

## Cosmos ex Natura: Part II

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, we are first going to look at each of the traditional views of major religions and see how well they actually address the existential dilemma in their cosmological narratives and then compare these with the difficulties and perceived limitations of the scientific description. This will then provide a more level playing field, in which the scientific description, which is already founded on the skeptical principle, as a root means of testing validity, can be compared with religious cosmological narratives based on affirmative belief, and religious narratives put to the same kind of scrutiny. Part II of this article include: 5. Mayan and Christian Redeemer's Blood; 6. Vedantic and Buddhist Cosmologies; 7. the 'Other': Kali and the Feminine Power of Living Space-time; 8. Shakti Cosmology in the Kali Yuga; and 9. The Perennial Tao.

**Key Words:** cosmos, nature, religion, science, God.

### 5. Mayan and Christian Redeemer's Blood



Maya mural depicting scenes of the creation story and, at the center, the maize god, who crowns himself king.

To broaden the horizon we will examine one other creation story from the Maya to see how this parallels essential features of the creations processes and heroic sacrifices of other religions, particularly Christianity.

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When Cortez arrived in Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs marveled at the Christian religion, because its rituals of blood sacrifice in drinking Christ's blood and eating his flesh and his gruesome crucifixion as a sacrifice, by Abba the Father God so closely paralleled their own abundant blood-letting sacrifices to appease the Gods and keep the sun in orbit. Far from appreciating these similarities, the Conquistadores reacted with violence to this alien religion, in dismemberment of not only the priests but also the musicians who played at traditional rites, in a frenzied denial of their own religion's foundation in the endlessly flowing blood of the redeemer.

Like the monotheistic world view in the older Mayan creation, there is a heaven above and an underworld below, in this case a succession like the seven layered heavens and hells of Sumeria and Babylonia:

The Mayas' religion taught that there were 13 layers of heavens above the earth. They also believed nine underworlds were below. They thought that they lived in the fifth creation of the world. The previous four worlds had been destroyed by a great flood. At the beginning of the fifth world, the gods created humans from corn.

Again we have an intelligent design scenario very much like the Elohim making the world in a number of days:

In the first stage of creation, before anything else, the world was nothing but sea and sky. Then the Maker stretched a cord across the sea and sky to create the four corners of the earth.

In the second creation, the Modeler made mountains, lakes, forests, animals, birds, and insects. Although the Maker was happy with the creations, these organisms couldn't speak, pray, keep track of time, or most importantly, show their love and appreciation by returning nourishment to the gods. Dissatisfied, the Creator Couple commanded a flood that eliminated all life on the earth so they could start over.

We now enter an era where we find messianic heroes who break the umbilical cord between life and death in a severely sacrificial round very similar to Christ's crucifixion, the celebration of the Eucharist of soma and sangre and the return of the Lord in glory. This third stage is the legend of the hero twins:

The father and Uncle of the Hero twins were great ball players. Unfortunately, the court where they played caused great noise, disturbing the Lords of Death in the Underworld of Xibalba (Place of Fright). After trials set forth by the Lords, the Father and Uncle were put to death and buried under the ball court. The father's head was severed and placed in a tree as a warning to others.

As in Eden, we have the woman sent into exile over the forbidden fruit, under pain of childbirth, but unlike Eden it is a woman tricked by the father into becoming the mother of the heroes:

One day the Father called a girl over to the tree. She complied when she was asked to hold out her hand. The Father spit in her hand, impregnating her. When this girl's father found out, she was banished to the middle world of humans. She had twins who she named Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the Hero twins.



Early in the conquest the notorious dismemberment and slaughter of Aztec musicians because they were celebrating a heathen festival.

The twin heroes again challenge the Gods of darkness just as did their father and uncle:

One day they were playing ball like their father and uncle before them. Their gleeful shouts were heard down below in Xibalba. The Lords of Death were affronted. These twins were no more humble than the others. And so messengers were dispatched, summoning them to a ballgame in Xibalba.

The twins now become messianic heroes in the same vein as Jesus. Like Jesus they must be sacrificed and die so that they may be resurrected from the dead to return in power. Like Jesus they must endure trials and torment to become the heroes they are destined to be:

The Twins were challenged to a series of ordeals, each in a special "house". In the Dark House they were given a torch and two burning cigars. They were supposed to return these in the morning just as they had received them. Their father and uncle had let the torch burn out, and they had smoked the cigars. But the Hero Twins knew better. They swapped a macaw's scarlet tail feathers for the torch's flame. And they stuck fireflies on the ends of their cigars. When they were sent to the Razor House, sharp blades were supposed to cut them to pieces. But they convinced the blades that their job was to cut up animals, not hero twins. And when they were sent to the Jaguar House, they distracted the tigers by feeding them bones. The Cold House they survived by locking out the cold. The Fire House didn't burn them to ashes, but only toasted them golden brown.

It was when they were sentenced to the Bat House, they made their first mistake, in accordance with their destiny. Hunahpu decided to peek outside the blowgun and see if it was morning yet. When he did so, a bat sliced off his head and it went rolling out onto the ball court of Xibalba. His brother called all the animals together, asking each to bring its favorite food. The coati brought a squash, and with the help of the gods this became a new head for Hunahpu. Meanwhile the Twins told a rabbit to hide outside the ball court. When the Lords of Death started the game, they used Hunahpu's head for the ball. As far as they were concerned, this made them victors automatically. But when they kicked the ball, Xbalanque

deflected Hunahpu's head flying toward the rabbit's hiding place. The rabbit hopped off, and the Lords of Death thought it was the bouncing ball and raced off in pursuit. The boys got Hunahpu's head back and put the squash in its place. When the game began again and Xbalanque gave the ball a particularly energetic boot, it split open and all its seeds came spilling out. The Hero Twins had defeated the Lords of Xibalba. So the Lords of Death, with all their tricks and all their tests couldn't kill the Hero Twins.

Now the hero twins have to go to the underworld and harrow hell as Jesus did, in this case being so completely obliterated that they are ground to dust and scattered in the water, thus enabling them to reintegrate by becoming the food of the fishes:

But still the boys knew that they would have to die for their quest to be complete. They even knew how the Lords of Death would kill them. So when they were called before the Lords of Xibalba and challenged to a new and different game, they knew it was a trick. "See this oven?" said the Lords of Death. "Bet you can't jump over it four times." "We're not falling for that one," said the boys, and without any further ado they jumped right into the flames. At this point the Lords of Death made a big mistake. Instead of throwing Xbalanque and Hunahpu over a cliff or hanging their bodies in a tree, they ground their bones on a grinding stone and sprinkled them in the river.

The twins now come back to life, performing miraculous resurrections, just like Jesus bringing Lazarus back from the dead:

This was the only way that the Twins could come back to life. And come back they did, first as catfish and then as their normal selves, healing others and even being able to cut out their hearts in a sacrifice and restoring them in a resurrection from the dead. The Lords of Death asked that a dog be sacrificed and then brought back to life. And when this was done, they asked that it be repeated with a human. And when this too was accomplished, they asked the Twins to sacrifice each other. So Xbalanque dismembered his twin and cut out his heart. Then he started dancing and commanded Hunahpu to get up and join him. And when Hunahpu got up as good as new, the Lords of Death were caught up in a frenzy of delight.

