

Danijel Turina

Possibility of the new



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“No” to atheism

Of skeptics and skepticism

Recently I took notice of quite a number of books and propagandistic movies with atheist thematic, and it's difficult for me to say which surprises me more: the level of argumentation or the intended audience.

Regardless of the possible causes, the fact that the atheist ideologies create controversy is a strong indicator of the level of philosophical thought and spiritual spectrum of the population. This is why I feel the need to write down my answers to the atheist arguments, and also to express my thoughts about the rational basis of worldviews that take the existence of God as a fact, not a hypothesis.

Yes, I understand how people of a certain profile might see the existence of God as a questionable, or even absurd hypothesis, but to a certain number of people so is evolution. To some, Moon landing is a questionable or absurd hypothesis. A population's opinion on this or that idea often says more about that population than about the idea itself.

Once I happened to find myself in the company of specimens who never heard about the priority of arithmetic operations, and so the 30 of them or so attempted to convince me that $2+3*5=25$, while I stated that the correct result is 17. Since I refused to change my mind, they called me stubborn and resistant to the truth; they even showed me a calculator that showed 25. It took place quite a few years ago, and happened to be a point in which I had a specific form of "enlightenment" - that the number of people making a certain claim is completely irrelevant, and their mutual assurance and numbers mean nothing. It is quite possible for *everybody* to believe the same thing and for all of them to be wrong, unless they

know how to perform arithmetic correctly. One person who knows maths can be opposed to them all and have the correct answer, and the truth is in no way “in the middle”. There's no compromise, no democracy in the matters of truth. The truth lies with knowledge, it's not something you can establish with a majority of votes. The truth is where the deepest perception is combined with the deepest understanding, and where shallow perception is combined with shallow understanding, and the result presented via a thick layer of demagoguery, the result is usually horrible to behold.

But I digress; let's go back to our “skeptics”, the ideologues of atheism and soldiers of science. I will attempt to express the essence of their arguments.

1) Religion makes claims that are too specific for the offered evidence; they make very detailed claims about heaven, hell and similar things, which all lie outside the sphere the skeptics consider accessible to human experience, and therefore they consider all the offered evidence invalid – either fabrications or delusions.

2) The argument of unified experiential basis, according to which all humans have essentially identical experiential basis and perceptive range, and if some of the believers claim to have communicated with God, it's automatically interpreted as proof of that person's mental insanity, because if it were possible to communicate with God, everybody could do it.

3) There are thousands of God-concepts in circulation, and most people are atheists regarding $n-1$ God concepts. The only difference between believers and atheists is that the atheists are so regarding all n God concepts, ie. the Christians don't believe in Allah, Krishna, Thor and Zeus, and atheists don't believe in Allah, Krishna, Thor, Zeus and Jesus.

4) Religion is inherently fraudulent, a form of sociological manipulation that uses imaginary beliefs to place the religious

officials in the position of power. Basically, they say religion is what the first thief sold to the first fool.

5) Religions are a source of ethical and moral corruption and need to be rejected on high moral grounds. Also, they stimulate irrationality, violence towards the minorities, contempt for women etc., which is all opposed to a healthy and natural sense of morality, which would guide mankind if not for the religion, with superior results.

All of the above arguments are used in various degree by the agnostics, skeptics and atheists, but in particular discussions some are more pronounced than others.

It is important to take notice of the fact that those arguments are a response to the religious dimwits – the American Christians and the Muslim fanatics, above all. The arguments used are designed to target that level of religious “thought”; therefore, when some desert idiots make a claim that the one who blows himself up with a bomb inside a bus full of people will go to a heaven where he will fuck 72 virgins for all eternity, the reaction of the western humanist population can be anticipated. Some of them will say it's morally wrong, some will say it's irrational to believe in that kind of heaven, and others will ask where do they come up with all those details – why 72 virgins and not 71 or 73. So that is essentially the skeptical response to the religious lunatics.

The problem with this type of reasoning arises when its adherents lose sight of the scope of its usefulness. Most of those arguments are in their essence demagoguery that uses straw-man argument to portray their opponents as caricature that falls at the slightest hint of criticism. According to those arguments, religion is an absurd thing that requires belief in a talking snake or a heaven with 72 virgins per suicide bomber, and if a minimum of skepticism is

applied the whole thing must be rejected as sheer folly.

What I find particularly unpleasant about this kind of demagoguery is that it consists of sound-bites that sound well on TV, but to disprove such statements one needs to go deeper into the matters and think about them with more seriousness and finesse, which is significantly less televisual, and thus it is possible to come to a misapprehension about the strength of the response. It is possible to refute those arguments, yes, but not with sound bites. In fact, sound bites make a form of fast food that is rather bad for one's mental health. With that in mind, I will now proceed to answer those arguments.

1) *The complaint about claims that are too specific for the level of evidence offered* does not differ significantly from the arguments used by another kind of skeptics, the 9/11 conspiracy theorists¹, or Moon landing conspiracy theorists², or those who claim that the theory of evolution makes claims that are too specific for the level of evidence on display. Essentially, a question along the lines of “do you really think us gullible enough to believe a claim x based on evidence y?” is irrelevant and worthless as an argument, since it doesn't refute the offered evidence. If one refuses to accept the offered evidence, he can eternally remain skeptical of anything, and to refuse accepting evidence is a time tried way of defending indefensible claims and worldviews, essentially a form of sticking fingers in one's ears and singing “la la la...”. A method of selective acceptance of evidence based on personal preference, regardless of the strength of the actual evidence, is inherently dishonest and those who use it cannot claim to be on the side of reason. For instance, very solid scientific evidence was provided for the parapsychological phenomena in the '70s, and yet there's some magician by the name of Randi who offers a million dollars for proof of parapsychological phenomena, under his own terms of

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#No_plane_theories

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon_landing_conspiracy_theories

course¹. Having a million of reasons for not seeing evidence, it is quite expected that you will manage not to see it, and I therefore make a prediction that this fellow would keep his money even if a Darth Vader comes to Force-choke him for his regrettable lack of faith. Besides, the concept of believing in something only when someone proves it to you personally is arrogant beyond belief. Nobody had to prove *me* that he landed on the Moon, and especially didn't have to land on the Moon in answer to my challenge. Also, the biological organisms didn't have to evolve on my challenge, so that I would believe in evolution. It's just that I examined the credible evidence offered by other people, and based upon examination I chose to accept this evidence. To offer a million dollars for someone to prove a parapsychological phenomenon to you might sound like an authentic statement of skepticism, but if one offered you a million dollars to prove that the Earth is round, you'd call him an idiot, and rightly so. But you'll never get him to admit the fallacy of his method, so he will in his mind remain the undisputed champion of truth and reason, simply because he's powerfully motivated to remain so. This is the exact reason why it is unrealistic to expect any kind of argument to be convincing the skeptics into changing their minds. A mind is not changed by the evidence, but by a decision to accept the evidence. This needs to be had in mind when the actual weight of evidence is considered. Acceptability of evidence to a skeptic is no measure of its validity, because skepticism, in itself, is not a sufficient qualification for assessing the actual weight of evidence. One needs to be both qualified and honest, and those qualities, I'm afraid, are not widespread among those who wave the flag of skepticism, and there I must invoke my experience with the 2+3*5 crowd, who were skeptical of my explanation and results, and remained so in spite of all offered evidence. The problem, obviously, wasn't with the evidence.

If it is possible to have a group of people who doubt something

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Randi_Educational_Foundation#The_One_Million_Dollar_Paranormal_Challenge

from the sphere of simple primary school arithmetic, and do so in the face of evidence and provided theoretical explanation of the correct procedure, it is obvious that the problems increase exponentially as we venture into the fields that are less accessible, tangible and verifiable to the majority. That invariably takes place as malicious or incompetent people express their opinion about something from the realm of science or technology, and it is a mistake to think that the problems of proving something in the transcendental sphere are that much greater, because something from the sphere of high science can only be proved to another scientist from the same field, because the knowledge required for understanding something is usually too specialized to be understandable to those without a doctorate in the field. Of course, one can imagine how some people could make a conspiracy theory about it and say that all the scientists from a certain field are members of a conspiracy with the purpose of lying to the general public which cannot independently verify their claims, and it ultimately comes either to trust, or to getting the qualifications required for understanding, and risk being called a co-conspirator, because it's a recursive thing – as soon as you accept the evidence, those not accepting the evidence will disregard your opinion and attempt to disqualify you. That's why one of the main requirements for scientific skepticism is skepticism towards one's own beliefs – you need to think “everything I believe can be wrong”, not just “everything other people believe is wrong until I say otherwise”. But let us return to the concept of transcendental experience: if one a priori refuses to accept experience of the transcendental as a possibility, he can question absolutely anything from the field as too specific for the level of evidence offered, simply because the evidence “doesn't make sense” to him, and because it doesn't make sense to *him*, it must be the work of lunatics, deceivers and the gullible. If he refuses every single bit of evidence on the matter, how can one speak of volumes of evidence and knowledge from the field? Again, this is exactly the same argumentation that the conspiracy theorists use to refute, among other things, the scientific facts. The claim that “there is no evidence” must therefore be interpreted as “I do not accept the offered evidence”.

The fact that evidence or witnesses are rejected doesn't mean they are bad. I invoke the example of various "skeptics" refusing to accept the video recordings of planes crashing into WTC and statements of the astronauts who landed on the Moon. Someone doesn't accept it, big deal. It's still there, it's valid, it's all true. Not accepting it just makes you a fool. You can be a fool and claim that Armstrong and Aldrin didn't go to the Moon and it's all works of liars and crazy people who try to convince honest people of some obvious nonsense such as men walking on the Moon, and we all know it's impossible. You can make such claims, but you cannot do it and claim intellectual honesty. Furthermore, if one doubts Moon landings, he will of course refuse all evidence provided by Moon landing as fake, as "claims too specific for the level of provided evidence" - if you doubt they went there, of course you're going to doubt the details such as the texture and color of Moon dust and the feeling of reduced gravity. Similarly, one cannot simply dismiss the spiritual experiences of the saints and mystics, or the testimony of the people who were reanimated from near-death, and say that there "must" be a "rational" explanation for all that (as if the obvious explanation was somehow irrational) and proceed to make claims about lack of evidence. I mean, one can make such claims, but I can as easily dismiss them. To say that there is no evidence for the existence of God is like saying there's no evidence for evolution, and the motivation for dismissing evidence is the same, it's just that people that come from different worldviews choose to dismiss different things, depending on which body of evidence happens to be in opposition to their respective worldview.

2) *The unified experiential basis argument* is based on the recognition of the intellectual and sensory limitations of the human species, but those limitations aren't universal or insurmountable. On one hand, it is possible to make amplifiers for the intellect (computers) and the senses (all kinds of scientific gadgetry from microscopes to telescopes) in an attempt to get around some of those limitations. Also, what is beyond the capabilities of an untrained mind, is not necessarily beyond a trained one. An

untrained man can look at the data obtained in the detection chamber of a particle accelerator and understand nothing, but an educated physicist can understand a great deal, in fact he can see irrefutable evidence where an untrained man sees no sensible information. Also, throughout the history people watched apples fall from trees and it didn't make them any smarter, but Isaac Newton deduced many things about gravity and inertia, enough so to solve the main problems of movement of the celestial bodies. So recognition of the patterns in the apparent chaos isn't some universal quality inherent to being human, but something that requires extensive development of intellectual faculties, sometimes very narrowly focused, enough so that it is accessible only to the people of much higher than average intelligence and education that only a few possess. Also, one needs to acquire the terminological and intellectual apparatus that makes it possible to communicate one's specific ideas with the others of the same level of proficiency. The others might witness a conversation between physicists and come to a conclusion that they are madmen who talk about nonsensical and nonexistent matters, such as Universe coming into existence by the cooling of cream cheese and glue¹. Who in his right mind could believe such a thing; it makes as much sense as the existence of pink unicorns. The same goes for the invisible entities that exist in 11 dimensions and their resonance causes all material phenomena². What's next, music of the spheres? Basically, if you can't demonstrate a Higgs boson on demand, don't require demonstration of God on demand.

So the criterion of the unified perceptive and experiential basis is not applicable because it is easy to demonstrate great difference in both perceptive and experiential basis between the trained experts and general population. By analogy, it is not unreasonable to assume the existence of similar differences in spiritual perception, and to interpret a certain percentage of authentic spiritual

1 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quark_\(cheese\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quark_(cheese))

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quark>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gluon>

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superstring_theory

phenomena in this light. To say that all who experienced God are nuts is exactly the same as saying that all, who think that rocks fall from the sky, or that men can fly or land on the Moon, are nuts. To call someone crazy or a fraud, with no better reason than his testimony contradicting your theoretical model, is rude and intellectually dishonest. That doesn't say that there are no nutters who claim spiritual experience. They are legion, but so are fake scientists.

3) *The number of the theological concepts* is far smaller than the number of the symbols that attempt to communicate them. If, in the tangible realm, we have a multitude of words for the simple objects such as an apple, a rock or a cloud, depending on the language and culture perceiving those objects, then it is clear that there can be many different linguistic or intellectual structures that attempt to describe an essentially small number of the actual phenomena. When we thus abstract the interpretation layer from the experience layer, we end up with a reduced number of the distinct theological concepts, and not all of them are contradictory, but often relate to the various aspects of reality, with only some of them obviously wrong and fabricated. It is to be expected, however, that the vast majority of the theological concepts are merely some kind of a primitive interpretation of the spiritual realities, because people managed to correctly perceive the physical world and its phenomena for eons, and yet only a few centuries ago they managed to come up with the principles of electricity, magnetism, gravity and nature of light. Before that, they had some silly interpretation, in spite of everything being based on an essentially correct perception. It is therefore to be expected that in the spiritual realm, too, there is authentic perception, but the layer of interpretation isn't scientifically sound and the sphere of spirituality abounds with poor models, similar by analogy to the Ptolemaic model of astronomy, and “brilliant” ideas such as phlogiston and impetus. We therefore need to separate perception from the model that attempts to explain it. The fact that the stone-age men didn't know about gravity and inertia doesn't mean that they didn't know that the rocks fall down. They just

didn't have a good theoretical model that would explain their experiences. It is therefore possible to be skeptical towards the interpretations, while accepting the validity of the experience.

4) *The institutionalized religion is indeed often an instrument of manipulation and is fraudulent to a great extent.* On the other hand, there are many structures of motivation in the sphere of religion, ranging from the desire for attaining transcendence to the desire for robbing and controlling people. One needs to differentiate between those.

5) *The religions are more likely an instrument and a consequence, rather than a cause of moral corruption.* If one hates the gays, it's simpler for him to say that God hates the gays and that they need to be killed because the Bible says so, than to claim his hatred as a personal one, founded solely in his personal qualities. It is therefore a form of generalization, a projection of one's own qualities onto a larger entity, according to the premise that the larger the crowd making a claim, or greater the authority making the claim, the more likely it is for the claim to be true, thus masking the personal desires of an individual. Sure, there is a lot of inertia in any system, but it's more of a problem of tradition than it is of religion. Even without religion, there are traditions which contain morally disastrous customs, from female circumcision to abuse of the weaker groups and individuals. Religions have only sanctioned such horrid customs and given them a "divine mandate". Religions, in that sense, really are a part of the problem, but the problem itself has its origin in the nature of human society and in the human psyche, which is far from being inherently moral and good. Humans are far from being the good beings that were somehow corrupted by religion into becoming the perverted bigots they are now. More likely, they are the perverted bigots who invented religion, so that when they kill whomever they like killing and abuse whomever they feel like abusing, they can feel morally justified and divinely sanctioned about it. The majority of religious rules are in fact sanctions of the socially acceptable behavior of

their time. As human ethics evolved, so did the religious edicts. The religion is therefore primarily a reflection of the human ethical concepts, and the fact is that people modify their religious beliefs when the religiously sanctioned ethics start to diverge from the contemporary social mores, so when it's no longer acceptable to stone an adulteress, but to solve the issue by divorce, the outdated religious rules are ignored. On the other hand, when one group wants to indulge in acts of violence over another, it will do that regardless of whether it can count on the sanction of religious scripture or not. For instance, when the skinheads feel like beating up the gays, they'll say that God hates the gays and that the Bible says so. But they will also beat people up if they listen to the kind of music they don't approve of, or if they are the fans of a soccer team they don't approve of, in spite of the fact that the Bible doesn't cover any of that. If someone feels like beating up his wife, he'll surely find some rationalization for it, religious or otherwise, and invoking religion to rationalize one's own choices is a transparent tactic. However, it is true that the inertia of social mores and religious rules causes a great many people to feel inhibited and frustrated, and it is in that sense true that religion causes many problems.

Of science and scientism

When I look at the ideologies in circulation and their adherents, in 90% of the cases I find myself siding with the atheists against the believers, because the believers tend to spew such blatant nonsense, and believe in things that are so opposed to truth and reason, that they really give me no choice but to side with anything that defends truth and reason from them.

Let us use the example of the American creationists, who talk about dinosaur fossils 3000 years old, Earth as 6000 years old, who believe in the literal accuracy of the Bible (which is by all criteria highly questionable), and on the other hand they consider evolution to be an unproven theory, where they fail to understand the meaning of the word “theory” in the scientific context. That's not a discussion between atheism and theism, it's a discussion between a sheepherder variety of Talibanism and science. When I see someone seriously questioning things such as the evolution, and when I see how deeply the various sheepherder ideologies infiltrated the very top of politics, where public opinion and educational curriculum are formed, I am filled with dread and I instantly remember the fools from Africa who attempt to cure AIDS with garlic and sex with virgins, because they consider it a viable alternative to the western science. It's a bloody disaster. There is really no difference between the American creationists and the African witch doctors. There is a vast reservoir of spiritual darkness in America, almost as bad as the one in Africa.

In a discussion with such ideologies I therefore almost without reservation side with the atheists who oppose them. The arguments used to confront such belief systems are quite appropriate for the circumstances, and only rarely are the problems of the other side revealed, the problems of the atheist ideology that presents itself as

scientific and enlightening.

The problem arises when science is presented not as truth, but as the totality of all truth. That has been the problem with the scientists and the apologists of science ever since the age of enlightenment, which is the reason why science is in fact inseparable from a specific, immensely arrogant ideology of scientism.¹ Scientism says that there is science on one side, and a bunch of nonsense and superstition on the other. Its adherents are often very smart people, such as Antoine Lavoisier, and their problem is not that they are dumb, because they are quite capable of understanding complex things, but that they hold a conviction that outside of what they are able to understand there is no truth of any kind; only ignorance, lies and senselessness, and that they, the scientists, are the bearers of the light of knowledge, sense and order. That conviction can sometimes produce funny results, as in the instance where the very Lavoisier stated that no rocks can fall from the sky because there are no rocks in the sky, with all of the contemporary astronomers agreeing, accepting the position of Newton on the subject, who stated that there can be no small objects in the interplanetary space. Having heard such a verdict of the scientific community, the custodians of the museums hurried to dispose of their “obviously fake” meteorite collections, which is the reason why the museums don't have meteorite samples predating the 1790. That's the result of the belief that there is no truth outside science. Certainly, the scientific understanding of meteorites evolved greatly after the year of 1803, when a huge meteor shower counting over 2000 objects struck the city of L'Aigle, shaking the French academy of science from the conviction that the concept of meteorites belongs to the superstitious, pre-scientific past. The museums then renewed their practice of collecting meteorite samples, without fear of being ridiculed by the scientific establishment.²

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientism>

2 http://www.mysteriousnewzealand.com/featurearticles/featart_meteorites.html

The thing with science is that it's not the totality of all truth. If anything, it's the totality of the data we managed to accumulate and verify so far, and the models that interpret the data, that haven't yet been disproved. Quite often, science is merely an interpretation of a local phenomenon. For instance, Newton's celestial mechanics are quite a good approximation, as long as we can safely assume that the spacetime is Euclidean. If we attempt to use the classic mechanics to perform calculus in the curved spacetime, for instance in the vicinity of a very massive object, it will yield incorrect results. This is why the Newtonian mechanics historically gave accurate predictions for all the planets in the Solar system except for Mercury. That is because Mercury is close enough to the Sun, whose mass curves the spacetime, so that in its vicinity the values deviate from the Euclidean assumptions used by the classic mechanics. Before Einstein, it was impossible to either understand this deviation or to provide the correct predictions¹, because in order to do that, calculus needed to be performed on a manifold, and not in the Euclidean space. Does that mean the observed deviations of Mercury's orbit should have been ignored? Should it have been discarded as hallucination, fraud or folly?

Such examples provide us with a historic lesson about the necessity of accepting the observations that oppose the official scientific interpretation. Even when the scientific model is locally valid, giving accurate predictions, one must have in mind that discoveries are possible, that will provide a different perspective for those local events, such as for instance the general relativity which provides a wider perspective in which the Newtonian mechanics play an important role – that of an approximation of the relativistic mechanics for the cases of negligible curvature of spacetime.

If science performs its observation locally, within a limited scope, it is quite possible for it to do everything right and still miss

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tests_of_general_relativity#Perihelion_precession_of_Mercury

significant parts of reality, not unlike the supposedly nonexistent rocks in the sky.

That's not a problem with science. There's nothing wrong with science, either as a principle or as a methodology. The problem are the scientists (as in “adherent of scientism”, not as “practitioner of science”) and their arrogant assumption, which always remained that the current result of the applied scientific method is in fact the model which completely explains the totality of reality, leaving only a few fine details to solve. That is not the case only with scientism, it's a problem of human psychology. In the first century b.c. Sextus Julius Frontinus gloriously proclaimed that all inventions had reached their limits and that he doesn't see any room for significant improvement.¹

What does that mean, in practice? One can of course hardly expect scientific “breakthroughs” that will prove the biblical creationism, according to which Earth is 6000 years old, and dinosaurs 3000. It is certain that the theory of evolution will remain as fact in spite of any further discoveries. The place where I would expect significant developments are the places where science is “thin”, in the fields of parapsychology, spiritual phenomena such as the visions of God, near death experiences and the like. Those are the “stones in the sky” of today, which, according to scientism, have no place being there, and if any evidence is presented, we should all stick our fingers in our ears and sing “la la la” until it goes away, because it's all the work of kooks and crooks. Therein lies my objection directed at Dawkins and company: from the fact that science disproves the foolish religious models, they conclude that science would in a similar manner disprove everything else in the sphere of religion. That is not so. However, the problem with the sphere of religion is that it resides in something of a proto-scientific phase of development, like physics before Newton, or, more accurately, in ancient Greece. A great many things could be observed, but the available models didn't really tread water. The

1 <http://www.etni.org.il/quotes/predictions.htm>

way forward wasn't in the direction of saying that it's all worthless drivel that needs to be discarded, but by acknowledging the observations and yet making a better model. The history of science consists exactly of the situations where observation was in a better state than interpretation, which created an intellectual pressure towards forming the better models. That's how the Newtonian mechanics and optics came to be, as well as Darwin's theory of evolution, Einstein's relativity, and in fact anything of any value that exists in the sphere of science. The greatest error of scientism is to rationalize or ignore things that fail to fit nicely inside the drawers of the currently accepted model.

