

1. The Creative Activity of Saguna Brahman
2. The Relationship Between Saguna Brahman and the Universe
3. Akasha, Prana, and Mahat (Cosmic Mind)
4. Saguna Brahman Manifests as the Universe
5. Panentheism: The World Within Brahman-God and Brahman-God Within the World

VII. Saguna Brahman and the Universe and Panentheism

1. The Creative Activity of Saguna Brahman

Saguna Brahman is both the efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*) and material (substantial) cause (*samavayi-karana*) of the universe. Saguna Brahman becomes the universe by a process of transformation in which case It proceeds from full capacity to a lower capacity. In doing so It diversifies into a vast array of minds both human and animal; each mind continually changes over time; and has three aspects: conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. The things of the universe are not identical with Saguna Brahman and can never become It. Consequently, we never become Saguna Brahman but remain separate as Its worshipper. The universe is understandable because Saguna Brahman is rational and has made us rational. Because the world is derived from Saguna Brahman, religion in one sense enjoys an ontological and epistemological priority over other disciplines.

The creative process of the universe is one of degeneration where the effect is less than the cause. A degenerative ontology indicates that in the creative process each stage is less than the prior one. There is a withdrawal and negation of the original Divine qualities. The creation of the universe is de-evolutionary, proceeding in the opposite direction of the emergent evolutionary process that occurs later. Swami Abhedananda expresses the notion that the perfect ideas in the Divine Mind become lesser when they manifest on the material plane through space, time, and causation. The degenerate process of creation involves fragmentation from the highest to lower levels of organization, complexity, structure, interaction of components, and process. Through the process of fragmentation, it loses its unity and becomes less organized. It is the exact opposite of the emergence process from lower to higher levels of organization.

According to the metaphysics of the German Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (Cusanus) (1401-64) the world is a contraction of the Divine Being. "In the creation of the world unity is 'contracted' into plurality, infinity into finitude, simplicity into composition, eternity into succession, necessity into possibility. On the plane of creation the Divine infinity expresses or reveals itself in the multiplicity of finite things, while the Divine eternity expresses or reveal Itself in temporal succession."¹

If infinite space is contracted then it becomes limited in scope and if infinite knowledge is contracted then there is a possibility of a lack of understanding which are aspects of a finite world. This assumes an infinite with finite parts. If

infinite space and knowledge with or without parts are withdrawn they could be replaced by finite space and knowledge.

The creative process involves Saguna Brahman's self-emptying (kenosis), self-limitation, contraction, withdrawal, self-negation, and self-modifications. Conversely, evolution involves the creation advancing toward Saguna Brahman, while degeneration is the reverse process of going away from It. They differ in that evolutionary process takes aeons to occur, while the original degeneration of the creation of the world quite possibly occurred quickly.

Swami Abhedananda (1866-1939) cautioned that, "Ishvara [Saguna Brahman] is called the creator because He projects out of His own being the powers existing there potentially and makes them active. Thus, the word "creator" means the projector of all forces and of all phenomenal forms, which potentially existed as eternal energy in Ishvara [Saguna Brahman]. That projection from the potential into the kinetic or active state takes place gradually through the process of the evolution of the Maya or the cosmic energy, which dwells in the Ishvara [Saguna Brahman] of Vedanta.... He does not create matter, but matter is only a certain state or mode of motion of the universal Divine energy. When the dormant power of Maya begins to manifest, all material forms commence to appear" [This was published in 1903 two years prior to Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity that equates energy with mass (matter)].² "When we realize that nature or the material cause is nothing but a part of the manifested Divine Energy, we understand that God does not, like a carpenter or a potter, create or fashion the phenomena out of the materials which exist outside of Himself, but that he projects by the process of evolution everything out of His own body wherein dwell all the matter and forces of the world."³

Abhedananda continues, Ishvara (Saguna Brahman) is "the material [substantial] cause of the universe and also the efficient cause. He projects through the process of evolution and out of his own. That is the cosmic energy, which contains potentially all the forms, forces, ideas, and thoughts. Then he becomes the ruler of the universe. He is the internal ruler, just the same as the individual may be called the ruler of his own form.... the ruler of the universe is the knower of the universe. That ruler is not only outside of nature, but immanent and resident in nature also. He transcends nature as well as lives in nature. He is nothing but that portion of Divine energy, which has taken so many forms and appears as so many forces. His physical body is the gross physical form of the universe, which includes the infinite variety of the manifestations of forces, and powers that we perceive with our senses. The innumerable suns, moons, stars and planets make up the gross physical body of that Ishvara [Saguna Brahman]. He is the all-knowing and all-intelligent Cosmic Ego. As the individual ego is the knower of the body, He is also the knower of all acts that can be performed by body, mind or senses. So the Cosmic Ego performs all the acts that are to be observed in this world of phenomena. His mind is the Cosmic Mind, and Cosmic Intellect is his intellect... He dwells in every object and gives reality to it, but, at the same time, is not the same as the object itself."⁴

Swami Abhedananda explains, "All the manifestations of forces are nothing but the expressions of one universal force, which may be called the Divine or

Cosmic Will. The whole physical universe is his body. He is the one stupendous power and everything is a part of that one infinite power. Our bodies are parts of that Universal Body, our individual mind is a part of the Cosmic Mind, our individual Intellect is a part of the Cosmic Intellect, and our individual will is a part and parcel of the Divine Will.”⁵ Mental telepathy or thought transference is possible because, “There is a Cosmic omnipresent Mind, and our individual minds are but little eddies in that Cosmic Mind. Our individual minds are connected through the Cosmic Mind.... The Universal Mind is the source of all the powers, which have been shown by different individuals on the human plane. That Universal Mind is also called the Cosmic Mind. There is one eternal current of the Cosmic Mind, which is flowing from eternity to eternity. The individual minds are related to this Cosmic Mind, as eddies and whirlpools are related to the current. The eternal current of the Cosmic Mind is flowing and producing eddies or whirlpools, which are our own individual minds. These eddies of the individual minds are connected with other eddies through the Cosmic Mind.... Geniuses manifest their powers which they draw from the Cosmic Mind.”⁶ Through extreme concentration, geniuses are able to go beyond the limitations of the egoistic boundaries of their own mind and make meaningful superconscious contact with ideas within the Cosmic Mind resulting in intuition, insight, and inspiration.

He continues, “The sum total of all energy forms the Cosmic Body of God. Therefore all forces, mental and physical, are only expressions of that all energy God.... The energy that is manifested through sunlight and heat, are no other than the expressions of that one eternal energy, which forms the body of God. So all the activities are the workings of the Divine force or energy, what right have we to claim the results of works as our own?... You must realize that you are the Spirit, and are related to the Universal Soul. You should realize that your body and mind are only the instruments, through which the higher Spirit, with all the Divine energy, is working and manifesting its powers. As you are an instrument, you will be uplifted by this, instead of being discouraged.”⁷ “Our will is “a part and parcel of that one Will which is moving the universe from the minutest atom to the biggest solar system, and our bodies are nothing but so many small instruments through which that all-pervading Will is expressing itself.... We are like so many cells in the Spiritual Body of the Infinite Being.... nothing exists outside of God, because he is omnipresent. He is all in all.”⁸

That Saguna Brahman is both the formal and material (substantial) cause of the universe is to some extent paralleled by the Christian idea that the Divine exemplars are the cause of both the form and material substance of all things.

When It creates the universe Saguna Brahman's essential nature does not change. It remains free of all of the imperfections of the universe though operating in it. It is both transcendent and immanent, and therefore is not exhausted by, dependent on, or tarnished by the defects of the universe. We might think of electricity that operates through a lamp yet is not affected by a faulty light bulb. An analogy is given in the *Upanishads* between a spider and its web. The web proceeds from the spider, yet the latter is not directly affected by the conditions of the former.

As the human mind controls the body, so also the Universal Mind (the mental universe) directs the activities of the Universal Body (the physical universe) and uses it for its own purposes. For example, the Universal Mind works through our mind telling it to raise our hand, which is a part of the Universal Body. Saguna Brahman has a subtle aspect as the Universal Mind and a gross aspect as the Universal Body. The Universal Body is to a human being as our body is to a cell within the body. Yet, we do not have direct contact or control over our cells as Saguna Brahman does over us.⁹

"Indian and Western religious philosophers agree that the universe is created out of exemplary ideas or forms, the archetypes of all things that exist in the Divine Mind. These ideas are the thoughts of Saguna Brahman-God, which are mental forms within the Divine Intelligence, out of which the universe is made."¹⁰ The Divine Mind not only creates physical objects through the objectification of Divine Ideas, but also properties, propositions, and values, both physical and moral laws. First the Divine Mind thinks then It wills.

Concerning Benedict Spinoza's (1632-77) system of philosophy, Frederick Copleston, S.J. wrote, "If God were distinct from nature and there were substances other than God, God would not be infinite.... what Spinoza meant was that finite beings are modifications of God, the unique substance..... if we thus proceed still further to infinity, we can easily conceive that all nature is one individual whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways without any change of the individual as a whole (Ethics, II:13).... The difference between God, the Infinite Substance, and finite things is that God is not determined in His existence or actions by any external cause (there is no cause external to God which could act upon Him) whereas finite things, being modifications of God, are determined by Him in respect of their existence, essence and actions.... 'God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things', (Ethics, I:18).... The chain of finite causality is the Divine causality; for it is the modal expression of God's self-determination.... Nature in a particular sense, namely, as the Infinite Substance, which lies behind the transitory modes."¹¹ Summing this up, unlike finite objects there is nothing that can be separate from infinite God that can act on Him; God is an individual, an indwelling cause that lies behind nature.

Paul Tillich (1886-1965) points out, that nobody is a pantheist in the sense that all things are identical with God. Rather, pantheism proclaims God as "the Substance" that grounds and unites the world and is the power of the Divine present in all things.¹²

According to the ideas of Robert Oakes, the Absolute Infinity and Unlimitedness of God's Divine Substance must be ontologically comprehensive including all of Reality in its entirety. Nothing can exist which is not ultimately included or subsumed within the Being of God. The plenitude of the Divine Substance would not be maximal, if it did not allow for "metaphysical space" for the existence of a variety of ideas. Therefore, the Divine Substance's maximal plenitude requires that all spiritual entities be modes, aspects, or manifestations of God.¹³

We can create something, but if we perish it will remain. Yet, this does not apply to the Divine power of Saguna Brahman since if it were removed the object would cease to exist. If we think of Saguna Brahman as the Divine Mind and the world as thoughts in that mind, obviously the latter requires the former to remain in existence. So the watchmaker-watch analogy will not work, since the latter continues to exist after the former perishes.

When Saguna Brahman creates a universe It creates possibilities and from them It selects out which ones to actualize. Its nature determines the sorts of possibilities that will come into existence. Within the being of Saguna Brahman lie the rational principles and archetypes that will manifest. Within Saguna Brahman is an element of creative spontaneity that can generate new ideas and events, just as a human artist improvises new musical tunes or objects of art. These creative acts are not rigidly determined, but are free and spontaneous within the limits of Its own nature. To do so Saguna Brahman must modify the causal relations to bring the desired results. If Saguna Brahman manifests as the male Shiva and the female Kali, then what is Its nature? Does it transcend gender? Does Saguna Brahman differ from the deities it manifests as?

Cosmopsychism is the view that the entire universe is conscious and that the consciousness of humans and animals is derived from this consciousness. The whole cosmos is ontologically prior to its parts. This is a holistic view that can support panpsychism.