Now in a twist of turning the tables, the twins cut the hearts out of the Gods of the underworld, overthrowing them as Jesus aspired to do, in the final conquest of Satan, who like the Gods of the underworld, led Jesus to his death, having already taunted him to cast himself from the pinnacle of the Temple, so that he might show he can save himself as the Son of God:

"Now do us!" they cried. And so the Twins sacrificed the two foremost of the Lords of Death. Only they didn't bring them back to life. And the other Lords knew that they had been defeated, and from that day forth Xibalba had lost its glory. The Twins took the head of First Father from the tree in which it hung, and they put him back together and restored him to life. They left him there in a place of honor beside the ballcourt in Xibalba.

Finally, like Jesus, the twins ascend to the heavens:

And then the Hero Twins, Xbalanque and Hunahpu, their heroic quest complete, ascended into the sky and became the sun and the moon.





Left: The Dream of Mary (Christoforo Simone dei Crocefissi) Sacrificial blood streams from her Tree of Calvary (the place of the skull). Right: Tree of the Middle Place Blood mother of the corn from the place of the skulls. At the crown of each is a bird - a Christian pelican picking its flesh for blood and a quetzal (Campbell).

## 6. Vedantic and Buddhist Cosmologies



Images from Indus valley, including Shiva in lotus posture as Pashupatinath - Lord of the Animals (centre) and sacrificial images suggestive of Kali (right).

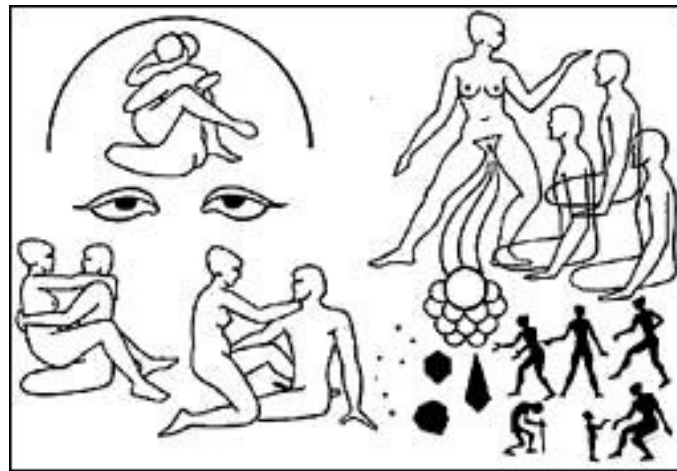
The religion coming out of the Indian subcontinent is rich and diverse, overflowing with both male and female deities and deeply absorbed in a contemplative tradition that runs back, long before the Vedas, into the Indus valley planter cultures of Harappa and Mojendaro.

It is here that one can find images of a Shivaic godhead complete with trident, sitting meditative in lotus pose, as Pashupatinath or Lord of the Animals, the shepherd king consort to the dark Dravidian planter goddess Kali-Ma, the creatrix and destructress of all beings, gorging bodies in her mouth, whose name is time, who also beckons far back into ancient roots in the fertile crescent, in chthonic deities, like

Ereshkigal and whose bloodied sacrificial offerings continue to remind us of the ancient power of the Goddess, whose resurgence, spells out a newly wholesome message of female emancipation.

From these very early roots, long before the Aryans brought the Rig Veda and their own brand of worship of the warrior god Indra down from the steppes, has sprung the tradition of transcendental contemplation that has left its mark echoing through the Upanishads and lays the sacred ground for both Jainism and Buddhism as contemplative religious paths.

Shiva and Shakti, another manifestation of Kali as youthful sexual goddess, in consonance with Inana and Dumuzi of Sumeria, come to spell out one of the most sumptuous, fertile and perplexing religious cosmologies spawned by human culture.



Tantric Genesis in the deep coitus of Shakti and Shiva

In the Tantric origin, like the Eden story, everything comes down to sex, but this time sexual union is the creative source of the entire universe, for the very beginning is reality in a state of complete sexual fusion – a contemplative fusion between mind and body, in which everything is a state of holy and complete bliss.

As the partners retreat from coital union, Shakti, as the physical aspect begins to dance the dance of Maya or illusion, in which the conscious mind of Shiva now perceives all the diverse interacting material forms of reality and all individual sentient beings become fully absorbed in the separate phenomena of the complex interacting reality we perceive around us. Tragically the subjective mind thus loses sight of the cosmic unity and becomes distracted by material phenomena, ultimately becoming a plethora of conscious beings lost in egotistical engagement with the physical world.



The cosmos as a dream in the mind of God: Vishnu, the sustainer, dreaming reality in the form of Brahma appearing as a lotus emanating from his navel overlooked by Lakshmi the faithful devoted wife.

Three fundamental attributes differentiate the Tantric cosmology from the monotheistic one:

Firstly the universe is founded on complementarity, and one in which both the sexes, both as woman and man and as Goddess and God, are integral, co-eval and interdependent, rather than a universe formed by an absolute hierarchical creator God.

Secondly the cosmology articulates clearly the root of the existential dilemma and mystery in the complementary relationship between conscious experience and physical nature, which are barely differentiated in the monotheistic description, founded on a covenantal dialogue with God and the historical trials and tribulations of human frailty in the face of God's designs.

Thirdly, because Shiva and Shakti represent cosmological principles present in all of us, rather than separate deities aloof from fallible humanity, the contemplative quest provides us with a path back to the condition of cosmic integration, because the process can be reversed, in the first person, by the individual following the path back to the primordial condition.

However, this is only one of many cosmological dialogues in the Indian tradition, some of which veer as dangerously into hierarchical male dominance as monotheism itself. Alongside the Tantric origin we have the image of the entire history of the universe being a dream Vishnu is dreaming as he lies on a boat in a lake with his consort, with the phenomena of reality emerging from Brahma – a lotus blossom emerging from his navel. Vishnu also forms a trinity, called the trimurti in which Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are creator, sustainer and destroyer.



Elephanta: The trimurti of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva reflect a similar trinity of An, Enki and Enlil of Sumeria. While Enki masturbates to fertilize the primal waters, Krishna likewise fertilizes the womb of the universe.

From an even more fundamentally patriarchal perspective we have Krishna, the ultimate male cosmokrator, cum gigolo, planting his transcendental seed into the primal chaos to give rise to the universe, in a manner reminiscent of Enki of Sumeria, who masturbated to fertilize the waters and give forth the fertility of Sumer from a purely male procreative urge.