The thing that pisses me off about the materialists and their scientific worldview is that they keep trying to force a square peg into a round hole, and when that doesn't work, they blame the peg. In translation, when someone perceives something that doesn't fit inside their model, then he has to be either a kook or a crook, but their model cannot ever be at fault. If someone says that he saw rocks fall from the sky, he's nuts. If he brings a meteorite as proof, it must be forgery, because there just aren't any rocks up there, so how can there be actual and valid evidence? If there is, there really isn't.

There are thousands of NDE witnesses with experiences for which the only rational explanation is that the human soul survives the death of the physical body and is able to independently experience both the physical and the spiritual world, and then reconnect with the physical body upon reanimation, to take some limited form of memory into the physical experience. There are thousands of spiritual persons – yogis, saints and mystics – who bear witness about God and the spiritual world, and the materialists try to force them into the materialistic paradigm like a square peg into a round hole, inflicting upon them a grave injustice with offensive characterizations that portray them all as either madmen or deceivers, just so that their endangered materialistic worldview could be kept afloat. Those people are neither crazy nor are they

liars, and neither were the people who bore witness of the existence of meteorites in times when the French academy considered it all either superstitious, delusional or fraudulent. I am afraid that the materialists need to have a sizable chunk of heavenly rock fall on their thick skulls before they are forced to accept the facts as such, and rework their theories accordingly, instead of trying to force the facts into an unsuitable paradigm and slander the witnesses.

In my opinion, the science will at some point be forced to accept that the material existence is only a local phenomenon, valid within a certain range of boundary conditions and approximations, but until then may God help everyone survive their arrogant conceit.

The origins of the Western civilization and scientific thought

In previous two chapters I dealt with the arguments of the modern atheists, as well as the scientism as a worldview from which they, as the critics of religion, originate and which is the basis of their arguments.

That leaves the open question of sustainability of both atheism and religion in the context of modern civilization and the current state of scientific progress and social order.

Atheism, or a belief that there are no gods, is by no means a new idea. The atheistic concepts appear in ancient Greece (Diagoras, Democritus, Epicurus) and ancient India (Carvaka), but atheism was not a credible or defensible worldview in antiquity, because the theistic systems gave a much more convincing interpretation of reality. By removing the concept of gods, atheism was left at odds trying to explain the origin and functioning of the world, the origin and nature of life, as well as human consciousness and spiritual experience. The atheists always invoked accident, chaos and automatism of the natural laws as answers, but compared to the answers given by the religions, that sounded exactly like a collection of vague cop-outs that it was, because the atheists lacked answers to almost all questions. Whatever a man asked them, their answer was that it was either accidental, or a result of natural laws, and when one asked where did the laws of nature come from, and how come that the experimental demonstration of chance and accident produces only chaos and reduces meaningful to meaningless, while the nature abounds with examples of order, meaning and harmony, the atheists were unable to provide an answer, which is why atheism, throughout history, played the role

of a marginal, irrational worldview advocated by the fanatics who oppose facts and reason. Interestingly, that seems to be the niche that is presently occupied by the religious fundamentalists who believe in the literal accuracy of the creationist myths.

Interestingly, it was the Catholic church in Europe who initiated a direction of thought that eventually elevated atheism to the position of an intellectually sustainable worldview, for the first time in history. If you look closely, the humanism, enlightenment and scientism are the exclusive product of the European, Catholic civilization. Nothing similar was produced in either Byzantium, Persia, India, China or the Islamic world. The rudiments of scientific thought existed in many places, but they never evolved past the point of Europe in times of the ancient Rome – there were the technological inventions such as the printing press, gunpowder, paper money and what not, but the technology was essentially of the same order as in the ancient Greece and Rome, where they had even the complex geared mechanisms. That is the phase of development that was independently reached in several parts of the world, but the specific intellectual explosion that created the intellectual apparatus that places such efforts within a greater system of dealing with inventions and information, that is unique to the Catholic western civilization, and wasn't repeated anywhere else in the world.

The scientific thought is usually traced back to the renaissance, to the times of the Medici, as if renaissance by some miracle arose from the dark ages, and was followed by humanism, enlightenment and space age.

Thinking some more from that point, I came to a conclusion that the transition from a dark religious swamp, as people imagine the backward times of the Christian dark ages, into such an extreme opposite, could be possible only if the Christian civilization itself bore a seed of transformation in its core; a seed of rationality that fell on fertile ground at some point, and sprouted into the scientific

thought.

I'm afraid that the Catholic church was unjustly slandered during the age of enlightenment, which is the reason why people fail to understand its position and inner turmoils throughout the history, that gave birth to the modern science. The Catholic church was from its beginnings wrought with internal conflicts, and what people fail to understand is that the Catholic version of Christianity is not merely religion, meaning faith based on the Bible as a “holy scripture”. The Catholic church started as an official religion of the Western Roman Empire. If you want to understand what that means, I'm afraid you'll have to read a couple of thousands of pages of St. Augustine, because it would be otherwise difficult or even impossible to understand the fires that shaped and tempered the Catholic philosophy. What people usually imagine is something along the lines of Tertulian, who said that he believes because he believes, in spite of reason, by an irrational and emotional/spiritual act of accepting the faith; but the Catholic theology was not built on Tertulian. It was built by the intellectual giants such as Jerome, Origen and Augustine.

The fundamental difference between Tertulian and Augustine is that Tertulian considers something to be true because his faith tells him so, while Augustine believes because he thinks it is true. Tertulian despises the Greek philosophers – Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Origen and Augustine on the other hand wove a great deal of Greek philosophy into their thoughts; especially Plato. Augustine's personal philosophy was formed under the influence of Stoicism, Platonism, Neo-platonism, Vergil, Cicero and Aristotle, as well as his personal worldview conflict of the conversion from Manichaeism to Christianity. Augustine believes because it is true. He found his faith by searching for the greater truth.

Augustine had the last word in the philosophy of antiquity, he formulated the mainstream Christian philosophy and set the

foundations of what is to be known as the core of the Christian medieval thought. On one hand that is the orientation away from the physical and towards the spiritual, where, according to Augustine, reside all the good things, and from the body come only vice and temptation, which is in agreement with the teachings of St. Paul. According to this philosophy, the world is the valley of the tears, a place of temptation and vice, and God's grace alone is the cause of salvation and light that guides us into the next world, into the eternity that follows transience, and where we are to put all our hopes.

In all fields, from the concept of righteous war, ways of tutoring students, ways to govern a state, salvation of the soul, to intellectual evaluation and intuitive knowing, Augustine made such a profound mark upon the Western civilization, that his thoughts are the implicitly implied premises in all that surrounds us. It's just that their source was forgotten with the passage of time. It is his theological position on the absolute authority of the truth in evaluation of all things that predestined the Western Christianity for the later emergence and explosion of science. Augustine doesn't accept the Bible because it's the Bible, but because he thinks it is true. He thinks it's a collection of texts inspired by God in order to guide human conscience, thought and faith over the centuries. He doesn't subscribe to the naïve Protestant ideas about Bible being “the word of God”, but instead thinks that the scripture has been inspired by God and is useful for spiritual education. That's the part that's assumed to be beyond question, and whether something is factually correct, or it's a metaphor that is meant to teach men the spiritual truths, that is considered by Augustine to be secondary. He is aware that Jesus' speech contains parables and metaphors, and so when Jesus speaks of a sower or the good Samaritan, he doesn't mean the actual existing persons, but uses abstract imagery. The criterion of truthfulness that is used in evaluation of the scripture is therefore not the criterion of the factual accuracy of every single thing mentioned in every single metaphor, so that there would have to exist a real Samaritan who helped a real wounded Jew, but a criterion of moral rightness and

spiritual orientation towards God, which can be found in the parable of the good Samaritan. The stories from the Bible are therefore true because God reveals the truths about His nature and directions on where to seek Him, as well as the guidance for good and proper action.

The Western Christianity therefore possesses, in the very core of its philosophy, something people don't expect to find there, being poisoned by the rudimentary and raw Protestant theologies and vile propaganda of the age of enlightenment. The core of the Western civilization contains Augustine's concept according to which God reveals Himself through all the things that surround us, and wishes to teach us His truth. God speaks to us with the allegory of the holy scripture, God speaks to us through the physical reality and the laws of nature, God speaks to us through our dreams, He shows hints and coincidences. God leads us through the world of space and time, all the while present as a hunch and foreboding of His existence, but in his fullness He is beyond this world, beyond space and time. Yes, the concept of relativistic spacetime doesn't originate from Einstein, but from Augustine, and with the much more profound repercussions, because according to Augustine, there, beyond space and time, is the true promise to those who love Him, for they shall inherit the eternity.

Essentially, the Catholic philosophy contains intellectual concepts that are so abstract, wise and refined, that they contain and envelop the seed of that which later grew into the modern science, with all its discoveries. The science, from the position of the Church, is merely another way to read into Augustine, like Aristotle was, to Thomas Aquinas, yet another way of reading into Augustine. Most people don't know that, but renaissance and humanism were not a revolution, compared to the medieval times. The Church would never have allowed one. The reason why those things took a life of their own, and why they did not take place elsewhere, is because the Church perceived them as yet another way of reading into Augustine. There is a magical formula that could always have been

used to influence the Catholics, but not other Christians, or the believers of most other religions: to the Catholics, you could prove that what you are saying is the truth. That's what makes the Catholics different from all the others: they believe because it's true, not because it's in the Bible. Faithful to Augustine's teaching, the Catholics believe that the hand of God is guiding them through time. They consider themselves to be on the path, not at the goal. To them, faith is the way, a way of following the signposts God left them in the relative, material world of space and time, pointing towards the eternity where He waits and calls for them. In that sense, "the Omega point" introduced by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is merely an echo of Augustine. The Catholics believe that the truth is the way God guides them towards Himself, towards greater knowledge and greater goodness. If you prove to the Catholics that something is true, it has a magical power over them, beyond comprehension of those who fail to truly understand the philosophy of Augustine, and the influence it had over the Catholic church. Finally, we come to the reason why the Catholic church accepted Aristotle when the Arabs rediscovered his texts, lost in the dark times of barbarian struggles and destruction of all culture – they perceived him as a greater truth compared to Plato.

There, again, we find something that "the enlighteners" don't want you to ever find out: the Church never persecuted science and the scientists. Never. The Church persecuted the *charlatans*, but science and the scientists were never an opposition to the Church, and in reality they grew from the body of the Church. Do you know what the court of inquisition, before which Galileo was brought, looked like? That court was de facto what today's peer review would be. It was a gathering of the scientific community of the time, called to evaluate his scientific evidence. It consisted of the most prominent astronomers of the time, the creme of the scientific establishment, and not some dogmatic dimwits as "the enlighteners" brazenly lie to you. Do you know what the process looked like? Galileo expressed his beliefs, and the tribunal decided that those beliefs require, watch this now, "reinterpretation of certain passages of Scripture", but that they were ready and willing

to do that, to change the official interpretation of the Bible, if Galileo proved his theory. Yes, you heard it right. The way he was treated is completely identical to the treatment a scientist would have received today, in case he came up with a controversial hypothesis and had to present it to a board of his colleagues the scientists, who would have examined his data, examined his conclusions, seen if the whole thing treads water, and if it does, they would have rejected the current mainstream theory and accepted his instead. That's what "the enlighteners" don't want you to know: the Church behaved scientifically, because that's what its inner philosophy teaches it to do: it is taught to succumb to the supreme power of truth – a power greater than the Bible, a power that forces the Church to change its understanding of the Bible and of the world, if they are being shown a truth greater than the one they know. That's what their enemies fail to understand, for they didn't read Augustine. They don't understand how the Church listens to God's hints and signposts through time and space: that the Church understands God's revelation as a process, that they listen to the voice of God in all things, not thinking that the fullness of truth is known to them and already revealed, but that it is something that will be known in fullness only in God, in eternity beyond space and time.

If you didn't know that about the Catholic church, you're not alone. It's not something that is widely known. Not even all the priests know it, not told like this, but it's true nevertheless. What do you think, why Galileo ended up under a house arrest (no, he wasn't burned at the stake either)? Because he couldn't prove his claims; he was rude and arrogant but couldn't back his claims with evidence, so he was ordered to remain silent. What do you think, why does the official Church accept the theory of evolution? Why does the official Church accept the theory of Big Bang? Why does it keep inviting top physicists into Vatican to hold lectures? Why does the Church keep conforming its teaching to the new scientific discoveries? Not because it has been changed and modernized, but exactly because it keeps diligently following Augustine's philosophy, because it thinks science is the way God reveals the

truth about the world, and they keep humbly discarding their previous ignorance when a greater truth arises. Of course, the Church is by its nature inert and conservative and finds it difficult to accept change, but scientific establishment is no different in that regard. But when you prove to the Church that something is true, you have a magical power over them, such as you wouldn't have over some Protestant following, or over Islam. But when Church sees that something is true, even if they don't like it, they hear in it the distant whisper of Augustine, warning them of God who guides them across time and space, marking the way with the breadcrumbs of truth. That's the reason why the Church is so sophisticated and adaptable, that's the reason why its civilization and no other gave birth to science – because the Church within itself has an imperative to follow the truth, even when it hurts, when one has to accept that the Earth is not the center of the Universe, when one has to accept that humans had evolved from lower organisms and were not created by God in a singular act, when one has to accept that the Universe came to be over 10 billion years ago, and that Bible was an allegoric text and not the literal truth.

However, regardless of the appearance that it is science that changes the Church, I think the Church is the one with a wider, more complete understanding, and that it is a superset of science, not only a relic of the past, atrophying with the appearance of the new understanding of reality, as its enemies always preached. The Church, throughout history, kept listening to truths that were revealed from many sources. On one hand it's the science, which significantly modified the ecclesial understanding of the material Universe, but on the other hand it were the saints and the mystics, who are the teachers of the Church, in spiritual things, in the same way the science is, in material things. For the Church follows the ancient philosophy of Augustine, not only in the material sphere, but in the spiritual one as well, modifying its understanding of the transcendental to include the revelations of the saints such as Theresa of Avila or John of the Cross, who keep revealing the hidden truths about reality every bit as much as did Copernicus,

Kepler, Brahe, Newton, Einstein or Darwin. The Church listens to God's voice in the whole of reality, and not only the physical matter, which is but a fragment of a larger picture.

This now sounds like an apology of the Catholic Christianity, which is funny considering how I have nothing to do with the Church, and my beliefs differ from theirs in a great number of things, but unlike the naïve atheists such as Dawkins, I have a much better understanding of the deep historic background and the momenta inside the church, within its deep philosophical layer.

With the advent of consistent scientific models of reality, the materialists had for the first time in history found themselves in a position where their worldview makes intellectual sense, or at least appears to; it doesn't collapse at the slightest hint of analytical questioning like it used to. On the other hand, most religions, in the light of the consistent systems such as the theory of evolution, modern cosmology or particle physics, appear silly and outdated.

The problem we are facing here is layered and complex. Not all religions seem to be threatened by science to the same extent. Buddhism, for instance, is not only not threatened by science, but science actually strengthens its relative position compared to the other religions; its abstract philosophy is much more compatible with the scientific worldview than the mythological bestiaries of other religions. The religions who are able to separate their teaching from the literal, mythological worldview will generally fare better; within Christianity, for instance, the Catholic Church doesn't have any problem with science, but various naïve Protestant theologies will be existentially threatened, simply because they are foolish and shallow, made on the literal interpretation of the Bible which cannot stand in the light of the new discoveries. These religious forms are unsustainable and face extinction, which is a good thing. Removing the senseless and unsupportable theologies from circulation is a constructive process, since they serve no other purpose but to make people stupid.

Removing them from circulation is analogous to removing dead tissue from a patient in order to promote healing.

The thing that really does represent a problem has been previously illustrated with the example of Lavoisier's academy and the meteorites. Occasionally, when science is in its early and primitive state, it can appear that certain empirically gathered information belong to the sphere of superstition, before science is developed enough to show that it was neither superstition, nor fraud, nor hallucination, but authentic observation of real phenomena that weren't scientifically processed so far, but which are nevertheless true. That can happen because science is not synonymous with truth. Truth is a much wider term than science, and people often experience things that are not "scientific", but are not less true for that fact. For instance, everybody has experience that a cold happens when you are exposed to cold weather. There always happens to be a "scientific" smartass who bores everyone to death with statements that it's the virus that causes the cold, not cold weather, and some gullible people even started changing their behavior to absorb those mistaken ideas. Of course a cold has a causal connection with cold weather – the viruses are here all along, but the cold weather has a vasoconstrictive effect, it constricts the peripheral blood vessels and thus reduces the body's ability to provide a massive immunologic defense to a budding infection, so they find it more easy to make an initial penetration of the body and start the infection. It is therefore indeed a virus that causes the illness, but in a combination with cold weather. The problem arises when "the scientific Taliban" attempt to root out all the "folk lore" as prejudice and superstition, thus removing from circulation the useful knowledge that helps us fight even the problems science hasn't discovered yet. Science therefore isn't always useful. Sometimes, the "scientific knowledge" makes people throw away precious samples from the museum, because "the phenomenon doesn't exist" so the proof "must be fake", but that is a far less significant a problem compared to what takes place when people modify their moral views based on "the scientific findings", in order to conform to the current "scientific"

fashion, the disastrous consequences invariably showing after a decade or so.

A good example can be found in the permissive upbringing of children, which created a huge calamity of corrupted youth, simply because a “scientific” methodology of “modern psychology” was applied, according to which corporal punishment is a bad thing, and that anything that could introduce psychological trauma of any kind is to be avoided. Of course, such “scientists” haven't studied the field of neural networks, because had they done so, they would know that in order for neural networks to be correctly trained you need to have both positive and negative feedback – you need to “reward” choice of a correct path and “punish” the choice of an incorrect one. Essentially, “trauma” is a good and positive thing, and the whole point of upbringing and education is to introduce trauma whenever children do something wrong, in order to discourage development in wrong directions, and to promote proper behavior. “Scientific psychology” abounds with hopelessly foolish ideas, for instance it assumes that children will develop correctly all by themselves, if you just avoid anything that will “traumatize” them. If children are left to develop on their own, they will grow into complete savages, ill-bred and uneducated. That's exactly what took place when people listened to the fools with academic degrees, instead of holding on to the traditional methods of upbringing that were perfected through millennia of trial and error, through countless generations, which, when you think about it, is really the true application of scientific method, not pulling something out of your ass and claiming it to be true and beneficial just because it feels good. In comparison, modern psychology of pedagogy is utter charlatanry, created ad hoc because someone found it to be emotionally pleasurable, not because there was any evidence that it's beneficial. Science can, therefore, in its immature forms, be quite an aberration, a wrong path that destroys the good traditions and replaces them with dangerous nonsense.

A funny historical footnote: Rasputin, the “crazy charlatan monk” from the Imperial Russia, actually saved the hemophiliac prince Alexei Nikolaevich from certain death by stopping his “scientific medical” treatment and instead prescribing spiritual treatment. Why? The “scientific medicine” treated his hemophilia with Aspirin, which is a blood thinner, and would have worsened his symptoms and hastened his death, but Aspirin was very “modern” and “scientific” and therefore a popular panacea of the time.

In the spiritual sphere, excessive appreciation of all things scientific can lead one to ignore all aspects of one's experience that don't fit nicely into the drawers of the contemporary scientific paradigm, which teaches what the world is about and what has no “rational grounds”, and therefore should not be perceived lest one be labeled crazy, and in worst case, “scientifically treated”, which is a newspeak term for brainwashing and lobotomy.

More-less all humans have some degree of transcendental perception. With some it is deeper and more subtle, with others it is rudimentary, and with some almost nonexistent, equivalent to blindness or deafness. Some have the ability to sense that someone close to them has a problem, and feel the need to ask about it and help, which is a rudimentary form of sensitivity to spiritual realities; some have a sense of Divine presence that follows them throughout their lives, like St. Augustine for instance. To say that such holy people are lunatics or frauds is... overconfident, to say the least. A man who set the foundations for the entire Western civilization, and not only foundations, but walls and roof as well, that man had a strong sense of transcendental guidance and spent his life trying to feel God's will, to feel the thread of rightness God set there for him to find, to lead him from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light and truth. That's not an isolated or unique phenomenon: a vast number of people have such a sense of transcendental guidance, and the materialistic science poses an obstacle to using that sense, comparable to the obstacle creationist Christianity poses to teaching evolution. The Talibanism of science

is no less bad than that of religion.

Why did I say that, in the present age of scientific discovery, atheism “appears to” make sense? Do you really think that people remain religious, in spite of all that science, because they are so uneducated, all of them? The thing is, the majority of people possess a sensitivity to the transcendental, some degree of that very same sensitivity to God's presence and will that guided the saints throughout the history. In this context, of understanding the existence of a sense that tells people that God exists, most people would rather acknowledge any paradigm that is compatible with that deep sensitivity, than a paradigm that renounces it or tells them things that are perceived as incompatible with it. Would you accept a paradigm that tells you that visible light doesn't exist and it's all a hallucination, regardless of how sensible and rational that paradigm sounded? I thought so. The thing is, atheism is a consistent and sensible worldview only from a position of a certain percentage of people who do not possess a developed sensitivity for the transcendental, who do not feel God's presence in a way some people do. Throughout history, people based their belief in the existence of gods on rational grounds, being unable to produce an alternative explanation for Universe and life, and today they are inclined to leave religion, but the interesting thing is that people, despite loss of interest for the classic, institutionalized religions, seek some form of a spiritual paradigm that will be able to encompass both their sensitivity to the transcendental, and a scientific worldview. They don't see it either as a contradiction or a dualism – they accept the scientific interpretation of the world because they see how it makes sense and produces practical results, but at the same time they also accept the spiritual understanding of the world because that, too, makes sense to them, because they have some experience that those things exist, that they are no illusion or hallucination, as the materialists try to convince them. The meteors kept falling even at the times when the educated scientists considered belief in rocks that fall from the sky to be a matter of superstition, fraud or hallucination, and not fact – the same way they now think about spirituality.

The fact is, every old hag can have a better perception of reality than the smartest scientist, if she talks about things she has in her experience, and he makes guesses based on what he considers possible. We've seen that many times, and it's the reason why we should all keep holding on to our personal meteorite collections, in spite of the "educated" ridicule of "the enlightened ones". Those who succumb under pressure and throw away their treasures, might eventually live to regret it.

The experiential basis of spirituality

The argument of identical experiential basis is one of the most commonly used atheist arguments in discussions with believers, and judging on the dishonest, callous way it is used, to de facto intimidate the opponents, it is clear that the atheists themselves consider this to be the crux of the matter, where atheism will either stand or fall. If there are people who perceive God, then God exists, and the atheist belief is wrong.