Vivekananda mentioned when Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829) was overpowered by laughing gas, "For the time being, as it were, the gross vibrations had ceased, and only the subtle vibrations which he called ideas, were present to him. He could only see the subtle vibrations round him; everything had become thought; the whole universe was an ocean of thought, he and everyone else had become little thought whirlpools."¹⁴ As Davy's discovered, external objects are reducible to ideas that are independent of our limited mind (objective idealism). These ideas have substantial existence in subtle matter and energy, being objective and spatial, at a vibrational level not perceivable to us, but only to a mind in a certain state of vibration. External physical objects and properties composed of gross matter and energy are perceivable by the five gross senses, while internal objects and properties such as ideas and feelings composed of subtle matter and energy are perceivable by the subtle psychic senses. This correlates with the religious philosophical idea that Brahman-God created the universe out of Divine Ideas. These external physical objects such as an electron or a rock are produced from thought (mind), but they need not have any mental-conscious aspects such as beliefs, desires, and fears.

Vivekananda stated, “When men are in a certain frame of mind, they see this very existence as the earth, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and all those who are in the same state of mind see the same things. Beyond you and me there may be millions of beings on different planes of existence. They will never see us, nor we them; we only see those who are in the same state of mind and on the same plane with us.”¹⁵ From our standpoint of being a small part (sub species pars) of the universe, there are many planes of existences and possibly many space-time continuums. From the standpoint of Saguna Brahman the Totality, the Whole (Sub species totum), there is only one world. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur E. Powell (1882-1969) taught that due to the Principle of Interpenetration the different realms of existence are all here and now in this one location. We do not have to go to some place else to find them. We only perceive one realm of existence because the others are outside of our vibration range.¹⁶

Swami Saradananda tells us about Sri Ramakrishna, “Because he dwelt in bhavamukha, the whole world always appeared to him to be made of ideas. He felt as though every animate and inanimate object—men and women, cows and horses, wood and earth—was rising and floating in the Cosmic Mind as different aggregates of ideas. The infinite indivisible Brahman was manifest within these ideas in varying degrees—in some places more, some less, and in other places It did not appear to be present because It was hidden behind thick veils.”¹⁷ “It was as if innumerable waves of ideas were rising, floating, playing, and dissolving within the Cosmic Mind. He felt that his own body, mind, and I-consciousness—as well as those of other beings—formed waves in that Cosmic Mind.... [concerning] insentient matter ... he saw Its true nature and experienced It as the living, conscious ... Not only that, the Master saw innumerable waves of ideas arising in the Cosmic Mind because of that Cosmic I.... The Master saw that the individual little ‘I’s exist and function by the power of the Cosmic I.... This cosmic I is the “I” of God, or the Divine Mother.... where diversity and oneness coexist.”¹⁸

The mental nature of the universe has received support from some influential modern scientists. Max Planck (1858-1947) wrote, “All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particles of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together.... We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent Mind. This Mind is the matrix of all matter.”¹⁹ And Sir James Jeans (1877-1946) ascertained, “The stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears to be an accidental intruder into the realm of matter... we ought rather hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter.” “I incline to the idealistic theory that consciousness is fundamental, and that the material universe is derivative from consciousness, not consciousness from the material universe... In general the universe seems to me to be nearer to a great thought than to a great machine. It may well be, it seems to me, that each individual consciousness ought to be compared to a brain-cell in a universal mind.”²⁰

The Reification Fallacy occurs where an abstract idea, concept, or model is treated not as a representation, but as if it were a concrete, real event, or physical

entity. In other words, it is the error of treating something that is not concrete, such as an idea, as a concrete thing. Conversely, according to Vedanta reification is not a fallacy since abstractions have a concrete existence composed of subtle matter and energy. At the higher level reification is the case, since what we think of as abstract is concrete, having causal efficiency by bringing our universe into existence. The mental realm (subtle) brings the physical order (gross) into existence.

Neurologists mistakenly think that the human brain creates the mind and thought. But actually “at conception and afterwards the pre-existent mind (subtle body composed of the substance of subtle matter and energy) creates the physical body (gross matter and energy) including the brain.... The brain is the gross and external part of the mind and the mind the subtle and internal aspect of the brain.” The subtle creates the gross and not vice versa.²¹

Swami Vivekananda also indicated that some highly advanced ancient yogis in their deep meditation saw the fine particles (Tanmatras). He did not state their size, but they could be no larger than a molecule and might be more minute. Do we exist in both the physical sphere as an empirical object and in the subtle realm as an idea at the same time? Vivekananda explains, “The physical forces are but the gross manifestations of the fine forces, just as the physical world is but the gross manifestation of the fine world.” “Few understand the power of thought. If a man goes into a cave, shuts himself in, and thinks one really great thought and dies, that thought will penetrate the walls of that cave, vibrate through space ... Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense.”

Internally our thoughts enter into our unconscious mind where they are stored. Externally they take on a concrete existence by becoming thought-forms that become part of the atmosphere. Most of them probably have a short duration. Thought-forms are composed of subtle matter existing as vibrations of thought waves of force that are both mental and emotional in nature. Thought is sometimes accompanied by speech. Their influence is most noticeable in a large sporting event where a contagious atmosphere of similar vibrations is created. They are communicated to and felt by others, but people vary in their degree of receptiveness to them. This is analogous to the sound of a bell radiating through the atmosphere. Many thought-forms do not leave the aura and immediate vicinity of the thinker.²²

Science deals with the physical universe (mahakasha) where its accomplishments are fantastic. There is also the subtle universe (chittakasha) that is beyond the scope of the physical sciences, and beyond that the causal universe (chidakasha). When the physical universe dies, it continues to exist in subtle form, space, and time unperceivable to the five human senses. Though it exists, it is not perceived because of its extreme subtlety of this state.

This is similar to a human who continues to exist after the death of the physical body. Gross space and time came into existence with the Big Bang. The common origin of matter, energy, space, and time in the physical plane originated in the subtle realm. The subtle universe existed at a particular location in extended subtle space and during the Big Bang process, in involved seed form and then

rematerializes as the physical universe. It took birth in the corresponding area of physical space. Similarly at conception from a particular location in subtle space the subtle body (mind body, thought body) enters into the womb in involved seed form and out of the physical materials slowly creates a physical body and brain. As brilliant as they were both Nikola Tesla (1856-1943) and Albert Einstein (1879-1955) thought that we perished with the death of the physical body. They understood the nature of the physical world but not the metaphysical subtle realm.

Since in the chain of causal events the subtle precedes the gross, does a physical illness exist in the subtle body before it enters the gross body? Is it detectable in the atoms prior to its gross manifestation?

Swami Abhedananda clarifies this idea, "Before the world was created, everything gross and subtle remained in a seed form, and everything was unmanifested. Then creation began. Now, what do we mean by 'creation'? It does not mean getting something out of nothing. In the beginning, the world is in an unmanifested state, and it gets out, and gets back again. It takes millions of years to evolve. This present state will go back to its primordial nebulous state, and it will remain in that state perhaps for millions of years, and then it will come out again. This expansion and contraction of the whole manifested world into the unmanifested energy is the eternal process of the infinite Being."²³ "The whole universe: sun, moon and stars, and the form of the human body, animal forms and vegetable forms, all existed in the causal state, before coming into being. Nothing was there to see and recognize it. All was a mass, as everything was sleeping. Then, through the process of evolution, it wakes up and comes out gradually in material forms.... That causal state retains all the potentialities of the forms or what we call the phenomena. When we go into deep sleep, we go to the causal state."²⁴ "After the dissolution of the phenomenal universe, everything will remain latent in seed form. Our bodies may be reduced to their elements, to atoms and molecules, and to forces of nature. Our souls [minds], however, will remain perfect, or remain intact, and will not be annihilated or dissolved or destroyed, but will continue to exist, and retain all the powers and desires and tendencies, which they possess. Then again in the beginning of a new cycle, they will wake up, and the accumulated desires or combined desires of all living creatures will help in the process of the evolution of the cosmos."²⁵

2. The Relationship Between Saguna Brahman and the Universe

Saguna Brahman-God and the universe are related as whole and part, cause and effect, one and many, perfect and imperfect, internal and external, independent and dependent, infinite and finite, archetype and ectype, subtle and gross.

Through a process of fragmentation and differentiation of space, knowledge, and values Saguna Brahman creates the physical and mental world. In the creation of the world process, we are spatially a part of Saguna Brahman's omnipresence. An aspect of the fully coherent and comprehensive omniscient Saguna Brahman fragments into more and more limited and contradictory levels

of thought. In creation the manifestation of omnipotent Saguna Brahman's power is lessened, and through a process of transformation, the effects of the omnipresent Saguna Brahman becomes localized into minds and bodies with limited power, knowledge, happiness, and freedom. Such is the case for goodness, love, and all other virtues. Yet, Saguna Brahman remains ontologically distinct from the creation and retains all of its Omni-characteristics. While Saguna Brahman is present everywhere in the world, yet Its manifestation varies in degree and content from place to place.

Saguna Brahman and the universe form a whole-part relationship since our mind is a fragment of the Universal Mind and our body of the Universal Body. The whole and part are essentially different in nature. Saguna Brahman's scope of interaction is universal, whereas the scope of interaction for any creature is localized. The universal differentiates into particulars and the principle of individuation occurs resulting in a sense of ego. The Universal Cosmic Mind has an omniscient intellect, omnipotent and omnibenevolent will, and omniblissful feelings. Fragments of the Universal Mind and Will that make up the creation possess these virtues to varying degrees. Our will and what we will are parts of the Universal Cosmic Will. Improving our ideas, will, and feelings can only occur by becoming more in harmony with the Universal Mind and Will. Our mind is a portion of the Universal Mind and body a portion of the Universal Body, analogous to the relationship between the cells and the body. To some extent, Saguna Brahman is like an organism that has a systematic character of Its own that manifests Itself in and through its parts. Besides considering Saguna Brahman as the whole and we are its parts, we can consider It be the Foundation of the universe and of our very being. We and the universe are imperfect structures that emerge out of Saguna Brahman the Foundation.

When Saguna Brahman fragmentizes it becomes this highly complex, changing, hierarchal universe. It is composed of space, time, and causality with multiple substances, quantities, qualities, and relationships. Since the Universal Mind is omniscient only It understands how the universe operates in all of its ramifications. Does fragmentation occur all at once or in stages such as from genius, to species, and then to individuals? Causation operates in a temporal sequence where the effect always comes after the cause.

This differs from the interpretation of Protestant Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) where God is the Eternal Perceiver. Following this notion we are not fragments of the Eternal Perceiver, but God is the efficient cause of our sense data that are imprinted on the senses of finite objects.

The philosophy of Mereology is the study of parts and the wholes they form. Composition principles take us from parts to a whole and Decomposition principles from a whole to its parts. It would be a fallacy of composition to assume that Saguna Brahman lacks maximum power and knowledge because its parts do.

The substantial unity of Saguna Brahman is the reason for the interdependence of all Its parts within the universe. Saguna Brahman is basic and independent and its parts (the phenomenal universe) are finite and dependent. They owe their existence (that it is) to a chain of causes and their nature (what it

is) to their place in the entire system of entities that together constitute the universe. Living beings are both quantitatively and qualitatively less than Saguna Brahman. Each phenomenal member of the universe (which includes us) contributes its own particular content to the total system, and is thus an essential and necessary factor for the unity of the Whole (Saguna Brahman). In this way Saguna Brahman and its constituent members, interpenetrate one another and form a systematic structure. Thus, each partial experience reflects the total structure from its own particular perspective. In a comprehensive system, no single member can be missing or different from what it is, without altering the basic configuration of the entire unified system. Each particular entity is necessitated or logically implied by the nature of the totality. There are no totally isolated independent effects and causes in the world of events, each component of the system can only be completely determined by its connections with all other entities to various degrees. According to the Principle of Universal Relatedness, everything is related to everything else. An omniscient understanding of the entire cause of any event, would take into account all of its connections with everything else in the universe. Our ideals and ideas are but so many expressions of our place in the system and our relation to the rest of it

Saguna Brahman is an omniscient, all-encompassing, coherent, and individual entity that experiences the totality of existence directly with complete internal consistency. Not being determined by any outside force, It is a genuine free individual. Nothing is outside Saguna Brahman, since it is all-in-all. Being that all reality is interconnected, every finite component of the phenomenal universe is somewhat dependent on the reality outside of itself, and thus cannot be completely explained from within itself. Being complete in Itself, Saguna Brahman forms a single and direct experience, while Its component experiences are more fragmentary and less immediate. The all-embracing experience that constitutes Saguna Brahman is a concrete individual, being a unified Whole totality determined by reference to Its own internal structure. The lesser experiences that constitute the phenomenal universe can never be entirely self-determined in themselves by free will, since they are not a completely self-contained system. Thus, the more individuality a thing has, the more fully it exhibits immanent causality in its internal structure, and the less will be the modifications that structure undergoes due to its relations with other entities.

