

An Exposition of Traditional Wisdom  
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## Prelude

A note on citation and of thanks. Dr. Whitall Perry deserves complete credit for this work. His book, A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom, is a corpus of the perennial philosophy. It is nearly impossible to cite, because it is made up almost entirely of many hundreds of primary quotations from other sources, yet its citation is integral: Merely citing each work independently would completely disregard the absolute genius that makes Treasury more than just a compendium – The genius is in the construction, both in the order by which the whole book is composed of, as well in the order by which each individual quotation is placed. As Huston Smith remarks in Treasury's Preface, “One marvels at the way the editor has played these traditions as if they were keyboards on a vast organ... they are arranged in a way that brings out a souring descant.” He thus concludes, “A marvelous unity emerges.” Indeed, merely turning the book to its Contents is instructive: It outlines in astonishing order the entirety of the esoteric pursuit! Equally astonishing is its Index of Sources, which is as long as it is breathtaking, underlining the brilliance of Treasury's simplicity in the face of absolute exhaustion. I have thus made citations in the form of the original title, followed by the pagination in Treasury, unless I have remarked upon the source itself prior to quotation, in which case I have merely cited the pagination. E.g. (Chuang Tze, x) or (x).

I find it important, therefore, to append the sole bibliographical reference of this paper in its commencement, instead of following its conclusion. This is both out of respect, as well to alert the reader of the extraordinary exposition that Treasury is in its own right. Mine is only an attempt to coagulate the wisdom of the ages, as delivered in intuitive construction by Perry, into a minor exposition of mine own. Know that even when there is no citation, I could not have done it without the treasure this corpus delivers.

## Bibliography:

*Treasury of Traditional Wisdom, A.* Presented by Whitall N. Perry, Louisville, KY, Fons Vitae, 2000. (Fons Vitae Paperback Edition)

## **Introduction: A Goal in Mind**

Then only will you see it, when you cannot speak of it; for the knowledge of it is deep silence, and suppression of all the senses.  
-Hermes

What is esoterism? Is it a field of study, or a path to enlightenment? Can we categorize it, box it into a set a perimeters, or create analogies to define it? In previous works, I have developed ways in which mystical wisdom can be applied to specific topics: Islamic Law, sacred architecture, quantum mechanics, cosmology, inactive action, and the theophanic world view, to name a few. However, what if we were discuss the pursuit of the Principle and the Principle itself in their own terms? Could such an endeavor even be successful? As Hermes, the famous Alexandrian alchemist, makes clear, the Principle, and the pursuit of the Principle, cannot be defined in terms that match up neatly to language. Language, and its application, are the opposite of silence, and the Principle is steeped in this very essence. Yet it is the intention of our class, and thus our present discussion, to make an attempt to understand esoteric wisdom and the esoteric pursuit beyond mere formalities; in other words, our goal is to get to the heart of the matter. Such is our goal for this paper: To formulate an exposition of the esoteric pursuit, utilizing the vast corpus of the perennial philosophy as an instructive tool.

## **Methods**

An endeavor such as this requires the right tool, as it is akin to scaling a mountain, the highest mountain imaginable, at that. As we would not attempt to scale the Emerald Everest without proper tools, similarly we could not hope to be successful in coming to a fundamental exposition of esoterism without utilizing the corpus of esoteric thought and wisdom: The Perennial Philosophy. As there is no greater exposition of the perennial

philosophy than Dr. Whitall N. Perry's extraordinary work, A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom, we will rely on Perry's structure and presentation for discussing the esoteric pursuit. Beginning with a discussion of the goal of esoterism, we will then discuss fifteen primary elements of esoteric wisdom and the esoteric pursuit, identifying within these elements a variety of specific examples. In this effort, we will discuss both Perry's thoughts, as well as his ample quotation of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, René Guénon, and Frithjof Schuon. More importantly, we will thoroughly comment upon the vast corpus of perennial wisdom that Perry has so graciously delivered in a digestible format. We will make the apex of our discussion the "Eternal Now" and the transformation of the personal identity into the Universal Identity. We will continually demonstrate that this apex is the last fundamental concern of the esoteric pursuit, the realization of eternity, and the consciousness of God, a harmony symbolized in the heart, whose synthesis is peace itself. In our conclusion we will find in this peace the Liberated goal of Man: The Great Mystery.