Before we dig too deeply into the matters, it should be made clear that most believers are not so because of an active choice, but by certain automatism, because everyone around them is. If someone was born in Pakistan or Egypt he will most likely be a Muslim, and if he was born in Croatia or Poland he will most likely be a Catholic. Someone who was born in the Soviet Union will most likely be an atheist. Most people therefore simply imitate their environment in all things, and are afraid to be different in any way, lest they be isolated, mocked or even assaulted.

Still, when we remove the “spiritual chameleons” from consideration, we are left with a minor percentage of individuals for whom spirituality is a matter of choice, not heritage or environment. Those are the ones who live in a Christian environment and chose to be the members of the Hare Krishna movement, or atheists or Muslims, or they live in a Muslim environment and choose Christianity. Such a choice is often wrought with all kinds of unpleasant things or dangers, and still, some people choose to swim against the current in a way that can bring them nothing but misery and suffering. We must ask: what motivates them? What force makes one choose exile or mockery when the alternative is a comfortable life of swimming with the stream? What is it that such a person saw in his chosen worldview,

that made the alternatives to this choice unbearable? Also, why are people so sensitive to their religion, enough so for them to react defensively and aggressively when it is questioned?

The answer can be summed up in a counter-question: why has gold been so highly valued throughout history? What makes gold, and not copper or something else, a traditional measure of worth, a material money is made of? A partial answer can be found in its stability and persistence, but even a rock has stability and persistence – some pieces of it are dated 4 billion years or more – and yet only the few kinds of rock have significant value. The reason why gold is highly valued lies foremost in its scarcity, or limited availability. If anyone could get limitless amounts of gold from nature, it would have the same value as air or water. It is scarcity, therefore, that makes something precious. That is also the answer to the question why people value God so highly. There are many things of vital importance to humans, such as air, water or food, but only if those resources become scarce, they are perceived as precious. Air is absolutely essential for human life, and yet it is merely assumed and not given much thought in normal circumstances. Similar applies to the senses – hearing, sight and others. Only if we are left without one, or it is damaged, we stop to really consider its value.

The reason why God is such a central issue to humans, important enough to kill each other over it and sacrifice not only their comforts but life as well, is that scarcity of a resource defines its perceived value, but only if it is perceived as important or essential. For instance, ancient American civilizations didn't perceive gold as particularly valuable, unlike the Europeans, who were ready to kill and perform other atrocities over it. There are many materials that are both durable and scarce but that doesn't give them any particular value. If there is no perceived need, then scarcity alone isn't enough to give something value.

What am I getting at?

The atheists do not perceive any value of God. They actually fail to understand what it's all about. To them, God is as important as bicycle to a fish. Having no experience of God and no good idea about his value or use, of course they don't miss it. It's comparable to asking a guy if he misses the girl x, whom he never saw or heard of. He'll tell you he's utterly indifferent. He has no feelings whatsoever for her, nor does he feel any lack in his experience because of her absence. But let's say he gets to know her, let's say he completely falls in love with her, that sparks start flying between them and they realize that they mean the world to each other, and that at this point she is taken away from him, for some reason or another. He will be a changed man. What meant nothing to him mere moments ago, now became the pivot point of his life, that woman is suddenly the most important person in the world to him and his entire life revolves around her. Her absence creates a huge emptiness in his soul, but the kind of emptiness he doesn't want to fill with anything other than this special person's presence, because that emptiness is something noble, that makes him feel richer than he was when he was "whole", not having had that precious something to miss.

The thing is, when I use the word "God", it is a generic term, a variable x that can be assigned to any theological concept people can think of, if that concept is a pointer to a deeper, transcendental level of reality. The problem atheists have here is not much different than the one most believers have: they don't understand that God, for most uses of the term, isn't a person, so that it would matter "which" God is in question, but a point of intrusion of the higher reality into the lower, comparable to an intersection of a 3d body with 2d space. When such higher reality touches human consciousness and experience, it's like a parting of clouds to show the full force of the Sun in an instant. One cannot exaggerate the impact of such experience. A single moment is enough to completely define a man's entire existence and point it towards that, to which he scarcely gave a single thought, before that crucial moment. But now, in knowledge, indifference is no longer an option.

The problem with such experience is that it is both utterly precious, like discovering the love and meaning of your life, and at the same time it's horribly brief and uninfluenced by your willing control and choice to repeat it at will. This makes it extremely inaccessible. The combination of immense perceived importance and immense scarcity makes an experience of God something of utmost value.

If someone had a spiritual experience, he will want to understand what it was that he experienced, to place it inside some meaningful worldview, wrap his mind around it and integrate the experience into his life in a way that its placement reflects its central position in his personal set of values. Also, he will find it extremely important for his worldview to most accurately reflect the experience and hopefully to include all the elements of the experience – he will want it to have the greatest possible intersection with the experience. In this context, the worldview is some kind of a ritualized reminder of the experience, an attempt to revive something precious but inaccessible, in order never to forget it, to align oneself with it at all times and to increase the likelihood of encountering it again. Compared to a spiritual experience itself, religion resembles the washed-out photos of wives and girlfriends that soldiers carry with them in the trenches – the imperfect, pale reminders of something of great importance, from which they are at the moment separated, maybe forever. The thing with religion is that people would have no need for it if they were now in the presence of God, if the intrusion of higher reality was present in their consciousness at that very moment in time. If you're together with your wife every day you'll hardly need to look at a pale photo of her; you have the real thing. But he who finds himself at the other side of the world, in a situation where perilous daily experiences threaten to end even the memory itself, he is in a much different position, and one who mocks his pale, washed out photo might risk ending up with a fist or a bullet in his head.

Atheists, therefore, fail to understand that they actually don't share

the same underlying basis of experience as the believers. The fact that they don't have a need to carry a washed-out photo of some woman with them, to look at every once in a while and to quietly talk to it and whisper her name, the fact that it looks silly to them that someone does, doesn't mean that they have the same experiential basis as that person, only that the person in question is silly to drool over a piece of paper representing something that, to them, might as well be the flying spaghetti monster, and that they are free from this craziness. It's just that their experience is poorer for the thing that matters to that other person, they lack that central experience of their lives, the pivot-point of their existence. Someone who was never in love, who never had that special feeling of his destiny being inseparable from that other person, he can't ever hope to comprehend such emotions of other people, because he lacks the common grounds for empathy, and nothing anyone says or does could possibly convey or explain it in a convincing way, because this experience is intransmissible, it's absolutely intimate and personal. The people who had it can recognize the similar feelings of others by analogy, but those who didn't have it can't possibly hope to understand it.

With religion, in order to intellectually understand the phenomenon one needs to separate the spiritual content from the vessel that bears it. When we put water in a dozen or so different vessels of various colors and shapes, we have apparently different but essentially identical content. Of course, it is important that the vessel doesn't release contaminants into the content, in order not to pollute it (the analogy for the false teachings that contaminate the spiritual experience and transform it into something corrupt and perverted), but it could come as quite a surprise to people if they found out how little difference there really is between spiritual experiences, and how vastly different are the theological descriptions and other forms of packaging that wrap those experiences into the package of religion. When Dawkins asks a believer why he believes in Jesus and not Zeus, that makes sense to him, and probably to the believer as well, but in reality it is quite meaningless, because a man who grew up in the ancient Greece

would probably interpret a transcendental experience as appearance of some of the gods known to him from the mythology he was exposed to since birth, and the experience would pass through the closest equivalent in the neural networks that make up his brain. The experience would be heuristically filtered through the path of the least resistance, through imagery that makes the closest match. One will therefore see either Zeus, or Ahura Mazda, or Jesus, or Krishna or meditating Buddha, depending on the concepts he was exposed to, and which will be used by his brain to interpret and present the experience in the most accurate of all the available ways. What appears to be silly and irrational to the atheists, and here I mean the vast multitude of deities, saints and god concepts, is in fact an expected result of a genuinely transcendental experience shining through the spectrum of human experience and its biological basis. The meaning of the vast plurality of spiritual experiences, and the huge menagerie of gods people said to have had experience with, is therefore exactly opposite to that claimed by the atheists, who interpret it as a negation of the possibility of any of it being authentic. In reality, most of it is probably authentic, in a sense that they are some sort of a reflection of transcendental reality, although they may vary wildly in depth and intensity. When we therefore remove the really crazy people from the equation (crazy in a sense that they walk naked through the city and have passionate discussions with dried cod), and we are left with people who are quite reasonable and sensible according to all normally applied criteria, it must be assumed that the spiritual experiences those people had, in all their diversity, are in fact authentic, and that they were formed as a result of the events of transcendental reality shining through human biology.

Of course, we can always have issues with the symbolism, as well as with the distortions that were introduced due to the poor quality of the “vessel”, the receptacle of the experience, as well as its interpretation, but I would expect the lion's share of the experiences to be an authentic reflection of the transcendental in the human.

The dusk of materialism

In the previous chapters I dealt with the danger of overexertion of the term “science”, showing how the concept of science is, not merely often, but, in fact, as a rule, much narrower than the concept of truth. Also, I demonstrated how in the initial phases of scientific processing of a certain field there is, not only a possibility, but a practical certainty that the empirical data gathered by the non-scientific population will be of a better quality than that provided by science.

That makes it clear why it is dangerous to take science too seriously, because we can fall off the precipice of reason and into destruction of the real and useful proto-scientific truths and scientifically unprocessed evidence of actual things and phenomena, such as, for instance, the meteorites, connection between cold and cold weather, or between a well deserved spanking and good upbringing. The practical application of bad or incomplete science poses a serious threat – for instance, based on science people used vast amounts of DDT¹, thus inflicting serious harm to the ecosystem. Likewise, they manufactured and consumed “medications” that caused grave fetal malformations and produced thousands of deformed children². In that sense, there is little real difference between the physical deformities produced by Thalidomide and the spiritual deformities caused by its intellectual equivalents.

Scientism, as a worldview that makes science into a religion, experimenting with removing all “backward” things from circulation, things such meteorites and religion, produced a vast amount of the problems of the recent centuries, at least equal in

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ddt>

2 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thalidomide>

gravity to the problems produced by all religions throughout history. That, however, never seems to have put any restraint on the scientists in their arrogance, because they always behave as if they are on the side of all knowledge and truth, and opposing them there is the cesspool of superstition, ignorance and primitivism that needs to be drained by the light of knowledge, which they, of course, possess. There appears to be no difference between the scientists and the Taliban in the amount of hubris and arrogance.

The problem with science is that, in most of its phases of development it encompasses and successfully interprets a very small portion of reality, but from the very start it behaves as if it has all the answers while its opposition consists of imbeciles. I think it all started with Galileo. That one thought that the comets were cases of lens flare of sunlight in the Earth's atmosphere and not discrete cosmic objects¹, and called Kepler an idiot for thinking that the Moon's gravitational influence causes the tides², while the heliocentric model he worked with provided predictions greatly inferior in precision compared to the Ptolemaic geocentric system. So essentially that man was wrong in practically half of all the subjects he considered; in fact, contrary to "the enlighteners" who treat him as something of a saint-protector of science, he in fact inhibited the progress of science in his time, and the modern astronomy owes little to Galileo. The line of progress in fact leads from Brahe through Kepler to Newton, while Galileo found his place in history mostly through his great skill in making enemies and alienating friends; and that, not his significant contributions to astronomy, was why he ended his life under house arrest.³

From the examples of Galileo, Lavoisier and the like it is quite easy to see the pattern of scientific ideologues' behavior: knowing little, they have no problem claiming that their knowledge encompasses the whole of reality, while all who think otherwise

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Assayer

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_Galilei#Galileo.2C_Kepler_and_theories_of_tides

3 http://www.traditioninaction.org/History/A_003_Galileo.html

are fools, conmen and lunatics. Even if they admit that they don't know everything, they always assume that the new discoveries and understandings will make only incremental improvements over their current understanding and therefore even strengthen their case. Essentially, they think that, while they don't know everything, they know all that is known, and the unknown is on their side.

What their detractors are doing wrong is the attempt to argue with them in the areas that are already well understood by science and where science provides a good model of reality. That makes the scientists' job easier when they move to discredit their objections – they merely point to the American protestants and the Muslim fanatic as examples of religious thought, and the audience will think they have it all figured out. When someone claims the Dinosaurs lived 3000 years ago and portrays them with a saddle for Mr. Flintstone, that creates the very consternation with religion that pours gasoline over the flame of scientism, and at that point the scientists ask the normal believers how can they possibly believe such nonsense. The fact is, they don't, but they are also not skilled in philosophical debate, while the scientific apologists are. This is why they can be embarrassed in front of the cameras in situations where a trained Catholic apologist such as Robert Barron¹ would make short work of Dawkins.

The paradoxical part of the association between atheism and science is that the situation where atheism turns to science as its instrument of evangelism might prove to be a very brief phase in the wider history of science.

The atheists will tell you volumes about how science gradually dismantled the religious concepts and how religions were forced to retreat from their millennial dogmatic positions. That is true, because the scientific discoveries indeed made some religious convictions implausible or even impossible; if someone, for

1 <http://www.wordonfire.org/>

instance, believed that the Earth was 6000 years old and that the creation myths were literally true, such convictions will be unsustainable in the light of modern science. If someone believed that God lives on a cloud, that belief also became unsustainable.

What is less talked about is that the ideology of vulgar materialism, present since the times of Democritus, likewise found itself on rocky shoals. The classic materialistic atheism had its times of triumph in the 19th and parts of 20th century. According to all that was discovered until then, and what science seemed to show, it appeared that the result of scientific research will be the absolute triumph of materialism and utter disappearance of religion as “pre-scientific superstition”.

Let's see what events took place during that period in time:¹

- Robert Stephenson invented a locomotive and started building railroads.
- Alessandro Volta invented an electric battery.
- Hans Christian Oersted discovered a relationship between electricity and magnetism.
- Samuel Morse and several other scientists simultaneously invented telegraphy.
- Alexander Graham Bell invented telephony.
- Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison invented more-less everything that we have today related to electricity, other than semiconductors and superconductors – production and transfer of electric energy, electric light and motors.
- Tesla and Roentgen simultaneously discovered X-rays.
- Tesla, Marconi and several other scientists simultaneously invented radio.
- Ernest Rutherford postulated the planetary atomic model, and a symmetry between micro and macro universes seemed to have been discovered, where structure of an

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/19th_century

atom seemed to be analogous to the structure of the solar system.

- Charles Darwin formulated the theory of evolution of the biological species through natural selection, removing the necessity of believing in God's act of creation and providing a simple explanation to the vast number of open questions regarding life.
- Louis Pasteur discovered the microbiological causes of disease and vaccination.
- Sigmund Freud made attempts in psychoanalysis.
- Karl Benz invented an automobile.
- Niépce invented photography, the Lumiere brothers invented cinematography.
- Industrial revolution, railroads and urbanization changed the image of the world entirely.
- The most influential philosophy of the time is dialectic materialism, or positivism, and the most influential philosopher is Karl Marx (I expect the admirers of Hegel to scream foul, but I call it like it was).

Acknowledging the impact of all of the above, you will understand why I left out a dozen of epochal discoveries, such as the periodic system of elements, the advances in astronomy, or everything Davy, Faraday and Maxwell discovered.

The nineteenth century was marked by the aftershocks of the French revolution and of the American independence war, by the extreme advances in science and technology, which all produced the ideology of modernism, and if you look at the list of the greatest discoveries of the 19th century, made *after* the Western civilization essentially parted ways with the Church and established the concept of a democratic secular state such as the United States of America, it will be made clear why all of the perceived vectors seemed to converge into the point of total knowledge of all the natural phenomena, total mastery of the world, and total demystification of all things that left people

without a proper answer for ages, thus making religion a necessary and rational option. The result of such thinking was modernism¹, which thought the time was ripe for eradicating all remnants of old, primitive belief systems: the religions and other “reactionary” philosophies, among other things, need to be uprooted, but also the inferior races, in order to purify the gene pool of mankind, and so open the path into the bright future.

The modernism is, in that sense, a collective term for the philosophies of “spring cleaning” of mankind, saying that the time has come to rid ourselves of the remnants of the ignorant past in order to move on, into a new age of science and knowledge. Modernism as a philosophy is best described by Nietzsche's statement that “God is dead”, and the millions who died in various concentration camps and killing fields of the twentieth century, as well as under the guillotine of the French revolution, are the result of this concept of “purge”, a desire to rid the world of the “old” that “hinders the progress” and represents a “counterrevolutionary force”. The nineteenth century is therefore the century of discoveries, while the twentieth century is the century of great slaughters that resulted from the idea of new uprooting the old. “Let's get rid of religion, and in a few years we'll have colonies on Mars”. That, in essence, is the motto of modernism, albeit not quite so literally. The modernism calls: “let's make the new world!” The modernism think it's about time mankind took its destiny as well as the destiny of the world into its own hands, because the age of the gods had past; the mankind had come of age, and the authorities of old have no power over it.

In hindsight, things didn't work out quite the way they planned them at the time, but to them, it looked like they had all the answers. It is all clear, it is all understood, the science explained it all – from the atom, through the nature of life and Universe, to the human mind. What science didn't explain, is a matter of mere days or years – the new and epochal discoveries were made daily, and

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism>

the single most telling sign of the zeitgeist was the apparent triumph of the deterministic universe, in which the clear and firm laws describe all phenomena, leaving no place for God. The world of the 19th century was a clock, and a clock needs only springs and gears.

Awakening from the modernistic dream was by no means sudden, and it wasn't a singular event or a thing that brought it about. It wasn't even the bloody wars of the 20th century that had done it, but it came to a crossroads more because of its triumphs than because of the failures. I personally think that the crucial crossroads of modernism was the landing of Apollo 12 on the Moon.

The landing of the Apollo 11 was the peak of the technological civilization and a crown of human endeavor. Billions of people carefully watched the “Eagle” land, quite aware of the giant leap for mankind it signified.

What next? Where does “more of the same” lead? The Apollo 11 was the crown of an era, but the coronation ceremonies are quite expensive and their significance pales if they are done on a monthly basis. Apollo 12 was perceived as a new airplane line, and quite an expensive one for its flight schedule and capacity.

Likewise, people expected the linear continuation of the explosion of the 19th century, but instead, the progress happened to burst their bubble. The new discoveries didn't confirm the modernist expectations. In fact, they turned the world upside down, and the modernist concept of a deterministic Universe of gears, cogs and springs, in which everything could be measured, known and explained, the Universe which had no place for God, that Universe came to an end. The atheism had its five minutes of glory, when it seemed to be elevated by science, from a position of a marginal philosophy to a pedestal of the official truth, but then came the moment of sobering.

One of the most damaging blows to materialism came from a completely unexpected direction: the science of the 20th century disproved what appeared to be the triumph of materialism in the 19th: the science disproved the atomistic theory of matter, which remained the cornerstone of atheist thought since the times of Democritus. Science demonstrated that there are no elementary, indivisible particles of which all matter consists. The “atoms” are divisible into nucleons. The nucleons are divisible into a vast menagerie of particles, so many of them in fact that none of them can be considered elementary in any way. An attempt was made to systematize this unholy mess into a so called “standard model”, but this model has so many problems, that many scientists seriously consider throwing the whole thing away and making something completely different, like the string theory, which however have a “slight” problem of being completely unsubstantiated by evidence. Nevertheless, the string theory looks like the most likely exit from the mess the physics made for itself due to incompatibility of the quantum physics that explains the micro-universe, and the general relativity which explains the gravitational macro-universe. A quantum theory of gravity, or a Great Unified Theory, remains the holy grail of physics, but the problem with the holy grail is that there most likely isn't one. On a macro-scale the physics also has major problems. There is simply not enough visible matter in the Universe to explain its behavior. The current theory that explains the behavior of the galaxies assumes the existence of vast amounts of “dark matter”, for which there is not a shred of evidence; the entire thing is pure guesswork, like the strings. Nobody really has a good idea about how the whole thing really works, and the more is discovered, the more there are unanswered questions. For instance, recently (actually, between writing this book in Croatian in 2010 and translating it to English in 2014) there was all the hype about the Higgs boson, which was supposed to dot the “i”s and cross the “t”s of the standard model, and once it was confirmed and its behavior was entered into a simulation, it showed that if that thing really existed and all things were as they are known, the universe

would have already collapsed.¹ So, whenever the physicists state that they “almost have it”, it's just this or that particle that eludes them, I facepalm, because it's been exactly like that with the Newtonian physics and that nasty perihelion precession of Mercury. In fact, for the last 20 years it's been the “we just need that one last particle” story; first the “top” quark, more recently the Higgs boson. In reality, the whole thing is a blind alley. What we can deduce from this menagerie of particles is that the fundamental layer of the physical reality has not yet been discovered, and that physics is currently digging through one of the superficial layers. The string theory, as crazy, unproven and unfalsifiable as it might sound, might in fact be closer to the general direction of giving the final answers, than the standard model, but what sounds like a really revolutionary concept is Wolfram's theory of cellular automata (essentially, producing complexity from simplicity)², or Universe as software and not hardware, however not standing alone, but combined with Teilhard de Chardin's “Omega point” concept, which implies a goal-driven inverse causality of Creation (translated to normal language, it would mean that God created some future goal and then extended it backwards into the necessary initial conditions; since God is outside spacetime, in eternity, this is in no way contradictory or problematic). Basically, we are located on a timespace vector somewhere between Big Bang, as “Alpha point”, and the “Omega point”, which is the thing God actually intended to create, and on this vector we can witness the ever increasing complexity of the material structures within the Universe.

Of course, none of that is in any way proven, but as things stand, no model in physics is ever really proven in a final sense. Instead of a nice, simplistic, deterministic Universe of 19th century we have an interesting trilemma: the most promising explanations of the Universe come on one hand from a theory that implies the existence of 11-dimensional intangible entities that defy any

1 <http://news.discovery.com/space/cosmology/the-higgs-boson-should-have-crushed-the-universe-140624.htm>

2 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_New_Kind_of_Science_\(book\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_New_Kind_of_Science_(book))

attempt of experimental proof, on the other hand from a theory according to which the Universe should have collapsed if a particle that gives other particles mass actually exists, and on the margins we have a theory according to which the Universe is some kind of a software entity (running on unknown hardware) based on the simple initial rules that intend to produce ever greater complexity, presumably having a convergent limit somewhere in the future. When we salt this soup with the observation which clearly confirms the increasing complexity of the material structures as a function of time, as a result of a process that resembles “cooling” of the Universe, it appears that both classic physics and the Darwinist theory of evolution perceive and explain only the local phenomena and not the wider picture: that on both microscopic and macroscopic scale, the Universe in various ways produces increasing complexity, from hydrogen atoms to the heaviest metals, from simple molecules to nucleic acids, where life appears to be merely the continuation of the same politics by other means, to paraphrase Von Clausewitz. Paradoxically, De Chardin seems to have struck very close to observation, with his Omega point theory of convergent increase of complexity. What makes most sense to me at this point is a theory according to which the actual goal of the Universe has already been created and is located at some point in the future, and the thing we perceive is the process of creation, where the necessary prerequisites have been set in the Alpha point, and now we are witnessing the thing rolling out towards (or, rolling back to) the Omega point, in order to create in spacetime what God already had in His mind in eternity, He and Augustine presumably waiting for the rest of us to finally figure it out.