This patriarchal fertility take-over extends to the cosmological dominance of conscious spirit over material nature. In the Geeta 14:3 Krishna (an incarnation, of Vishnu the sustainer, who forms a trimurti with Brahma the creator and Shiva the destroyer), declares to Arjuna the wisdom beyond knowledge, that the sages neither die nor are reborn when the universe is recreated, for it is He who fertilizes the womb of the cosmos:

*The eternal cosmos is My womb, in which I plant the seed, from which all beings are born O Prince! O illustrious son of Kunti! Through whatever wombs men are born, it is the Spirit itself that conceives, am I am their Father.*

Moreover he declares that the law(s) of nature are fundamentally flawed:

*Purity, Passion and Ignorance are the Qualities which the law of nature bringeth forth. They fetter the free spirit in all beings.*

The Bhagavad Gita portrays the existential condition as a necessary state of holy war, even against one's own kin and teachers, because in the midst of the battlefield, Krishna teaches Arjuna that in one's pure unswerving devotion to himself as godhead, and renunciation from the egotistical pulls of gluttony and desire, no act in the physical world, however destructive, is sinful. In an allegorical sense of course this



is a call to do battle with reality in the name of devotion to the ultimate Godhead, couched in the manner of a teaching in meditation and yoga of action.



Krishna as cosmokrator incites Arjuna to holy war against kith and kin in the name of the indestructibility of the sages who come to realize his true God nature.

But this is the same type of unswerving devotion that led early Christians to offer themselves to the lions rather than recant their faith and leads young Muslim men and women too today to commit violent atrocities in suicide bombings of the innocent, including women and children in the unswerving belief that this struggle, or jihad, is ordained by al-Llah and that they will immediately come to see his face in heaven, and if they are male, have the pick of fragrant virgins in paradise.

The Gita is a call to holy war even more uncompromising than those of Jihad and Crusade, because it is couched in a battle without pity or reason against one's own kin and teachers alike. It is clothed in the deception that the battle is justified, because it is couched as the jihad, or struggle, of the soul to reach the dispassionate independence of the eternal sages. This is both dangerous and a fundamental genocidal deceit, because it is the very claim Krishna is making as cosmokrator, beyond even the transient womb of the universe, that is used to justify actions which, from any natural, social, or ethical perspective, are wholly destructive to survival, to kinship, and to the passage of the generations (2:19):

*He who thinks the spirit kills, and he who thinks of It as killed are both ignorant. The Spirit kills not, nor is It killed. It was not born; It will never die: nor once having been, can it ever cease to be: Unborn, Eternal, Ever-enduring, yet Most Ancient, the spirit dies no when the body is dead.*

Really it is Indra the Aryan war god speaking in the guise of transcendental Krishna, so as to finesse the patriarchal mutual defection of warfare on claims of being the absolute godhead. This is clear in the running conversation (2:2):

*Why yield, just on the eve of battle, which does no credit to those who call themselves Aryans, and only brings them infamy and bars against them the gates of heaven?*



Although Radha and Krishna are worshipped as a dyadic duo and the belief the God's power in the world comes through his consort, the dyadic complements arise only as a secondary result of the impregnation of the universe as womb vessel by the sacred seed of Krishna as Godhead, thus perpetuating the myth of male as creative essence and woman as mere earthen vessel.

Despite the followers of Krishna sometimes also perceiving him, along with other male deities, in the dyadic form of Radha-Krishna, in a pseudo-Tantric pairing that some Vishnavites believe is essential to his power, this pairing of opposites is only generated once Krishna's primal procreative force has entered the transient womb of the universe. The natural complementarity of the sexes is thus kept secondary to ultimate male power.

Little wonder then that we find followers of such movements have subservient female supplicant wives and why India is plagued by the caste system, bride-burnings, killing of the girl child and consignment of the widow to the funeral pyre, or a life of penury begging outside a charnel house on the Ganges.

At its cultural zenith, the Vedantic tradition produced the Upanishads (to sit down near), which free the Soul or atman from its bondage, in becoming one with the eternal cosmic Self or Brahman, which can be realized through the Yogic paths of devotion and meditation, forming one of the most penetrating cosmological insights about the nature of conscious experience, to which all traditions since owe a debt of gratitude.

The Upanishads free the Self from the confines of the creator deity, in a dialogue, as much with Death, as with God:

*Death said: The word the Vedas extol, austerities proclaim, sanctities approach - that word is Om. ... The Self knows all, is not born, does not die, is not the effect of any cause, is eternal, self-existent, imperishable, ancient. ... The Self is lesser than the least, greater than the greatest. He lives in all*

*hearts. When senses are at rest, free from desire, man finds Him and mounts beyond sorrow. Though sitting, he travels, though sleeping is everywhere. Who but I Death can understand the God is beyond joy and sorrow. (Katha-Upanishad 2)*

Although the self is still couched in the patriarchal, we are now in a spiritual territory of sitting near the guru attaining realization, rather than violently at war with one's cousins, as Arjuna was in the Gita.

Into this rich and fertile tradition came a new innovator, who unlike many religious founders, from Jesus to Muhammad, set up a middle path, founded on peaceful coexistence and extreme non-violence, although many of his followers have also tarnished the path with intrigue bloodshed.

Buddha, having followed a path of extreme asceticism, declared a more moderate position of renunciation of worldly desire as traps of the ego, setting out a notion of mortal sentient beings escaping the shackles of a life of suffering caused by attachment to desire for worldly pleasures, possibly spanning many cycles of birth and death in an ongoing round of reincarnation, driven and affected by karma, both in this life, and across many lives.

This cycle of suffering is avoided by becoming one with Buddha nature in nirvana, which, cutting through the spiritual materialism of the objective notion of Self, is neither Self (atman - an essence of things that does not depend on others), nor non-Self (anatta - the absence of limiting self-identity in people and things), but rather the still centre of the cyclone of the turning world, in a cosmology of redemption through meditation in the abyss of conscious existence, without need for any God.

However, in addition to remaining silent on whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, finite or infinite, on unity or separation of the body and the self, complete inexistence of a person after nirvana and then death etc., Buddha also denied that the self existed or was reincarnated. Rather there is only an agglomeration of constantly changing physical and mental constituents or skandhas (form/matter, sensation, perception/cognition, volition, and consciousness, as cognizance or ground experience). Thus the concept of karmic reincarnation remains both controversial and ambiguous, being merely a self-perpetuating dynamic of transient features.

Moreover the central thrust of Buddhism, like all patriarchal religious paths, remains centered on the supremacy of the conscious condition over the transient material phenomena of samsara, or illusion, inherent in the natural world, and the source of suffering in the first place. Thus the Buddhist dharma, or path, consists centrally of renunciation of sensual and physical desires, and with them, the biological foundation of genealogy, survival, and the diversity of life.

The mortal condition is tragic and a true cause for suffering and compassion. But the viability and fertility of life and of sexual life is central to the sanctity, vitality and creative meaning of the entire process, not a condition of mere imperfection and suffering. Thus renunciation is only a remedy for the maladies of ego not a royal route to enlightenment.

Because all sentient beings are entwined in this existential condition the connectedness between us is as pivotal as our equanimity in the face of our mortality. Renunciation is merely a symptom of a need to escape obsessions, rather than an elixir of enlightenment in itself. Social interconnectedness, love and

sexual engagement are just as essential as renunciation, to provide a life of ecstasy and fully-embodied meaning, health and wholeness and for the passage of life to flower anew on the planet.