### **Departure: Mysterium Magnum – The Origin of the Pursuit of the Truth**

The first witness of the Mysterium Magnum, the Great Mystery, is the initial state of the esoteric pursuit of the Principle. The heart of the pursuit of the Principle is this initial moment of witness and the spiritual path towards understanding at attaining it. These are not mutually exclusive expressions of the pursuit; they are in fact indivisible in all but name. Both rely on the mystical practitioner's understanding of the Truth, as well as his spiritual development, but whereas the initial moment can come as an intuitive apprehension without any conditioning, its final attainment is the end state of spiritual development. And, as spiritual development is marked by both the practitioner's intuitive

and intellectual understanding of Reality, the two are really paired halves of a cohesive whole. In the Traditional world, the Way leads from the exoteric understanding of Reality to the esoteric understanding of Reality. This a movement of the intellectual understanding of what Reality seems to be, to an intuitive understanding of what Reality Truly is. Therefore, it involves the process of moving from the exoteric to the esoteric. Perry quotes Coomaraswamy: “What lies at the end of the road is not revealed, even by those of have reached it... it cannot be told and does not appear: The principle is not in any likeness.” (971) Whereas the exoteric thrives in its exposition of reality through analogy and tradition, the esoteric seeks to eliminate orthodox conjectures, even as it seeks to expand upon the truth that orthodoxy professes. But whereas the orthodox goal is to limit and condition, Guénon remarks,

(The) supreme goal is the absolutely unconditional state, freed from all limitation... The question of this state is what the Hindu doctrine calls “deliverance” when compared in relation to the conditioned states, and union when envisaged in relation to the Supreme Principle... this final state is... Absolute Plenitude, the Supreme Reality in regard to which all the rest is an illusion. (971)

It is clear, therefore, how the study of esoterism and the movement towards the Principle involves a process of personal transformation, as only the transformed Wayfarer may truly understand the Reality to which he wishes to be exposed.<sup>1</sup>

### **Creation: Self-Revelation and the Wayfarer**

Initial witness of the Creative act is the archetypal starting point of the mystical path, the moment in which his or her heart is first exposed to the True Reality. It is the witnessing the initial centricity and unity of existence by which the witness is aware of

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<sup>1</sup> Thus the distinction between believer and gnostic: “The difference between the believer and the gnostic is that the believer sees by the light of God and the Gnostic sees by the means of God Himself, and the believer has a heart, but the Gnostic has no heart.” (Al-Sarraj, 975)

the illusion of multiplicity. Understanding Creation as a Divine Act is the beginning of the Wayfarer's understanding of the Origin of Reality, but acknowledging Creation in the presence of Eternal Unity is a process of the soul. Thus, just as Creation is the initial orient, existence itself is concerned with the cycle of creation that exists in perpetuity. As it is a process of the soul, spiritual development takes place in time, but as it is concerned with the Eternal, this development is concerned with something that is necessarily mysterious and immaterial. It therefore requires an extraordinary understanding of the place of the Wayfarer in the eyes of God. Meister Eckhart remarks, "God Cannot know himself without me," (50), just as Ibn Arabi states that,

God wished to see his own essence in a global object, which being endowed with existence, recapitulates the whole divine order, and in this way (makes) manifest his mystery to Himself. (49)

In this way, Man becomes a primary element in Reality, as Man is the basis by which God witnesses His own glory. The position of the Wayfarer therefore is travel back into the Center, returning to the Origin along a vertical plane, all the while taking part in the Self-Revelation of the Principle.<sup>2</sup>

### **Sacrifice and Suffering: The Task of the Soul**

The Path is meant to test, as the Principle only reveals itself to the worthy. Because of the extraordinary character that is required for the Path, the Wayfarer must possess an extraordinary will. At the same time, the pain of the test is not the crux: It is acknowledgement of the Truth behind the test. This Truth is the fallacy of separation, the erroneous vision of multiplicity that makes up the witnessed outward universe. Because it concerns the subjugation of the Mind and the egotistical self image, the Path is often

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<sup>2</sup> Jili states, "Man is the link between God and nature... As God has descended into Man, so Man must ascend to God."

characterized by a pronounced asceticism. Unfortunately, often the ascetic gets lost in the extremity of his or her practice, failing to realize, as Guénon states, that, “Ascesis in its most profound and complete significance is nothing other than the sacrifice of the “self” to realize the consciousness of the Self.” (116) Any pain that the Wayfarer experiences that does lead to the consciousness of the Self, i.e. pain suffered to inflate the ego, misses the Principle entirely.<sup>3</sup> As Perry says, “The illusion in desire must be overcome through discernment... but one must be detached from one’s own renunciation.” (135) In actuality, the importance of asceticism is limiting the self’s resistance to God, and thus resistance to the serenity of the Truth.<sup>4</sup>

### **Renunciation of Illusion: Eluding the Ego**

The core of the esoteric Path is the irreality of multiplicity, and witnessing multiplicity is the function of the ego. It is the worldly reality that is so often identified with sin, hedonism, and material objects, and according to the esoteric line of thought, it is so obviously an illusion; it is called a *veil* by the West and the *maya* in the East. We find no better example of this than in the Swami Ramdas: “The only thing which a man must renounce if he wishes to attain the Supreme Truth is the notion of individuality – nothing else.” (143) This is the first step in folding the self into the Self, a process that ends in the obliteration of individuality, the annihilation of the ego that thrives in and on the material world. Often times the Wayfarer can become trapped by his own egotistical exposition of his spiritual prowess, just as liable as any one who excels at their trade. Bayazid al-Bistami: “The people most separated from God are the ascetics by their

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<sup>3</sup> “All the activity of man in the works of self denial has no good in itself, but is only to open an entrance for the one only Good, the light of God, to operate upon us.” (William Law, 144)

<sup>4</sup> “Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace?” (Job, 147)

asceticism, the devotees by their devotion, and the knowers by their knowledge.” (145)  
Thus, the process of eluding the ego begins by acknowledging its illusory existence, and ends by allowing it to perish into the boundaries of True existence. Upon reaching this boundary, the Wayfarer takes his first step towards the “death before death,” the initial element of personal rebirth into the presence of the Universal Self.