The success of medicine in reviving the clinically dead patients had an unexpected side effect of a huge number of testimonies about experiences of souls who outlive the physical death¹, for which the materialists of course have explanations – dozens of them, in fact², of which not a single one describes even a third of

1 <http://www.near-death.com/>

2 <http://www.near-death.com/experiences/experts01.html>

the phenomenon as it is described. That, of course, means that they have no explanation whatsoever, for if any of those dozens of explanations had any viability, there would have been only one explanation, not a beehive of them. NDE experiences are an undeniable proof that soul outlives bodily death and that there is a spiritual, non-material world of which religions speak for millennia in varying degrees of accuracy and coherence. NDE provides evidence for the existence of this spiritual existence and parallel reality that would be considered undeniable in any court of law. The only reason why this evidence isn't accepted is that it rubs the current mainstream materialistic mentality in exactly the wrong way.

We must also mention the problem of the apparent fine-tuning of the constants of the Universe¹, which seems to point to a conclusion that either there's only one Universe and it was without any question specifically created with the purpose of allowing formation of self-aware life, or it's explained away with a multiverse theory², according to which an infinite number of universes exist, so it's no great wonder that one has a combination of constants that allows us to observe it. The problem is, the multiverse theory can in no way be proven, and is probably the worst possible violation of the parsimony principle, because, in order to avoid assuming the existence of one intangible and unfalsifiable entity (God), it assumes an infinite number of intangible and unfalsifiable entities (parallel universes). So it's rock and hard place for materialism.

In short, I have a hunch that the triumph of the 19th century atheism and materialism deflated to the point where atheism is stunned by the events and tries to figure out what the hell happened, and all the apologists of atheism, such as Dawkins, are really playing with the strawman argument, trying to time-travel the discussion back to the 19th century, to the times of Darwin, where they thought they

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fine-tuned_Universe

2 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiverse>

were in control of the events, because they feel as if their nice clockwork of a deterministic material Universe went “poof” and we are now in a situation where none of the plausible theories for explaining the Universe are materialistic in any recognizable way. Essentially, they are making fun of the village idiots in order to hide the fact that they are back to their historical norm of being an intellectually weak and implausible worldview.

Change of paradigm

Physics, as the fundamental science of matter, is presently faced with a situation in which it can resolve certain fundamental problems only in a way that is inconsistent with its most basic methodology: it would have to assume intangible, unfalsifiable entities, whether those are the the infinite universes in the multiverse theory, or, alternatively, an intangible fine-tuner of the physical laws. If that wasn't bad enough, one of the main plausible theories of everything, the string theory, makes unfalsifiable assumptions about 11-dimensional entities, while the standard model needs an assumption of invisible, unknown “dark matter” and “dark energy” which supposedly make up for around 90% of all gravitational influences in the Universe and are necessary in order for our model of the Universe to work. For a science that used to mock religion for its belief in unproven and unprovable things, and for making untestable assumptions, this is certainly an embarrassing position. Basically, instead of having all the answers and wrapping up the package, physics is in the position to admit that, in the best case scenario, it has theories that encompass 10% of the physical Universe, and in the worst case scenario, everything it knows is completely irrelevant (that is, if there actually is a God and the entire Universe has no reason to exist in this form other than because God wanted to design it this way). Whatever eventually proves to be the case, one must admit that physics is in a position where the fundamental paradigm changes, at least equivalent to that from Newtonian to Einsteinian, are possible. Discoveries of things that can turn our understanding of physics upside-down are not only possible, but likely.

One must, therefore, take very seriously a possibility that the solution to those paradoxes will completely depart from the materialistic paradigm, and that completely different concepts of

reality need to be considered. This potential change of paradigm, from one that assumes physical matter as the fundamental reality, to one that says that there is no reason why physical matter would be any more real or fundamental than the “substance” of which our modern video games are made, actually makes it easier to account for the things that are now considered “impossible” and therefore not even seriously studied by science. So basically we come to the choice: either the physical Universe is the fundamental reality, the “hardware”, or the “hardware” is something else, something that doesn't necessarily have anything to do with physical matter, and physical Universe is just “software”, some virtual reality simulation that runs within the actual reality; or not even the actual reality, but only a deeper layer than what we have here.

When I was younger, a couple of decades ago, this was a very serious dilemma for me. It took me several years of thinking over the arguments for both sides, and at one point it “clicked” - I listened to a rather boring lecture on mathematical analysis in college, and in an absentminded moment it all clicked into place, all my dilemmas were resolved. I understood that the Universe is indeed software, not hardware, and that the software is being “executed” in the spiritual world, and all the spiritual phenomena perceived in the material world are not artifacts of the matter, the way speed is an artifact of an automobile, but intrusions of a reality of a higher order into a reality of a lower order, when the lower reality attains sufficient degree of complexity in order for some sort of contact between realities becomes possible. In that sense, complexity is not merely different organization of matter, but a dimensional extension, where some kinds of structures that are not just matter but also information¹, could be extending the matter into a non-integer Hausdorff dimensions (where a line has a Hausdorff dimension of one, a plane has a dimension of two, space has a dimension of 3, Minkowski space has a dimension of 4, but a fractal can have a dimension of, let's say, 1.2345 or 3.3456) which

1 <http://phys.org/news/2014-01-discovery-quantum-vibrations-microtubules-corroborates.html>

at a certain point makes it possible for a physical being to extend itself into the dimensions of reality other than time and space. And here I mean consciousness, self-awareness, love, spiritual depth and, eventually, aspects of reality so profound that they can only be described as God, and silence is preferable to words.

So it clicked into place, and for me the paradigm changed, but don't think it made me happy or brought me comfort. On the contrary, the result was hopeless despair, because I studied physics because I believed that's how I will understand the world, that's how I will understand the fundamental nature of reality, and suddenly I understood that this was a blind alley because there's not much point in studying the vector space and textures in videogame engines if you want to understand reality, if that analogy is any good. But if physics wasn't useful for understanding it, I thought I had no hope whatsoever of ever figuring it out, because I knew of no other intellectual system that was even close to the exactness of physics. In physics, it wasn't very likely for me to figure everything out because that would assume that I had to make some very significant breakthrough in order to get "the great theory of everything", which wasn't very likely. But success in anything is unlikely, so that didn't bother me much. At least I had a direction, I thought I knew what I had to do, I had a vector of my efforts. When it clicked, physics was taken away from me, and I had nothing else, because I had a very low opinion on religion. To me, religion was entertainment for the stupid; a cheap, simple answer, a catch-all response for the intellectually lazy or incompetent, and its answers and iconography were repulsive to my logically organized mind. I hadn't really considered it as a serious alternative for science; if anything, religion felt like the last place that could provide me with answers to any question about the fundamental reality, because it looked like fundamental idiocy.

And so the first thing I did was to get so drunk I passed out cold on a bench in the park, because in absence of any worthwhile direction for my efforts, it was either that or suicide, and I could

always kill myself later. Getting drunk didn't do anything for me, and when I sobered up I decided I'll have to start filtering information in a different way, because I had two options. Either I was missing something, or there was nothing to miss so it's hopeless anyway. I assumed that something could be done, because the alternative was useless. So I started combing through literature, trying to pick other people's minds for possible ideas and directions, things that haven't yet crossed my mind, things different from science, things from the sphere of, well, something generally alternative or spiritual, but I must admit that I had a very low opinion on the probability of success, because spirituality in my mind equaled either religion or parapsychology, and both were riddled with sheer idiocy.

So basically I had a problem: I didn't know the extent of my ignorance, or the direction in which to find possible answers, which made my target very wide and flexible, so I decided to approach the problem in a logical but chaotic way: I went to the library, went to the philosophy section, took one book after another from the shelf, browsed a bit to see if it's obviously useless (a rehashing of things I already knew), and if it had any hope of being good, I took it home to read. This way, I read an immense shitload of books, most of them bad, but I was getting better at filtering stuff. For instance, I discarded everything related to the ancient Greek philosophy, Western philosophy and Christianity, since those rehashed the concepts that were familiar to me and I didn't have hopes of finding anything there that didn't converge into either science or the familiar forms of religion. Basically, I knew enough of it to know that the answers I was looking for aren't there. So, knowing where it isn't, I subtracted that set from all the stuff that was there and was left with a very reduced number of works that sounded completely unfamiliar, which made me feel hopeful – at least it ain't the devil I know. I went through the books on parapsychology, but they weren't exactly helpful, because they usually described the symptoms of “something”, but didn't know anything about this “something”. Yeah, thanks very much but I managed to figure that much out for myself. That left me with the

oriental philosophies, and watching the Hare Krishnas dance in the city didn't really warm me toward those, because they looked more idiotic than any other form of religion that I happened to encounter elsewhere, but I read some introductions to philosophy in school so I knew there's more to it than Hinduism, which had a really bad start with me and I was inclined to dismiss it entirely. I intended to look into Buddhism, but books on the subject were scarce and I happened to notice a small book with a title "Yoga Upanishad" by Shri Upanishad Brahmayogin. Based on watching documentaries on TV, I thought that the greatest achievements in yoga were to meditate for 20 years and can influence people in the room to start dancing some religious stuff. Wow, like, that's useful. So I didn't have high hopes, but I could find nothing obviously better around so I took this book home to read – it was either that, or the Hare Krishnas, or Hegel, or Fromm. Basically, it was "I'll take the Indian stuff, but without the gay dancing, please".

This book was the single most important book I ever read, and 21 year later I still remember every thought I had that afternoon when I opened it and started reading, the feeling of the paper, the feeling of the translation of the texts, everything, because that's where the universe I used to live in went "poof". My first reaction was "what the hell is that?", in a sense that the entire thing was so inherently alien to me, so foreign, unknown and essentially "other", that it took me a while to adapt my mind and absorb the cultural shock. The text itself was very complex, because those were the most esoteric "insider" teachings of tantric yoga, without any compromise and dilution "for the westerners", which is exactly what I needed at the moment. But they were also intentionally cryptic, some parts were intentionally obscured against non-initiates, and I couldn't figure out some things at all. But I was never stupid. I did figure out quite a lot. The funniest part was, the translation was intentionally quite literal, non-poetic, and the structure was incredibly close to the Sanskrit way of thinking, which is quite different from what I was used to, but it did something to my mind, this alien structure of the language that I figured out through the translation, its mantric structure, and the

first change in my mind was to completely throw out all of my preconceived notions about the Hinduism, because the text I had in my hands looked like the superset of all my ideas about what Buddhism was. It looked like something that deals with a direct knowledge and experience of the transcendental, of a positive spiritual principle called Brahman, which saturates the physical reality in a way in which sounded very much like an attempt of describing exactly the thing I was looking for: the higher level of reality than the physical one, and some way of figuring it out.

That's when it hit me: this thing was written thousands of years ago and it's about exactly the thing I managed to vaguely figure out just days ago. And then the other thing hit me. I didn't find it by accident. There's no way in hell I could've found that book by accident. In fact, it is so incredibly rare, I only found another copy once, in two decades. There was only one copy in the entire city, and it was exactly in the library where I went to find books, and I was specifically guided to find it. That reality which is more fundamental than matter, it's not something remote, it's not something beyond reach. It's not something in some backwater corner of the Universe, at its farthest limits. It's between every atom, and inside every atom. It's inside my mind, and it's the stuff my mind exists in, and is made of, together with all the atoms. Because if it's software, if it's a simulation, then it creates every atom in my body at every single point in time. And it's the stuff I'm aware with, it's the stuff I'm aware of, and it wants to be found. It wants to be known, and it knows me better than I know myself, because my mind is but a small fraction, and That is the whole. I had my new vector. And I was motivated so hard, it's beyond my ability to describe.

The thing is, I always had a feeling that “something” unknown, aware and huge guides my life in some unknown direction, but if anything, that only confused me more, because I thought I knew what it couldn't be. It couldn't be God, because that concept was not in my good grace. I had too many bad experience with idiots

who believed in God, and if those people believe in something, it's almost certain not to exist. I'd be more inclined to look for answers in science fiction than religion, because science fiction was usually much smarter and made more sense. So I knew there was "something" there, but I had no idea what it was. Can't be God, but everything else is vague and unlikely, so I simply suspended any attempt to figure it out, until now. So I was the strangest kind of an atheist then: I was an expert in AT (autogenous training, a form of self-hypnosis and bio-feedback), and I had certain parapsychological capabilities which made any kind of vulgar materialism implausible for me, but at the same time I had a deeply rooted aversion toward anything that smelled of religion, because I was allergic to idiots and idiocy. If I had to think of an explanation, I'd rather invoke something along the lines of a disembodied David Bowman from the 2010: The Space Odyssey, than God. But that stuff was even less plausible than religion, so, as I said, I suspended my attempts of figuring it out.

My paradigm at that time wasn't the least bit foolish, even in hindsight. I'm actually quite proud of what I managed to figure out without any outside help. I figured out that there must be a higher order of reality within which the material Universe is defined as some kind of software. This higher reality must be spiritual in nature, and all instances of consciousness within physical matter are in fact points of intrusion of that higher spiritual reality into the lower; it's the exact opposite to the materialistic thinking, according to which mind is created by interaction of material components. No, the overmind influences the material components in order to manifest itself as a localized mind, and a complex human mind is the most likely point of strong intrusion. I thought I knew why I felt the presence: my mind was unusually strong and refined, and there must be some sort of an affinity or empathy which makes that higher consciousness like my mind, probably in the way people like fast cars. But my problem is, I felt nothing from it but presence. It was just there, it didn't give me any information or help me in any way I could see. It was just there, and though I couldn't tell how big it was, I could tell it's immensely

superhuman. It drove me crazy, honestly, to know it's there, but doesn't do anything, and I can't make it do anything either. Doesn't communicate, doesn't answer questions, just exists, and is immense, so much that I knew I only got the vaguest of glimpses. Even more maddening, I knew it was absolutely aware. It was more aware than I was, it was much smarter than I was, and deliberately didn't want to tell me anything whatsoever. I only knew it couldn't be God, because God is supposed to be a rather hysterical and pathetic character – I always felt that the God of religion is spiritually small and limited, someone concerned with sex and proper sacrifice of animals, jealous when someone worships some other tribal deity. A pathetic, petty person. The thing I felt couldn't be God, because I was a much smarter and better person than God, and this thing I felt was much bigger and better than I was. I can't tell you how I knew. It's something you feel, at least something I feel when I touch a person with my mind; as I said, I had innate parapsychological powers of not really insignificant kind. I could feel the quality of one's consciousness, the general emotions, refinement, general attitude, tenor and depth. I could even influence people – stop someone's pain temporarily, for instance. So I had plenty of first hand experience with getting the “taste” of someone's quality of consciousness. Touch some and you know they are dumb as a brick. Touch some, they are concerned with very ordinary things and are predictable. Others are deeper, more refined, subtle, powerful; I didn't feel many of those, but I did feel some. But this someone within my consciousness, this vast presence, or, to be more accurate, the shadow of a hint of a presence, it was not merely vast. It was beyond my comprehension – I didn't know if it had any limits at all, because what I knew mostly amounted to a list of stuff I didn't know. Basically, my profound interest in the nature of reality had a very practical reason behind it: I burned to know how this thing was possible and what kind of reality could possibly encompass a thing like that. Is it something material, or is it something that thinks matter?

And now I had a book in my hands that described, in vague and

cryptic terms, something that had the biggest intersection with my experience of anything I've ever read, anywhere. I wasn't sure that I was perceiving Brahman, because some things didn't quite match; for instance, the experiences of Brahman were supposed to be cosmic, non-dualistic, and there should be loss of perceived difference between self and That, and I always perceived a difference, and the experience was always just a hint, just enough for me to know that something exists, but insufficient for more. But the concept of Brahman, and the related concept of Ishvara as an intrusion point of Brahman into maya, the illusory software-Universe, it all made more sense to me than anything I encountered thus far. And I figured out something else, too: yoga was not some stupid and useless circus act. In fact, I already did stuff that could qualify as yoga – the AT practice, constant awareness of the Transcendental, enhanced concentration and focus. Switching into advanced practice was very easy for me, and I almost immediately started to do things that can be described as advanced raja-yoga, simply by doing intentionally what I already did half-consciously.

This Yoga Upanishad book looked like a more sophisticated, more mature version of a worldview I started forming just recently, and I practically swallowed it that afternoon. Many things were still vague, and I couldn't tell how much of what they are describing has anything to do with what I happened to experience, but it was by far the best match I ever hoped to find, and at that point I modified my definition of myself and what I was doing. What I was doing, and what I wanted to do more and better, is yoga. There seemed to be evidence for this practice causing full emergence of the latent, low-level realization, and if I did that, there was a good chance that I could figure out more, and most important of all, I wasn't inventing that stuff. Thousands of years ago, there were guys who were better at this than I was. I felt great about that, because it was the first time in my life that I felt that someone actually knew something about what I was perceiving internally, and not just something – it looked like the ancient yogis of the upanishads had it completely figured out. This was the right place to learn. So I did things that were a combination of AT and things I

figured out from the upanishads, and things started really happening, I felt a very powerful thing that I can only describe as a mental “om” sound, but not really mental because everything in me resonated with it to the point I actually got scared because the Upanishads were all about reducing contamination from the body or you die when things start happening, and at that time I was smoking a pack and a half a day, eating meat and getting drunk when really depressed (not very often, but still...), so I thought, this is not good, I look like a description of someone who's gonna die when this starts happening, so I stopped everything, scared shitless as I was, and decided I'd better take things seriously, like no smoking, no drinking, no nothing. I didn't go vegetarian because I thought I'd have nothing to eat if not for meat so it didn't sound like a good idea, but it bothered me still because that stuff that shook me, it looked like it could wreck me completely in a few seconds, so yeah, I tended to take the scriptural warnings very seriously after that. Like, wow: this stuff actually works. Incredibly so. That stuff was thousands of times smarter than anything I expected to find. I expected a bunch of primitive ceremonial nonsense, in the order of invoking some voodoo deity that's going to inflict seven years of bad sex on you if you fail to sacrifice it a goat, or dressing up in some weird traditional garment and dancing. What I did find looked as if someone, thousands of years ago, made a leap of thought similar to what I made based on my knowledge of modern physics and limited personal experience with transcendence, and then people spent additional thousands of years working out a rational system of thought around that. It was immensely impressive.

An interesting change in my thinking at that point was that I could no longer dismiss any form of spiritual practice out of hand. What looked silly at first glance, and here I mean prayers to anthropomorphic deities, in the light of the upanishadic model of reality looked like a sensible form of spiritual technology. Because, if you want to identify and focus your inner aspect of Brahman, the best way to do it is to isolate and “illuminate” the neural networks that hold the closest equivalent, the thing that is

most closely associated with the transcendental, and to direct positive emotions towards that, in order to open up towards it, invite it and include it within your current comprehension of self. The concept of prayer and devotion to God looks quite sensible in this context, and all the kitsch the religions build around it looks like a form of a cargo cult, a degenerate form of the authentic phenomenon, or, in a better scenario, an aid for concentration. I was familiar with that concept because I used music for the same end, so I understood how someone could find some form of religious imagery useful.

In short, religions are far less silly than it might appear to the “rational” atheists. The heterogenous nature of religious iconography doesn't necessarily imply heterogenous nature of the subject of spiritual experience, but heterogenous nature of the psychological structures formed by upbringing and the civilizational context that formed a person, so that the structures within human consciousness, that one can use to touch the transcendental, are vastly diverse and individual. Once I had this symbolic key to the interpretation of the sphere of religious experience, I started making progress. I won't go into describing my own personal spiritual experiences because most of it is intimate and intransmissible, but let's just say that I can confirm that the theory of Vedanta¹ is not “theory”, in a way the American creationists speak of the evolution, but theory in a sense of a sum of scientifically processed, certain and experimentally confirmed knowledge. It's no hypothesis, it's a science every bit as much as the modern physics, and should be taken most seriously because its veracity is verifiable through personal experience. The foundation of reality is indeed Brahman and not physical matter, and this Brahman exists within the human spirit as atman, the personal Self, the quiet, subdued spark of a greater reality, which is more than merely “cosmic” in dimensions, because the Cosmos is its small subset. In the context of Brahman, the entire material Universe is something of a dream, an illusion superimposed on reality, not

1 <http://vedanta.org/vedanta-overview/>

unlike one of many applications that run on a computer that is Brahman. When people use the concept of God as an intellectual wrapper around the sense of Presence that follows them through life, what they really do is keep their spiritual eye focused on the aspect of eternity that touches their being as they pass through space and time.

What am I really saying here? People possess an immensely precious gem, and “science” (or, more accurately, the people who believe in 11-dimensional invisible and unprovable entities) keeps convincing them that this gem is a worthless piece of rock, the way Lavoisier and his smartass academic friends convinced the custodians of the museums that there are no stones in the sky, and so they threw away their precious meteorite collections. Science is still a stupid and primitive discipline which still fails to recognize the fundamental layer of existence, the same way it historically failed to recognize many real and existing things, treating everything it doesn't know as illusory, nonexistent and primitive. Take it seriously where it knows what it's talking about, but otherwise be quite free to ignore it.

“No” to religion

Pascal's psychosis

Is it possible that it is all true? Jehova, Jesus, Allah, Buddha, Krishna, walking on water, raising the dead, the intercession of saints, reincarnation, heaven, hell, all the miracles, theologies and philosophies? Is it possible that all of it has a foundation in Brahman, that all the religious structures are merely the different vessels for the same truth, that they are merely the different wellsprings for the same water?

That's probably the first thing that comes through the mind of everyone who went through a violent change of paradigm the way I did. This kind of a conversion is a turbulent event, especially when it is, as it was in my case, accompanied by a quick succession of powerful mystical experiences. What happened to me amidst all that can be best described as Pascal's psychosis.

Blaise Pascal¹ was probably the greatest thinker of his time, who gave an incredibly great contribution to science for just one person, and then he experienced a religious conversion. This was the point in which he turned his life upside down, revised everything, and whatever he did before conversion he declared to be sinful worldly arrogance, started preoccupying himself with petty religious trivia in order to please God, and thus wasted his life on nonsense.

In short, this is the point where one should write the same words of warning that are occasionally found in public toilets: “this is where even the bravest ones shit themselves”. The point of conversion, where a man is forced to radically change his worldview because he got whacked upon his head by reality, and the light of new realizations makes him unable to keep his prior convictions and

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaise_Pascal

instead has to accept that what he considered to be utmost folly is in fact the truth, is possibly the single most dangerous point in the whole spectrum of spirituality, and this is where I almost got screwed. The realization that the dumbest of believers was closer to the truth of God than I was, at least in a formal sense, had a devastating effect on me, and here I questioned my entire personality as it was before that point. I judged almost all of it as sinful, arrogant and godless, and whatever it is that religious people think of, with purpose of self-depreciation. I experienced the full extent of the spiritual abyss which the “spiritual people” so highly praise: humility and modesty. During a several months time, I happened to get so spiritual it could make a normal person vomit; I'd have made all the saints proud, except that I completely lost touch with that spark of Brahman which I had no problem holding in my mind's eye during my “sinful past”. In my karma-vegetarian-reincarnation-celibacy condition, I was as empty as any of the Hare Krishna imbeciles that used to scandalize me earlier.