Saguna Brahman the Cosmic Mind and Body, the supreme individual, possesses a qualitatively superior substantial existence than its parts, functions autonomously and independently of them, and has a causal power to bring about changes in them. The whole is indeed qualitatively greater than the sum of Its constitutive parts. It is absolute consciousness that includes all finite consciousnesses as its components.

Things of the world are contained in Saguna Brahman “virtually and eminently” as in their First Cause. The will of Saguna Brahman combined with Its omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence (What It is), is the first cause (What It does) of all events in the universe. Ontologically and chronologically, knowledge or anything else cannot precede Saguna Brahman who is the first cause. Either Saguna Brahman as first cause precedes knowledge as its creator,

or It and perfect knowledge are one and the same thing. As impersonal, Saguna Brahman is identical with perfect knowledge and with the transcendental Law, Scriptures, Wisdom and Truth. Saguna Brahman as the Logos manifests personally as a human Divine Incarnation, and impersonally as the religious scriptures of the world. We can say that Saguna Brahman is the cause of, or creates, or manifests as causation, which is an attribute of God.

Following Vivekananda's cosmology one might ask how does Mahat the Universal Mind and Body, effect individual minds and bodies and the universe of matter [Akasha] and energy [Prana]? Though Arthur Peacocke the Cambridge and Oxford University biochemist did not teach the ideas of a Cosmic Mind and Body, nevertheless his idea of whole-part downward causation supplies a possible answer to this question that should be considered. His approach is based on the concepts of modern science and the New Biology:

A number of terms have in recent years been applied to this effect of the higher level whole on the behaviour of its constituents, for example 'downward causation' or 'top-down causation' or my preferred term, 'whole-part influence.'... Here the term whole-part influence will be used to represent the net effect of all those ways in which a system-as-a-whole, operating from its higher level, is a causal factor in what happens to its constituent parts, the lower level. We have seen that causality in complex systems made up of units at various levels of interlocking organization can best be understood as a two-way process. There is clearly a bottom-up effect of the constituent parts on the properties and behaviour of the whole complex. However, real features of the total system-as-a-whole are frequently an influence upon what happens to the units (which may themselves be complex) at lower levels. The units behave as they do because they are part of these particular systems. What happens to the component units is the joint effect of their own properties, explicable in terms of the lower-level science appropriate to them, and also the properties of the system-as-a-whole which result from its particular organization. When that higher level can also be understood only in terms not reducible to lower-level ones, then new realities having causal efficacy can be said to have emerged at the higher levels. We have also seen that the world-as-a-whole may be regarded as a kind of overall System-of-systems, for its very different (e.g., quantum, biological, cosmological) components systems are interconnected and interdependent across space and God's interaction with the world time, with wide variations in the degree of coupling. There will therefore be an influence on the component unit systems, at all levels, of the states and patterns of this overall world-system and of its succession of states and patterns.... If God interacts with the world-system as a totality, then God, by affecting its overall state, could be envisaged as being able to exercise influence upon events in the myriad sublevels of existence of which it is made without abrogating the laws and regularities that specifically apply to them.

Any such interaction of God with the world-System would be initially with it as a whole. One would expect this initial interaction to be followed by a kind of 'trickle-down' effect as each level affected by the particular Divine intention then

has an influence on lower levels and so on down the hierarchies of complexity to the level at which God intends to effect a particular purpose.... which occurs between God and the totality of the world-System and this, from a panentheistic viewpoint, is within God's own Self.... But one has to recognize that there will always be a distinction, and so gulf, between the nature of God and that of all created entities, structures, and processes.... The model is propounded to be consistent with the monist concept that all concrete particulars in the world-System are composed only of basic physical entities, and with the conviction that the world-System is causally closed. There are no dualistic, no vitalistic, no supernatural levels through which God might be supposed to exercising special Divine activity. In this model, the proposed kind of interactions of God with the world-System would not, according to panentheism, be from 'outside' but from 'inside' it. The world-System is regarded as being 'in God.'... But if God incorporates both the individual systems and the total System-of-systems within Godself, as in the panentheistic model, then it is readily conceivable that God could interact with all the complex systems at their own holistic levels. God is present to the wholes as well as to the parts.²⁶

A two-way process comes about when as a reaction to downward causation there is bottom-up causation. As we move up the scale there is an evolutionary increase in size and inter-relationship complexity between the parts.²⁷ For example, there is a corresponding development from quark, to atoms, molecule, cell, multicellular entity, life, conscious being, and self-conscious being. At each stage, new laws, concepts, and generalizations are required. One idea is that the study of bottom-up causation proceeds from physics to chemistry, biology, psychology (via neuroscience), and to mind/brain (or cognitive science).

An example of a “downward causal effect” is mental phenomena affecting the body, such as the mind causing the bodily movements like speaking or raising the arm.²⁸ As Nobel Prize winning scientist Roger Sperry (1913-94) stated, “As things stand, I no longer need to believe, as a scientist, that I and my world are governed solely from below upward through the ‘fundamental forces of physics’ in a totally mindless and purposeless cosmos, indifferent to human concerns. In our new downward-control paradigm we are moved and surrounded in the modern world by higher, more-evolved vital, mental cultural, and other social forces.”²⁹ According to Roger Sperry, the mind-brain interaction is mutually reciprocal between the mental and neural levels. It involves the downward causally determined influence of higher the emergent [SEP] mental level exerting an active control over lower level neural entities, each with their own kinds of laws and forces. Evolution adds new phenomena with new properties and forces regulated by new scientific principles and laws. “Once generated from neural events, the higher order-mental patterns and programs have their own subjective qualities and progress, operate and interact by their own causal laws and principles which are different from, and cannot be reduced to those of neurophysiology.” Simpler electric, atomic, molecular, and cellular forces and laws though still present and

operating have been superseded by the configurational forces of higher-level mechanisms.³⁰

Bottom-up causality is generated by the energy interaction of the constituent parts of a system. Top-down causality such as the experience of human agency also requires information so that the whole brings about coherent activity in the parts. Nancey Murphy emphasizes God's intended action as bottom-up causation working from within. At the quantum level, controlling the movement of the electrons within an atom can cause extraordinary events.³¹

Following the idea of a nested hierarchy of emergent systems, parts are contained within wholes, which become parts within greater wholes, and so forth, from quantum particle through atoms, molecules, cells, organs, organisms, etc all of the way up to Brahman-God as Mahat the cosmic universal mind and body. There is also a hierarchy of levels, matter, life, mind, and spirit each embracing and containing the one below it.

According to emergence theory, higher-level entities, properties, forces, potentials, laws, teleological organizing principles, etc. come into existence without being determined by lower-level entities; and limit, replace, or change the behaviour of the latter. Wholes represent a real explanatory level within science because they possess properties not ascribable to their parts that compose them and because they exercise causal powers over them. Each upward hierarchal stage shows increasing structural organization, complexity, differentiation, and integration; unity, holism, function, and coherence; and in the higher levels, awareness, consciousness, intelligence, and spirituality. This process occurs on the physical, mental, social-cultural, psychological, moral, and religious levels. Physicalism begins at the bottom and conceives of the world as physically based on the laws of physics and chemistry, and each higher level is the result of upward causation and emergent evolution. Religions start with perfected Brahman-God at the top followed by creation, a process of degeneration which is the reverse of evolution. Brahman-God is conscious because It cannot be metaphysically less than what It has created. Through downward causation, Brahman-God affects the world and each higher state influences its lower components. Each part appears to have quasi-autonomous functions.

Following another approach, Arthur Peacocke suggests God's relationship to the world as analogous to the way in which the mind influences the body. "This psychosomatic, unified understanding of human personhood partly illuminates the use of a panentheistic model for God's relation to the world. For, according to the model, God is internally present to all the world's entities, structures, and processes in a way analogous to the way we as persons are present and act in our bodies. This model, in the light of current concepts of the person as a psychosomatic unity, is then an apt way of modeling God's personal agency in the world as in some sense 'personal.'"³²

Donald Rothberg states, "Reality is tiered or layered both in its outer and inner manifestations; there are different levels of both world and self, and these exemplify different grades of being, power, and value.... Higher levels of the hierarchy are more real, more causally effective, and reveal more good than lower levels.... a higher level somehow integrates the achievements of lower

levels, over-comes its systematic structural problems, and differentiates a new structure which shifts identity to the higher level of movement downward (i.e., emanation, devolution). There is commonly a notion of 'vertical causation'; a higher level somehow brings into being or causes a lower level."³³ The higher stratum has more structural organization, integration, unity, awareness, and consciousness.

Saguna Brahman is a genuine individual whose perfection cannot be improved upon. Everything is interconnected following determinate laws since the universe is a transformation of Saguna Brahman, a unity-in-plurality. It derives its existence from Saguna Brahman and is subject to Its will. The laws of nature result from the will of Saguna Brahman, the Universal Mind. Saguna Brahman employs the law like the regularities of nature it has created, in determining the structure, organization, and form of Its creation. As universal intelligence Saguna Brahman is responsible for the design in the universe, a uniform and regulated existence that follows a logical and law like pattern. If not, the world would be one of unpredictable chaos and confusion. Supporting the unity of creation by division, according to Hamilton's Law, "However different any two concepts may be, they both are subordinate to some higher concept--things most unlike must in some respects be like."³⁴ For example, red and yellow differ from each other yet are both colors.

There is a possibility that the Divine Mind is a logician, creating the universe by progressing from universals to particulars, from genus, to species, and then to individuals. In this case metaphysical and cosmological relations are really determined by the logical relations of concepts.

As the totality, Saguna Brahman is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent representing the maximum presence, knowledge and power. We lack these characteristics because we are only a very small portion of this totality. Just as the ripple is part of the ocean (whole) having far less power; so we in our limited perspective have much less power than Saguna Brahman the totality of existence. This is an example of a quantitative difference based on a whole-part relationship, resulting in an accompanying qualitative difference.

All phenomena in the world are different manifestations of the one ultimate reality (Saguna Brahman), so that the universe is a complex web of relations between the parts of a unified whole. The universe is a unity with mutual interconnectedness and interdependence to various degrees of all things and events. Within the unity there is a balance of forces of pairs of opposites forming polarities with their opposition resulting in changing events.

Following the doctrine of Priority Monism the universe as a whole is ontologically prior to, or more fundamental than, the concrete objects it contains. While Existence Monism teaches a whole without parts, Priority Monism accepts the existence of many derivative proper parts of the universe. The substantial unity of the universe is inferred from the causal interrelatedness of all of its parts. The nature and existence of the parts are posterior to, grounded in, localizes into human minds and bodies and dependent upon the whole. This idea of unity is supported by quantum entanglement at the micro level where two quantum particles are anticorrelated, yet they do not interact since this activity occurs

faster than the speed of light. Since the universe is one system with nothing outside, it is not interdependent with anything external to it.³⁵

Saguna Brahman is the first cause (Cosmological Explanation), the reason for rational design in the universe (Teleological Explanation), and what makes the holistic approach correct. Because the universe originates in Saguna Brahman it is a highly integrated unified whole and holistic in structure. This is a holistic relationship between an entity of a higher order and the universe and not between the physical universe and its parts that are both on the same plane of existence. Meaning Saguna Brahman and the universe are intimately interconnected with reference to the former, which is greater than the sum of its parts. Being that the conceptual universe begins with Saguna Brahman the Universal Cosmic Mind, it is a unified system of thought based on the laws of reason. According to science there is only one valid system of reason. This is an extension of the Teleological (Design) Explanation for the existence of Brahman-God.