### **True Death: Annihilation of the ego-self**

The profane world is the source of illusion, the source of the mistake of the self. The self grasps hold to the illusion, making material trump immaterial, corporeal trump Truth. So long as the self is the primary preoccupation of the soul - the mind unquieted, the ego unchecked, and the needs of the flesh unreplaced with the longing for reunification - there can be no rebirth into the Truth and the Principle. Guénon:

Every change of state whatsoever is both a death and a birth...  
Death in relation to the antecedent state, birth in relation to the subsequent state. Initiation is generally described as a “second birth,” which in fact it is: But this “second birth” necessarily implies a death to the profane world. (204)

In truth, the self is just an idea, a conception born through an ill-placed acknowledgment of the seeming reality of irreality, of multiplicity when in fact there is only unity. The experienced world, the profane world, comes between the Universal Self and the self, between God and man.<sup>5</sup> The ignorant self must therefore be destroyed, annihilated in the act of giving up that which we egotistically hold most dear: The ego itself. Whether we hold on to our past, our passion, or our material objects (which is to say they are actually all expositions of the ego-identity), it makes little difference. By giving up the self, we

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<sup>5</sup> “Between Me and thee is thy self-experience: Cast it away, and I will veil thee from Thyself.” (Niffari, 221)

acknowledge its existence, and we tame it in its destruction. In this we ultimately find peace, as aspiration, and crushed aspiration, are both nullified:

The consciousness that “This is I,” is like the shadow of night and is dispelled by the rising of the sun of true knowledge. Think neither of the entity nor the non-entity of yourself or others. Preserve the tranquility of your mind, by ignoring the thought of both positive and negative existence, and rid the sense of distinction between cause and effect. (Yoga Vasishtha, 222)

The mind is, in actuality, the wants of, and needs of, the profane world, actualized in egotism, self worth, pain, pleasure, and ultimately illusion. The ego, and its aspirations, is the source of all ill; from wealth to the atom bomb, from livid sexuality to livid addiction. The mind and its distractions stand in the way of peace. Thus says the Sri Rama Krishna, “A man obtains Brahajuana as soon as the mind is annihilated. With the annihilation of the mind dies the ego, which says, ‘I,’ ‘I.’” (222) The identical existence of the identity, the self, and the mind allows for a simple equation: With the destruction of one, all will vanish. The process of ordering this equation will find its situation in ritual:

Destroy the Mind by means of True Knowledge; destroy the ‘I’ by the Consciousness that “I am Brahman,” and this through constant and intense meditation. When the mind vanishes and thought ceases, name and form disappear and the end is attained. -Swami Sivananda (222)

### **Ritual and Method: The Path and the Spiritual Master**

Though we said before that ritual asceticism, often associated with meditation and self-denial, can lead to an inflation of the ego, practiced properly, rite leads the Wayfarer to that the Reality that transcends vertically his shallow self identity. A most important piece of this puzzle, then, is a spiritual master who demands ultimately objectivity. There is a reason that often the most inobjective spiritual Wayfarers are self-described masters themselves, because they have shed the dominance of a master. The master is responsible

thus not only for the student's progression through the states, but also, perhaps more importantly, for his or her humility. The dark shadow of the ego must be dispelled as it is the most un-humble of entities:

The syllable "gu" means darkness, the syllable "ru" means dispeller; he therefore is called a guru because he dispels darkness. The guru is the Supreme Cause, the guru is Ultimate Destiny, the guru is transcendent Sapience, the guru is Supreme Resort, the guru is Final Limit, the guru is Supreme Wealth. Because he teaches That, the guru is most great. (Advaya Tavaka Upanishad, 288)

The guru is these things because he has become them through a process that he now teaches his pupil. The guru does not just teach "That," he is "That," and as such he is not self but Self. The Eastern tradition of the guru is tantamount to the Western Prophet in its original sense, not because he represents God or speaks for God, but because there is an ultimate continuity between him and Him; in as much as there is no "him," in the guru there is only "Him:" "God and the guru are not really different; they are identical." (Sri Ramana Maharshi, 290) Thus, just as in the West the religious are commanded to "Give themselves" to the principle speaker *for* the Principle (the Word as it is delivered by Jesus, the Qur'an as it is delivered by Muhammad, the Law as it is delivered by Moses), so to does the whole giving of the pupil to the Guru in the East constitute an extraordinarily important step in esoteric realization: The giving is an act that is not an act, it is action out of inaction.