Some Buddhists realize the importance of the Tantric truth of interconnectedness in the sexual rite of Yab-Yum or Father-Mother and in the Bodhisattva ideal of bringing enlightenment to all sentient beings., although the ideal of personal renunciation and the emphasis on conscious redemption over the physical wellbeing of the planet still dominates.



Buddhist sexual yoga of Yab-Yum or Father-Mother

Despite the central void of the Buddha non-self, Buddhist's do describe the cosmos just like the many layered heavens and hells common to monotheism and fertility and astronomical religions. There is a highest perfect heaven, then a lower imperfect paradise, next the human condition - a central arena for realization, then the animal realm driven by base instincts, next the hungry ghosts on the borders of hell, and finally a hell of torment. Only in the human realm can one become enlightened and escape the unholy life cycle of samsara, so the other realms become shadow lands.

There are major issues here. The universe is distorted into an enlightenment machine for humans and humans only, with the other life forms simply becoming degraded repositories of an essentially human consciousness. Sexual life and the life cycle has again become degraded to an distracting obstacle to enlightenment, manifesting the gross aspects of samsara, in a manner similar to the downfall of natural paradise and woman in the Fall from Eden, to become the bestial nature from which the base instincts of sex betray us in the eyes of God.



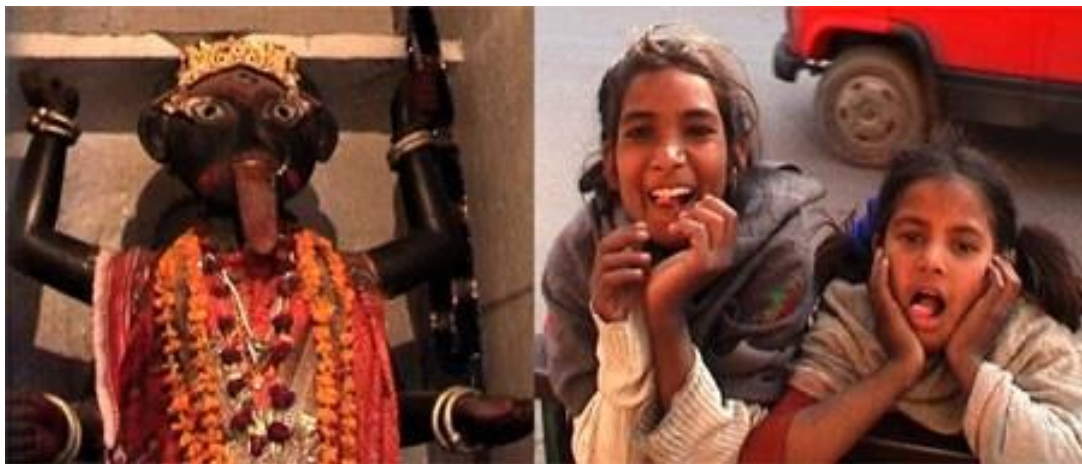
Renunciation impedes our relationship with nature as much as our interconnectedness. Although Buddhists are taught not to take the life of any sentient being, Buddhism tends to see all biological organisms merely from the subjective perspective, as sentient beings caught in the wheel of karma. Buddhist thinking thus tends to judge biological values of life, death and the ecology purely in terms of its effect on the karma of sentient beings in the cycle of reincarnation, not their biological importance for our survival, their beauty, rarity, or the genetic vulnerability of the organism, or its species.

Although some writers portray Buddhism as intrinsically green in its principles, and some branches of Buddhism embrace nature and its mysteries for their capacity for enlightenment, this confusion between sentient beings and biological reality can lead to an incapacity to deal with ecocrisis, to protect rare species from highly invasive ones and to value nature as highly as consciousness. Bringing the life force back into the realm enlightenment would thus be a win-win situation.

Following chapters turn the tables on this situation, showing that we need to consider how the biological parameters defining the fertility, sanctity and diversity of life shape the nature of conscious experience and the underlying natural principles necessary and conducive to the ongoing fertility of life, before trying to formulate any religious or moral imperatives.

By better understanding the dynamics and complexity of the natural cosmological process we can realize ourselves more completely what the outlines of the existential condition must correspond to in the physical world and thus realize a truer and more meaningful understanding of the complete, whole psycho-biological existential condition encompassing both consciousness and the natural world.

## 7. The ‘Other’: Kali and the Feminine Power of Living Space-time



Kali standing on Shiva at Varanasi. Nepalese girls personifying the mother tongue.

If we now turn to the female side of the fatal attraction, there is no personality of more ancient and enduring affection than the black Madonna Kali. She is both the grim black Madonna of creation and destruction and is the most long-lived Goddess we know of, pre-dating the Aryan invasion of the Vedas and harking back to Mojendaro where we find her consort - a trident clad Shiva, and yet alive and



manifest in both Hindu and Buddhist cultures, as the original verdant planter Goddess, from whom all fecundity and fertility arises.

Kali in her ecstatic apotheosis as Shakti the erotic cosmic feminine is also at the root of the most sumptuous Tantric creation, eclipsing the parochial sabbatical creation of Genesis, in a true meeting of the complementary aspects of Yin and Yang, the universe beginning in a deep sacred union of female and male, and giving rise to all the manifestations of existential complexity as the lovers retreat from ecstatic union to the relationship of the objective world and its teeming phenomena, reflected in the passive gaze of Shiva's sentient mind, thereby encapsulating the totality of the existential dilemma. Indeed her ancient primacy is reflected in her being the mother of all the gods and of the three realms:

*In the beginning the supreme Goddess Adi Shakti laid three eggs in a lotus. From these three eggs emerged the three worlds and the three gods: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.*

In contrast to the patriarchal sky Gods, eternal, unchanging and abhorring the impermanent transformations of the physical, Kali acts in space-time in the world of sap and dew, spawning countless offspring from her birth canal and consuming creatures alive, as Lilith was alleged to have done, her body smeared with the blood of sacrifice.



Kali standing on lifeless Shiva with sacrificial goat Kathmandu

Indeed until human sacrifice was outlawed a little over a century ago it was not only black goats that were sacrificed, but humans and particularly those standing in the person of the Lord of Death, in a reflection of the same male sacrifice performed by Inanna, Ishtar, and of the sacrificial principles which

saw John the Baptist's head on a plate after the dance of Salome, and Yeshua, anointed by a woman, hanging on a cross, overlooked by the three Marys, Salome and the women of Galilee.

In the rural areas of the Khonds, whole families were raised to be sacrificed to the harvest, torn slowly to pieces on whirling wooden elephants by the fingernails of frenzied farmers waiting to take back some of the sacred flesh and blood to ensure the coming harvest.



Kali Varanasi

Nevertheless Kali rules over a physical world in which birth and death are the inevitable gateways of living existence, so in an important sense, it is more relevant to worship the Dance of Maya than the inscrutable Nirvana of the Void.

Moreover, in a sometimes damnably patriarchal culture that thinks nothing of killing off its girl children by the thousands, in which young brides are often burned to death for the dowry, and widows suffer death by neglect and attrition, Kali represents the ancient unquenchable spirit of an older Dravidian culture, in which women possessed a degree of power, stemming from the continuity of life that passes in unbroken flesh in the female line, from the bloody birth process, down the umbilical cord to the next generation.

