ Of all the conclusions to be drawn from the doctrine of the One

⁸² So "a man, out of charity, ought to love himself more than he loves any other person . . . more than his neighbor" (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.26.4). Cf. BU II.4.1-9 (mutual love is not of one another as such, but of the immanent spiritual Self); Hermes, *Lib.* IV.6B; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.8; and Marsilio Ficino, originator of the term "Platonic love," importing that "true love between two persons is by nature a common love for God" (Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, pp. 279, 287).

⁸³ "He who, dwelling in the semen, yet is other than the semen, unseen Seer, unthought Thinker . . . Inner Controller" (BU III.7.23), "who grasps and erects the flesh" (Kaus. Up. III.3). "Say not 'from semen'" (BU III.9.28.5), for "without the Breath semen is not effused, or if it be, it will decay, and not produce" (AĀ III.2.2).

⁸⁴ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 41 and 69, where God, the Maker and Father, instructs the gods, his sons, as subservient causes, to bring together the mortal part of creatures, but "as for that immortal part, which we call the Divine Guide (Θεῖον . . . ἡγεμονοῦν), that part I will deliver unto you when I have sown it (σπείρας . . . ἐγὼ παραδώσω)."

⁸⁵ "Came to himself," *eis éautòn δὲ ἐλθών*. Sāyana on RV IV.27.1, *ātmanam jānan*; BD VII.57, *tatah sa buddhvā ātmānam*; Sāyana on BU I.4.10, *nanu smarasy ātmānam*.

⁸⁶ RV X.90.11, *katidhā vy akalpayan*, "How manyfold did they divide him?"; conversely AB I.18, *na vai na ittham vihitō'nnam bhaviṣyati, hantemam yajñam sambharāma*, "It will not suffice for our food that we have dismembered the Sacrifice, come, let us gather him together again."

and Only Transmigrant, the most poignant is this, that whereas He is the bird caught in the net, the Ram caught in the thicket, the sacrificial Victim and our Savior, he cannot save *us* except and unless we, by the sacrifice and denial of our self, also save *Him*.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ As is also implied in the Christian doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Cf. St. Augustine, "When we all sing, it is that One Man who sings in us" (*In Ps.* 136); in praying, we should not say "we" but "I," because although it is actually a multitude that speaks severally, really "it is that One Man who speaks, who is distributed throughout the world" (*In Ps.* 122); and so, "If, on the one hand, we die in him and in him are resurrected, he on the other hand dies and is resurrected in us" (*Epist.* 140).

The Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ is represented in Buddhism by that of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. It is in the Saṅgha ($\sqrt{\text{samhan}}$) that the distributed Buddha-nature is reintegrated; in this communion those separated members are reunited, which Prajāpati "could not put together again" (*na śaiśāka samhātum*, ŚB I.6.3.36) otherwise than by means of the Sacrifice in which the sacrificer (identified with the oblation) and the Sacrifice are jointly regenerated.