### **Action and non-acting Action: The Work of the Sage**

"To act, one must be," says Perry. What does it mean to be? While Perry expands upon this statement in a discussion of acting through the positive action of the single legitimate Act of God, to "be" in the way that Perry means is to act through negation. To

act without action is to act without position; unconcern with cause and effect, concern instead with Truth. Meister Eckhart states,

He whose work is wrought in the Kingdom of Heaven remains tranquil in every undertaking... People of this sort are always the same whether they work or whether they work not, for works give nothing to them and take nothing from them. (359)

Whereas action for the self is action that attempts to add more to, or take away from, the self, non-acting action is action that just “is,” just as Perry says, “to act, one must be.”

This “be” means to be without constraint, without limitation, without imposition. Such being is without need, and thus needs not to act for anything. Effort is the boon of the ego, and is the full contemplative order of the distracted and egotistical mind. Thus, “when egoity ceases to be, actions become spontaneous.” (Sri Ramana Maharshi, 360)

This is the reason that inactive action is a the fundamental proposition of the Dao de Jing:

“Act non-Action; undertake no undertaking; taste the tasteless.” (360) The Inner

Pilgrimage is the supreme example of the undertaking of non-action, and the unmoving move towards peace.

### **The Inner Pilgrimage**

Pilgrimage is both noun and verb, an illustrative image and an allegorical action; speaking of pilgrimage is a discussion of the entire mystical path, going on pilgrimage is the journey from profane to sacred. The goal of this paper is one that Perry himself describes as a pilgrimage, and he orders his book (if we could even call it that) with the “pilgrimage action” in mind. Pilgrimage thus is so central to the basis of this paper that to ignore its importance would be a catastrophic error. Yet it is not the external pilgrimage: Make no doubt about it, St. Gregory of Nyssa is insurmountably correct: “I believe Bethlehem, Gologtha, the Mount of Olives, and the Resurrection, to be verily in the heart

of him who has God.” Birth, experience, death, existence in the Principle, and disintegration into God are the story of Christ, as they are a unified example of the Inner Pilgrimage itself. In many ways, understanding the difference between inner and outer pilgrimage is the same as understanding the Truth as opposed to the illusion. Bayazid al-Bistami expresses this understanding of the inner pilgrimage: “For a long while I used to circumambulate the Ka’ba. When I attained unto God, I saw the Ka’ba circumambulating me.” (389) Another Sufi, Shabastari, similarly expresses the true meaning of the esoteric *hajj*: “In the empty heart, void of self, can be heard the echoing cry, “I am the Truth.” Traveling, travel, and traveler have become one.” (390) Becoming one, the personal transformation from multiplicity to unity, requires a raging assault upon the self, an all out war to reign in and obliterate the ego, destroying the Dragon that resides within the body.

### **Holy War: Killing the Inward Dragon through Faith and Patience**

The goal of the Way is to reintegrate manifested multiplicity into the Principle Unity, to paraphrase Perry (391), and the image of that process, as we have seen in our discussion of the annihilation of the ego, is destruction. Yet at the same time, it is not destruction in the eyes of Truth, merely in the way the egotistical self considers its own doom. In actuality, it is the reintegration of loss, loneliness, and separation that accompanied the Fall from Paradise, and is in fact a most peaceful act, even if it violently explodes the ego. War is thus necessary, war against the ego, but as Perry makes clear in his discussion of Holy War, it was a war that is just, for it reestablishes equilibrium and balance. (391) Simultaneously, the commencement of Holy War is one whose operation must be with the goal to cease War when the goal is attained. In the consummation of

Holy War we find the introduction of the second piece of our esoteric apex: The eternity of the Present, as Guénon makes clear:

“For the person who has perfectly succeeded in realizing the unity within himself, all opposition ceases, and consequently the state of war ceases... (That person) sees unity in all things and all things in unity, in the absolute simultaneity of the “Eternal Present.” (392)

Unitive Identification and intuitive eternity are impossible unless the enemy-self has been reintegrated into the peaceful-Self; peace in its truest sense is having no enemy, a message at the heart of Christ, and echoed in the Bhagavad-Gita: “He who has conquered himself by the Self, he is a friend of himself; but he whose self is unconquered, his self acts as his own enemy like an external foe.” (396) With the end of war necessarily comes peace, but the war is waged with the allies of peace: Faith and patience. Faith itself is more than practical belief, but as Schuon says, “faith is nothing less than the consent of our whole being to the Truth.” (499) Faith is intrinsic to winning the war against the enemy-self because it is an operation of the will. By employing the will, the Self denies the self the will as a weapon, and uses it for good instead of evil; allowing faith instead of agnosticism to be the priority of the will leads the soul to participate fully in the non-active action of full Being. Such action has no device save Being, an inactive-action that is readily reinforced by patience. In these two things, reintegration of the self into the Self and faith through willed Being reinforced by patience, one begins truly to witness the Unitive Truth of the Eternal Presence of God. Such is Enlightenment and Deliverance the result of peace and the end of war. The West calls this Salvation, the East, Liberation.