Kali thus represents female power in a way that is psychologically redeeming. In the words of Rani Jethmalani, Kali is an energizer and saviour of oppressed women through social and political empowerment. "It is possible through the revival of an energized feminine principle symbolized by Kali,

ethically dynamic and control free, autonomous and active, who challenges the civilized order and status quo”.

Certainly, in coming to terms with the claims made by monotheism for an abstract God acting in history, even unto the end of days, we have to accept that Kali is where time itself gets its name Kal, and it is time that is the grim reaper that turns our hair grey and ultimately casts us to the winds of entropy.

## 8. Shakti Cosmology in the Kali Yuga



We are entering the Kali Yuga - this is the age of science and apocalypse. Life is perennial, but we are damaging the Earth to the extent that our own survival prospects are being seriously undermined. We invent nuclear weapons and chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, we are devastating our natural ecosystems, causing a mass extinction of biodiversity and disrupting the climatic stability of the planet semi-permanently. This is criminal religious and selfish folly based on male views of nature as subservient, evil or a grist to be exploited.

A major reason for this are the very patriarchal religions that espouse this mind-sky view of the physical as distraction and in the case of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions of the idea that a desert God may scorch the Earth to triage of every living thing in the tumult of an apocalyptic end game which is really a product of our own folly.

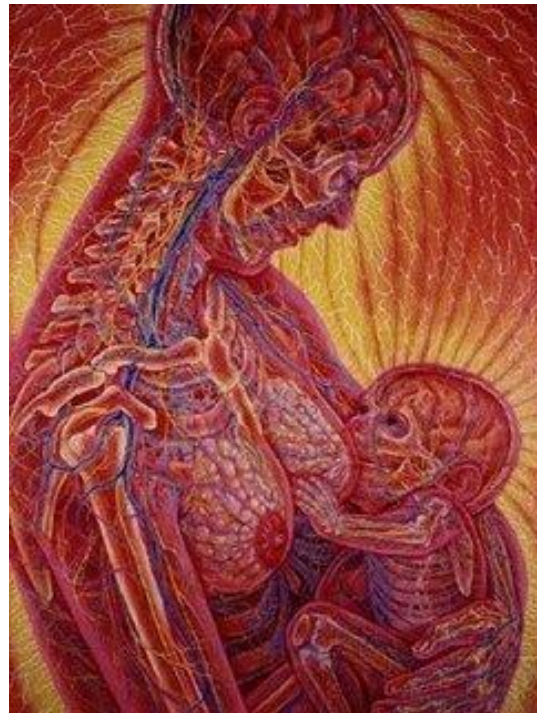
Science has lost her soul because we moved from a scorched Earth God to an age of reductionistic materialism with no ethical idea of how to synthesize and refertilize a sustainable world.

The Universe is the embodiment of Kali - kal 'time' - it is the process of creation and destruction lived out in real time as opposed to the timeless eternal of the space-time envelope.

This has deep resonances with the idea of Kali as creatrix, and yet destructress of the material realm, so that the history and future of the universe is the Kali Yuga in its full blown nemesis:

*Such in outline, but even more purposeless, more devoid of meaning is the world which science presents for our belief. Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That man is the product of causes that had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave, that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspirations, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins - all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy that rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. ... Brief and powerless is man's life, on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark ... (Bertrand Russell)*

The ultimate birth and fate of the universe are entirely destructive to life, but this is not a tragedy because life is resplendent on the cosmic equator - the tropic of Gaia. Indeed the big bang alpha and omega death are essential to create the complex universe with forces of nature making tissues and life possible at all, so we have to settle for the Kali condition as the best of all possible worlds even though the cosmic design may have her eating us all alive in the heat death.



Science is feminine, as Shakti and Kali is feminine, because it is the description of the embodiment of the existential condition, complete with its wild sexuality leading to individual mortality, and creation and destruction of life, through the passage of the generations, and the ultimate annihilation of all life in



the heat death or cosmic crunch and the awesome details of the scientific description, from the forces of nature to the genetic code.

This is not to suggest that the universe is ruled by a vengeful Neolithic Goddess, or that the physical universe is permeated by a vital feminine 'holy ghost' but that our existential description of reality, our respect for the physical and nature as sacred, rather than inert materials to be exploited, lacks the integrating view which makes sense of how all this awesome cosmological description leads to a verdant overflowing of sustainable natural life or a sense of the 'sap and dew' of human destiny to bring about the joyous perennial cosmology of living paradise on the cosmic equator.

The analytic aspects of good deductive science do not require a vitalistic myth to complete them but rather a new appreciation of the role we as sentient beings must needs play, since we are mortal and cannot carry our baggage with us when we go to do the one and only thing in this transient life that makes any sense at all - to leave the planet and on a wider scale the sentient universe in amore complete and better state than it was before we came along.

This is partly 'feminine' in aspect, just as the females of the species make the living flesh and blood covenant with the life process by giving birth to live young. It is also essential to a complete description of the cosmic Tao that the patriarchal view of reality involved in traditional religious thought and the analytic reductionistic mechanistic view of the scientific description be complemented by the feminine synthesizing aspects of the description arising from non-linear dynamics, the paradoxes of uncertainty and the wave-particle relationship, the nature of quantum entanglement, the emergent properties of quantum molecular systems, and the synthetic integrative properties of molecular biology, from molecular complexes and organelles, through cells, to tissues, organisms and ecosystems.

It is the tragedy of human history that men, in their fear of their own mortality, not giving birth to living beings themselves, have seized control of culture, and developed scorched Earth religions of fire and retribution, leading to an idea of a vengeful God acting in history that brings us to our own tumult and near destruction and a view of the physical universe as a kind of Newtonian clockwork mechanism freely available for human exploitation, or worse still nature as sexual evil and the slime of mortal imperfection.

Karma is not a predetermined, or moral destiny. Karma is the active quantum entanglement of uncertainty leading to the coincidences we find in the living world around us, which indicate the universe may be more consciously alive than we may think.





Swirling Dragons representing complementary processes of chaos and order in nature as represented in Taoist tests.

## 9. The Perennial Tao

### A: The Continuity and Diversity of Life

This section, is an outline of how, in the light of the scientific description of the universe, and what we know from our own subjective experience of reality, we can approach the 'spiritual' significance of our conscious incarnation, in terms of one central purpose, which is safeguarding and enriching the future diversity of life, on Earth, and in the universe at large, while embracing the freedom of the individual to experience the conscious condition creatively and autonomously, to the fullest degree possible.

The principle of the safeguarding and enriching the diversity of life is central, in keeping the relationship between the 'sap and dew' of the physical paramount for the passage of the generations and the diversity of ongoing life, while liberating conscious experience.