The world system follows a holistic approach defined in terms of its process and organization. Its components form a complex interrelated and interdependent system with interactions between its parts. The action and characteristics of the fragmented parts are unified by Saguna Brahman under a common conceptual and explanatory framework. Properly understood the universe expresses a unified systemic structure and behaviour pattern. It is an intelligibly ordered reality with an underlying organized unity. The system is a configuration of parts connected and joined together by a web of relationships and feedback loops. In a holistic universe the entire system, structure, compound, or complex has an effect on its parts, factors, elements, constituents, or ingredients.

We can gain a better understanding of the nature of Saguna Brahman by studying the writings of F(rancis) H(erbert) Bradley (1846-1924) of Oxford University. Bradley's Absolute like Saguna Brahman is a self-consistent organized systematic Whole forming a single individual experience with a harmonious internal structure of Its own (Holistic Principle). Nothing is outside the Absolute which is perfect. It is a coherent system of eternally existing finite members (the phenomenal universe), embracing them in an all-inclusive harmony. The Absolute is immanently present in all things but to different degrees and with diverse values. Each phenomenal member contributes, and is an essential and necessary factor for the unity of the Whole (Absolute). Thus, there is a perfect unity of all Its aspects. Being a substantial totality beyond all relations, it is not the sum of things but a unity that transcends and yet contains every manifold entity. Consequently, the Absolute is a higher experience above the distinctions that it includes.³⁶

A(lfred) E(dward) Taylor (1869-1945) later developed and expanded on the ideas of Bradley. The Absolute (Saguna Brahman) as the totality is not a separate limited being among other beings. Saguna Brahman as first cause transforms Itself into (according to some creates) the phenomenal universe. In a systematic unity, the parts have no independent being, except as the Whole (Saguna Brahman) expresses Itself through them. The totality of existence is a single coherent system in which each part of the phenomenal universe is determined by the nature of the Whole (Saguna Brahman). Though the phenomenal universe is

not the Whole, It is present in each of Its parts or aspects (omnipresent), manifesting Itself in a particular way thus determining the characteristics of each of Its components. A single perfectly determinate principle expresses Itself in a vast multiplicity of variations. Saguna Brahman as a harmonious systematic unity pervades, permeates, and manifests itself in the lesser unities that are configurations and transformations within the phenomenal universe. There are degrees of reality since some lesser unities reveal more of the nature of the Whole to which they belong than others. For example, a human mind expresses more of the nature of Saguna Brahman than the mind of an insect. Each aspect of the phenomenal universe is less inclusive (incomplete), coherent (unsystematic and contradictory), powerful, and blissful than the Whole. Consequently, Saguna Brahman is a higher experience above the distinctions which it includes. From the standpoint of the Whole, all of Its components without contradiction or discrepancy form a coherent system. Thus, Saguna Brahman and the phenomenal universe are not two absolutely distinct entities since the former acts on the latter. No single member can be missing or be other than it is without the system being changed. Emphasis is not in temporally preceding events (the cause), but with the total system and the entities connection with the other events.³⁷

Self-existent Saguna Brahman is conceived through itself not requiring anything else to cause Its existence (aseity). It eternally exists necessarily. Being omnipresent It is indwelling, transcendent, and the background of existence.

The one Saguna Brahman becomes the many entities of the universe. One approach to the “One and the Many” relationship, is to start with the fundamental unity (whole) and explain how it was fragmentized (parts) and another is to begin with plurality to show how it is ultimately unified.

According to this idea, the truths of reality are found not in ultimate simples (e.g., subatomic particles), the smallest units comprising a phenomenon but in organized wholes. Emphasis is on the unity and uniqueness of the Divine world. Saguna Brahman is the cosmic “system of systems,” a totality, independent of and not a member of the many. It endures as the whole of wholes, persistent in its essential character, despite the perpetual coming and going of Its parts. Hence, Its knowledge is not inferential but direct and complete.

An alternative approach is to begin with the parts and then to combine them in new ways. For example, Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) the German logician suggested that all ideas are compounded from a small number of simple ideas that form the “Alphabet of Human Thought.” The idea is to remove the verbiage from each idea and reduce it down to its core meaning. Thought construction involves a hierarchy of combining these basic core elemental ideas (conceptual atoms) into more complex ones. This is a type of conceptual reductionism that considers a complex system to be the sum of its parts.³⁸ So Leibniz proposed a universal language composed of symbols that would stand for concepts or ideas. This language is accompanied by logical rules used in human reasoning to combine these symbols in a meaningful way. Ideally this language will mirror the processes of intelligible human reasoning if all human concepts are perfectly

represented. The complex or derivative concepts are composed of and reducible to simpler concepts.³⁹

Arthur Lovejoy (1873-1962) the co-founder of the *Journal of the History of Ideas* in 1940 introduced the concept of “unit-ideas,” which are the basic concepts reduced to its smallest unit that might only be a single word. It is the task of the historian of the genealogy of ideas to identify these conceptual building blocks and describe their historical emergence and how they have been combined and recombined with each other into new thoughts. Over time creative patterns developed and are expressed in new forms and combinations.⁴⁰ Lovejoy while a graduate student at Harvard in 1897 was one of the signers of a letter requesting Swami Vivekananda to return to the United States from India. In his classic “The Great Chain of Being” (1936) Arthur Lovejoy discussed this conceptualization held by the Platonist’s in the West: 1) the Principle of Oneness requires that all things are manifestation of the plenitude of a single entity called Spirit; 2) there a continuum and continuity in nature and not discrete differences, there are no gaps, all things are coherently interwoven with one another; and 3) the continuum of Being is based on a hierarchy of levels, a gradation with emergent properties.⁴¹ There is a hierarchy of levels of existence ranging from matter at the lower end proceeding up through life, mind, and spirit. They proceed from the grossest to the subtlest level, from the external to the internal. Phenomena at a higher-scale level of organization exert causal influence on a lower-scale level, in a system of downward causation. Reality is multi-layered, the layers are intimately interconnected, and each contains the one below it.

The process of cosmic and human history is the unfolding of Saguna Brahman, the Universal Mind within the empirical world. It is an immanent, Self-cognizant, Self-determining, Self-changing, and Self-directing rational process of Saguna Brahman manifesting Itself. It is both the substance and the energizing power of the universe.

Within the Universal Mind there is a tremendous amount of individual variation, unlike the Group Mind of the Frenchman Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) where in an organized crowd everyone tends to think and feel the same. He taught when individual’s come together in a crowd a consensus is created and a Group Mind or Collective Mind emerges.⁴²

The spiritual seeker strives to become more compatible and harmonious with the ideals of the Whole (Saguna Brahman, God). The degree of saintliness, goodness, and truthfulness of an individual is proportionate to the degree of correspondence between the individual mind and the Cosmic Mind. Egoism and egotism separates us from the totality. The purpose of yoga is to increase this correspondence, congruence, and compatibility with the Higher Self.

This means that all of our good thoughts originate with Saguna Brahman (Divine Mind) and not with us as the ego tells us. But where do are our bad thoughts come from? According to the Reflection Theory our minds reflect Saguna Brahman and bad thoughts arise from an impure mind which is a bad reflector. It is like the sun reflecting off muddy water. There are other theories that attempt to explain why we have bad thoughts in spite of Saguna Brahman.

The homeostasis process results in the tendency toward a relatively stable equilibrium between interdependent elements that over time tend to maintain their basic characteristics. Each part is maintained as a boundary-maintaining entity that differentiates one thing from another. Changing one part of the system affects the other parts with predictable patterns of behavior. Within the system there are reciprocal transactions and an energy transfer by which the parts influence one another.⁴³

Another view as expressed by Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) is that God receives the data from the empirical world, formulate His thinking, and then reacts back onto the world. God interacts with the changing universe and is affected by the events of the world (passible). This is an ongoing reciprocal process. According to this idea the unity (Saguna Brahman) and the multiplicity of the system (the universe) are interdependent.⁴⁴ Do our actions and the events of the phenomenal world effect the way God acts, which means God, is not in this case the first cause. One example, is the Avatara-Divine Incarnation who as an act of Divine grace enters the world reacting to the human situation.

With great originality Swami Vivekananda brilliantly and creatively explains the Qualified Nondualism (Vishistadvaita) philosophy of Ramanuja. "The answer given by another party was that the soul was a part of the infinite Divine Existence. Just as this body is a little world by itself, and behind it is the mind or thought, and behind that is the individual soul, similarly, the whole world is a body, and behind that is the Universal Mind, and behind that is the Universal Soul. Just as this body is a portion of the Universal Body, so this mind is a portion of the Universal Mind, and the soul of man a portion of the universal Soul. This is what is called the Vishistadvaita, qualified monism." "Then comes another view which I have just shown to you. Man begins to find out that if God is the cause of the universe and the universe the effect, God Himself must have become the universe and the souls, and he [the individual soul] is but a particle of which God is the whole. We are but little beings, sparks of that mass of fire, and the whole universe is a manifestation of God Himself. This is the next step. In Sanskrit, it is called Vishistadvaita. Just as I have this body and this body covers the soul, and the soul is in and through this body, so this whole universe of infinite souls and nature forms, as it were, the body of God. When the period of involution comes, the universe becomes finer and finer, yet remains the body of God. When the gross manifestation comes, then also the universe remains the body of God. Just as the human soul is the soul of the human body and mind, so God is the Soul of our souls. All of you have heard this expression in every religion, 'Soul of our souls.' That is what is meant by it. He, as it were, resides in them, guides them, is the ruler of them all. In the first view, that of dualism, each one of us is an individual, eternally separate from God and nature. In the second view, we are individuals, but not separate from God. We are like little particles floating in one mass, and that mass is God. We are individuals but one in God. We are all in Him. We are all parts of Him, and therefore we are One. And yet between man and man, man and God, there is a strict individuality, separate and yet not separate."⁴⁵ "Every cell in your body has a soul conscious of the cell. It is a separate entity. It has a little will of its own, a little sphere of action of its own. All

[cells] combined make up an individual. [In the same way,] the Personal God of the universe is made up of all these [many individuals]."⁴⁶

Philip Clayton, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the Claremont School of Theology, adds, "Thus an analogical relationship suggests itself: the body is to the mind as body-mind combination—that is, human persons—is to the Divine. The world is in some sense analogous to the body of God. God is analogous to the mind which dwells in the body, though God is also more than the natural world taken as a whole.... there would be no qualitative or ontological difference between the regularity of natural law conceived as expressing the regular or repetitive operation of Divine agency and the intentionality of special Divine actions." God controls the world like our mind and thought controls our body through willing intentions. "The regularities of natural law represent the autonomic or, as it were, habitual operation of Divine action apart from God's specific or focal intentions.... Natural regularities within God's universe, then, would be roughly analogous to autonomic responses within an individual's body [e.g., breathing]—the things that one's body does without conscious interference or guidance. In one sense, such behaviors are still one's own "actions," even though they occur through the body's operating in a regular or autonomic manner and one thus performs them unconsciously."⁴⁷ Just as human thought can bring about changes in the physical world, so also God can do the same. Seeing the world as God's body is compatible with the modern ideas of ecology and respect for nature.

There are also some important qualifications and limitations to the Brahman-God-world and human mind-body analogy since: a) Brahman-God has perfect knowledge (omniscience) and control (omnipotence) over the world, which humans do not have over their physical body; b) The human mind does not transcend the body, in the way Brahman-God transcends the world; c) The world is within Brahman-God, while the body is not within the mind; d) Brahman-God controls the world from within, while humans most often (not in psychosomatic cases) have external control over their bodies; e) There are things beyond the body, but not beyond the entire world (Brahman-God's body); and f) The body does not have a conscious relation with the person, unlike parts of the cosmos (humans) with God.⁴⁸ We might ask, is the effect of the world on God, less than our bodies on us and is the world as Brahman-God's body an integrated organism like our body? Some form of resemblance (analogy) between Brahman-God's action and ours is absolutely necessary or we would not be able to make comprehensible statements about the subject.