### **Meditation and Contemplation: Cultivation of the Liberated Soul**

Once the mind is at rest and the acknowledgement of the Truth has taken place, the “War” is over, and is seen for what it truly was: A War with the effect of Peace,

bringing about Pure Death with the effect of Unconditioned Life. In re-birth, the Wayfarer is given all the tools he will need to go from mere acknowledgement of the Truth to active participation with the Truth. From hereon, he must go from knowing *of* the Universal Identify and the Eternal Now to reintegrating the newly enlightened Self into the actual Principle. In order to do so, he must begin cultivating his essence; he has gone down the rabbit hole, but he discovers that this was only the first step, and the cycle of death and birth is not yet finished. The root of this cultivation will be the contemplative and meditative life.

“The concentration that distinguishes contemplation (is) a synthesis or con-centering of all faculties and qualities in their Common Center and Archetypal Source, the transcendental Intellect, omniscient Spirit, ‘Eye of the World,’ or Solar Comprehensor.” (Perry, 520)

It is this con-centering unity that quite literally transforms the identity into a Being that explores the world within and beyond, with the ultimate goal, wherein possible, to become completely united with the Source of all worlds. In doing so, the Wayfarer literally *becomes* that what he contemplates:

The saint has himself become prayer, the meeting place of earth and Heaven; he thus contains the universe, and the universe prays with him. He is everywhere where nature prays, and he prays with and in her. (Schuon, 520)

Emmanuel Swedenborg characterizes this “becoming” as entering into direct correspondence with a higher entity, the end goal being to correspond to the Principle.<sup>6</sup> In

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<sup>6</sup> Quantum mechanics has shown that this correspondence to the Principle is a game that the entire universe plays at, a reality that Emmanuel Swedenborg foresaw in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His understanding was rewarded with proof in Catholic physicist Wolfgang Smith’s book, [The Quantum Enigma, Finding the Hidden Key](#). Smith has acknowledged to Dr. Sayyed Hussein Nasr that he believes that his quantum understanding of the theophanic and unitive universe is well represented in Emmanuel Swedenborg’s cosmology, despite Swedenborg preceding him and quantum physics by nearly two hundred and fifty years. See [The Congruence of the Cosmologies of Emmanuel Swedenborg and Wolfgang Smith: An Examination of a Remarkable Intersection of Wisdom](#), Donovan, 2004.

this becoming, all distractions are eliminated, the mind lies at rest, the Self is fully realized, and sees without veiling the eternality of the True Identity:

In (Self-experience) all forms are endowed with the sameness of space. And the mind is held steady with the nature of this same sameness. When the mind ceases thus to be mind, the true nature of the Innate Shines forth. (Saraha, 532)

Thus the true nature of meditation: “The mind becomes like a continuous flow of oil – it thinks of one object only and that is God.” (Sri Rama Krishna, 534)

### **The Oratory of the Heart**

The Way to the Heart is one whose end-goal is peace, and though no discussion of that Way is exhaustive, we have considered it quite thoroughly; before we move into the apex of our discussion, the profound peace that comes with Liberation that delivers the Wayfarer into the Principle, we must consider the inward reality of the heart. Consider these five quotations:

The path to the source of your and the world’s being is not without. You have to go within. (Swami Ramdas, 538)

A spirit is within, which by deliberate skill you must separate from the body. – (Glory of the World, 538)

The wise man remains wholly centered in himself. – Yoga Vasishtha (539)

The Absolute resides as the Self in every Heart. – Sri Ramana Maharshi (541)

In the Heart, according to the traditional world view, lies the apex between God and God: The God of Life and the God of Transcendence. Both of these identities of God wish to be known, and it is by no mistake that life itself begins and ends with the rhythm of the heart. To know the Truth of the heart is ultimately to know the Truth itself; though this is not attainment, it is understanding. Deliverance comes with the peace of what the heart represents, the united synthesis of the God of existence and the God of inexistence, the

*Yin* and the *Yang*. The harmony of these two halves of the Principle is the rhythm of the heart, found between the personal God of the heart's "on" beat in the West and the impersonal God of the "off" beat in the East. The harmony of these two halves is Deliverance. The harmony of these two halves is True Life.

### **The Two Halves of the Heart: Eternity and Identity**

Just as a heart displays a rhythm between two separate yet equally important elements, "on" and "off," so too must we consider the rhythm between knowledge of eternity and the realization of identity separately, so that we may consider their synthesis in our conclusion.

Eternity is the nature of the microcosm, the central point by which all else turns in time. Without the needle, a clock is worthless, but without the central point, so too is the needle worthless. As we have considered exoteric reality, we have considered the clock itself. As we have considered the *pursuit* of the Principle, the Way or Path, so too have we considered the needle and its use. In considering the eternal present, we consider the point in which the needle originates.

Identity is the nature of reality as a whole, the truth behind not just the clock, but its relationship to Man. The theophanic universe encompasses the entire clock, and is a vision of the exoteric majesty of God. Just as we have considered the three intrinsic parts of the "clock," or the "Wheel of the Universe," so too must we consider the relationship between the Identity of the Principle and the Identity of Man.

Only after we delve into the interplay between these two, witness and unwitness, *ying* and *yang*, heaven and earth, may we express as best we can the Great Mystery.