### B: Complementarity and Symmetry-breaking

This is consistent with the complementary relationship between the yin and yang receptive and creative aspects, of nature and consciousness, in the indescribable Tao, or way, of existence:

*The way that can be told is not the eternal way.  
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.  
The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.  
The named is the mother of ten thousand things.  
Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.  
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations.  
These two spring from the same source but differ in name;  
(Tao te Ching - Lao Tsu).*

In all of its critical manifestations, the chaos-cosmos is expressed in terms of complements, rather than absolutes. In the existential condition we have the complementarity between subjective consciousness and our physical embodiment. In the physics of the universe between wave and particle aspects of the quantum. In the biological realm between the female and male sexes. In the realm of dynamics, between chaos and order, and in the Prisoners' Dilemma, between cooperation and defection. These complementarities are the key to the ability of the cosmic condition to become manifest.

Associated with complementarity is the idea of symmetry-breaking of the complementarity into polarized aspects each of which is incomplete without the presence of the other. Thus, while mental phenomena are indivisible and subjective, physical phenomena are both objective and decomposable into the myriad manifestations of the physical world. Again while the wave aspect of reality is continuous and indivisible, the particle aspect is discrete and multiple. And in biology, while the ovum and its excitable membrane are continuous, the many sperm which try to fertilize it are discrete

competing motile packets of DNA. This is where the differences between the sexes become most profound.

In addition, the phenomenon of cosmic symmetry-breaking gives a complex polarization to the forces of nature, in which a single super-force becomes the four polarized forces we experience today, gravity, electromagnetism and the weak and strong (colour) forces; and in this polarization, the large scale structure of the expanding universe comes about, and the complexity of matter, from fundamental particles, through nucleons, to atomic nuclei, atoms, molecules and tissues, and hence the flowering of life, becomes possible.

Furthermore, symmetry-breaking between the biological sexes in animals, which in mammals gives rise to pregnancy, lactation and the birth and rearing of live young, leads to a central polarity. In human society, with its massive pregnancy and long term parenting is at an extreme of mammalian polarization. The strategic investments of the female and male sex, even though they are very different, the one based on long-term investment, and the other venture-risk competition, and each may challenge, or even contradict, that of the other. Nevertheless they are complementary, and human survival depends on the combined effect of both. In their perilous and unstable equilibrium, arises the catalytic stimulus for the emergence of human culture, and the explosion of runaway intelligence.

Human spiritual and religious traditions thus need to be founded on respect for the mutual interdependence of the sexes and the integrity of each, without resorting to attitudes of dominance - of mind over body, male over female, or God over Nature.

### C: Sexuality, Mortality, Diversity and Love

Intrinsic to the complementarity of the Tao of yin and yang is the fact that all life is sexual, and by being sexual, and possessing the endless variety which sexuality enables, sexual life becomes mortal, forsaking the absolute genetic selfishness of parthenogenesis. Fusion sex transmits only half the genes in each parent, rather than the whole genome. This altruism results in the endless variety of sexual beings, each with their own identity and genetic makeup, thus giving each a unique ability to resist epidemic disease, profoundly aiding the survival of the species. Sexuality and sexual transgression is thus not the cause of death, and our downfall from the grace of God, but the very principle which makes life's diversity possible.

All life is sexual and sexuality needs to be respected as the interactive foundation of the diversity of life. Bacteria have a form of pan-sexuality using viral and transposable elements, which transfer bacterial genes, and enable conjugation, even between differing species. Fungi have differing forms of conjugation and fusion sexuality which permit up to twenty different sexual mating types, and plants and animals are universally sexual through dyadic fusion sex. Although many plants and a few animal species are capable of vegetative, or parthenogenetic, reproduction, they depend on the generation of sexual variety whenever environmental stresses occur, occasionally even mating with related species.

The mammalian sexual condition is highly polarized as a result of pregnancy, live-birth and lactation, giving the female a principal reproductive investment in parenting and humans with massive pregnancy and long-term parental care are at an extreme of this polarization. The female reproductive investment strategy of long-term out-front sustainability must not be subjugated to the venture-risk exponentiating

reproductive strategy of human males and its association with male attempts to control culture and assert dominance through patriarchal religion.

Rather it is female reproductive choice of overt resource-bearing and/or covert genetic male sexual partners, and corresponding male genius in attracting female partners, which is the principal mediator of runaway human intelligence, despite a degree mutual mate choice also occurring in immediate relationship formation and falling-in-love. However, along with this manifest symmetry-breaking also comes a tacit need for acceptance of human polygyny, which, although it is often associated with patriarchal cultures, and male prerogatives, is fundamental to sexual symmetry-breaking. Polygyny is as much a product of female reproductive choice and selection of male suitors as it is an expression of the male strategy of sowing wild oats. Differences in the diversity of the X chromosome and autosomes across cultures, confirm the continuing prevalence of polygyny throughout human evolution, despite the religious ideal of monogamy being asserted in the Christian world on the basis of the Edenic myth of Adam and Eve - a mistaken conclusion, given the earlier mythological relationship of Adam with an all-too sexually liberated Lilith.

Sexuality is also the foundation of love, and love of the other, in partnership, parenting, kinship and comradeship. The ability to love is an emergent expression of the fulfillment of the spiritual quest grounded biologically in the altruism implicit in the sexual interconnectedness of all life. The capacity for love is an evolutionary endowment of the emotional repertoire of the mammalian brain, among other emotions, from fear and anger, through hate, to the chaotic unpredictability of humour, which enable us to relate to one another beyond the confines of genetic determinism.

The essential truth here is that, just as mind and body, or conscious spirit and physical form are complementary and symmetry-broken, so nature needs to be sacralized and respected as holy (whole) in completing the conscious, spiritual and religious quest for an unveiling, with the sexual foundation of the Tree of Life's perennial immortality across the generations. Only when nature and sex is respected as sacred in this way can a paradigm of sustainable life culture ensue for humanity, rather than the damnation and misadventure of hell fire and destruction.



Flesh of the Gods Teonanactl the magic mushroom, ancient mushroom stone, Maria Sabina the mushroom shamaness.

## D: Consciousness and the Transcendental

From birth to death, the only actual reality we experience is the subjective reality of conscious sentient existence. All our experience of the external world and one another comes about through regularities in our subjective conscious experience of reality. By contrast our experience of all aspects of the physical universe, and our relationships with other sentient beings, thus come about indirectly as a secondary effect of conscious experience.

Nevertheless we acknowledge that if we cut ourselves we bleed, and if we fall asleep, or are concussed, we may go into an unconscious state. Although we are subjective beings experiencing a subjective reality, we know that our continued survival depends on acceptance of the existence of the physical universe. In this way, subjective consciousness and the objective physical nature of our bodies and the universe around us, (as well as those we love and relate to), are fundamental complementary aspects of the totality of existence.

Despite the belief of many religious people in the existence of God, or gods and goddesses, or the afterlife, the only aspects of the universe we know to possess subjective consciousness of any kind are the biota. It is thus not God, but we ourselves that are uniquely at the sentient crest of the cosmic emergence, perhaps the critical and only way the universe is able experience itself in the conscious condition, giving additional impetus to the importance of the implicitly cosmic nature of sentient consciousness.

By contrast with the undeniability of our own consciousness, religions try to assert the necessity for belief in the godhead - because there is no verifiable evidence for it as such, so an affirmative act of belief, in the absence of real evidence, is necessary. If we are honest with ourselves, we would admit this fails the critical test of integrity in trust, in the same way pyramid schemes, confidence tricks, and other forms of fraud, fail the same test.