According to Vedanta similarities between the world as Brahman-God's body and our physical body include: a) Brahman-God existed before the world and we existed before our physical body; b) Brahman-God created the world, and our subtle body (mind body, thought body) created our physical body at conception; c) The world is ontologically distinct from God, and we are ontologically distinct from our physical body; and d) Brahman-God continues in existence after the world ends as we do after the death of the physical body.

In different philosophies the world is a manifestation, transformation, mode, aspect, idea, word or sound vibration, name, form, secondary attribute, fragment, limitation, particularization, division, contraction, externalization, objectification,

grossification, modification, emanation, projection, reflection, shadow, image, and/or ectype of Brahman-God (or Ultimate Reality).

Monists maintain that in the creative process all objects are derived from a single unitary source. Monism is the idea that there is only one basic substance, principle, or entity that is the ground of reality. The various schools of monism include:

1) Substantial Monism in Western philosophy everything is composed of a single basic substance be it matter (Materialism, Physicalism), ideas-thought (Idealism), an unknown entity that has a material and a mental aspect (Dual-Aspect Monism), or a neutral entity (Neutral Monism).

2) Source Monism: The sun and its rays.

3) Foundational Monism: Brahman-God is within (Antaryamin) or pervades everything as its background or supports it as its ground. There is nothing ontologically or chronologically prior to the foundation.

4) Archetypal Monism: The universe (as an ectype) is an imperfect copy of the original Reality.

5) Mereological or Priority Monism: The integrated Whole (Mahat, Universal Mind and Body) is ontologically prior to and subdivides into its parts that constitute the universe. A Whole-Part relationship such as an ocean and its waves.

6) Atomic Monism: Atoms combine to produce all physical entities.

7) Logos Monism: The Word becomes all things.

8) Panentheistic (all-is-God) Monism: Everything is within Brahman-God.

9) Advaitic (Non-dual) Monism: Where humans are non-dual but appear to be dual.

10) Transformational Monism: Brahman-God transforms into the world being its substantial-material cause.

11) Modal Monism: An example would be water and its modes of liquid and ice.

12) Reflective Monism: The Highest Reality is reflected off a surface (which could be the human mind) to varying degrees (Original-Reflection).⁴⁹

13) Form Monism: There is no wave without water.

14) Action Monism: There is no action without an entity that is potentially active.

15) Objectification Monism: The subject becomes an object.

16) Externalization Monism: The Inner Reality externalizes.

17) Example Monism: If the Reality is a principle like truthfulness or goodness, then a truthful statement or a moral act would be an example to it.

3. Akasha, Prana, and Mahat (Cosmic Mind)

Swami Vivekananda explained, "The whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call Akasha [Primal form of matter].... It is the Akasha that becomes the air, that becomes the liquids, that becomes the solids; it is the Akasha that becomes the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, the comets ... every form that we see, everything that can be sensed, everything that exists. It cannot be perceived; it is so subtle that it is beyond all ordinary perception; it can

only be seen when it has become gross, has taken form.... By what power is this Akasha manufactured into this universe? By the power of Prana [Primal form of Energy]. Just as Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe. At the beginning and at the end of a cycle everything becomes Akasha, and all the forces that are in the universe resolve back into the Prana; in the next cycle, out of this Prana is evolved everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is the Prana that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prana that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism.”

He continues, “Now there is something beyond Akasha and Prana. Both can be resolved into a third thing called Mahat--the Cosmic Mind. This Cosmic Mind does not create Akasha and Prana, but changes itself into them.... The Mahat becomes changed into vibrating thought; and that becomes in one part changed into the organs, and in the other part into the fine particles of matter. Out of the combination of all these, the whole of this universe is produced.”⁵¹ “In the universe, Brahma or Hiranyagarbha or the cosmic Mahat first manifested himself as name, and then as form, i.e. as this universe.”⁵² “Now both Akasha and Prana again are produced from the cosmic Mahat, the Universal Mind, the Brahma or Ishvara.”⁵³ This is a type of Neutral Monism where Mahat which is neither Akasha or Prana but manifests as both of them.⁵⁴

Akasha is in a state of potentiality, for example as clay it is a potential statue that becomes a statue. Meaning that creation is the manifestation of what is already present as unmanifested potentiality. Primal matter becomes secondary gross (physical) and subtle (mental) matter.

In the West, Plotinus (c. 205-70) expressed the idea that the Platonic Forms, or Archetypes are active powers in the Divine Mind, which operate at the causal level that is a higher plane of existence than the empirical realm where we reside. Quoting S. Radhakrishnan's (1888-1975) statement on Plotinus, “All the phases of existence down to the lowest ultimate of ^[SEP] material being or the lowest forms of being in the visible universe are ^[SEP] ideally present in this realm of Divine thoughts.” The phenomenal world is not created directly through the Nous, the intellect of the Divine (Ishvara, Saguna Brahman) but through the World-Soul (Mahat) which is an expression of the energy of the Divine.⁵⁵ The higher level of reality, the cause must contain more perfection than any of its effects which it emanates. The effect participates in and is a likeness of the cause. Since the effect derives its existence (that it is) and its nature (what it is) from its cause, it is in some ways like its cause but in a far less perfect the farther it is removed from the Divine. Each level of existence is an image or expression on a lower level of the realm above it. Creation then undergoes a series of descending stages to less pure, less perfect levels of existence. Eventually the process must reach the lowest stage, which is formless prime matter a state of pure potentiality (Akasha). This is the exact opposite of the process of evolution that proceeds from the less to the more perfect.

Unlike the Indians, Plotinus divides Saguna Brahman into a higher (Nous, Para Ishvara) and a lower aspect (All-Soul, Mahat). All-Soul [World-Soul] is “an

image of Intellect [Nous], as its life is a reflection and likeness of it.” The “All-Soul is a ‘single living being which encompasses all the living beings that are within it; it has one soul which extends to all its parts, in so far as each individual thing is a part of it.... This one universe is all bound together in shared experience and is like one living creature.... Each individual part is preserved by the whole.”⁵⁶ Simultaneously, the All-Soul looks upward and contemplates the Divine Ideas of the Nous and downward in generating the physical universe. It is the lowest aspect of the Divine realm, the connecting link between the spiritual and material worlds. All-Soul is the agent through which the Forms of the Nous are actualized in the phenomenal world. As the active formative power the All-Soul creates, organizes, and maintains the corporeal world. It is immanent in all entities of the sensible, world giving them life, motion and growth. All-Soul never descends into the sensible world, but illuminates it from above.⁵⁷

Jiva Goswami (1511-66) the Bengal Vaishnavist follower of Sri Chaitanya referred to the One as Brahman, Nous as Bhagavat, and the All-Soul as Paramatman (Great Self). The latter is the indwelling spirit of the world, its creator, preserver, and destroyer. Paramatman is an intermediary between Bhagavat the Supreme Personal God and the phenomenal world that does not affect it.⁵⁸ In the *Upanishads* we have Brahman, Ishvara, and Hiranyagarbha (World-Soul) the creative aspect of Brahman-God.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan relates Hiranyagarbha [Mahat] to the Logos, the image and word of God through whom the world is created. “This is a logical succession and not a temporal one. The world-spirit must be there before there can be the world. We thus get the four poises or statuses of reality, the Absolute Brahman, (2) the Creative Spirit, Ishvara (3) the World-Spirit, Hiranyagarbha, and (4) the World This is the way in which the Hindu thinkers interpret the integral nature of Supreme reality.” Ishvara is “the causal principle of all differentiation,” and Hiranyagarbha “the innermost essence of the world.” He adds, “This Intellectual principle [nous] of Plotinus is the Ishvara of the *Upanishads*. This universal intelligences makes possible the multiple" universe. For Plotinus this principle is the totality of Divine thoughts or Ideas in Plato's sense. These Ideas or thoughts are real beings, powers. They are the originals, archetypes, intellectual forms of all that exists in the lower spheres. All the phases of existence down to the lowest ultimate of material being or the lowest forms of being in the visible universe are ideally present in this realm of Divine thoughts. This Divine intellectual principle has both being and non-being. It has, for Plotinus, two acts, upward contemplation of the One [Nirguna Brahman] and generation towards the lower.” Hiranyagarbha (Mahat) is the World-Soul of Plotinus. It “fashions material universe on the model of Divine thoughts, the ideas laid up within the Divine Mind [Nous, Ishvara]. It is the eternal cause of the cosmos, the creator and therefore the vital principle of the world. God [Nous, Ishvara] is envisaged as something apart from the world, its creator or artificer. Human ideas of God are centered round him. Plotinus does not make the sensible world a direct emanation from the Intelligible World. It is the product or the creation of the World-Soul, the third person of the Neo-

Platonic^[SEP] trinity, Herself an emanation from the Intelligible World, the Nous.
^[SEP]Our souls are parts or emanations, of the World-Soul.”⁵⁹

4. Saguna Brahman Manifests as the Universe

Only the Saguna nature possesses a Divine-Universal Mind with an intellect and will, and a Universal Body. Working through these It creates, preserves, and destroys the universe, which requires complexity, space, time, and mutability. The relation between Saguna Brahman-God and the universe is comparable to: Greater-Lesser, Perfect-Imperfect, Primary-Secondary; One-Many, Universal-Particular (particularization), Whole-Part; Homogeneous-Heterogeneous, Unity-Diversity; Abstract-Concrete, Idea-Object, Internal-External (externalization), Subject-Object (objectification), Subtle-Gross; Archetype-Ectype, Source-Image, Source-Participation, Source-Reflection, Source-Representation; and Cause-Effect, Free-Determined, Independent-Dependent, Necessary-Contingent, Source-Emanation, Source-Transformation.

Nine theories are presented of how Saguna Brahman-God becomes the universe. 1) By means of a transformation and modification: Saguna Brahman-God transforms into the world and its substantial-material cause. Shankara states, “It is established that Brahman—conscious, one, and without a second—becomes the cause of the universe through a transformation [parinama-vada] that need no extraneous help as in the case of milk [transforming into curd] etc., or of gods and others, without any external help.”⁶⁰ Mahat (Universal Mind and Body) becomes the universe by a process of transformation in which case it proceeds from full capacity to a lower capacity. In doing so It diversifies into a vast array of minds both human and animal; each mind continually changes over time; and becomes conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. The things of the universe are not identical with Mahat and can never become It. We are not Mahat since in our highest development we can never create, manifest, or destroy the universe as stated by Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva. Consequently, we never become Brahman-God but remain separate as Its worshipper. The universe is understandable because Mahat is rational and has made us rational.

2) On account of fragmentation, particularization, and division: The integrated Whole (Mahat the Universal Mind and Body) is ontologically prior to and subdivides into Its parts that constitute the universe. This is a complex procedure since the Universal Mind and Body fragmentizes into too a vast number of different human and animal, minds and bodies each with a different nature. Also, their minds (particularly human) and bodies are in a process of continually changing. When fragmentation occurs producing the mind of particular individuals they are always less than the Universal Mind. Sri Ramakrishna mentioned, “God alone has become all this; but He manifests Himself more in certain things than others.”⁶¹ So, fragmentized individuals vary from one another in their capacities and their degree of manifestation changes over time. Vivekananda states, “The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little

minds, are fragments of that Universal Mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another.”⁶²

3) By externalization, objectification, and projection: The internal becomes external, the subject an object (see Eternal Subject above), and the subtle mental the gross physical. Most neurologists think that the human brain creates the mind and thought, but actually at conception the mind (subtle body composed of subtle matter and energy) enters into the womb and from the sperm, egg, liquids, and food it slowly creates a physical body and brain.⁶³ Vivekananda mentioned, “The external world is but the gross form of the internal, or subtle. The finer is always the cause, the grosser the effect. So the external world is the effect, the internal the cause. In the same way external forces are simply the grosser parts, of which the internal forces are the finer.”⁶⁴

“We are all projected from one common centre, which is God. The highest as well as the lowest life God ever projected will come back to the Father of all lives.... ‘From whom all beings are projected, in whom all live, and unto whom they all return; that is God.’”⁶⁵

4) By a process of grossification: Thought in Mahat the Cosmic Mind becomes gross and manifests as matter (akasha) and energy (prana).