## *The Eye of Knowledge and the Eternal Now*

Eternity relates to time and space, and prior to *being* eternal, one must *know* the eternal, which means knowing the truth of time and space.<sup>7</sup> The Truth thus is that they are intrinsically an illusion, nay, *the* illusion of existence. The Truth is that the focus of time in space is upon that point in which there is no time in space, and in fact (as we have discussed in the symbol of the clock) they rotate around it both outward and downward, acknowledging both the Fall of Man and the irreality of Time, forming the universal cosmology of the Mountain or the Cone. Quite clearly there is time, and quite clearly there is space, but in the Origin, there is quite clearly neither. Science acknowledges the Big Bang, an event science places in time, but Wolfgang Smith has made clear that the Big Bang is not a temporal Creation, but an ontological Creation that occurs eternally at all points in space. St. Bonaventura wisely states: “God’s center is everywhere, his circumference is nowhere.” (814) As such, Man participates firstly in the Center through knowledge of It as the final Truth, prior to the peace of *being* in It; such knowledge is known in the East as Samadhi.<sup>8</sup> At this ontological “height” and Originality,<sup>9</sup> there is nothing but “Present,” and all things exist simultaneously in one united Now. By knowing and understanding this Present Moment that resides at the center of the ontological internal boundary of the universe, the Wayfarer engages and eventually

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<sup>7</sup> Resisting the temptation to quote Perry, Coomaraswamy, Guénon, and Schuon’s wisdom *ad infinitum*, we will rely on them in this section primarily through footnote. I strongly encourage witnessing the beauty in which they describe such a difficult topic.

<sup>8</sup> Perry: “Samadhi is to know the synthesis of all time and space... in an “Eternal Present” centered in a super luminous fullness of beatitude whereof the Comprehensor is the transcendent Intellect or Solar Deity dwelling microcosmically in the “Eye of the Heart...” this non-manifested ‘abode’ of the Supreme Principal or Universal Sprit, (is) Omniscient Self, Atma, or “Moment without duration,” but central and axial to all existences, where complementaries and oppositions are contained in (the) Principal equilibrium.” (814)

<sup>9</sup> In the truest use of the term “Originality.” The etymology of the word is usually lost as it is often associated with the creativity of the ego.

embodies within him or her a sense of timelessness and eternity.<sup>10</sup> Speaking of this moment, Ibn al-Farid states, “Before it there is no ‘before’ and after it there is no ‘after;’ the beginning of the centuries is the seal of its existence.” Knowledge of it begets two important realizations to the Wayfarer: First, that in realistic application to life, there is no truer reality than the “Eternal Today.” Such an attitude readily dispels any problems with life, and sets truer priorities over the baser ones. Thus Christ says, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Matthew 6:33) The transformative qualities of such a perspective are also documented by Omar Khayyam:

Ah, fill the Cup: What boots it to repeat  
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:  
Unborn, Tomorrow, and dead Yesterday,  
Why fret about them if Today be sweet! (840)

Finally, ‘Isa al-Kharraz wisely states, “Do not occupy your precious time except with the most precious of things, and the most precious of human things is the state of being occupied between the past and the future.” (841) In rejecting the demands of the future and the past, one not only stops projecting an illusionary sense of need into his true Self; he lives in and for the Moment (the Sufi *al-waqt*). Secondly, knowledge of the central unitive point from which the Axis Mundi protrudes is knowledge of the perennial three-part cosmograph, delivered just as truthfully through both contemplation (i.e. Mulla Sadre, Swedenborg and the Dao de Jing), as through Quantum Mechanics and Astrophysics (i.e. Wolfgang Smith). Knowledge of the wholeness and fullness of being comes only from acknowledging the eternality of Being Itself. Indeed, “the point whereto

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<sup>10</sup> Guénon: (It) is the direct reflection of principal eternity, which excludes all succession... it is the “abode of immortality:” All things appear therein in perfect simulteity in an immutable Present, through the power of the Third Eye; with which man has recovered the “sense of eternity.” (815)

all times are present,” (Dante, 838) is that point, “Where every *where* and every *when* is focussed...” (Dante, 839). The three-part cosmograph, so integral to every tradition and every faith, is the end goal of, “The pure one (*safi*) (whom) is plunged in the Light of the Glorious; he is not the son of any one, free from ‘times’ and ‘states.’” (Rumi, 841). The nature by which the Pure One identifies with this freedom (from time and state), is the process that ends in Deliverance.