Nevertheless, since we do know we are subjectively conscious and that we are mortal beings in the sexual paradigm, we must needs take personal responsibility for this undeniable fact of reality, to leave the world a better place, because any other choice of action, from personal indulgence to psychopathic exploitation, is doomed to meaningless oblivion, in the inevitable event of our demise. This act of taking personal responsibility is the same act that all heroes and heroines, bodhisattvas, messiahs, shamans and sages of the spiritual traditions must take, and it is also the critical step to give our lives real meaning.

The ego is not the enemy of realization, nor is it intrinsically a selfish, grasping, delusory influence, but is an integral part of our mammalian emotional endowment, the dynamic manifestation of the life force, seeking the survival of the organism in the vagaries of a precarious environment. The suffering of the ego, which Buddhism draws attention to, without posing a creator God, is healed, not by renunciation of the world, but by acceptance of the ultimate altruism of sexual mortality, and understanding the fact that the only truly meaningful act we can perform, while alive in this world, is to work to improve the condition of sentient life, and the passage of the future generations of the diversity of life. This compassionate act of redemption is as real in the biological world as it can ever be, seen through a glass darkly, in the world of religious imperative and messianic salvation.

It is the biota in the universe which possess the capacity for sentient consciousness and thus are the crux and crucible and the antennae of cosmic consciousness. It is in the sentient biota that the capacity of the universe to understand itself comes to full climax. Our biological incarnation gives us the unique opportunity to witness and experience the awesome totality of conscious existence while we are alive in the incarnate condition. This free lunch gains its true meaning, and we gain our true peace, in giving back in turn to existence, and those that will follow us when we are gone, a world which is made better and more wholesome through the insights and good works we have performed in this life, to make the world a more bearable, habitable and sustainable sanctuary, for the generations to follow.

Rather than attempting to enter into the *mysterium tremendum* through assumptions and beliefs about supernatural deities, it is better to experience the inner depths of conscious existence first hand, through meditation, through our psychic and psychedelic co-species which have been used as sacraments of spiritual voyage and discovery by virtually every culture which has come upon them. Spiritual experiences gained first hand without any binding assumptions, doctrines or dogmas deserve greater trust and respect than any social system, however grandiose or apparently devoted to the moral welfare of humanity.

There may also be forms of compassionate dis-incarnate consciousness, with which our individual consciousness may co-integrate on the boundary of life and death, but there is no more evidence for reincarnation than there is for a creator God. Moreover, reincarnation of sentient beings, or even the desires and attachments they possess, violates fundamental principles of evolutionary biology, effectively subjugating the diversity of life to a narrow morality of reincarnating sentient beings, in which the evolutionary adaption of 'lesser' species are falsely imagined to carry a purely human social burden, and in which the diversity of living organisms is subjugated to the potentially endless recycling of a few morally corrupt sentient beings.

Nevertheless in eternal space-time, we are all part of the collective conscious process and the lives we lead and have led, when we come to pass away, continue to be an integral part of the ongoing manifestation of consciousness discovering itself in the universe, from alpha to omega, so the fear of death, and hunger for the afterlife, arise from a misplaced desire for the transient temporal, when the sentient universe is eternal in space-time.

This ties back to the cosmological evolution of the universe and the way sentient life becomes possible on the 'cosmic equator' mid-life in the universe's manifestation, where there are mature planets and galaxies, and the complexity of molecular life becomes possible over long evolutionary epochs. Even if biological life cannot survive the extreme conditions of the big-bang, or the heat death, or big crunch, these very extremes are necessary to make possible the kind of cosmic evolution that leads to the complexity of life on the cosmic equator. From the eternal space-time perspective the equator and poles are necessary features of a single, eternal, integrated manifestation, in which life, and sentient life, is as integral and fundamental a manifestation, and in no way futile.

#### E: The Prisoners' Dilemma and the Red Queen

Intrinsic to the complementary description of reality is the unstable cusp of the strategic prisoners' dilemma game between cooperation and defection, in which there is continual temptation to defect for higher payoffs, despite the relatively secure win-win of mutual cooperation, leading to double jeopardy



in mutual defection. This is where all manner of strategies of altruistic punishment, such as 'an eye for an eye', or 'tit-for-tat' as it is called in game theory, come into play.

The strategic interaction between parties is caught on the unstable cusp between these two, so that neither cooperation, nor defection can never entirely eliminated and the rule of order can never be complete. Neither the faithful wife, nor the scarlet whore can be eliminated no matter what dire penalties, such as stoning for adultery, men invent in the name of religion, or God, to assert control over women's sexual choices, because the rarity of either commands a king's bounty. Likewise neither the faithful husband, the philanderer, nor the potentate, can be eliminated from the game entirely.

Moreover, the ecological relationships, both between species and individuals, including those of predator and prey, and parasite and host, are driven by a prisoners' dilemma Red Queen evolutionary race, running while standing still, in which all species need to be sexual to avoid the extinction of an entire parthenogenetic clone line of individuals. Hence sexuality can compensate, in a single generation, for the altruism of contributing only a half of one's genes, by providing the individual variation that limits epidemic catastrophes which would completely wipe out a monoclonal species.

Although predators and parasites exploit their prey and hosts, each are also dependent on the other, to varying degrees, to avoid population boom and bust, and the likely extinctions that result from population explosions to the point of starvation, in the absence of predators and parasites. Parasites also depend on their hosts for their own survival. It is therefore difficult or impossible to define universal moral laws about killing, theft, coveting, adultery, or other forms of violent or non-violent exploitation of one individual, or species, by another, except in terms of its likely effect on the survival, in diversity, of the ecosystem as a whole.

Although the female human makes the principal reproductive investment in parenting, the emergence of human culture, and the flowering of intelligence, is catalyzed by a prisoners' dilemma Red-Queen race between the sexes, in which each has had to run, while standing still, to secure the reproductive favour of the other. Thus any spiritual or religious paths that advocate domination, sequestering or control by one sex over the other, even in the name of their best interests, is in root violation of nature as a cosmic principle.

## F: Religion and Oppression

Despite the higher values of compassion, and spiritual virtue, which devout followers place in their beliefs, established religions are social systems designed to shape the lives of their followers by manifest systems of control. Religion, by its very nature, (re-ligio - to bind together, islam - submission) binds the conscious mind from its autonomous freedom, while alive, to explore the depths of the cosmic abyss, which becomes manifest when we enter a state of repose, dream, or psychedelic, natural or mystical communion. Only in such states can we experience the disembodied cosmic 'self', many people witness in near-death and other white-light experiences.

Those who wish to discover the underlying nature of the cosmic subjective need to free themselves from all religious and scriptural imperatives, all doctrine and dogma, all fear of divine or social retribution, and all compulsions to believe, or obey God's will, and discover for themselves, with as few assumptions as possible, the nature of the abyss within.