5) As a reflection, image, and copy: For Plotinus (c. 205-70), the visible world is an imperfect reflection of the Ideal Forms of the Divine Intelligence (Nous), which is transplanted onto matter. He said, “Nature [Physis, Samsara] is an image of intelligence, and since it is the last and lowest part of the soul, [it] has the last ray of the rational forming principle which shines in it.... that which is reflected from It [Nous, Divine Intelligence] into matter is nature ... and these are the last and lowest realities of the intelligible world.”⁶⁶ All-Soul [World-Soul] is “an image of Intellect [Nous, Divine World and Divine Mind], as its life is a reflection and likeness of it.”⁶⁷

The universe as an ectype is an imperfect copy of the original Reality. From this standpoint, the content in the Mind of God are the true realities, and the sense objects of finite perceivers are imperfect copies or resemblances, phenomenal manifestations, or representations of the eternal archetypes.

6) From Divine Ideas:⁶⁸ Indian and Western religious philosophers agree that the universe is created out of exemplary ideas or forms, the archetypes of all things that exist in the Divine Mind. These ideas are the thoughts of Brahman-God, which are mental forms within the Divine Intelligence, out of which the universe is made. Thoughts in the Divine Mind not only create physical objects, but also abstract entities such as the principles of reason, laws of logic and mathematics, numbers, values such as goodness, etc. Swami Abhedananda relates, “God thinks of the manifold world in His Cosmic Mind and then gives them the material form.... He projects the images of the manifold world outside from within.”⁶⁹ “The Cosmic Mind contains all the ideas or concepts of the various things that have come into existence since creation.”⁷⁰ First the Divine Mind thinks then It wills. A person can think without willing, but cannot will unless they think.

7) From Divine Words (logos) or sound vibration: According to Shankara at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, the Vedic words in the mind of Brahman

(God) are the archetypical ideas, used to create the names and forms of the genera of all things in the universe. “The universe, consisting of the gods and others, originates verily from the Vedic words.... He [Brahman] was intent on creation, the Vedic words flashed in His mind before creation and then He created the things according to these”⁷¹ Vivekananda added, “This eternal Sphota [Logos, Sound-Brahman], the essential eternal material of all ideas or names, is the power through which the Lord creates the universe; nay, the Lord first becomes conditioned as the Sphota [Logos, Sound-Brahman], and then evolves Himself out as the yet more concrete sensible universe.” “The words of the *Vedas*. These are the eternal words out of which the whole universe has been produced. There cannot be any thought without the word. Thus, whatever there is in this world is the manifestation of thought, and thought can only manifest itself through words.”⁷²

8) Through kenosis and a process of Self-limitation Brahman-God empty itself of its Omni characteristics. The Infinite becomes finite.

9) *Creatio ex nihilo*: Creationism whereby the Lord creates the phenomenal world from nothing.

10) Through a succession of changing thoughts: It is possible that when an object splits into two pieces this does not occur through a process of division. It could occur through a succession of thoughts in the mind of Brahman-God, beginning with the whole object and ending with the object as two pieces. Similarly, when Brahman-God creates the universe this could occur through a succession of changing thoughts and not from the empirical object undergoing change.

Ontological creation is perpetually ongoing, occurring at this very moment and at every other moment in time. We might think of ontological creation as vertical and chronological as horizontal over time. Preservation of the universe is due to perpetual creation and the ceasing of it brings about destruction. Brahman-God knows of the events occurring in the universe in at least three ways: 1) intuitively, utilizing nonpropositional modes of apprehension, 2) through inference, and 3) by observation. It would be limited if It had only one-way of knowing.

Chronological creation begins at one point in time and ends in another. Most people believe that after creating the universe Brahman-God occasionally intervenes in its workings. A less held idea is Deism that Brahman-God the uncaused First Cause created the initial conditions including the physical constants and laws of the universe and then withdrew and let it run itself without interference. In this case there would be no need for Brahman-God to intervene at a later date. This is analogous to a person or a machine manufacturing a watch or a clock and then letting it run by itself. Augustine (354-430) believed that God created everything at the beginning of time in a potential germ state including all people and they later materialized coming into empirical existence at different times in world history.⁷³

If the universe proceeds out of the Divine Mind, this implies that metaphysical creation and relations are also a logical creation and relations. We find the idea of a logical creation in the teachings of Johannes Scotus Erigena (c.

810-77). The universal (the class-concept or logical genus) is the original reality that produces the particulars (the species and ultimately the individuals) taking on definite form. For him logical relations of concepts are also metaphysical relations. The universals of the Divine Mind are determining substances that through logical subordination become production and inclusion of the particular by the general. When creating the universe, logical partition and determination transform into a causal process by means of which the universal takes on form that unfolds in the particulars. Following this system the creation of the universe might possibly proceed in the logical process and sequence of genus, then species, then individuals.⁷⁴

According to Plato, Eternal Forms (*Eidos*) are archetypes, meaning original models, of which particular objects, properties, and relations are copies. Particulars participate in the forms, and the forms inhere in the particulars. Forms such as beauty, are more real than any object that imitates them. Unlike physical entities, these forms are timeless and unchanging unqualified perfection. They are the essences of various objects that determine what kind of thing it is. For example, a particular table exists only because tableness is at the core; it is its essence. Form transcends space and time altogether, yet it provides the formal basis for them. They are perfect, unchanging, and non-physical without spatial or temporal dimensions. The entity is essentially or really the transcendent Ideal Form, and the empirical object in the sensible world is an appearance (*phainomena*), shadow, or imitation of It.⁷⁵

Swami Abhedananda taught, "Before man came into existence there was an Ideal Man or a perfect type of man in the thought of God, and its projection or physical manifestation became something like [less than] that ideal type, because the gross manifestation, being limited by time, space, and causation, cannot be exactly the same as the ideal type which is perfect.... All human beings, therefore, are more or less imperfect expressions of that Ideal Man."⁷⁶

5. Panentheism: The World Within Brahman-God and Brahman-God Within the World

Indian: "It is within all, and It is without all. He who sees all beings in the Self [Atman], and the Self in all beings hates none" (Isha Up.* 5-6, p. 4). "Formless, He dwells within all and without all" (Mund. Up.* II,1.2, p. 62). "That yogi sees me in all things, and all things within me" (BG* 6:30, p. 84). "Devotion to him in whom all creatures exist, and by whom the universe is pervaded" (BG* 8:22, p. 98). Arjuna "beheld the entire universe, in all its multitudinous diversity, lodged as one being within the body of the God of gods" (BG* 11:13, p. 120). "One indestructible Substance is seen in all beings, undivided in the divided" (BG 18:20).

New Testament: "Yet he is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live, and move, and have our being'" (Acts 17:27-28). "We though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom. 12:5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:27).

Qualified Nondualism is supported by the doctrine of Panentheism (all-in-God) that the universe is contained within Brahman-God. Most often, this is combined with the idea of Theoenpanism (God-in-all) that Brahman-God is within (saksin) (or pervades) the universe but is not identical with it. This coinherence is possible because the Supreme Being is Omnipresent in the universe. It is also possible to accept Panentheism or Theoenpanism and reject the other. Brahman-God and the world are ontologically different. The Divine Being is more than the universe, being both immanent and transcendent and therefore not exhausted by, dependent on, or tainted by the imperfections of the world. The Apostle Paul said of God, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). This differs from Creationism whereby the Lord creates the phenomenal world *ex nihilo* (from nothing).⁷⁷

As the British biochemist and theologian Arthur Peacocke (1924-2006) from Oxford and Cambridge Universities wrote, "God is best conceived of as the circumambient Reality enclosing all existing entities, structures, and processes; and as operating in and through all, while being more than all. Hence, all that is not God has its existence within God's operation and Being." The Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in the Divine Reality.⁷⁸

Philip Clayton signified, "Finite space is contained within absolute space, the world is contained within God; yet the world is not identical to God. Precisely this is the core of Panentheism. In this sense, the world is not outside of God who immediately perceives everything through His omnipresence." Traditional theistic (Indian dualistic) systems often stress the difference between Brahman-God and the world, while Panentheism emphasizes Brahman-God's active presence in the world. Creatures though different from God, receive their existence through participation in the Infinite being of God. There is a similarity-in-difference between Brahman-God and humans, remaining distinct in regards to Infinite/finite, necessary/contingent, and perfect/imperfect.⁷⁹

A Panentheistic Brahman-God who contains the entire world is apt to show more concern for it than a Brahman-God who exists separate from it. Brahman-God reacts to the human situation as a Divine Incarnation (Avatara), being affected by what people do. Its intension is to liberate-save people and to improve human conditions on earth.⁸⁰ We exert an influence on Brahman-God for example, when the Divine Being responds to our prayers.

Vivekananda agrees we live in Brahman-God, "We cannot objectify Him, for we are always living and moving in Him, whether we know it or not. Whatever we do is always through Him."⁸¹ He also indicates that the ongoing creation of the universe originates from within:

A second explanation of knowledge is that the explanation of a thing must come from inside and not from outside. There had been the belief that, when a man threw up a stone and it fell, some demon dragged it down. Many occurrences that are really natural phenomena are attributed by people to unnatural beings. That a ghost dragged down the stone was an explanation that was not in the thing itself, it was an explanation from outside; but the

second explanation of gravitation is something in the nature of the stone; the explanation is coming from inside. This tendency you will find throughout modern thought; in one word, what is meant by science is that the explanations of things are in their own nature, and that no external beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the universe. The chemist never requires demons, or ghosts, or anything of that sort, to explain his phenomena. The physicist never requires anyone of these to explain the things he knows, nor does any other scientist. And this is one of the features of science which I mean to apply to religion. In this religions are found wanting and that is why they are crumbling into pieces. Every science wants its explanations from inside, from the very nature of things; and the religions are not able to supply this. There is an ancient theory of a personal deity entirely separate from the universe, which has been held from the very earliest time. The arguments in favour of this have been repeated again and again, how it is necessary to have a God entirely separate from the universe, an extra-cosmic deity, who has created the universe out of his will, and is conceived by religion to be its ruler. We find, apart from all these arguments, the Almighty God painted as the All-merciful, and at the same time, inequalities remain in the world. These things do not concern the philosopher at all, but he says the heart of the thing was wrong; it was an explanation from outside, and not inside. What is the cause of the universe? Something outside of it, some being who is moving this universe! And just as it was found insufficient to explain the phenomenon of the falling stone, so this was found insufficient to explain religion. And religions are falling to pieces, because they cannot give a better explanation than that.... It is unnecessary to seek for any cause outside. This also is breaking down religion. What I mean by breaking down religion is that religions that have held on to the idea of an extra-cosmic deity, that he is a very big man and nothing else, can no more stand on their feet; they have been pulled down, as it were. ⁸²

Vivekananda adds that the idea that the universe was created by a Personal God outside of nature, "holds that the effect is not the cause, that the cause is entirely separate from the effect. Yet all human knowledge shows that the effect is but the cause in another form." "Everything should be explained from its own nature. There may have been people who thought that every apple that fell to the ground was dragged down by a ghost, but the explanation is the law of gravitation; and although we know it is not a perfect explanation, yet it is much better than the other, because it is derived from the nature of the thing itself, while the other posits an extraneous cause. So throughout the whole range of our knowledge; the explanation which is based upon the nature of the thing itself is a scientific explanation, and an explanation which brings in an outside agent is unscientific." "The nature of ignorance to seek for causes outside of effects. If a stone falls, it has been thrown by a devil or a ghost, says the ignorant man, but the scientific man says it is the law of nature, the law of gravitation.... Science means that the cause of a thing is sought out by the nature of the thing itself. As step by step science is progressing, it has taken the explanation of natural phenomena out of the hands of spirits and angels. Because Advaitism has done

likewise in spiritual matters, it is the most scientific religion. This universe has not been created by any extra-cosmic God, nor is it the work of any outside genius. It is self-creating, self-dissolving, self-manifesting, One Infinite Existence, the Brahman.” “We believe ... that God is in us, and that we are in God.”⁸³