*Wahdat al-Wajud: Towards the Supreme Identity and Deliverance*

With the knowledge of unity comes simultaneously the realization of personal unconditionality and universal possibility. Just as our previous consideration required a realization of the centrality of the Unitive universe, delivering a transformative perspective whose priorities became little other than the Principle itself, free from worry, our current discussion requires an identified realization of the Real itself.<sup>11</sup> This realization is the full knowledge of the self, bringing about the knowledge of the Self. When this full knowledge reveals itself, the universe falls into place, so to speak. What is the Self? Words like Supreme Identity and Universal Truth are fancy and all, but what is the Truth? The Self is an act: It is not “liberated,” it is Liberation. But as we have said before, it is an in-active act: It produces nothing, and thus it produces the nothingness that the Wayfarer seeks, illuminating the Real of Unity. What is it Liberation from? From the fallacy of multiplicity. This is still just knowledge, but it is knowledge of the highest order. It is the type of knowledge that transforms the Wayfarer from one who *knows* the Real into the Real itself, whereby there is no Wayfarer, there is only Principle, the initiation of this final reintegration is the knowledge of the Truth: That who he or she is

(or thinks he or she is) is quite an illusionary thing indeed.<sup>12</sup> The realization that the Identity is something that has always resided in God, and will always reside in God, acknowledges thus that the final goal is not so much the act of unity as it is a return to a pre-and-eternally-existing unity. Thus Coomaraswamy rightly says, "... What separates Man from the divine Reality is an infinitesimal barrier: God is infinitely near to Man, but Man is infinitely far from God." (857) Chuang Tze states, "It is that to place oneself in subjective relation with externals, without consciousness of their objectivity, this is Dao." (861) Let us discuss this statement. At its heart is a priority to live life in Liberation by losing 'eyes for distinction' and gaining 'eyes for Unity.' To see the self in relation to the Self is to begin to see the self truthfully. To place oneself in complete subjectivity to the universe is to become one with it, as egotistical subjectivity is to believe that the universe is full of witnessed objects. Thus, to be in subjective relation with externals is to coexist *in* the identity of those externals, and thus, by acknowledging the unity of things, to be subjectified by the Identity of the Universe. *To see only a landscape laced with one sole object is to truly have knowledge of the sacred.* To be thus, as Haung Po acknowledges, is to, "just be himself, oblivious of conceptual thought and one with the absolute – he would have attained the state of unconditioned being. This, then, is the fundamental Principle."

### **The Peace Which Passeth all Understanding...**

Knowledge of the prior two alternating elements of the fundamental Principle begets understanding, and understanding begets true attainment; knowledge of

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<sup>11</sup> Perry: "The possibility of full realization cannot be other than in the Here and Now... only the Real... can be Realized: Atma... is Brahma." (855)

<sup>12</sup> Coomaraswamy: "The Liberation from good and evil that seemed impossible and is impossible for the man who we define by what he does or thinks and hwo answers to the question, "Who is that," "It's me," is possible only for him who can answer at the sun door to the question, "Who art Thou," "Thyself..." (He) liberate(s) himself by knowing Who he is."

Identification with the Real and of the Eternality of Existence are one thing, attainment is quite something separate. Yet each beget understanding of the other, and in a fury of movement that is completely (for obvious reason) out of the hands of the Wayfarer, the “cause of attainment is attainment itself.” (Hujwiri, 890) Which came first, the chicken or the egg? The Zen nature of this question is exposed when one realizes that the two came into being simultaneously, along with all other things. Knowledge prior was concerned with identifying the subjectivity of time and objectivity of space: Then knowledge became an understanding of the Truth of the matter, in the Real and in the Eternal. Now, knowledge becomes transformative, wherein it causes itself, inasmuch as it causes nothing; the Wayfarer is only granted that which he deserves, and reintegration is not possible whilst the Wayfarer is concerned with the esoteric pursuit of the Principle, for such a concern maintains two identities: The Wayfarer and the Principle. Back to our chicken and egg, only when the Wayfarer puts down his quest, will his *question* be concluded. To do so can only be done when the heart is in peace, or more pointedly, when the heart is peace itself. But as we have said before, the heart’s function is to beat on and off, between the two sides of the witnessed Principle! And for the heart to be truly at peace, it cannot merely lack a beat, for that would be the “off” beat – one half: The heart cannot be fully “on,” nor fully “off,” but obviously it cannot function as a heart if one or the other is not perpetually occurring. Thus peace is only found when there is *no* heart, or rather, when the heart of Man is replaced by the Principle itself. This, like the quest, is a process, but it is not one bounded by time and space, by cosmology or theology, by orthodoxy or even mysticism. Peace comes with the eradication of these labels one by one. The labels are elements of language, and language is the opposite of

silence. As peace persists and slowly removes the heart, only non-resistance, the highest order of human peace, will keep the Wayfarer from failure if he strives to hold onto the last shred of ego that maintains his limited self; his quest. If he does not resist personal annihilation, Man turns his entire existence towards God, and God thus turns His entire existence towards Man; it is at this endless moment that *God draws man near*, and Man begins to perish into the Truth: That he is nothing, in and of himself, an experience of the Peace of the Eternal Self.<sup>13</sup> This peace, as the heart becomes quieter and quieter, is serenity. God dwells in Peace, and as such, so does the Wayfarer. Rest overcomes his heart, and so does the quiet, even as the rushing of Reality explodes past him. Spreading his wings of destiny, the Wayfarer awaits the final Word from the Principle, a Word unutterable except when he is commanded to recite It. Then God, “performs within the soul an act too Godlike for creature to attain to or yet see. The divine Wisdom is discreetly fond and lets no creature watch.” (Eckhart, 701) The fire of all things is extinguished through aversion, and,