Religions attempt to assert themselves, as imperatives, through several totalitarian manoeuvres. Firstly they expect one to believe under pain of taking God or al-Llah in vain if we don't believe. Secondly they assert that it is God's command that we obey him, depriving us of any choice in the matter. Thirdly religions try to convert through evangelical enticements, or coercive practices, like Islam's conversion by the sword. Fourthly religions try to invoke harsh, or even lethal penalties for apostasy, or recanting the faith, making it difficult or impossible to retreat. Fifthly, religions set out moral imperatives that must be followed, which confine the individual into a state of guilt and fear of transgression, and promote societies which punish and expose transgressors. Sixthly religions teach that the priests, mullahs, preachers and gurus know what is best for us all and deny our innate capacity to experience reality for ourselves. In virtually every religion the mystics who would experience spiritual unity in the first person, are repressed, punished or murdered. Seventhly religions of patriarchy set up dire punishments to control female sexual, legal and educative choices, to maintain control over female reproductive choice, and to ensure the expansion of the population of the believers, as part of a utopian aim of planetary control under the rule of God.

Religiosity is also found to have a significant genetic component, which although it may on some occasions trigger mystical experience, favours an individual's psychological need to believe in a higher power ordering their lives, and societies which become dominant over neighbouring cultures by imposing conservative morality, and punishment of defectors. Like the influence of patriarchy, the dominant controlling position of religions over the last four millennia, is liable to result in self-fulfilling genetic selection, undermining the capacity of both individuals and societies to pursue the unfolding of the conscious realm, free from coercive religious imperatives, and utopian designs.

For these reasons religions are the enemy of spiritual illumination, and stringent measures, equally effective to their own contrivances, are needed to keep religion from assuming diabolical control over our lives, and those of future generations.

#### G: Morality, Criminality and the Social Quality of Life

Morality is an emergent product of societies, in which individuals forsake personal advantage over others for the collective benefit of the group. Alexander's theory of the biology of morality asserts that morality arises as a way of reducing intra-social strife to gain greater capacity for inter-social competition and dominance. That is, moral societies can better survive onslaughts from their neighbours, because there is less internal strife caused by personal expedience, exploitation and corruption. The rise of kin altruism, mutualism, and reciprocal altruism in biological societies has a similar basis, which functions also in terms of individual genetic fitness.

There are thus no absolute standards of morality that we must abide by, and no absolute rights and wrongs. We are better served by learning from example from living ecosystems, which are sustainable over evolutionary time scales, even though they contain predators and prey, than allowing ourselves to be forced to commit to cultural moral imperatives which may be unsustainable long-term because they assert values which undermine natural viability. Control of female reproductive choice by violent punishment is an obvious example.

By the same token, attempts to crush criminality by dire, or deterrent, punishment, under the rule of law, is doomed to failure in the prisoners' dilemma game. Criminality is an integral part of the defection,

which the cusp of the game is centered upon, and is legitimate, for example as protest movements, parliamentary opposition, and whistle blowing, if society is to remain free. Criminal defection can be minimized only through investing in a just society, with a high degree of familial and social connectedness, so that violent anti-social behavior has a high cost, in loss of social respect and support, in the local networks of society.

Dire penalties, even public executions, in an unjust, coercive society, simply lead to an arms race of criminal turf wars, and ever more cut throat professional criminal military organizations, which then pose a threat to society, itself as great as the coercive forces of 'order', or utopian religion, attempting to dominate it.

## H: The Future of Western Religion

Can the Christian church survive as the central religious tradition of Western society? Is it worth saving and what compromises would have to be made for it to evolve into a genuine description of existential reality consistent with our scientific knowledge of the universe? Could the heritage of the Western tradition be reflowering the evolutionary tree of life and the reunion of female and male in protecting the passage of the generations of humanity and of all life's diversity? Isn't this our true destiny? This would mean a profound change at the very root of religion, about what redemption actually is and what the messianic quest is as a human vision quest in healing the existential condition.

Isn't God the Father and the Son hanging on the Cross seriously going to have to bite the dust? I see this as the only option - do or die. The Second Coming is simply a trap to ensure the continuity of a false teaching in perpetuity. Generally it's better to save the patient than bury a corpse before its truly dead. But only if the patient is still alive and kicking, not a pagan Man-God idol. It is a fallacy - a travesty of reality - to repeat the Nicene Creed, to drink Jesus' soma and sangre as a rite of human sacrifice, or to think of Jesus as the only begotten Son of God who will return on a white horse in the Day of Judgment.

Jesus and his teachings are the act of an individual human genius reinterpreting the diverse religions of his day, from the Essene, Pharisee and Sadducee forms of Judaism, through wandering as a 'Rabbi' seeking the lost sheep of Israel, to the frank fertility worship of the countryside and adjacent lands such as resurgent Edomite Nabatea - in the form of his relationship with the women, supported our of their very substance, anointed by a woman ostensibly to his doom, whose name would always be spoken, and lamented by the women when the men scattered like lost sheep, to his doom and in the heady Dionysian miraculous dread of his deeds.

The capacity of Christianity to spread like wildfire through the pagan world resulted strongly from the cross-cultural nature of his mission integrating the God acting in history traditions of Jewish and Zoroastrian apocalyptic thought contrasting darkly with the chaos of the foolish shepherd wreaking social havoc, and the lavish Tammuz-Adonis like heroic mission of the women, tax collectors and gentiles and of his anointing to his doom.

A true understanding can come only when we neither conflate his image into the sky as a pagan Man-God, nor strip him down to leather thongs, in reducing him to a mere parochial zealot from Keneret but appreciate the paradoxical depths of many of his source sayings, particularly those in Thomas and

appreciate the cultural ingenuity underlying his mission even to the point of turning the tables and the very carefully planned crucifixion sequence.

Deifying Jesus as some pagan demi-god without whose blood there is no remission from sin, sacrificed by his filicidal Father as his only begotten Son, while endlessly awaiting the second coming of a feudal commander on a white horse is an insult to his ingenuity, his humanity, and his compassion. As a human innovator, Jesus deserves as major a recognition in advancing the understanding of cultural religious transformation as Albert Einstein has in relativity and quantum theory, but not at the expense of our understanding and relationship with the natural world.

Can you really redeem the inner essence while the outer dogmas are unflinching fallacies?

How is this honest to the people and how is it true to the nature of the universe?

The only doctrine I can afford to trust is first person experience. We are the eyes and ears of the sentient universe, through which it comes to know itself, no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face, knowing also as we are known. I've wandered India as a Sadhu, taken initiations with renowned Tibetan lamas now long dead, kept the way of the Tao, and partaken from the sources of the worlds most potent visionary power plants from the Amazon jungle to the Mexican deserts. My sacrament of holy communion is a magic mushroom and my covenant of faith is to the diversity of life.

Better the 'flesh of the gods' in a truly visionary fungus than the empty vessel of cannibalistic blood and guts of an ancient murder victim and a pact with a demiurge who has failed for two thousand years to return to reestablish a totalitarian feudal empire!

Now it's over to us to do the good thing and make the guardianship of the universe and its conscious life forms a living reality.

It's us who have to make the journey across the Styx now and bring back the bundle of life.

Isn't the entire destiny of the Biblical tradition to re-flower the Tree of Life lost in the Fall?

Isn't this what the future generations of humanity need more than anything else?

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