Fortunately, I was somewhat better than they were at watching the signs in me and around me and I quickly figured out where all of it was leading me, that it wasn't yoga, but exactly the spiritually empty religion that used to disgust me before, and made me rather stick to science. After several months of spiritual darkness, I learned an important lesson: not everything labelled “God” and “spirituality” is of value. Brahman doesn't shine through the places religious people would expect – through “spiritual people”, holy scriptures, churches and the like. On the contrary, the vast majority of those things are spiritually sterile and empty; I initially thought them worthless, and after a while I made a full circle and realized that my initial assessment was correct. The true spirituality, the intrusion of Brahman, is where there are brilliance, innovation, new thought, vivid joy – did I say brilliance? Brilliance. It's the essence of what could be called “life”, not in a biological, but spiritual sense, and is a direct opposite of what “spiritual people” usually look like. They are usually dry and lifeless, and more than just a little bit mad. Some are so dry they actually look fragile. Piety is a mighty force, that removes every single bit of God from

a man, turning the former dwelling of life into an undead shell.

What I mistakenly thought in my moment of conversion, was that the realization that God is the foundation of reality is a victory for religion. No. The realization that God is the foundation of reality is a *defeat* of religion. The religions are as empty of God as the most vulgar forms of atheism or satanism. It's all rubbish. No, the religions are not the different vessels for the one God, they are the different vessels into which lunatics crawl in order to hide from God, who is the foundation of reality, the source of all that could be called positive spiritual qualities: awareness, intelligence, bliss, ecstasy, joy, vitality, reality. The religions are the dungeons for the mind, into which people come to hide from the magnitude of reality which is God – the living, true, brilliant God, not the paper cutout they pray to, and wise men piss on.

When you put it all like that it sounds simple, but it took me a while to get there – some pieces I got immediately, but some mental shackles that religion imposes upon consciousness took years to get out of, through gradual understanding of the principles involved.

Knowledge of God is not a triumph of religion over atheism, as the followers of dry superstitions, that turn people into worse sinners than they found, arrogantly assume. Knowledge of God is a triumph of reality over illusion, triumph of truth over lies, of joy over suffering, of knowledge over spiritual darkness. Depending on where a man is as a person, it will be either his triumph or defeat, regardless of any label - “believer”, “agnostic”, “atheist” or whatever one might call his worldview. What's important is where he stands related to reality, truth, bliss, awareness, courage, the explosion of happiness in the knowledge of the truth. That's what matters.

The believers are often the much worse idiots than the atheists, and if such idiots delude themselves by thinking that the Absolute , the

foundation of all reality, the thing that makes the electrons and Galaxies dance, is something that will validate them in their idiocy and let them enter some kind of “heaven”, they are very mistaken. If someone believed in nonsense and fought against the truth, then the living, true God is his enemy, as much as he might consider himself a true believer. Vedanta is not a triumph of religion, it's something completely other. Vedanta is the end of religion, as much as it is the end of any form of superstition, ignorance, folly or spiritual darkness. Vedanta is closer to being the triumph of science, the science that explores the world and understands meaningful patterns where the religious darkness saw nothing but confirmation of its silly dogma for millennia. They thought they served God if they said “God is great” many times, and they behaved as if God is a petty provincial tyrant and an idiot. Religion is a great insult to the true, living God. In most cases, it's a greater offense towards God to be a believer than to be an atheist, because there are some things you can believe only if you kissed virtue and reason bye-bye.

The true God indeed is the fundamental reality, but God of the most believers is closer to being the fundamental delusion, in the words of Dawkins. For most people, God is a sack they wear on their heads and wander around like the blind fools that they are, so that they wouldn't have to ask questions about the world and still have an instant-answer, something to be mixed with water and readily made in all circumstances. God taught by the religions is a form of spiritual anesthesia, and Marx was indeed right to compare it to the opiates.

I am making a full circle now. I disagree with the apologists of atheism such as Dawkins in many things, but I must without any reservations admit that their opponents are often such damn idiots, that Dawkins is the whip of God sent to finally kick their stupid butts and wake them from their slumber, in which they stupidly vegetate like fat cows in a barn. For this reason I don't really know what to do with Dawkins – to argue with him or to buy him a drink.

Emergence of the Logos

So we established that God isn't a thing among other things, nor is he a wizard who occasionally waves his wand to squeeze himself in the gaps between the scientifically understood and the possible.¹ God is not the daddy in the clouds, nor any other thing within the material Universe. The truth is much more radical: the material Universe is a thing within God.

It needs to be understood that this is not a new concept, in the same way in which things that fall aren't a new concept, while the theory of gravity is. Since the dawn of time, people understood that there is “something”, and attempted to understand that “something” through a multitude of religious myths, which had evolved in complexity and sophistication as the older version didn't satisfy the more developed thinking and perception. Some of those early endeavors were neither naïve nor silly, unlike the general impression about those things²; surely, one cannot expect any semblance of scientific approach in this earliest phase of human thought, because that's not how people used to think back then – they used to express themselves by means of a somewhat sinesthetic poetry, but recognition of One in the Many is a very old concept.

The scientific concepts such as thermodynamics, electricity, evolution, particle physics and modern cosmology have no intersection with the worldview of those ancient men, who saw events in the sky as a reflections of the mood of the various divine beings – the thunder was Indra's battle with Vritra³, the waters were under the lordship of Varuna, the earth is the goddess

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_of_the_gaps

2 http://www.stephen-knapp.com/vedic_culture_hinduism_a_short_introduction.htm

3 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vritra>

Prithivi, the air was ruled by Vayu, and fire by Agni, a mediating deity between the world of gods and the world of men, taking the offerings to the gods. It all has its foundation in One, in Brahman, from whom all the aspects of the manifested world emerge, without clear separation of the spiritual and the material, because all material things have spiritual significance, and everything spiritual has its aspect and “body” in the material.

If we subtract the unscientific elements and translate this into modern terms, the core of the Vedic people's philosophy is “emergence”, the concept according to which the plurality of phenomena arises from the transcendental potential, the birth of Many from One, in a way not dissimilar to the way modern science observes the appearance, expansion and evolution of the material world, where various cosmic events can be perceived as the mechanisms used by the Universe in order to produce the increasingly complex forms. The third population stars¹ are made out of hydrogen created in the Big Bang – they are huge, unstable because of the lack of the heavy elements, and they combust their fuel quickly, to explode violently after only several millions of years after their formation, spraying their constituent matter across the interstellar space, where it is mixed with interstellar hydrogen, and gravitationally condenses into the next generation of stars, of the second population, richer in heavy elements created not so much through fusion, but more in the violent explosions of the third population supernovae. The second population stars are more durable and stable – many of them shine to this day, billions of years since their formation, and many of them already spent their fuel and exploded as the second population supernovas, creating in this process the elements heavier than iron (which is the heaviest of elements producible by fusion), and spraying the entire periodic system of elements across the interstellar space, where the light and the heavy elements are mixed and gravity again condenses them into not only the first population stars, but also a

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metallicity>

protoplanetary disk¹ which condenses into the planets of a solar system. What is interesting about the first population stars is their incredible stability and longevity. Not only that they do not significantly vary their radiation output, but they are also incredibly durable. Once, the astronomers in their Copernican mood had an inclination of classifying the Sun as an insignificant, average star on the periphery of important cosmic events, but today we know this is far from the truth. The Sun is an incredible star, a result of the billions of years of evolution of the physical matter. The Solar system contains practically all possible elements from the periodic table (essentially all that are stable enough to exist long enough for us to find them), which is a stunning fact, having in mind that the Universe started with hydrogen and some helium, and that everything heavier than that was formed in the stars – some through fusion, some through the supernova explosions, and that it took no less than two generations of stars to produce the elements such as lead, gold, uranium or thorium. This vast richness of elements makes it possible for an even greater richness of chemical compounds to be formed, including life. The most fascinating thing in all that is that the complexity of the Universe ever increases. Even in the greatest cosmic catastrophes that assaulted the Earth and caused the great bouts of extinction, the resulting situation after the fact was not the reduction of complexity and turning the evolutionary clock backwards, as one might expect, but the exact opposite – the degree of complexity keeps increasing, and the cataclysms merely mop up the existing biological niches, opening the way for evolution of different kinds of biological organisms. The whole thing is just incredible. When you observe the Universe as scientists do, by slicing it into increasingly smaller bits and pieces and observing each of them separately, it might all seem like an accident, but when you look at the whole, it looks like the Universe uses different mechanisms in order to produce the ever increasing complexity of structures, and it's no accident, it's a pattern which can be observed since Big Bang onwards. The stars are the way the Universe produces the

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protoplanetary_disk

chemical elements, the planets are the way it produces the complex molecules, life is the way it produces the far more complex multimolecular organized systems, and who knows, maybe the self-aware organic organisms are the way Universe tries to produce the self-aware intelligent computers, which in turn might lead to some form of disembodied intelligence, which will be the true crown of Creation. We can therefore observe the pattern of “emergence” in the Universe, the phenomenon of ever increasing complexity arising from the simple initial conditions, and this pattern gives strong credence to the theory of directed, convergent development, acknowledging the possibility that this development might not be guided towards this or that concrete form, but simply designed to produce the ever increasing complexity of the systems, and by the way it appears to have an inclination to wipe out the dead ends, the points where growth flatlines.

I remember reading an article on religions as a kid in a children's encyclopedia called “The world around us”, which was an excellent example of materialistic ideology that was aggressively promoted in communist states. This article was arguing something very similar to the arguments of Dawkins: religion is a primitive form of human thought, which represents natural phenomena in form of a vast menagerie of gods and spirits, and in the modern times we have science which brought order to this chaos, so that now we no longer have any need for explaining lightning and fire with gods, and this scientific attitude is called atheism.

It all makes perfect sense if one knows very little about the true content of religions, and if science is in its very early form of development. As the physical theories diverged from the coarse materialism of the 19th century theories, reflected by the communist ideology that was imposed as official dogma in some countries, so did the attitudes of scientists evolve.¹ In a wider

1 <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2010/04/12/how-scientists-really-feel-about-religion/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relationship_between_religion_and_science#

sense, science provided answers only to one of the aspects of the problem that held people's interest since the dawn of time – answers about how this Universe and ourselves came to be. The answers about the essential nature of the world, as well as the answers about the purpose and meaning of the world, remain wholly within the domain of religion, and its answers might still prove to be quite valid. The ancient Vedic religion has its symbolic way of talking about emergence of Many from One, which is the same thing science talks about – of course, giving an abundance of good answers about the mechanisms of the process, so that we can now freely discard the aspect of the creationist myths that deals with the process of creation of the world we perceive. On the other hand, the aspect of the creationist myths that deals with the purpose of Creation may not be all that naïve, and if we strip the metaphoric and poetic layers away, the true message of the ancient texts might prove to be valid even in the context of all modern findings.

The thing we lost in the process is the possibility of literal interpretation of the texts that were never meant to be interpreted literally. We lost the layer of the religious “cargo cult”, which gives birth of all kinds of religious idiots. The science therefore didn't “kill God”, it killed the stupid version of religious thought, and forced religion to go back to the fundamental concepts.

Some things that once seemed to be silly no longer are. For instance, from the position of the 19th century science, belief in a personal God, who answers prayers and cares about individual destinies seemed childish and irrational – in the context of the vast cosmic expanses discovered by science, what possible sense would it make to believe in a God who deals with individual persons, who are but specks of dust on a tiny blue dot of a planet, orbiting about an unimportant star in one galaxy among millions? Believing in such a God seemed crazy, which is why Marx, as a prominent

[The attitudes of scientists towards religion](#)

philosopher of the time, compared religion with a lullaby and anesthesia for the mind, invented by the exploiters in order to lull the masses into a more easily exploitable state. That is not necessarily incorrect, but it is also nowhere near to being the whole truth. The thing is, the 19th century physics didn't know what we know today about the subatomic physics. It believed in the firm, indivisible atoms that are the foundation of the whole Universe, atoms that behave according to the mechanical, deterministic laws in which no place is left for God. Today we know it's a children's tale, that there are no indivisible atoms, that the fundamentals of the physical reality are the particles that are closer to being mathematical concepts than particles, that an electron can interfere with itself, that a particle can be split into two parts which keep behaving as a single mathematical unit¹. These are the things that mess with one's brain, and even Einstein had problems with them, thinking that this cannot exist, but the experiments showed that it could. This is why the quantum physicists favor the “shut up and calculate” principle, meaning, “it doesn't have to make intuitive sense, what's important is whether it's true”. The Universe is no longer a tidy, orderly place of tiny cogs and wheels that turn predictably. It ceased to make intuitive sense. So basically, it's not the particles, but mathematical concepts that make up the Universe on the quantum scale. And mathematical concepts aren't really matter.

From the position of the string theory, which attempts to unite the quantum physics and the general relativity, the concept of resonance through which information emerges out of the apparent chaos of the physical Universe is neither silly nor naïve. Also, from the position of Vedanta, which deals with the deeper layer of reality, Brahman is not only “big”, in a sense that it encompasses and goes much beyond the physical Universe. Brahman is also “small”, it is smaller than the smaller particle, because all the quantum phenomena arise within Brahman, which is the most basic prerequisite of all phenomena (like hardware is to software),

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum_entanglement

which gives birth to the understanding that the reality of Brahman is most intimately present in all phenomena and experience, but it is not recognized as such because of illusion (maya).

If we take a look at the theory of emergence from this position, acknowledging the fact that complexity in fact did emerge in the Universe as a function of time, what also starts making sense is the philosophic and religious concept of Logos, the meaning that emerges in the world and through it, the dawning sense. The religious texts, when you read them in this light, suddenly no longer look like primitive contemplation of a menagerie of the meaningless deities invented in order to explain the natural phenomena. Let us start by reading the prologue of the John's gospel:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This one was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and apart from him not one thing came into being that has come into being. In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Does it suddenly make sense? "Logos", "Word", "Sense" was in the beginning only in God, in Brahman on the other side of time and space, and of name and form. The process of creation is the emergence of sense through the relative world of multitude, the process of emergence of information, of Logos, through the increasing complexity of the manifested reality, through the increasingly complex atoms, molecules, multimolecular entities, the increasingly complex forms of life, the conscious life and reason, beginnings of abstract and transcendental thought, until "in the fullness of time" the Logos emerges in fullness, in form of a God-man, an "Avatar", a self-aware structure within the relative world, which in fullness reflects the transcendental Logos from which the world itself emerged, and which arose in the world in fullness of its significance, thus closing the circle: the light shines

in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

“All Creation praises the Lord”. This phrase which you probably heard many times is not a mere phrase, those are not empty words. The purpose of emergence is exactly that: praise to the Lord, emergence of the self-aware God in the relative, emergent world, a God born, not created, from the Lord. Because consciousness is not some emergent phenomenon of the brain – no, the brain, as well as life and complex matter, are the emergent phenomena of consciousness, of Brahman that is all pervasive, and all the above phenomena simply tap into it and manifest some of its potential.

It would be nice if the dimwitted priests who mechanically speak the words of praise to the Lord had any understanding of their true meaning, the real meaning of the formulations given to them by the mystics and the saints, which they parrot without understanding. The problem with religion is that its inexactness and unscientific character enable the huge gap between essence and form. The saints think one thing, but by reading their words the followers manage to get a completely different meaning, which is why religion is so sensitive to information decay, and the only likely cure I can think of is science. Science in its original form is a very primitive, silly preoccupation, but at least it is exact. In science, you know what you're doing and why you're doing it. You understand little, but that which you do understand, you understand completely, and the others can reproduce the same understanding based on a clear, well defined process. Paradoxically, the only way for religion to understand its inner, true quality of consciousness and thoughts of its holy founders is for science, through gradual progress, to reach this point of full understanding of the fundamental principles involved, so that there would be no more need for religion, as a combination of empty dogma and misunderstood poetry, parroted by those who fail to reproduce the spiritual achievements of the original thinkers. As science overran astrology and alchemy, so will it overrun religion, and as this process was unpleasant for the astrologers and alchemists, there's

no reason to believe that the religious people will find it pleasant, either. This process, however, will be the fulfillment of the longings of the original creators of religion, the saints and the mystics whose insights will finally receive an exact confirmation, far better and more solid than the fragile vessel of metaphor and poetry, which historically served the purpose of describing God.

Ekam sat, ...

When there is talk about a religious system that would follow from the concept of God as a fundamental reality, from which the material Universe emanates, pantheism is usually the first concept that arises in a discussion – the concept according to which God became the Universe, in a way.

But really, pantheism is the first system that can be discarded from any serious consideration, simply because of its impracticalities and mismatch with observation. From a practical viewpoint, if everything is God, then there is no difference between that and a system in which nothing is God, ie. atheism. If everything is God, then an oak tree is also God, but from a practical viewpoint, if someone prays to an oak, he's more crazy than religious. Prayer to God makes sense if God is a supreme principle which can be contacted and a relationship formed, and in the context of pantheism, there is no such concept. For all intents and purposes, a pantheist Universe is one without God.

As for the mismatch with observation, a pantheist universe doesn't work well with the observation of the emergence of Logos, or a world which manifests the increasingly complex systems as it “learns” to tap into the potential of Brahman and manifest it. In pantheism there basically is no concept of order arising from chaos, because in pantheism, there is no difference between the two. If everything is God, then the quantitative differences between phenomena and systems have no significance. If everything is equally God, then a rock of equal weight is qualitatively the same as your brain. This is contrary to the observation, which says that there are both quantitative and qualitative differences between things and phenomena. It states that some things are more complex and sophisticated than others,

and as such they are a greater degree of emergence of Logos into manifestation, compared with the other things. If we compare a rock, a fish, reptile, monkey and a human, it is obvious that those entities are not equal, they are not the same order of magnitude of complexity, and a pattern of increasing sophistication is perceived, a pattern of gradual expansion of the spiritual principle into the world, first as the evolution of life, and then as the evolution of the psyche, which is intuitively recognized as a higher dimension of the same vector as the evolution of matter and the evolution of life.

All phenomena in the world are therefore not in equal amount the manifestations of God, despite God being the foundation of the entire material reality; by analogy, despite all programs running on a computer being, in a specific way, the computer, there is a significant difference between a “Hello world!” program of three lines of code, and a Photoshop. It's all really the computer, but the latent power of the computer is manifested to a greater extent through a complex, sophisticated application, while a “Hello world!” sample manifests the mere minimum of potential, demonstrating the mere possibility of the existence of software, and just a hint of the hardware's true power. There is a similar difference between a rock and human consciousness. A rock is a mere “Hello world!” degree of the manifestation of the Logos, and a human (at least in his fully manifested potential) is a very complex application, the extent of complexity at which the computer, within the simulation, becomes self-aware, a videogame character who knows that he is the computer, thus closing the ouroboros, the loop of emergence of the Logos into self-realization, a point in which the descent of God into the world and ascent of Man towards God both converge into a point where they cease to be perceived as separate phenomena.

Pantheism is, therefore, out, and it doesn't deserve a great deal of consideration. A concept in which everything is God doesn't make sense in the light of experience which shows that some things are God more than others, and in the context of a system in which the

goal is to become more of a God – if possible, to become fully God, thus losing any identification with the aspects of the “primordial darkness” and chaos out of which the Logos emerges.

Atheism at this point makes as much sense as it would make to negate the physics: if we pretend that the protons don't exist because we cannot personally experience them, the result will be a limitation of our mind, but if we negate something that we don't perceive anyway, it will make no practical difference. So one could ask, how harmful is atheism? It would be harmful if someone who perceived some aspects of God decided to suppress those perceptions with an atheistic worldview, but if he feels nothing of the sort, and if his atheism is a sincere result of his lack of perception, not a result of an inner conflict and a battle against the unwanted perception, then atheism will have no negative consequences. If and when the authentic perception of the Divine does occur, atheism will become an unsustainable worldview and will need to be discarded, but before that point it hardly makes sense. It's better to be an honest atheist than a hypocritical believer.

Deism, as a system where the only point of contact between God and the Universe, is the point of creation, doesn't really deserve any serious consideration; if God is the foundation of the reality of all that is real, and the entire Universe resides in His spirit, what other “place” is there for God to be, if not in the universal “here”? Deism can work only if Universe is perceived as something completely other from God, but then, how would we ever know of God, and what point would there be in considering such God in any way? As I said, this system doesn't deserve our serious consideration.

Theism is something quite different: the concept according to which God creates the Universe but remains connected with it in some sort of a relationship. Theism is always a possibility, but more in a latent than in a persistent manner. God who “dreams” the Universe can therefore at any point “intrude” into the dream by

“shining” more light of his reality into any point of this manifested Universe and thus forming an apparent “God point” to focus the outwardly pointed attention of the conscious manifested beings. The theory cannot exclude this possibility, and this provides intellectual space into which we can fit prayer, visions, revelations, miracles and Divine incarnations. Hinduism has the concept of an avatar, a point of God's intrusion into the world with some specific goal or purpose, usually in a time of crisis, where an incarnate God leads mankind through crisis and into a new age. Theism is comparable to a situation where one dreams a dream from a third-person perspective, observing some persons doing something, and at a certain point he becomes first-person aware, from a viewpoint of one of the characters involved. Theism is therefore a situation where the dreamer wakes within his dream as one of the characters, and starts acting in his dream as first-person aware. Since the dreamer has, in fact, limitless power to change anything within his dream, this explains the “miracles” within the material world. From a viewpoint of the material beings, those miracles are something impossible, but from the dreamer's viewpoint, it's just a dream and everything is possible, including complete awakening, where only the dreamer remains, and all the characters within the dream are absorbed and dissolved within his spirit. The miracles performed by the Divine incarnations are therefore completely understandable and easy to process once you understand that Universe is the software and not the hardware, dream and not the dreamer, and that God can, awake in his own dream, in form of a lucid dream, simply change any of the “laws” in the dream. The beings who perceive his dream as their reality, viewing it from the perspective of it being “the” reality, can neither comprehend nor repeat those miracles, and in that sense only God can perform miracles and change the parameters of the Universe. Any being that awakens within the dream and thus closes the ouroboros of creation by knowing itself as the dreamer, and attains the fullness of the emergence of Logos, the self-realization of Brahman, or whatever else you might call it, is essentially identical to the concept of Divine incarnation in the world, or a personal God as he is defined by the theism. Such God-points might be plural, but in

spite of the plurality of the intrusion points, there is but one light that breaks through the dark screen; Brahman is one in all the Gods. Monotheism is therefore but an illusion, just like polytheism. The real truth is much closer to henotheism¹: one Brahman, one Logos, but many Gods that reflect and manifest the various aspects of One. Intuitive understanding of this concept makes it possible for the Hindus to have a completely monotheistic concept of God and at the same times to worship a plurality of “deities”, the aspects of One, depending on the current situation, needs and affinities; whether it's Shiva, Parvati or baby Krishna, depends on the same mental configuration that makes a Christian pray to the Father, to Mary or to baby Jesus, not seeing any kind of polytheism in his actions. In the words of Rigveda, "*Ekam sat, viprah bahudha vadanti*" – He is One, and the wise call Him by many names.