An essential task of the Panentheists is to explain how God works on the universe. Applying the scientific ideas of the New Biology and other realms of modern science Arthur Peacocke came to the following conclusions that echo Vivekananda teachings. “The world system is causally closed.... In this model the proposed kinds of interactions of God with the world system would not be from 'outside' but from 'inside' it [God]. That's why the world system is regarded as being 'in God.’”⁸⁴ Peacocke continues, “We have to emphasize anew the immanence of God as creator ‘in with, and under’ the natural processes of the world unveiled by the sciences in accord with all that the sciences have revealed since those debates in the nineteenth century. At no point do modern natural scientists have to invoke any nonnatural causes to explain their observations and inferences about the past.... God is creating at every moment of the world's existence through perpetually giving creativity to the very stuff of the world. All of this reinforces the need to reaffirm more urgently than at any other time in Christian (and Jewish and Islamic) history that, in a very strong sense, God is the immanent creator creating through the processes of the natural order.... The processes revealed by the sciences are in themselves God acting as creator, and God is not to be found as some kind of additional influence or factor added on to the processes of the world God is creating. This perspective can properly be called "theistic naturalism" and is not Deism *redivivus* [reborn], for it conceives of God as actively and (in the light of an analogy developed below) personally creating through the processes of the world.”⁸⁵

It should be mentioned that some Panentheistic ideas were anticipated by the Dutch Reformed (Calvinist) theologian Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) who wrote:

Augustine and others teach that God is transcendent above space—for space is a mode of existence pertaining to Creatures—and immanent in space: filling every unit of space with the Whole of his being, not diffused through space like light or ether.... Just as the soul is present in its entirety in the body as a whole and also in every part of the body, just as one and the same truth is acknowledged everywhere, thus, by way of comparison, God is present in all things and all things are present in God.... Some of the implications of the doctrine of God's omnipresence: God is transcendent above all space. He is immanent in all space. Space itself presupposes God's immensity.... In connection with God's immensity we must avoid on the one hand the error of pantheism, namely, that God is really the substance of all things and that he is spatial; and on the other hand, the error of deism, namely that God is omnipresent in power but not in essence and nature. Though God is essentially distinct from his creatures, he is not separate from them. Every particle of matter and every point of space require God's immensity to sustain them in their existence. The deistic idea that God dwells in a place far distant

from the world and thence governs all things by his omnipotence does injustice to the proper conception of the being of God. In reality this representation is in conflict with all of God's attributes: with his simplicity, immutability, infinity etc.; accordingly, God becomes man, and creation becomes independent. It needs to be emphasized that God is not present in creation as a king in his realm or a captain aboard his ship. He does not act upon the world from a distance; but with his whole being, he is present powerfully here and everywhere with respect to his essence and power.... Because his essence, though omnipresent, is of a character different from that which pertains to creatures, he remains pure in the presence of all impurity.⁸⁶

Arthur Peacocke has emphasized that God as the perpetual creator of the universe is maintaining and changing the universe at each instance of time, "But to speak thus is to recognize also that God is creating now and continuously in and through the inherent, inbuilt creativity of the natural order, both physical and biological a creativity that is itself God in the process of creating. So we have to see God's action as being in the processes themselves, as they are revealed by the physical and biological sciences, and this means we must stress more than ever before God's immanence in the world. If the world is in any sense what God has created and that through which he acts and expresses his own inner being, then there is a sense in which God is never absent from his world and he is as much in his world as, say Beethoven is in his Seventh Symphony during a performance of it.... Thus the inorganic, biological, and human worlds are not just the stage of God's action-they are in themselves a mode of God in action, a mode that has traditionally been associated with the designation "Holy Spirit," the creator Spirit."⁸⁷ "New modes of existence come into being, and old ones often pass away. In the world new entities, structures and processes appear in the course of time, so that God's action as Creator is both past and present: it is continuous. Any notion of God as Creator must now take into account, more than ever before in the history of theology, that God is continuously creating, that God is *semper* [always] *Creator*. In this respect, God has to be regarded as related to created time as the continuously creating Creator. Thus it is that the scientific perspective obliges us to take more seriously and concretely than hitherto in theology the notion of the immanence of God as Creator - that God is the Immanent Creator creating in and through the processes of the natural order."⁸⁸

In continuously modifying every aspect of the universe at each moment of time, Brahman-God is simultaneously involved in creation of the new, and preservation or destruction of the old. They represent a single not three separate events.

These ideas are in agreement with Swami Vivekananda's statements on the subject in his criticism of Deism. "It is not that this world was created the other day, not that a God came and created the world and since that time has been sleeping; for that cannot be. The creative energy is still going on. God is eternally creating--is never at rest. Remember the passage in the Gita [(3:24) where Krishna says, 'If I remain at rest for one moment, this universe will be destroyed.' If that creative energy which is working all around us, day and night, stops for a

second, the whole thing falls to the ground. There never was a time when that energy did not work throughout the universe.”⁸⁹

A distinction must be drawn between the notion that the Supreme Being guides and controls the laws of nature that are external to It, and the more advanced idea that the laws of nature and causation are an internal manifestation of the will of Brahman-God. The laws of nature are expressions of the Supreme Being’s nature and wishes and are not independent of them. The laws of causation are not separate from Brahman-God but proceed from Its own being. The Divine Being when controlling nature acts from within Itself, conserving and directing the development of the universe. This raises the question; do the laws of nature as known by the Divine Being differ from our understanding of them? We observe the operations of the laws of nature “from the outside,” while Brahman-God experiences and knows them “from within” in all of their internal relationships. Human knowledge is often an approximation of the underlying relationships and hidden regularities operative in the Supreme Being’s world of creation.⁹⁰

When Brahman-God intervenes in the world as an act of grace, It works internally through the laws of nature. The Divine Being reacts to prayer by altering both external events and our thought process. Neither of these require the suspension of any law of nature. The great mystics experienced Brahman-God consciousness making contact with the internal nature of Brahman-God that brought about a transformation in them. People who meditate regularly have some awareness of this. Though internal causation is the dominant method of Divine action, one cannot limit Brahman-God’s activity and say that external causation is not employed. For example, an Avatara-Divine Incarnation while living on earth utilizes external causation when dealing with other people.

Philip Clayton makes the point, “The infinite may without contradiction include within itself things that are by nature finite, but it may not stand outside of the finite.... There is simply no place for finite things to ‘be’ outside of that which is absolutely unlimited. Hence an Infinite God must encompass the finite world that He has created, making it in some sense ‘within’ Himself.” A fully Infinite God cannot be limited by something external to Itself.⁹¹

Clayton also discerned:

The concept of the infinite can be understood in a determinate and an indeterminate sense. In the latter case it becomes merely the indefinite extension of number, space, or time [infinite yet never reaching the end]; in the former, it refers to a particular reality that is qualitatively distinct from the finite. This determinate sense can in turn be taken negatively - as the negation of the finite - or positively, as that which precedes and grounds all finite things. Finally, the positive view can be construed monistically (the One excludes any independent existences) or dualistically (a world of finite objects can exist apart from the infinite) or as some combination of the two (the world is within God, though God is also more than the world).... it inclines one toward a world-within-God (Panentheism) rather than the separation of world and God.... one can best speak of the ‘transcendental’ infinite: the infinite is prior to finite things

in that it is the condition of the possibility for conceiving them as what they are.... the infinite would have to exclude the finite - unless the finite could be understood as existing within the infinite. But if we exist 'within' God then we are not really separate from the Divine; we are in some sense modes of the One.... if the world really participates in God, there is no place for a final ontological separation of the participating beings from their participated source. For Spinoza and Schelling, God is the All; there is no 'space' outside God (if one wishes to speak in spatial terms); hence the world is within God, as are we. Yet theism requires that the world not be identical with God. Here we reach perhaps the most difficult question: How is one to specify the world's difference from God? Theologians have not always seen that this is the crucial issue: not how the world can be connected to its infinite source, but rather how things in the world are to be individuated given such a source. We have found that the logic of the infinite is inescapable: the absolute can only differentiate itself into self and other, infinite and finite, God and world. The reason an adequate theism remains inescapably dialectical is that what results must both be not-God (as finite) and God. Given that there can be nothing outside the infinite, whatever becomes remains in some sense still part of the infinite. How then is one to separate God and creatures? The answer lies in the understanding of God as the ground of being. We are the beings that stem from this ground.

The world emerges out of its infinite ground—although it never attains an existence outside or completely separate from this ground, it has a different nature than its source (viz. a finite one). It is also true that God-as-personal emerges from the infinite Divine Ground; as a being involved in actual relations with the world.... It is also required by the logic of the absolute: things could only be distinguished from an absolute by being derived from it, not by being ultimately different from it.... To allow division within the infinite as I have done, to include within it the potential to be manifested as finite or limited being, does come closer to acknowledging an ontological—and axiological—dualism in God than most of the theological tradition has been willing to do.... Yet, in another sense, God remains different from the world—indeed, absolutely different, since he has an infinite nature whereas the world's is finite. The greater the difference between God and world—be it spatial, essential, or temporal vs. atemporal—the more difficult it is to develop a coherent theory of Divine action.... God's relation to the world, [is] understood neither as external to God (for what could be external to infinity?) nor as identical to God (since the essential features of the absolute such as eternality and necessary existence certainly cannot be predicated of us as finite individuals).... Of course, if Divine influence were not limited in frequency and scope, humans would lose all ability to distinguish the natural order from its Divine source; thus the influence must remain somewhat isolated and limited in scope.⁹²

Vivekananda explains the infinite-finite relation differently. "The whole universe is a play of unity in variety, and of variety in unity. The whole universe is a play of differentiation and oneness; the whole universe is a play

of the finite in the Infinite. We cannot take one without granting the other.... That is the peculiar claim--not that this unity has to be made, but that it already exists, and that you could not perceive the variety at all, without it. God is not to be made, but He already exists. This has been the claim of all religions. Whenever one has perceived the finite, he has also perceived the Infinite. Some laid stress on the finite side, and declared that they perceived the finite without; others laid stress on the Infinite side, and declared they perceived the Infinite only. But we know that it is a logical necessity that we cannot perceive the one without the other. So the claim is that this sameness, this unity, this perfection--as we may call it--is not to be made, it already exists, and is here."⁹³

These ideas are supported by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan the modern Vedantic philosopher, "The *Upanishads* nowhere say that the Infinite excludes the finite. Wherever they assert that Brahman is the sole reality they are careful enough to add that the world is rooted in Brahman, and as such has a share of reality. 'The finite is in the infinite. This Atman is the entire universe (Chandogya Up. II:4.26).'... The infinite is inherent in the finite. That is why the finite is ever struggling to break down its finiteness and reach out to the fullest freedom, and when ^L_{SEP}the freedom of spirit is reached all is overcome."⁹⁴

The infinite-finite distinction not only applies to space and time, but also to power, knowledge, will, feelings, values, etc. Each of these characteristics has both a quantitative and qualitative dimension. Our limited finite ideas are part of and an aspect of Brahman-God's omniscient infinite ideas. Finite space, time and all entities, structures and processes are within the infinite. Nevertheless, there is an ontological distinction between the infinite Supreme Being and the finite though intimately interrelated. Consequently, the world is absolutely dependent on Brahman-God for its existence and sustenance at every instant. Nothing has independent existence apart from the Divine Being. There is also an Infinite without parts that has no finite dimensions.