In conceiving this aversion, he becomes divested of passion, and by the absence of passion he becomes free, and when he is free he becomes aware that he is free; and he knows that rebirth is exhausted, that he has lived the holy life, that he has done what is behooved him to do, and that he is no more for this world. (Maha-Vagga, 704)

The Wayfarer experiences the Profound Peace of the *Wahdat al-Wajud*: Acceptance by and into the Supreme Identity, combined with non-resistance to his own immanent ego-destruction, through both the understanding of the doctrine of Unity (the esoteric pursuit) and its attainment (Liberation). Wings spread, the Wayfarer waits patiently, for,

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<sup>13</sup> That “Peace is always Present... this Peace is the Self.” (Sri Ramana Mararshi, 700)

Nothing can repose in itself, except by returning into that from which it has gone forth... in such a manner... the will beyond all sense and specific appearance is plunged into the eternal will of the Undetermined, out of which it has arisen in the beginning, i.e., out of the *Mysterium Magnum*, so that it no longer wills anything except what God wills for it. (Boehme, 705)

In the Profound Peace, “In tranquility, in stillness, in the unconditioned, in inaction, we find the levels of the universe, the very constitution of the Dao... The heart unconscious of sorrow and happiness – that is perfect virtue. One, without change – that is perfect repose.” (Chaung Tze, 707) The Wayfarer is plunged into Unity and fades away into the peace of God. Thus, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds.” Notice the verb “keep.” It is an action of the peace, the last vesicle remaining between the Wayfarer and God, an action that overrides all understanding and thus the entire intellectual being of man, overrides even the esoteric pursuit itself; knowledge and understanding fade away, as does all distinction. There is no truth but the ineffable Truth, no god but the ineffable God, no dao but the True Dao, no thing but the Principle. When even these distinctions are extinguished, there is no Principle but the *Mysterium Magnum*. It is that which was first intuitively witnessed that is now selflessly accomplished, a return to the Uncreated Unconditionality of the Great Mystery in the expiration of intellectual pursuit.

### **Arrival**

“Of the heaven which abides above the heavens, what earthly poet ever did or ever will sing worthily? ... There abides the very being with which the true knowledge is concerned; the colourless, formless, intangible essence... knowledge absolute and existence absolute.” (Plato, 998).

“It is infinite, incomprehensible, immeasurable; it exceeds our powers, and is beyond our scrutiny. The place of it, the whither and the whence, the manner and the quality of its being, are unknown to us. It moves in absolute stability, and its stability moves within it.” (Hermes, 998)

“Ultimate, unheard, unreached, unthought, unbowed, unseen, undiscriminated and unspoken, albeit listener, thinker, seer, speaker, discriminator, and foreknower, of that Interior Person of all beings one should know that ‘He is my Self.’” (*Aitareya Aranyaka*, 1000).

In the most specific of constructions, only fathomable after this long journey of understanding, attainment, reintegration and unity,

Om is Brahma. (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 1001)

### **Conclusion: No Mind for a Goal is No Life at All**

What have we accomplished? I would venture a humble guess: Quite nothing indeed. If our quest was for an exposition, we may have accomplished that. If our quest was a question, we have accomplished that as well: For the question is well stated by Dr. Perry: “The great imponderable in all spiritual work is: How to be what one is, and how to cease being what is not.” (858) Yet words are hardly instructive. Language is the opposite of, and opposition to, Truth, as it stirs up the Ineffable Silence that in perpetuity resides within the Principle.

So instead, let us end with a story. God Willing it will be more instructive than this paper. A George Washington University religion professor shared with me recently a story of the early-adult years of Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, when he focused with intensity his whole mind upon mysticism. Already becoming famous for his writing, a young man came and spoke with Buber one afternoon. Buber had previously spent the day ambling through the forest, and upon returning, had not shrugged off the spell that nature had cast upon him. Buber was aware, when the young man left, that he had not paid him full attention. Sometime later, Buber was told that the young man had died in the trenches of World War One. It shattered him. While his later existentialism is an

affront to the Truth of the Principle, we must take Buber's story to heart: God is the God of Life, even if the Principle is beyond such limits of God and Life. Participation in Life is the utter commandment of God, insofar as God commands Man to be at Peace and to be content. We must be mindful that our own esoteric pursuit must not blind us to Life itself, lest it be a paralysis; only God can truly blind us in a way that Delivers and Liberates. Many great mystics, prophets, and avatars left society to escape its trappings, only to return to society later and face life itself. Philosophers, Mulla Sadre, Al-Ghazali, and Prophets, Christ, Moses, and Muhammad, Peace be on them all, are the Western examples of those who wandered before their commencement. In the East, Chuang Tze, Lao Tze, the Buddha, and many others followed share a similar story. Yet their commandment, upon their return, was a command to live (yet,) in the realization that life's trappings are not Life: True Life is without trappings. Not all men and women are fit to be gnostics, but despite that, all men and women are fit (and specifically commanded) to be at Peace.