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henotheism>

The morality of the darshan

What kind of morality follows from the worldview in which God is the fundamental reality? What kind of morality follows from living conscious of the presence of the living God?¹

Brahman is the totality of the positive spiritual qualities. Everything that is perceived as good in the world, everything blissful, powerful, great and just, is such because there is some reflection and a spark of Brahman in it. Whatever experience that is great, good and uplifting in fact came into existence due to the increased conductivity for Brahman, because of the heightened intrusion of Brahman into the personal consciousness of the person having the experience.

A spiritual experience is therefore significantly different from what people might imagine if they lack it – they usually imagine some voice from heaven or whatever, essentially a situation where the recipient of the experience remains the same, enriched only for the received information. That's what a hallucination would look like, or some other form of deception. A spiritual experience is a radically different thing – it transforms the recipient in a way a light bulb is transformed when someone turns on the electricity: he is, metaphorically speaking, filled with spiritual light, he becomes transformed, and the veil of illusion and, for the lack of a better word, humanity, is torn from him. The situation is analogous to that which happens when clouds leave the sun and it shines in full strength, or if someone removed you from a sensory deprivation chamber and took you out for a beautiful sunny day in nature, with the difference that spiritual light doesn't hurt the eyes, but you are able to immediately absorb its full force. A spiritual experience is

1 sanskrt.: darśana, hindi: darśan; a vision of God, dwelling in the presence of God.

therefore a change in the recipient of experience and his ability to perceive that which already surrounds him, and not an experience in a classic sense. It's a change that is not a conversion, or awakening but, for the lack of a better word, realization, in a sense of becoming more real. Of course, if we get more technical, not all experiences are alike. For instance, my first real experience was that of the ananda aspect, the blissfulness of Brahman. It's something indescribable, among other things because no other form of physical, sensory joy has any semblance. Not orgasm, not common joy, nor anything the hormones, drugs or chemistry can do to the brain; nothing comes close. The closest comparison would be an image of an atomic explosion, if you can imagine an atomic bomb of happiness of the absolute fulfillment, eternal reality of one's own nature which is an explosion, a scream of happiness of a self-realized eternity – a feeling of God's presence as joy, such joy that it is clear why the saints always describe the angels as the ones standing before the Lord and singing His praise, but there are neither words nor song, just bliss that is He. Nobody can truly understand the depths of the spiritual darkness in which he lived until he feels Him, because it is only this light that can illuminate the extents of darkness and define the contrast, serve as a point of reference. Otherwise, everybody who lives in the deepest darkness thinks he's fine and feels great, because they are unable to face or realize the truth of their condition because they would simply fall apart in madness and horror, so there are unconscious mechanisms that protect them from that fate. Only when the darkness of human existence is stripped away from the soul, and when it finds itself in the presence of God, can one experience that incredible elation and relief, expansion, joy, reality – that is most closely comparable with the power of a nuclear blast, if we poetically describe it as the light that escaped from the bondage of the coarse matter, only in a spiritual sense. You can call this experience “indescribable”, but that doesn't suffice, because many trinkets and trivia are indescribable, from orgasm to the scent of flowers. Had you spent your entire life paralyzed like Hawking, unable to move anything but your eyes, and additionally you had a brain injury that makes you incapable of feeling anything more

than dull stupor, and at a single moment all that is stripped away from you, the entire mental capacity of greatest genius is made yours, together with the greatest mobility and dexterity, and knowledge that that, indeed, is your true state of being, and not a paralyzed brain damaged state, which is but an illusion, and the reality is the greatest glory and clarity and goodness, and that this reality has no end, that where you going is forever, well that's a limited way of describing the nature of an experience of ananda, the joy of Brahman.

Well, there's our foundation of morality: to remove from our consciousness and from the consciousness of other beings the ignorance, illusion, spiritual darkness and evil, so that in their consciousness the light of Brahman can shine – to remove its opposites, to dissolve spiritual obstacles, to be a flame of Brahman that sets ablaze the dry grass of human reality. That's our true morality, that is the meaning of doing good, that is the meaning of living the truth. The ethical meaning of human existence is therefore clear. One has to live in a way that makes those who feel you, feel the song of the Ainur¹ and remember the shores of a distant land beyond Creation. How and what exactly doesn't matter. Your song is your own, and cannot be given to you, you need to make your own. From Brahman you take and create your own life in your own individual way, unrepeatable, unique, original, and you give something completely new, without any predefined limits. There are no ethical rules other than: be Brahman, and live so in the world. To refuse being Brahman and existing as Brahman is the foundation of all sin, if one understands sin as opposing the will of God, because the will of God is for Logos to be born in the world. The will of God is for Brahman to intrude into and exist in the world. That, if anything, is the lesson we must learn from the history of the Universe.

1 http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Music_of_the_Ainur

The Sims X: "The Reality"

"God is simple. Everything else is complex. Do not seek absolute values in the relative world of nature."

(an unknown sadhu to Yogananda)

God is very simple to understand and explain, but the complexities of the relative world are enormous. How is that possible, if God is endless and the Universe limited? Well, let's put it this way: the basic concepts of the theory of evolution are simple to understand, but once you enter the Amazon rainforest and observe the vast diversity and complexity of the lifeforms and ecosystems of that rainforest, your mind will seize up. The concept of computers and software might sound reasonably simple, but once you include the concept of virtual machines, application servers, java messaging and similar, even the experts can find the level of complexity unbearable. So something can begin as a simple concept, but with recursive branching and additional rules introduced on each layer things can quickly get out of hand, and become practically unmappable, especially if you attempt to map it from within the limitations imposed upon you by that very system. So, an attempt to understand the logic of the operating system of a computer in situation when your screen is occupied by a 3d game from which you cannot exit, well, let's say that you can understand that you're dealing with an application and not reality, you can understand that it's being executed on a computer, but you can hardly know whether it's running "on the iron" or within some virtualized branch, for instance in a virtual machine within a virtual machine that runs "on the iron". The primitive information tech of yesterday wasn't as good a material for analogies as the tech jungle of today, with its multiple layers of complexity and abstraction.

There are, therefore, many more things than just the material Universe and God. Various religions speak of the subtle spiritual worlds, and they are right, because such worlds indeed exist, although they are mostly described incoherently or naively. A while ago, I borrowed the concept of mahat-tattva from Hinduism in order to describe the concept of a “virtual machine” with a specific kind of “defining parameters”, within which the whole Universes are spawned as “applications” of a certain type. The material mahat-tattva is therefore something that defines the fundamental characteristics something needs to have in order to qualify as a material Universe, and it's therefore a “machine” that has a “material operating system” within which the material Universes are a possibility. I can't tell how accurate that model is in an absolute sense, but it is useful for understanding the problem. Our material Universe is therefore not executed directly “on the iron”, but there are several intermediary layers of abstraction between it and Brahman, and those layers are mostly “logical”, meaning they are perceived only through necessity of their existence, but they are also quite real, because they can nastily interfere with the attempts of understanding the reality.

In order to understand this unholy mess, we need more imagery. Let's say that an application runs on a virtual machine and not on the iron. What's the functional difference? For starters, some things are not real but emulated; for instance, the graphics card is not the true graphics card, but a simulated layer that draws not directly on the video memory, but on some virtual stream. By analogy, the sensory perception in the physical world is not really the perception of reality, but perception of an emulated layer. The senses, therefore, don't show you reality, but simulation. On the other hand, some things are real, for instance, when an application uses memory, it uses the real memory of the computer, only reserved for the emulator. Likewise, when an application is being run, its instructions are being run on the real CPU of the machine. The layer of abstraction doesn't influence those things, because if it were completely removed from hardware, nothing would work, at least not at any decent speed. The thing is, there is a layer of

indirection in some things, because of which they function somewhat differently than expected. Some of man's spiritual aspects point directly to Brahman, to the absolute reality, and that's the aspect which makes one a conscious being and not an automaton. Likewise, the subjective experiences such as realization, joy, reality etc. are Brahman, they are the intrusion points of some aspects of reality. The subjective experiences of that kind cannot be emulated, unlike the sensory inputs. It's really funny and discrediting for the materialistic thinking that all the things that the materialists deem "objective", and thus true and reliable, are in fact a simulation and not reality, while the subjective, which the materialists consider unreliable and questionable, is in fact the only real intrusion of reality into the whole circus. Only the subject is real in the whole story, that's the CPU that executes the instructions of an application, and everything else is a layered simulation – the graphics, sound, ports; it all points to the emulation layer and not real hardware.

Not all is illusory, far from it; only the matter is. The beings are usually quite real, and their mutual relationships are real, only the medium in which they interact is illusory, like the networked multiplayer games that are wildly popular in the recent years, which might also be a good explanation for the existence of this world: it probably started as some kind of a multiplayer Warcraft or Call of Duty, as a shared illusion, and in the meantime it became a serious problem, in the same way in which the multiplayer games can become a problem when you forget to eat or sleep and, for instance, die of starvation.

The psychology is clear – it suffices to observe the addictiveness of the modern multiplayer games and virtual realities, with increasingly believable gameplay and shared experience, we only need to extend it a bit further and we will end up with a completely plausible virtual reality in which we shape our character from zero, since birth, and in order to play it more successfully, or identify with the simulation, they'll probably invent a memory suppressor,

in order for the players to have no memory of their prior existence. Honestly, the entire thing terrifies me, because the souls apparently have that damn inclination for creating the recursive layers of illusion, each perfected until it's completely believable, ad nauseam. As if this world weren't enough of a virtual shared reality, for some it isn't enough so they will soon play a version of the "sims" that will plug right into their brains so that during the game they will have absolutely no perception of the physical layer of reality or remember any "pre-sims" form of existence.

How old is the material Universe, really? If we have in mind that time is a subjective category, without "subjects-players" involved it doesn't really make much sense, and so the entire simulated Universe until the appearance of the first players could have been spawned within mere moments, if we assume the infinite strength of "hardware" running the simulation. So essentially some 14 billions of years of the "history of the Universe" could have taken a single "click" to open, in order to create the plausible initial conditions for the continued simulation. So the concept of the "old Universe" that seems to be beyond question from a position of the materialistic science is actually quite an uncertain concept, completely influenced by the anthropic principle, according to which there is no difference whether a tree fell in the forest or not, if nobody hears the sound. If those 4.6 billion years (for Earth) or 14 billion years (for the Universe) weren't witnessed by an observer, for all intents and purposes they could be a single second of computer time, from the position of an absolutely powerful computer, on the outside of the simulation-time.

This is the point where a man grabs his head and desperately asks "what can we really know with any degree of certainty?"

Nothing material is firm or certain, I'm afraid, but nevertheless we can know many things with certainty. Your relationships with other beings are a reflection of reality, and they have an aspect of eternity in them. Your inner relationship with God is real, and

possesses an aspect of eternity. What you choose to do, the qualities of consciousness you decide to own and manifest, those are the aspects of your eternity and they outlive any illusion. But things like money, real-estate, things, manipulative games with the intent of accumulating influence and power, it's all smoke and mirrors, and the only aspect of eternity involved is the foolish nature of the one who chooses to entangle himself in this folly. In this sense, "career" is nonsense and folly, and family is something important and real, those are the real spiritual relationships between the real spiritual beings, and they outlive the illusion of the world, while chasing the shadows of matter has no value and represents an exercise in futility. Interestingly, this is exactly what the religions claim, that the relationships among people and their relationship with God are the only things that matter, and only they outlive the death of the body, while all forms of material possession are transient and illusory, and dealing with them is a pastime of fools.

“No” to the plans of others

Complexity

Those of you who've read my earlier books know that I talked in length about the levels of reality and the energetic bodies. Those things are, surely, a model of reality, as is anything else that we can intellectually encompass. Based on my observations and experience I created a model with the relative levels and similar things, but it is important to understand the limits of such models. Models are useful like a knife is useful, but a man can use it to slice bread or to slice his fingers off, depending on skill, intent and focus. One should remain mindful of the limitations of the human mind, and first and foremost of the limitations of the human brain, which is basically made of monkey stuff, and which defines the limits of accuracy and subtlety of any model of reality.

I could now say that I had experiences of the astral level and that this proves its existence. No. The experience of the astral level is in that sense quite different than the experience of God – for starters, it is clear that it's not an experience of anything supreme or final, that it's only a form of existence that's much better than the one on the physical plane and that the beings there are much less limited, but it is also clear that this is very, very far from God, according to any parameters that could measure forms of existence. So what I can say about it is essentially that there are forms of existence that can be experienced, and that they are not physical; its laws are different than the laws of the physical plane, and that's more-less it. Whether it's a level of reality or a level of illusion, whether it's an aspect of the same lunatic asylum as this world, so that in leaving the thicker illusion the beings will think they have reached the reality – that is something I cannot say for certain based on my experience, because the spectrum of my experience doesn't contain that knowledge. Based on my observations it's better to live there than it is to live here, but in the long term that might be a greater

illusion, simply because the illusion here is coarser, more raw and cruel, it attempts to crush you in all aspects of your existence and impose total madness upon you and call it reality, and this very hysteria of madness that defines the physical plane of existence, which is probably the only place that attempts to openly negate God's existence and block the awareness of God, that is the thing that crosses the threshold of believability and makes you stop and ask where the camera is hidden.

The problem with the astral plane is the one of the cooked frog, as overused as that metaphor might be. If you throw a frog into boiling water it will immediately jump out and save itself, but if you throw it into the cold water and gradually increase temperature, the frog will remain in the water until it's cooked. The physical world is an almost total concentration of lies and madness, and it contains absolutely everything needed to drive you insane and bind you. But this is the very reason why it is easy to see it as the death trap that it is. On the astral plane, the problems aren't as obvious, but all the fatal problems of the physical plane have their latent astral form.

The physical plane looks like a condensed, hardened form of the astral, which is why I keep asking myself, is it really a separate level of reality, or merely a different aggregate state of this same illusion? I cannot tell for sure, but what I can tell is that I don't like the astral plane all that much more than I like this place, and I would always choose to live on some higher, more subtle level of existence that I also happened to experience. So, what I do know about the astral plane is that I like it more than I like this place, but I also like it a lot less than I like some other places. Is it a level of reality, a more subtle kind of trap than the physical plane, or a level of existence that represents the only possible place of existence for some beings whose spirit is not yet ready to go further, because it matches their specific "frequency" of thought and emotion and so elsewhere they couldn't function – that I cannot tell with certainty, and I would have to guess.

It's important for you to get that in order to be able to understand the way I think. Everything I talk about is based on my experience, but you can't really talk about experience unless you first turn it into some sort of a model of reality, and then describe its functioning. If that model turns out to be inaccurate, and that things really work in some different way, that doesn't mean the experience was inauthentic. It means that I drew the wrong conclusions from it. People have had thousands of years of experience with the Sun and the stars moving across the sky, and they shaped that experience into different models according to which the Sun moves around the Earth or through it. Those models were wrong, but that doesn't mean that the people didn't see the real Sun moving across the real sky. They just didn't draw the correct conclusions from their observations, because to see is not to understand. Those are the two quite separate concepts. A saint wrote once that it is one blessing to see, another to understand what is it that you saw, and yet another to be able to describe it to others. Those things are layered, and it's important to get a good understanding of the limitations and problems involved.

Another complex issue are the Gods – I do not wish to offend them by calling them angels as the monotheists prefer to do, since they are the beings that are quite undoubtedly God according to the quality of their spiritual substance, but logically speaking, so is a yogi who became a self-realized aspect of Brahman after long meditation. The Gods are, therefore, something of that sort, only in a pure spiritual state, unbound by the material limitations. Of course, I have a model that explains how those things work – that they are the Purushas, the emancipated spiritual beings who are the pure manifestations of Brahman in his fullness, but who knows how much greater the actual truth is than my models, because I have to work with my monkey brain. What I do know is what kind of experience it is to encounter such beings, and the spiritual state that is inherent to them, but what exactly are they, that requires a certain measure of guesswork, or interpolation. It is never wise to conclude that something *must be* so because it makes sense to *you*. To me, it makes sense that the Sun moves across the sky, while the

Earth stands still, and so what – it's still not the way things really work. So basically, there's a lot of stuff that can seem true and still be completely wrong, a mere intellectual attempt to encompass the vastness of reality with one's mind, and to create a map for finding our way around reality, instead of wandering around it without any sense and purpose. But I digress.

What I *think* is the case is that the Gods are the true goal. If there's any plan of creation, I would say that they are its goal, or at least one of its goals. Gods also exist in a way different than the astral and the physical beings – although relative, they are so much the aspects of Brahman, that I would dare to say that no part of any illusion participates in their existence and they are as real as Brahman; only relative. The Hindus had a very good sensitivity for that kind of existence – OK, Vyasa had a very good sensitivity for that kind of existence. His texts used to drive me crazy, when I, having had an experience of nirvikalpa samadhi, took only the Absolute seriously, perceiving the relative only as some kind of an illusion to be outgrown, while Vyasa had a much more detailed and compartmentalized view of the Relative. Yes, there definitely is an illusion and there definitely are things that need to be outgrown, but to him, some aspects of the relative are the mere “vehicles” for the aspects of the Absolute, and so for instance Krishna and Shiva are completely Brahman and utterly free of any illusion, and still there are the name and the form, there is a relative structure that is at the same time the absolute God. I've seen it and knew it was possible, I just didn't understand how. It's a source of great paradox and wonder, and it isn't easy to understand. When I spoke of complexities of the relative world, I didn't think only about the marshes of illusion filled with piranhas, crocodiles and snakes, but also the complexities of God's plan, the complexities of God's “lilas”.¹ Things can be relative and still not illusory, and that's the aspect of the relative world that I, in lack of a better and contradicting knowledge, consider to be eternal, every bit as much as the Absolute is eternal. That kind of relative

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lila>

existence is merely a point of view of the Absolute, and for as long as there is Absolute and for as long as there is a possibility of perceiving it from a viewpoint, so long will there be Gods, in their eternal and perfect beauty. The complexities of the relative world are such, that it is much easier to become a God and thus achieve the only goal worth achieving, than it is to understand it with a brain made of monkey stuff and to experience the inevitable frustrations. The models and the mind can only go so far. Still, they are both useful, the models and the mind, because for all intents and purposes the alternative isn't the absolute knowledge, but chaos, spiritual disorientation and mindlessness, and those can make you a victim. This is why it is necessary to attempt to model things, even if some things those models encompass can be quite problematic and dangerous, in the same way it is necessary for a doctor to study pathogens and poisons. Without a good understanding of the dangers and evils, you will likely become stuck in the quagmire of the world and make some fatal mistake or another.

That is so because there are relative beings who have plans for you, plans that have nothing to do with God.

The God factory

And the serpent said unto the woman, "You shall not surely die: For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

(Genesis)

Whenever there is talk about spirituality, people have a tendency to simplify matters above and beyond useful measure. If I had to describe this phenomenon in some way, I'd call it belief in the singular nature of the spiritual reality.

A simplified version of that thesis would state that there's the physical world with its multitude of complex phenomena, and on the other side of all that, there is God.

On one hand, you can say that such position makes sense. Indeed, beyond relative there is the Absolute, whom we can for all intents and purposes call God, but the relative world consists of much more than just our material Universe. The relative reality can be represented as a specific form of a multidimensional manifold¹, where the dimensions are not just space and time, but also the more abstract concepts such as thoughts and even more subtle things, such as the aspects of God's nature. The growth of complexity that we observe throughout the history of our material Universe can be explained by the higher dimension entities – astral, causal or whatever you might want to call them – “leaning onto” or in some other way joining with the material entities or phenomena. Simplified, it means that the spiritual realities have a

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minkowski_space

significant influence on the intensity and direction of the evolution of matter. Furthermore, one cannot safely state that any material entity is just matter, without any spiritual significance, because it might be merely a visible part of a more complex structure which is in most part intangible by purely physical means, and requires some degree of spiritual sensitivity to perceive.

Surely, that doesn't mean that all of the sudden we should take all the religious mythology and imagery seriously and assume that all their claims are founded. The greatest part of it all isn't literally true, but in a great many cases this kind of fairy tales are made in an attempt to communicate some spiritual idea that was understood or which arose in one's consciousness in presence of some higher, spiritual being.

Those things are difficult to communicate in scientific terms even if one possesses a scientific intellectual apparatus, let alone if you're a bronze age farmer. This dictates the choice of literary genre used for such communication – fairy tales, myths and poetic imagery are the best we can hope for, but when we attempt to deduce what inspired those works and understand the underlying spiritual message, it all becomes incredibly unreliable. Still, occasionally one can get something useful from it all, but the problem is, in order to get useful answers you usually need to know them already from other sources, which, for all intents and purposes, makes such texts useless, because if you need a clear signal in order to recognize it, that probably means that you're reading into the white noise.

What I can confirm from my experience is, strangely, exactly the part of religion which one would probably dismiss out of hand based on logical thinking. What I can confirm is the plurality of the spiritual. For some reason, the concept of plurality of the spiritual world and a conflict of various spiritual forces sounds implausible or silly to people, probably because their implicit Platonism, that makes them assume some kind of mathematical harmony of the

higher ideal realm, in which there is no place for conflict, chaos and disorder which prevails in this imperfect material world. This creates some sort of a “religion of comfort”, which makes you believe that everything will be all right if you spiritually survive this world.

I agree that spiritually surviving this world is exactly the point, but the aspects of the physical world that threaten our spiritual survival are created, among other things, by the beings that transcend the physical, but they have influence over it, in some specific, harmful way. Those are therefore the forces that are relative but non-material in nature, having their origin in some form of existence yet unprocessed by science. Let us make one thing clear: that doesn't mean that all the myths and legends are to be taken seriously. When we see the historical legends and stories that tried to explain the yet unknown parts of the physical world, and when we see how they differ from the much more accurate scientific understanding of those things, it's quite expected for the theories about the spiritual to be at least as inaccurate, containing exaggerations, distortions and outright folly. That was the most useful aspect of science: clarification of the mind-space. If there are great sea animals such as the whales or the giant squids, the science will classify them, measure them, determine what they are and introduce them into the domain of the known, thus eliminating the vague concepts such as “sea serpents”, “dragons” and similar mythical monsters. It is therefore quite reasonable to assume that the stories about sea monsters had some foundation in experiences with some actual beings, but ignorance combined with imagination and exaggeration created the kind of chaos that can be resolved only by science. But although there are most likely no sea serpents, dragons and Krakens, there's still an abundance of things that can kill you.