Arthur Peacocke believes that even God does not know the future of quantum events. "The predominant view among practicing physicists - to abbreviate ludicrously a sharp and unsettled question - is that this unpredictability of the effect of measurement on quantum-level systems is inherent. If one takes this view, then there is no definite knowledge of which, say, radium atom will split up in the next smallest possible time interval - only probabilistic knowledge is available. In that case there is no definite fact of the matter even for God to know, so God logically cannot know it, for omniscience is the ability to know all that it is logically possible to know. One would have to conclude that God has so made the world that God knows the outcome of such events only in a probabilistic manner. That is, God is omniscient, with only a probabilistic knowledge of the outcomes of some events. Clearly this postulate depends on the belief that God also does not know the future."⁹⁵

Peacocke is to be praised for raising these important topics, but his view is in direct contradiction to the doctrines of Indian dualism and Western theism. Brahman-God is far more than a perfected or a master quantum physicist. The

Omnipotent Being (Ultimate Reality) is the first cause, the ongoing and continuous creator of the universe that includes the quantum world. As the immanent creator, the Divine Being pervades the quantum world and is ontologically prior to all quantum events. The quantum world is not exterior to the Lord as it is for the physicist. Brahman-God is not subject to quantum events, but they are determined by the Divine Will that for example decides which radium atom will next decay. Being omniscient, the Divine Being has complete understanding of every facet of quantum physics in its entirety including its future states. The Supreme Being's act of creating and knowing are one and the same. Quite possibly quantum events are subject to laws that the contemporary scientists have not yet discovered. There are contradictions in human thinking due to a lack of omniscience.

According to the law of karma, even events that appear to be random are causally determined. If atheists/agnostics do not care for the word God or Ultimate Reality, they can use another term for that entity that ontologically pervades and continuously manifests the laws of nature and the quantum world. Brahman-God pervades the quantum, atomic and mental world and controls all three from within. The causality of the Divine Being operates both in a top-down and a bottom-up direction.⁹⁶ If Brahman-God is spatially omnipresent then its causation can begin from anywhere, at the top, in the middle, or at the bottom and go in any direction.

Process Theology of the American Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) is based to some extent on the Process Philosophy of English-American Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947). Both Hartshorne and Whitehead were sons of Protestant ministers. According to Hartshorne's Panentheism, God's creation is internal not external. The universe is within God and consequently, He is related to the universe in a manner similar to the way a person is related to the cells of their body. The relation of God to any non-Divine creature is a relation of whole to part. Thus, God's scope of interaction is universal, whereas the scope of interaction for any creature is localized. Since there is nothing external to God, no outside source can threaten Divine existence. God interacts with the changing universe and is affected by the events of the world (passible). For example, due to Divine initiative in the *Old Testament* God enters into numerous covenants with the Hebrews. God then reacted to the way the people fulfilled the covenant.⁹⁷

References

¹ Copleston, III, pp. 239-40.

² Swami Abhedananda, *Divine Heritage of Man* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1903, 1947), pp. 52-54.

³ Abhedananda (1903, 1947), p. 97.

⁴ Swami Abhedananda, *Religion Revelation and God* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1968), pp. 42-43.

⁵ Abhedananda (1968), pp. 113-14.

⁶ Swami Abhedananda, *True Psychology* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1965),

pp. 16, 59-60, 62.

⁷ Swami Abhedananda, *Yoga Psychology* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1960), pp. 192, 199.

⁸ Swami Abhedananda, *Attitude of Vedanta Towards Religion* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1947, 1990), pp. 32, 159.

⁹ Web: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mereology/>

¹⁰ Gopal Stavig, "Creation of the Phenomenal World from Divine Ideas in Indian and Western Thought," *Vedanta Kesari* (Oct. 2020).

¹¹ Copleston, IV, pp. 217-22, 226.

¹² Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. 93-94.

¹³ Robert Oakes, "The Divine Infinity: Can Traditional Theists Justifiably Reject Pantheism," *The Monist* (80) (April 1997), pp. 251-52, 257. Concerning emanation Robert Oakes, "Emanation Ex Deus: A Defense," *American Philosophical Quarterly* (29) April (1992), pp. 163-71 is also worth reading.

¹⁴ CW, I, pp.151-52 (1896).

¹⁵ CW, II, p. 278.

¹⁶ Arthur Powell, *The Astral Body* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1927, 1978), p. 5.

¹⁷ Saradananda, p. 408.

¹⁸ Saradananda, pp. 446-47.

¹⁹ Web: en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Max_Planck

²⁰ Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism; en.wikiquote.org/wiki/James_Jeans

²¹ Gopal Stavig, "Swami Vivekananda and the Theoretical Implications of the Doctrine of Reincarnation," *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture* (Jan. 2020), pp. 6-14; c.f. (Feb. 2020), pp. 19-22, (Mar. 2020), pp. 10-16; CW, I, pp. 257-58.

²² Web: www.theosophy.world/encyclopedia/thought-forms

²³ Swami Abhedananda, *Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math (1978), p. 95.

²⁴ Swami Abhedananda, *Yoga Psychology* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1960), p. 169.

²⁵ Swami Abhedananda, *The Mystery of Death* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1978), p. 257.

²⁶ Peacocke 1, pp. 52, 108-11, 138-40.

²⁷ Web: <http://inters.org/reductionism>

²⁸ Clayton 3, p. 201.

²⁹ Swami Jitatmananda, "Science Consciousness and Human Evolution," in Pradip Sengupta, ed. *History of Science and the Philosophy of Science: A Historical Perspective* (Delhi: Pearson, 2010), pp. 677-78.

³⁰ Roger Sperry, *Science And Moral Priority* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 87-89, 92.

³¹ Russell, pp. 345-49.

³² Peacocke 1, p. 140.

³³ Donald Rothberg, "Philosophical Foundations of Transpersonal Psychology: An Introduction to Some Basic Issues", *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (1986), pp. 2-3.

³⁴ Dagobert Runes, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), p. 129.

³⁵ Jonathan Schaffer, "The Internal Relatedness of All Things," *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 119, No. 474 (April 2010), pp. 341-76; cf. Web: www.jonathanschaffer.org/monism.pdf

³⁶ T. Sprigge, "Bradley's Doctrine of the Absolute," in *Appearance Versus Reality*, ed. Guy Stock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 194-95, 197-200, 204-05; T. Sprigge, *James and Bradley* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1992), pp. 264-69, 354-55, 439-41, 500-09, 565-67; F.

H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 123, 141, 172, 321, 371, 432, 481.

³⁷ Taylor (1961), pp. 34, 94-95, 97, 104-07, 109, 166-67, 394; For more details on degrees of reality see; Ch. V, Section 6. Relationship of Brahman-Atman and the Absolute to the Universe.

³⁸ Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Wilhelm_Leibniz#Symbolic_thought

³⁹ Web: plato.stanford.edu/entries/leibniz-mind

⁴⁰ Web: www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Arthur_Oncken_Lovejoy; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Oncken_Lovejoy. Ideas are also developed from a process of division as philosophy is subdivided into metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, etc. Each of these is then subdivided into various types.

⁴¹ Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), p. 8.

⁴² Web: www.psychologydiscussion.net/social-psychology-2/group-behavior/study-notes-on-group-mind-psychology/1336

⁴³ These kinds of ideas are discussed on the Internet under the titles of Systemology, Systems Philosophy, and Systems Theory.

⁴⁴ Web: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/process-theism>

⁴⁵ CW, II:413, 430.

⁴⁶ CW, vi:52.

⁴⁷ Clayton 3, pp. 128, 108, 148.

⁴⁸ Clayton 1, pp. 6-7, 150-51; Peacocke 3, pp. 137-39.

⁴⁹ Web: www.philosophybasics.com/branch_monism.html; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monism

⁵¹ CW, I, pp. 147, 360-61.

⁵² CW, III, p. 57.

⁵³ CW, V, p. 101.

⁵⁴ Web: www.philosophybasics.com/branch_monism.html

⁵⁵ Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upanishads*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953, pp. 65-68.

⁵⁶ Enneads, V, 3.8; IV, 4.32; G. Stavig, "Plotinus and Indian Philosophy," *BRMIC* (Aug. 2002), pp. 313-18; (Sept. 2002), pp. 360-64. For the S. MacKenna translation see, Web: classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.html

⁵⁷ Pritibhushan Chatterji, "Plotinus and Sri Aurobindo," in R. Harris ed., *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought* (International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982), pp. 261-62; Antonia Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Plotinus and Origen* (Roslyn Heights, NY: Libra Publishers, Inc., 1978), pp. 51-55.

⁵⁸ Sudhindra Chakravarti, *Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaishnavism*, Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1969, pp. 79-83.

⁵⁹ S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upanishads*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953, pp. 65-68.

⁶⁰ Shankara (1996), I.1.2; II.1.26.

⁶¹ GSR, p. 803e.

⁶² CW, II:13.

⁶³ Gopal Stavig, "Swami Vivekananda and the Theoretical Implications of the Doctrine of Reincarnation," *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission of Culture* (Jan. 2020), pp. 6-14; cf. (Feb. 2020), pp. 19-22, (Mar. 2020), pp. 10-16.

⁶⁴ CW, I, p.132.

⁶⁵ CW, I, p. 416.

⁶⁶ Enneads, IV, 4.13; V, 8.7. For the S. MacKenna translation see, Web: classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.html

⁶⁷ Enneads, V, 3.8.

⁶⁸ For more details see: Gopal Stavig, "Creation of the Phenomenal World from Divine Ideas in Indian and Western Thought," *Vedanta Kesari* (Oct. 2020).

⁶⁹ Swami Abhedananda, *Thoughts on Yoga, Upanishads and Gita*, ed. Swami Prajnanananda (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1970), pp. 158-59.

⁷⁰ Swami Abhedananda, *Yoga Psychology* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1960), pp. 367-69.

⁷¹ Shankara (1996), I.3:28.

⁷² CW, III. p. 57; I, p. 448.

⁷³ Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy* (9 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1985), II, pp. 76-77, 72-73.

⁷⁴ W. Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), pp. 289-91.

⁷⁵ Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_Forms; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato

⁷⁶ Swami Abhedananda, *Divine Heritage of Man* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1903, 1947), pp. 181-83.

⁷⁷ For the pantheist side see: W. L. Craig, "Pantheists in Spite of Themselves," in J. K. Beilby, ed., *For Faith and Clarity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), pp. 135-56. The opposing view is presented by: William Rowe, "Does Panentheism Reduce to Pantheism? A Response to Craig," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 61 (Apr. 2007), pp. 65-67.

⁷⁸ Peacocke 1, pp. 139, 56-58, 138, 140-42, 145-46. For an overview of Panentheism see Web: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism>

⁷⁹ Clayton 2, pp. 89-91, 102-05.

⁸⁰ Clayton 2, p. 94.

⁸¹ CW, II:135.

⁸² CW, I:370-72.

⁸³ CW, II:330; III:423-24; IV:191.

⁸⁴ Peacocke 1, p. 147.

⁸⁵ Clayton 1, pp. 143-44.

⁸⁶ Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, tr. William Hendriksen (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 158, 161-62. Bavinck's statements on the Divine Attributes are quiet enlightening, particularly pp. 133-41, 152-71, 197-99.

⁸⁷ Russell, p. 139.

⁸⁸ Peacocke 2, p. 105.

⁸⁹ CW, II, pp. 122-23.

⁹⁰ Clayton 4, pp. 348-49.

⁹¹ Clayton (1997), p. 99.

⁹² Philip Clayton, *The Problem Of God In Modern Thought* (Cambridge, U.K.; William B. Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 177, 179, 400, 477-78, 488-89, 505.

⁹³ CW, I:433-34.

⁹⁴ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (2 vols.; Delhi: Oxford University, 1923, 1992), I, pp. 190, 339.

⁹⁵ Peacocke 1, p. 59.

⁹⁶ A good portion of this section appeared in an article by G. Stavig in the BRMIC June 2017), pp. 35-39, (July 2017), pp. 19-27.

⁹⁷ Web: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/process-theism>