What I can therefore confirm from my experience aren't the talking snakes, but the existence of spiritual beings who establish their influence over the portions of the physical plane, and who are

occasionally motivated by their own idea of realizing some spiritual goal or another, and those goals can be essentially characterized as good. For instance, if we characterize manifestation of Brahman on the physical plane as good, it leaves an open question of the form of such a manifestation, of what it's going to look like. Apparently, the opinions in the spiritual world are divided on that matter as well.

As much as Brahman is a given, it leaves an open question of how exactly could Brahman manifest itself in certain aspects of the relative reality, for instance in the physical matter. Is manifested Brahman a state in which there is a complete breach, an intrusion of Brahman into the relative, a perfect self-realization of Brahman within consciousness of an individual being? Or is it manifested when several beings together manifest the qualities of Brahman, in other words when their social interactions bear the quality of sat-cit-ananda, reality-consciousness-bliss, in a way that the whole of their collective existence is a manifestation of Brahman? Or is it something else, ie. “enlightenment” of all beings, from first to last? What does a being that manifests Brahman look like, is it a strong, focused “ego” of an individual which is the living God, or is it a dispersed, disintegrated ego of a group of barely-individuals who manifest Brahman as a group?

The answers to those questions are very important because they decide the direction of evolution, and a wrong answer that appears correct in the short term can lead the evolution of not only human species, but the entire biological basis or at least its large portion, in a wrong direction¹, which is then very difficult to remedy due to the inertia of the physical, and something along the lines of a K-T event² might be the only solution.

I would expect the majority of the audience to be confused by these concepts; isn't the spiritual world supposed to be

1 Relative to the Omega-point, of course.

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cretaceous-Tertiary_extinction_event

hierarchically organized, from God to archangels and angels to the mortals? I'm afraid that such simplifications are baseless. If you take a look at the history of the world, and not only the human civilizations but wider, into the realm of biological evolution, what we observe as growth of complexity and order is far from being a linear and equivocal mechanism. There are often cases where eons of development in some direction are wiped out and things diverge on a tangent. For instance, the reptiles used to rule the world, and then they were wiped out and the mammals took over. The Neanderthal man¹ branched out into Eurasia and dominated the ecosystem for half a million years, until a new wave migrated out of Africa and the modern man wiped him out. In short, the biological evolution doesn't really work according to the Platonic system; quite the contrary, in fact. Instead of a nicely organized evolution from $a \rightarrow b \rightarrow c$, the determining factor of evolution seems to be the conflict of the different approaches, where success in real conditions determines the winner, basically meaning that not even God knows in advance what will work here. Since the successfulness of different methods remains unknown until they are tried out, it seems that the various spiritual forces are trying out different things on the physical plane, throwing stuff on it and seeing what will stick. It's not certain that all of them even consider physical incarnation worthwhile, or beneficial.

The concept of a directed local increase in organization and complexity of the physical matter as a result of spiritual influence from other dimensions of the relative reality is a very important theoretical model which provides explanations for many things. Among other things, it explains some parts of my experience, as well as some “fairy tales”, or religious myths.

Having worked with the increasingly deeper layers of the relative in my personal spiritual research, I discovered the various “energy layers”, or levels of reality with a greater Hausdorff dimension number – the levels far exceeding the astral plane. As I went

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal>

deeper into that stuff, I discovered the meaning of various religious tales and symbolism, which can be perceived as metaphorical imagery of certain spiritual levels, of the deeper dimensions of the relative reality. The important aspect are the “vajras”, which are mentioned quite a lot in Hinduism and Buddhism. They are the levels of the relative existence above the astral plane, above the usual concepts defined by form, emotion and thought, so spiritually intense that their intensity, forcefulness and depth cannot be conveyed by mental imagery. Nevertheless, some aspects of that reality managed to be included in mythology which can sound chaotic or primitive, but once you decipher the symbolic layer, things become clearer. For instance, the “Dancing Shiva”¹ is a symbol of one of those “dimensions”, or “relative substances of a higher order”; what’s important is to know the rest of the mythology in order to decipher the symbol, because Shiva isn’t dancing at a party; Shiva is a static, meditative deity, the God of transcendence, something of a Hindu Buddha. But this static, immobile Shiva is displayed in a motion of dance, surrounded by a ring of fire, of forceful dynamics of creation and destruction. This symbolizes the deepest, most subtle level of the Prakrti, “the relative Nature”, into which descends the Purusha, “a relative God”. The first point of entry of the Purusha into the Prakrti is a form of a two-way path, arrow pointing both downwards and upwards. The conflict of the dancing Shiva consists of the simultaneous nature of meditation and stillness that retains all aspects of the transcendental, and the forceful energy of a spiritual breakthrough and intrusion, which gives life to the otherwise passive Prakrti, infusing it with the spiritual energy that simultaneously creates and dissolves the phenomena and the beings, initiating the process of emergence of the spiritual principles in the matter. Shiva is therefore a paradox: remaining in his transcendental state, motionless and in perfect meditation on the Brahman, he creates the totality of the creative dynamics of Nature.

1 http://www.fritjofcapra.net/shiva_statue.jpg

The second symbol for this state originates from Buddhism: the golden statue of the meditating Buddha.¹ That symbol appears to be different from the Dancer, but for a yogi, who had experienced the spiritual level depicted by those symbols, they mean the same thing. The static, meditative Buddha, completely absorbed in the transcendental, at the same time manifests his apparent form in the relative, the “golden” spiritual light (at least that's how I personally experienced it, the golden color being much more than a convenient metaphor) which is in fact the “dance” of Shiva, something that at the same time contains the potential of the totality of Nature's dynamics, and the totality of transcendence of everything natural – at the same time, everything in the world manifests this potential, and it is present in the world only enough so that we can see it departing.

The concept of bidirectional creation is extremely important, and it explains some of the concepts that might seem unclear to the Western, Platonic thought, which perceives creation as a one-way street, a manifestation of the perfect archetypes from the ideal world, which is why this system is called “idealism”.² From what I managed to figure out, the process of creation is a two-way street: not only do the spiritual pressures on the matter influence the formation of the physical forms, but also do the structures manifested through matter create their own spiritual forms. So let's say that the spiritual field of some higher being applies pressure on the matter and creates the human species. That's the aspect the Platonists – or Theosophists – would find familiar. But the conscious matter, a self-aware human being, through its original thoughts, emotions and similar forms of spiritual existence, creates the spiritual forms that didn't exist before, thus giving an authentic, original contribution to the spiritual world. Furthermore, a great Yogi who becomes initiated beyond all the levels of Prakrti and attains realization, becomes in fact a new, original Purusha, a new eternal spiritual being, a new God. So it's not only true that the

1 <http://www.meditationcenter.com/newimages/goldenbuddha.jpg>

2 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism#Plato>

Gods create men and other beings, but the thing also works in the other direction: the matter creates new Gods, in quite a literal sense: a man is in fact a being which, by breaking through the limitations imposed by the matter, and providing he¹ attains fulfillment of his highest potential, creates such a radical spiritual breakthrough that he becomes a new Divine being, which, for all intents and purposes, is a relative viewpoint of the Brahman, without any share of illusion.

This concept is particularly pronounced in Hinduism and Buddhism – in Hinduism, some of the greatest Divine beings, the Rishis such as Vyasa and Narada, didn't always have this status, but had evolved from common men; Narada, for instance, was a servant's son from a lower caste. In Buddhism, the Buddhas are not “incarnations of a deity”, but beings of newly attained status, completely self-made. Far from the fatalist systems where enlightenment is some sort of a game for the beings that were Divine to begin with and went through the motions for the sake of an audience, the concept of evolution introduces a new category: the world as an instrument of initiating new Gods.

1 Of course, I use the pronoun “he” for both human sexes since there's no difference in spiritual potential between men and women. Likewise, some “Gods” are in fact “Goddesses”.

The plurality of the spiritual

So did God create the world or not? This is a much more difficult question to answer than one would expect, because people expect the answer to be given within an Abrahamic monotheistic paradigm, for which I found no confirmation in my experience.

On one hand, the world as such is a paradox – at the same time it's true that only God exists, and yet we perceive the existence of everything but God. There is only One, but on the other hand, the Multitude is what we perceive. In the state of samadhi, we perceive that only God is, but when we leave that state, we perceive that everything but God is.

So, depending on where we stand as observers, the reality is perceived in essentially different terms. Hinduism did preoccupy itself with these concepts at great length and came to a conclusion that what we perceive as the world is Maya. Maya is a word that was originally, in the oldest texts, used to describe a supernatural force used by the Gods in order to manufacture their weapons and other artifacts – Maya is the force used by the Gods in order to create. In the later texts, Maya changed meaning into illusion or deception, a force that creates a false impression of existence of something that is not, and nonexistence of something that is. I would refrain myself from such a radical interpretation. Maya is not so much an illusion, but software. Software is. It exists only in the computer, and only as a form of the computer's functionality, but it exists. Its existence is of a different kind than that of a computer. The ancient Indian philosophers didn't have the concept of software, so they used similar ones, like dream or a mirage, but thanks to the progress of information tech, we today have the new concepts that are much more suitable for this kind of a metaphor.

So when we define the concept of Maya as some kind of software, we still have the repeated question of how that software exactly came to exist in its present state of complexity.

Honestly, I have no idea. From a human position I can only guess, but I would say it has something to do with the concept of *perception*. The Relative is, in fact, a way of perception of the Absolute. If He can be perceived in any way at all, a way will be found to do just that in the Relative, and the system that makes it possible is Maya.

The Hindus have an interesting metaphor for this process. The first aspect of the relative world is Narayana, the God who “awakens” in awareness of his own existence. This very act of becoming aware is, in a way, creation of the relative world in its most abstract form. The God then wishes to create, and this very psychic momentum towards creating gives birth to Brahma, the “God Creator”, who in turn gives birth, from his spirit, to the spiritual beings. His attempts are not always successful. Sometimes he creates a being with intent that it in turn continues to create other beings, but that being decides against it, having free will, and leaves his designated task in order to meditate on the formless Absolute. Then Brahma feels anger in his frustration, and this anger becomes a spiritual being which also decides that the relative world is crap and goes to meditate on the Absolute and liberation from the relative existence. So Brahma is in great part frustrated because most of his creations have an upward momentum, towards Brahman, and not towards further creation of the increasingly more concrete relative forms, as he intended.

That concept is significantly different from the Abrahamic one, according to which God creates a bunch of automata and zombies who all, except the bad guy, keep monotonously repeating “yes Master”, and if anyone uses his free will, God gets pissed off and throws him to hell.

Such a concept might be a reflection of the common political system of the oriental despotisms of the bronze-age Middle East, but it is ill-suited for describing the complexity and diversity of the manifested reality. The reality really looks like its different aspects have a mind of their own and are set to attain different goals, and so those aspects collide and in this conflict they either prevail or perish.

The plurality of the spiritual world mapped onto the physical reality means that the physical phenomena are a reflection of those conflicts, in both goals and methods. The world is therefore not *created* by God, but is *being created* by Gods. The process of creation is ongoing, and we participate in it from within. Likewise, this process is not a reflection of a singular will and intent, set to a singular goal. It's not a fascist dictatorship. Different spiritual beings, depending on the way in which they perceive Brahman, create different spiritual concepts that aspire to reflect their viewpoint. Depending on the nature of those concepts and ideas, there will be a varying degree of interest towards the physical plane, depending on how much its fundamental parameters have in common with them. Besides, there are some specific rules to be observed: if a spiritual being invests his energy into a goal, if he invests his energy that is given to him by Brahma in the beginning, he is by the virtue of this act attached to the object of his investment, as he “bends” the reality of the physical things in his image. The different parts and aspects of the physical Universe are of interest to the different spiritual beings, and for different reasons. If a spiritual being aligns his existence, will and intent with some aspect of the physical plane, a twofold change takes place: on one hand the limitations of the physical plane modify and influence this being, and on the other hand this aspect of the physical plane is changed: the matter starts to gradually align itself with this being's ideas.

Such a spiritual investment creates the initial concept of property: the being that invested so much of itself in creation of something

does in fact by the law of things assume authority over this aspect of the world. It belongs to him now, because it is of him now. Accordingly, when other spiritual beings decide to play on his “playground”, they must play according to his rules and acknowledge his sovereign authority. His rights define the limits to their free will and power on his “turf”.

These things are therefore somewhat complicated, and of course everything I wrote is just my understanding of the dimensions of the issue. Far from it that the things are nicely arranged in the spiritual world, and that only their mapping onto the coarse realities of the physical plane creates problems. In fact, the opposite is true: the conflicts of the physical plane are to a great extent only a reflection of the plurality of the spiritual world, where different forces have a different understanding of what would be an appropriate mapping of some spiritual concept onto matter.

Is love a better mapping of the ananda, or is it the solitary blissful meditation? Is deep perception, emotion and creativity in solitude a better reflection of the bliss that is of God, or would that be a joint orgasm of the lovers? Is celibacy a better reflection of God's nature, or spiritualized sex? Is a great saint the true image of God, or would something like Internet be a better match, an entity which is both singular and plural? Is science a better reflection of God, as a desire for knowledge and understanding, for introducing order into the chaos of perception and thought, or would it be a naked, barefoot and hungry Milarepa, who used to meditate in a cave for seven years until he achieved the self-realization of Brahman?

What happens when your ideas about the goal of your spiritual evolution differ from the ideas of the spiritual being which, due to investment of his spiritual force, has authority over the aspect of the physical world in which you create your physical existence?

Should one do what the good followers of monotheism would,

which is to see what this being wants and declare it our own, the greatest good and the goal of all our aspirations, axiomatically, and join our spiritual energy with his efforts, as foreign as they might be to us, and as local, as opposed to universal, those efforts might be? What if the local “God” implements the concepts that are far from the main stream among other Gods? What if it's an experiment, a deviation, a branch of evolution that's headed the way of the dinosaurs? Should we join the other lemmings' cliff-diving just because the majority can't be wrong, or because “God” can't be wrong? How could you tell if the difference between the God who implements those plans, and yourself, is not in the spiritual magnitude and the degree of possession of the qualities of Brahman, but simply the fact that you are incarnated on his “turf”, and he can consequently play God? How can you tell if you're actually greater than he? Should you suck up to someone just because he happens to have the authority over a certain turf and in certain circumstances, or should you keep your own dignity, keep faith to your own spiritual ideas and concepts, and live Brahman in your own way, regardless of what some other being – more powerful and greater as he might seem – has a different angle on things?

If you find yourself in a society in which it is customary to do things that you consider atrocious, and the things that reflect your spiritual longings are forbidden, will you yield to the authority? If you find yourself in a situation where female circumcision is “normal”, will you conform to the social expectations and “circumcise” your daughter, or will you send them all to hell, and rather be excommunicated, persecuted or killed, than to stain your soul with their sins? If you find yourself in a Nazi state, will you keep being a good and loyal citizen, “because every government is of God”?

Those questions are highly relevant in this world, since this world has a King. The King has many names. He is a being of the Eternal Fire, the Bearer of Light. He is called the Morning Star, for he

precedes the Sun and proclaims its light. He is the Lightbearer, the one who takes God's light and gives it to the world. He is the Eternal Youth. The King of this world is Sanat Kumara, known in the Bible as Satan, or Lucifer.

Angled shot

How does this all work in reality?

I was thinking about how to explain this model with a relatively simple image, and something from physics came up as an answer: an angled shot.

An angled shot is one of those things that start simple and end in complexity. If you want to explain forces as vectors to the students, an angled shot is a favorite example – on one hand you have an initial velocity and angle, and on the other you have gravity. It's a simple matter: instead of a straight line defined by the inertia, the body moves on a parabola, because of the additional influence of gravity. There are three possibilities: if the curvature of the parabola is less than the curvature of the horizon, the body leaves the gravitational hold of the planet (or at least enters an orbit of a high eccentricity). If the curvatures are the same, the body enters orbit. If the curvature of the parabola is greater than that of the horizon, the object falls to the surface of the planet. The calculations are most often done for this third case, the artillery shot.

The problem is, the model is too simplified to be useful in practice. The obvious thing missing is the resistance of the atmosphere; if the equations are not done for a planet that is without atmosphere, like the Moon, one needs to calculate the resistance of air as a force that slows down the body. It's not a simple force, because it depends on the geometry of the body, because the air resistance is not the same for all bodies. Additionally, it is proportional to the square of the velocity, so the thing doesn't work linearly; the resistance is greater in the beginning, and drops with the reduction of speed of the body later in the process. Also, one needs to take

wind speed into account, and it is not constant, so a really precise account of the wind speed requires very complex measurements in all points of the body's motion. Likewise, for really long shots and great demands for accuracy one needs to take the Earth's rotation into account. What started as a simple model very soon becomes complicated, for a very simple reason: a body is affected by different forces depending on the local conditions. Some of those forces can be ignored in certain circumstances, and a simplified model can give very accurate results. On the other hand, in a different set of local conditions the forces we ignored earlier can suddenly become dominant. It's not the same whether you do a calculation for the angled shot on the Moon or under water. Under water, the resistance of the medium is more dominant than even the gravity, and on the Moon the resistance of the medium is completely absent.

If we apply this image to the sphere of the spiritual, we can say that in a trivial case the spirituality is a simple and straightforward matter, like an angled shot in vacuum: there is Brahman, He is the fundamental reality of all beings and things, including the Yogi in question, who seeks his deepest reality, finds the atman, goes deeper into this direction, enters samadhi where he understands that he, himself is that Brahman, and then he dwells in this Brahman and acts from this foundation of being, which makes his actions acquire progressively more qualities of Brahman.

This is a set of circumstances modeled by the Advaita Vedanta, as if there's nothing in the entire world but a Yogi and his atman. In reality, it's not that simple.

For starters, Brahman is but a word. People don't strive towards "Brahman", they strive towards what they perceive as the greatest good. Their perception is not absolute, but colored by the qualities of their personality. For this reason, they perceive as the greatest good things that are in fact a complex curve drawn as a resultant of many different forces, like in the case of an angled shot, with the

influence of atman/Brahman dominant in some cases like gravity is dominant on a body that lacks atmosphere, and in other cases the resistance of the medium is the dominant force, like it would be if you attempted an angled shot on the seabed.

Also, Brahman is not perceived from only one angle, but from many. At least in appearance, from a subject's position, the situation is perceived more as a chaotic blend of a multitude of apparently good forces of varying amounts, and a multitude of apparently bad forces of varying amounts. The initial problem is to determine what of all that mixture is good and what is bad, and an even greater problem is to determine what is useful and what is harmful. Evil forces can in a certain context be useful, ie. if you start doing something evil, and you meet an even worse man than yourself, who does an even greater evil to you, the end result might be good, where you understand that you did wrong and you recognize a fundamental error in your approach, you repent and convert, and do good ever since. Something evil can therefore prove to be useful, while something apparently good, like success or absence of any discomfort, in this set of circumstances might actually encourage you to do evil, eventually resulting in your utter corruption and doom.

What happens if there are local spiritual forces that play a role similar to that of the air resistance – they resist one's spiritual aspiration proportionally to the square of their intensity? The theories modeled for the case of a “Moon”, for a case where such forces are absent, will produce completely wrong results if they are applied “under water”. In the case of spirituality, the things are not always equivocal. For instance, if you find yourself in a situation where a force opposes your spiritual efforts, such a force is usually not universal, but opposes some things more than others, and you can “slip under the radar”, and there might also be other forces that limit its range, and they might nullify each other in beneficial ways. On the other hand, the presence of many forces can make the situation so incredibly complicated that the majority of people will

have no hope of working their way out of the quagmire, which might be exactly the point of those forces that have no positive goal of their own, but are intent on producing the failure of others.

So, in a realistic model of the world, you have God as the source of everything that is good and beneficial, you have various spiritual beings with their various concepts of what is good, which they attempt to impose upon everybody else as the standard measuring stick, you have the evil and degenerate beings which are intent on controlling others by creating illusions and lies, and you have the beings who simply prefer to have others in a greater misfortune than their own, which is why they cause trouble for everyone. Also, in a realistic scenario your freedom is not unlimited, and you are influenced by various forces to varying extent, not necessarily in proportion to the objective strength of those forces, but more in proportion to your personal vulnerability. For instance, the majority will be greatly influenced by their parents, and ideas implanted by them will have greater power compared to the other ideas. Even when they rationally understand the wrongness of those ideas, they are unable to get rid of them quickly, and often remain controlled throughout their lives. Likewise, most people are greatly influenced by the society, because they are biologically conditioned to be. The humans are social animals, and the evolutionary imperative makes the opinion of other human animals very important to them, because their social status depends on that, and that means food, safety and control over their environment. Humans, as a species, are finely tuned to follow the “spiritual field” created by other humans, especially those in a position of power, and they spontaneously align themselves with that field.

How does the influence of the King map into our picture?

The very fact that I call him the King (Jesus called him the Prince of this world, which is essentially the same thing) can correctly suggest that I consider his influence to be great, and possibly paramount. His influence is as pervasive on Earth as is its magnetic

field, or its atmosphere. For all intents and purposes, one can say that in the specific case of Earth, there are two pervasive forces: Brahman and the King, which in some cases overlap, which means that a certain profile of men will perceive the King as God.

The King is not someone you can dismiss or ignore. He perceives himself as the savior who came to give you the true light, and you are the beings who were, before his arrival, on the path of stagnation or degeneration, and he came here to bring order and show God the true nature of compassion and grace. De facto, he intends to perform acts that will make him glorious among the Gods, maybe even elevate him to the supreme position. In all that, he perceives the lower beings, whom he supposedly intends to help, only as an instrument of his self-promotion, as something that will prove him as the greatest and wisest among the Purushas. He perceives everything that he does as the only true way, and will not be convinced otherwise because he thinks, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, that he is right and the other Purushas are wrong; he thinks that the others argue against him because they are jealous of his genius and envious of the glory that will be his once his plans come to fruition. And humans, well, as much as he talks about compassion and helping, they are but an instrument to him, and if any of them leave his Golden Path or Great Wagon, they will be crushed without mercy. Of course, all in the interest of the universal compassion and Divine mercy.

The King is, therefore, some sort of a cosmic misfortune or accident, like a black hole wandering into your solar system, and we must live with him until God delivers us from his claws. He is mentally insane, but he owns this place because he invested so much of himself in it, that he can be taken out only by literally redeeming the world from his power.

Satan

"I used to think Satan was only a human invention, but now I know, and add my testimony to that of others who lived before me, that Satan is a reality. He is a universal, conscious force whose sole aim is to keep all beings bound to the wheel of delusion."

Paramahansa Yogananda ("[The Path](#)", Kriyananda)

My understanding of Satan evolved in pretty much the same way as Yogananda's. In the beginning, I'd say that all reasonable people think that Satan is an invention of the priests in order to control people through fear. You need to be quite unreasonable to doubt the existence of God, but the devil is a problem of a different order. When you are touched by God, you cannot rationalize it away – the experience itself is but testimony and proof of God's existence and character. But when you're touched by the devil, you instinctively rationalize your way out of it, and as the devil works by strengthening the lower, worldly forces, like ignorance, delusion, attachment, rationalizations, it is quite easy to get entangled in one of them and take it as an explanation. It is quite easy to blame yourself and your weaknesses for the things that are in fact the work of the devil, and easier still to invert the matters and say that the people invented the devil in order to escape responsibility for their actions. The devil is so difficult to identify because he works through the worldly things, through the lowly things that are present here in any case, and their presence can be easily explained away. You don't have that kind of a problem with God. God exists in a huge contrast with the "normal" worldly background, God is like a flash of light in the dark, but the devil, he's like a depression that makes the darkness darker, for which everyone would rather blame himself than seek cause elsewhere, especially since it is so easy to be deluded and self-destructive when in spiritual darkness. The devil makes everything seem low,

filthy, evil and devoid of spirituality, because your own personal inner lights have been put out and you were rendered unable to perceive anything good, pure, true and beautiful even if it's here, but instead you perceive everything from a position of darkness, evil and filth. This is why Yogananda so persistently argued for thinking only the good thoughts and ignoring negativity, because he instinctively felt the danger of falling into the trap of Satan. The trap is that the mind acquires the qualities of that on which it dwells, and if you shift your focus from good to evil and if you dwell on the lowly things, your "attunement" to evil increases and you increasingly see them in everything, thus strengthening the feedback loop until the wave crushes you and you are rendered incapable of sensing anything good and beautiful. Essentially, you become the very negativity that initially bothered you. On the other hand, if you concentrate on the good and the beautiful, you keep the virtue and focus even in the worst of times, and as hard as the things may be, the difficulty is on the outside, not on the inside; if you keep the light of faith, devotion, dedication, respect and courage within, the outside darkness can never fully conquer you, but if you yield from within and give in to finding the flaws and negativity in all things, you are lost.

That surely doesn't mean that we should not criticize evil, but that the evil must be criticized in such a way that our consciousness remains fully in God, and from this light you dispel darkness with clear knowledge revealed through words.

Negativity and the criticism thereof can look quite similar, but they are qualitatively opposite, because they require different focus of consciousness. In negativity, one is darkened and perceives only evil, lies, illusion and lowly things. In criticism of negativity, one observes the clarity, purity, virtue and bliss of the Divine reality and from that state perceives the great contrast created by the existence of the lowly things, which he then dissects from the light, and proposes a cure. The difference between the two is that the criticism of negativity is uplifting, like the fresh air of truth that

takes away the smog of ignorance and evil, and negativity is like stuffy smoke that makes everything look dark and hopeless. One would have to be completely stupid in order not to be able to perceive the difference between the two phenomena, because blindness to the difference means one's spirit has been darkened – to see only the words, that create the appearance of sameness of evildoer criticizing a saint and a saint criticizing an evildoer, is a symptom of spiritual darkness, of absence of an inner compass pointing towards God, and a man with that problem should understand that he is deeply under the rule of Satan, and conquer his skepticism, doubt and hopelessness through faith and devotion. In order to conquer darkness, you need to create light where there was none, and thus redeem yourself from the dark claws of evil.

The symptom of Satan's influence is not when you see Satan. No: it's when you can no longer feel God, when you feel despair, hopelessness, depression, doubt and skepticism, when you see negativity even in the saints and the avatars, doubt all good things and find reasons to see them as lowly and evil – basically, the symptom of Satan's influence is the loss of faith, hope and devotion, and under his influence you doubt both God and Satan, in fact you doubt anything, you don't see sense, purpose and meaning anywhere and interpret everything in the light of some psychological rationalization. The devil can be many things, but he is always the lowly state of spiritual darkness. The devil is the darkness of self-depreciation and self-blame, that takes away the opportunity to deliver oneself from one's lowly state, because you don't consider yourself worth saving. The devil is the arrogant boast of the deluded beings, that covers their despair and hopelessness, taking away the option of sincere remorse that would deliver them from their horrible state. The devil is the depressing materialism, which reveals neither meaning, nor goodness, nor hope, but only the lowly and the meaningless. The devil can be selfishness that comes from the lack of hope and meaning, but also the altruism based on the feeling of senselessness of the world and a wish to do something good in the world when God is so useless and incapable.

The devil is many seemingly contradictory things: hatred based on hysteria, but also love based on hysteria. He is many things that appear to be good until you scratch the surface. In short, he is what Yogananda says of him: a conscious force whose sole aim is to keep all beings bound to the wheel of delusion, and he uses any possible means to achieve that goal, as diverse and contradictory as they might seem. They all serve the same purpose of extinguishing hope, faith, spiritual ecstasy, devotion to God, adoration and confidence in the higher order and purpose.

It is quite easy to tell God apart from Satan, because God turns on the light in your soul, he awakens the inner spark of meaning and faith. The devil's influence sets the soul asleep, rationalizes away the good things by portraying them as the work of the lower forces, extinguishes hope, ridicules devotion, mocks light, and rots in the darkness and depression.

The Satan is the spiritual darkness, but the tragedy with this spiritual darkness is that the mechanisms that serve its purpose falsely portray themselves as the “light of reason” which dispels “illusion” and “fraud”. The evil is always, without exception, packed in such a way as to portray itself as the good. The Satan is not a horned and hooved beast, but a cynical comedian mocking the “spiritual fakes”. He presents himself as the one who enlightens and debunks the charlatans, but the result of this “enlightenment” is the darkness of depression, a hopelessness that interprets everything in such a way as to annul faith in any kind of uplifting force, hopelessness that uses mind as a weapon of rationalization, cutting away every thread that could lead upwards, towards the true light which is God.

One should therefore not have too much faith in reason. The reason is an instrument used by the will of the soul, and when the soul is darkened, the reason will attempt to rationalize it, present it as necessary, good and true. When the soul is in the light of God, the reason will praise God and create songs, prayers and holy

scriptures. Basically, the reason is a passive instrument that only reflects the state of the soul, and when the soul has been seduced by evil, the intellect will only keep providing more reasons for evil and delusion, and will serve no good or useful purpose. When one finds himself in spiritual darkness, he should completely disregard the “voice of reason”, because it will then be the voice of depression and hopelessness, and instead one should make a leap into faith, against all reason. The salvation from darkness doesn't lead through more of the same, but through a decisive split from the known, through devotion and faith and all the things mocked and despised by the reason. When the reason tells you there is no God, that's the best time to fall on your knees before God and pray for light and grace. Devotion and faith, even if you direct them toward Satan himself, had you been tricked into seeing him as holy, will have a redeeming quality and will bring you salvation. It's a paradox, but it's true, and that's why one should not fear the possible mistakes, or devotion to a “false God”, because the transcendental quality of the devotion itself will skip past the errors of the intellect and judgment and go straight to the true God, because devotion is the quality of Brahman. The intellectual errors can be easily remedied later, if they get in the way. This marginal importance of the intellectual filler is the reason why such a multitude of true, authentic saints exist even in the religions that are complete crap. A saint will somehow re-interpret the crap in order to get it out of his way to God, and a dark person can take the most holy theology and project darkness into it until his ruin. The spiritual light therefore has no connection with intellectual accuracy, but with the purity of devotion, with touch of one's personal reality and the universal reality of God, that shines as the light of optimism, bliss and purity of the soul.

When the night is darkest and devoid of stars, when the reason and the senses tell you it's all dark, in complete eclipse of all light, it is only faith that will save you, only devotion, only prayer, only the things considered folly, delusion and self-deception by the “light” of reason. When the reality around you is illusory and dark, when Satan is the Lord of the world you live in, then the only path

towards the true reality is to ignore everything that appears to be real. The mind is an excellent hammer, but not everything is a nail. In fact, some things are your fingers.

The reason why it was so hard for me to understand the concept of the devil is primarily philosophical, and is rooted in my understanding of the anatomy of the psyche, which sounds reasonable, but only superficially, because the local circumstances negate the general rule.

My model of the psyche was based on the principle that everything that is good originates from God, and the lack of connection with God results in, for lack of a better word, dementia. So absence of the reality-consciousness-bliss principle has the result of a spiritual condition which is deluded, stupid and depressed. The evidence for the accuracy of this model is widely available around us, where those who are opposed to God are soon left without brains, inner joy and a connection with reality, and so they are reduced to the empty ravings that are as crazy as they are obnoxious and evil. This model defines the devil as an impossibility. If we define the devil as an evil but powerful being, according to this model he cannot exist, because his evil would soon produce spiritual degeneration sufficient to render him inferior to the worst of humans – evil, but stupid, unhappy and depressed. If you imagine the devil as some kind of a Darth Vader, you'll see that it's contradictory, because if one were really evil, he would have lost his wits, virtue and power, and Darth Vader has all three in copious quantities. So the theory about the devil as a powerful evil deity is contrary to the theory of Vedanta and contrary to the empirical observation that shows that the evil beings are usually weak, crazy and stupid due to the lack of God.

My belief that the devil doesn't exist as a being, but as an infernal spiritual condition, was, therefore, well founded, both in my lack of experience with spiritual beings that would be both evil and powerful, and on the other hand in the familiarity with the

workings of the spiritual mechanisms. Having the confirmation from the formal Vedantic theory, which defines evil as a lack of good, only increased my confidence.

The problem with my opinion (which is prevalent in the books I wrote at the time) was that it occasionally found itself at odds with observation. Encountering the beings that I metaphorically called the devil incarnates was not an issue: they actually confirmed the theory that a soul without God, but with firm roots in sin, loses coherence and turns into something that is more like a hive of angry tar-colored insects, than a soul in any conventional meaning. Under the influence of hate, fear, malice and lack of anything Divine, such a soul is transformed from a singular entity into a confused collection of small evils in perpetual conflict. And still, such an observation confirms the theory according to which the devil cannot exist because the very process of becoming a devil would deprive him of the necessary qualities that define a devil: from an evil but powerful being he would become fragmented into a bunch of small, conflicted but powerless evils. Still, from the original concept from the 1999, according to which the spiritual degradation is not a realistic option, and powerful evil is an oxymoron, observation lead me to the conclusion that spiritual degradation is not only possible, but actually quite common, having encountered quite a number of such specimens within the limited pool of people that I happened to encounter. In fact, they seemed to outnumber the spiritually promising ones.

However, it was not the observation of the fallen souls that put my theory about the devil in doubt. What I perceived is the same thing Yogananda did, that there seems to be some sort of a conscious force that wishes to keep humans in a deluded state, and makes plots with that purpose in mind. It took me a while to confirm that this is not an apparition or an artifact of coincidence but a real phenomenon, and so I wasn't initially sure of my observation. What I *didn't* see was actually more interesting – I didn't see the devil himself, but only the results of his actions, in the same way in

which you can see the tracks of wild animals in the woods, but not the actual animals. You can see the tracks left in snow by a rabbit or a deer, but you see neither rabbit nor deer. You see the animal droppings, but not the animal that left them. You can even inspect them for the undigested remainders of food and see what the animal ate, and so if you see undigested plant matter you conclude that the animal was likely a herbivore, and if you see the remains of bones and fur you conclude that it was a carnivore. If you see a bunch of owl pellets containing undigested remains of small rodents, you can safely conclude that an owl is nesting on that tree.

So basically it means that I based my opinion about the devil on indirect observations, which made my conclusions tentative enough that I didn't have much to say on the subject. I saw what he attempted to do, but without better knowledge of the purpose behind the moves it was difficult to come to any conclusion, even about his true intent. You can always interpret any evil either as a straightforward evil, or as a temptation with the purpose of promoting spiritual growth. My observation could not disprove either hypothesis. This is why I formed my working model in such a way that it would be consistent with both interpretations. In both cases, there is a danger, and one should adhere to the highest possible spiritual states and attain such a high level of initiation that one would be resistant to spiritual perils and temptations. If it's a temptation, it should be overcome by choosing the highest Divine states and rejecting the inferior choices, and if it's malicious intent of a being or a force, then the danger is also to be averted by choosing the highest Divine states and rejecting the inferior choices. Not being sure whether what I observed was caused by the devil as a conscious individual being, an evil force of nature, or a good being that wishes to purify the souls by yanking at their attachments and weak points, the prescribed cure was the same. It's a situation similar to the battlefield where everybody is shooting at you. Whether it's "friendly" or hostile fire, you either duck or you die.

This is the rationale behind the instruction I gave my students: this is a dangerous place and you should get the hell out of here as fast as possible while you're still ahead: now you have the guru, the teaching and the technique, use them, attain the highest possible initiation in the shortest possible time because the dangers here are beyond count. This is not a playground, it's a war zone.

Of course, I still felt the need to understand the true nature of the threat regardless, especially since most of my students didn't take the warning seriously, lost focus and dispersed away. I saw what was going on, I saw the forces involved, and concluded that it doesn't look like some automatism of passive laws, but intelligent and focused action, such that it cannot be ascribed to the classic "demons" of the astral plane; it looked like the global astral field itself formed some sort of an "antibody response" around my students, as the pressures around them increased in strength and density, targeting their weak points, magnifying the flaws, blocking and masking the strong points, inflating their ego, inciting them to find flaws in everything that could help them. I observed this process and I came to the conclusion that it must have its roots in the very qualities of the global astral field, that the global astral field acts as a demonic entity, that its behavior was identical to that of a malfunctioning tulpa, when its creator stops investing positive spiritual energy in it, or what happens to an astral "corpse", when astral substance is left behind by an ascending soul, and all that is left is a decaying evil.

My working hypothesis was that the global astral field was created by some form of connection between the human astral bodies, and that its inertia opposes everything that threatens its coherence. Basically, such an astral field would try to normalize the spiritual spectrum of all its participants, on the lowest common denominator. For all intents and purposes, this explanation is true and useful, because it explains the largest number of phenomena without leaving the sphere which the largest majority of readers could intuitively confirm. However, if we want the truest

explanation, it's actually a much worse nightmare than this, and I must admit that I personally don't know the full extent of this entire evil. A particularly nasty part is that this global astral field creates people more than they create it. For the most part, humans are merely a passive echo of the global astral field, and not interconnecting conscious beings who create the global astral field as a consequence. People are the dormant beings, walking around in some form of zombified stupor, with all of their central spiritual mechanisms inactive, and all their activities are merely a reflexive response to the stimuli received from the global field on an unconscious "like/dislike" level. But if people didn't create the global astral field, and instead it creates them, we must ask where did that unholy mess come from? What created this biomorphogenetic field, this global noosphere?

The punchline of the joke is that the truth is actually already known and weaves through our legends and suspicions emanating from the collective unconscious, whether because the devil couldn't contain himself and told his side of the story, or because the truth managed to break free through the cracks.

When we remove the excessive fat from the tale, the common core says that one of the Gods, or angels if you prefer, long ago thought he was very smart and he could show God how to do things properly. I don't know what the exact issue was, but it seems to be something along the line of God not being compassionate and merciful enough, and needs to be shown what real mercy, love and compassion look like. He will give people something they were initially deprived of, and the result will be the better version of the world than the one God envisioned. He, the Prometheus, Lucifer, Sanat Kumara, will bring the Light to the humans, he will be more merciful than God who would satisfy himself by having souls attain enlightenment one by one; he will arrange it so that no soul is left behind or goes too much ahead, that everybody becomes enlightened better and faster than they would according to God's plan. Of course, as his plan progressed, the result was an

increasingly greater mess, and his interpretation always was that this is merely a passing phase, and in the end it will become apparent that he was right.

The devil is, therefore, the result of an experiment with astral pressures and manipulations performed by the King of this world, throughout the eons. For all intents and purposes, there is no difference between the King and the devil, because they are as closely related as shit and stink.

At some point God decides to end this entire mess because he had enough of this abomination, and Sanat Kumar screams at him that he is misunderstood, that he can't be judged because his plan was interrupted prematurely and if only it were left to continue all would magically turn around into a heaven on Earth, and the herds of zombies passively reflecting his aura would be recognized as the supreme manifestation of Brahman on the material plane, because "they are all One". All the concepts of "the fight against the ego", all social uniformity, social networking, it all leads in that direction: homogenization of the global field, suppression of the personal soul and replacing it with a transceiver for the global field, which acts through the heart, the anahata chakra. All the emotional tales about God who needs to be sought in the heart, about "voice of the heart" that speaks of the right way, it's all the same concept – a mechanism of attunement to the background field which intends to replace the personal soul and replace the concept of individuals traversing the paths of their respective personal evolutions, with a huge hive mind, a collective animal that would serve only as a vessel of incarnating Satan.

Then all would have "God" in their hearts and be "one", as the King understood the goal of evolution. He could then represent this as the highest manifestation of Brahman in the relative world, unlike the commonly understood concept of evolution according to which the individual souls evolve to reach the state of Purusha.

But none of that matters. What matters is to initiate ourselves beyond the spectrum of the heart chakra, above the astral plane, because the devil has no authority over these higher planes. Above the heart, above the devil. It's that simple. It isn't necessary to understand all the intricacies of the story about the devil, what's important is to initiate ourselves out of his reach by out-initiating the anahata center, as I repeated until I talked myself hoarse decades ago, because the global astral field interferes with the heart center and works through it, obstructing the incarnating process of the personal soul and replacing one's personality with the collective archetypes. That's the only important thing for one to know, and whether the devil is called Lucifer or Sanat Kumar or Joe, is beside the point.

What matters is this:

If the devil inflicted some evil upon you, and you claim that as your own fault, you are essentially releasing the devil from all blame and accepting it upon yourself. That's how he managed to pull it off for so long without being held accountable – it's because his victims were tricked into accepting the blame, and once they did, they were dealt the punishment and the karmic account was thus settled. But if one remains aware of his sinless and Divine nature, every evil committed against him by the devil will backfire at the devil, which is the reason why he is so motivated to convince people that they are sinful, that they should “accept the responsibility for their actions”, and that the idea of a devil is silly.

But remember the Bhagavad-gita: it's an illusion that it is Self that acts in the world. On the contrary, Self is but a screen, upon which the experience of the world is projected. This world is in fact utterly alien to our nature. Remember that, and be free.

Freedom for the new

Religion has always been a team sport, but the enlightened persons are always the individuals. A group has no soul. A group is just an aggregate of individuals who made a compromise that deprived them of all the things that made them special and individual – or, lacking a better world, holy.

As much as the various politicians and philosophers try to assign the concept of human society with some spiritual significance and sanctity, the fact is that the entire concept of human society is a completely material, evolutionary construct. A pack of monkeys could more effectively defend themselves from a leopard than a single monkey could. They could also catch bigger prey if they hunted collaboratively. The cause of society is therefore in the inherent weakness of a biological individual that evolved into our species. Why doesn't a tiger live in a pack? Because he is strong enough as an individual to hunt and to defend himself from any attack. Human society is a way to compensate for weakness, nothing more.

Surely, the King loves inventing and promoting ideas about how human joining in love creates spiritual bonds that reflect the inner unity of Brahman. All the concepts of love as a reflection of God are essentially his inventions. In reality, all of it is trickery and deception. Love is such a generic term that it can mean anything to anyone; a warning sign should come from the fact that love, such as it is for the vast majority of people, is really a biological artifact, an evolutionary mechanism that promotes survival of the social animals, organizes them in a community, promotes formation of a stabile hierarchy – basically, it's one of the primary biological mechanisms. As such, it has great strength, every bit as much as the sexual instinct and the instinct for self-preservation, which

gives it great potential for clouding one's judgment and for combining the instinctive with the spiritual. Just think how much does sexual drive change your behavior and priorities. Practically everything people do is sexualized. Everyone is constantly working on being sexually attractive, they measure up the potential partners and competition, basically, whatever they do, sex is some kind of a constant musical background that never really turns off, coloring their entire perception.

Fear is a similar mechanism, somewhat more implicit but still constantly influencing our judgment. The reason why we are cautious when we cross the street is an implicit fear, which takes the form of caution. The reason why we avoid the dark solitary places, why we avoid conflicts even when we are seriously annoyed – all those assessments are motivated by fear, which is the foundation of all of our caution. As implicit as it usually is, as soon as something unexpected and threatening takes place, it arises in its explicit form.

Love is the third such mechanism, which takes different forms and is implicit in all social interactions. A desire to be loved and admired, to find someone we can love and admire, as much as it can grow into some higher spiritual aspect, is first and foremost a biological imperative. Certainly, all biological imperatives can be spiritualized, bound with the higher spiritual states – for instance, the sexuality can inspire incredible spiritual ascents, and fear can also be a strong motivating factor which inspires high spiritual longings, but if a state or emotion is primarily a biological imperative, all the theologies that put this imperative on a pedestal as God himself should be questioned. Would you unconditionally accept a theology that puts sex on such a pedestal and says that sex is God? There were probably many such theologies throughout history. Would you unconditionally accept a theology that puts fear on a pedestal, and says that fear is God? There were even more of those. Why would a theology which says that love is God be less biological? Why should we unconditionally assume their

transcendental nature and Divine origin?

Surely, the experience of a high spiritual being's darshan creates a strong emotional reaction in humans, which is interpreted as love, but that doesn't mean much. A higher being's darshan can also produce a reaction that can be described as fear of something great and powerful beyond our control. Also, such an experience is usually accompanied by strong sexual arousal, because the spiritual experience has a side effect of boosting the energy flow through the body, which is experienced as sexual, among other things. None of that has any meaning other than the fact that a spiritual experience produces great spiritual excitement which implies strong physical responses. What we feel in the state of darshan is not love, but something greater, more subtle than love; God is not love, God is much more. God is sat-cit-ananda, reality-consciousness-bliss. People who have experienced it describe it as unconditional love, but that's nonsense, because love has nothing to do with unconditionality. It's a biological emotion which is by definition conditional. The thing is, sat-cit-ananda is perceived as unconditional love exactly because it has nothing to do with love – it's a spiritual light that arises from the very foundation of reality, without anything that would cause it, without any relationship with other beings it would be founded on. That light simply is as such, and its qualities are fulfillment, reality, bliss and consciousness. It is unconditional because it is completely transcendental, it is not caused by anything from the world of phenomena and manifestation, and it's the radiation of the very qualities of Brahman.

Of course love can have a subtle transcendental component that can be a vehicle for the shining through of the aspects of sat-cit-ananda, but so can solving a mathematical problem. Photographing flowers in a forest can have a transcendental component. Sex can have a transcendental component. Anything can have a transcendental component, because the transcendental Brahman is the foundation of every experience, and the very point of every

single phenomenon in the Universe is His desire to shine through all the phenomena in the world of duality. Love is in this respect not in any way different from fear or hatred – they, too, can be the vehicles of the transcendental light, but the same as love, they can also be the vehicles of a profound spiritual darkness.

Love is, in a majority of cases, a state of spiritual darkness, and not a transcendental emotion. In most cases, love is a substitute for the transcendental, and not its reflection. It is true that people feel “love” when they see some Divine being, but this “love” is a completely different emotion than the one they feel for their own offspring, or the one that motivates their social interactions and compromises. Love is often the name for imposing psychological control upon others, because you “love” them, and you wish them “well”. Imposing one's own vision upon others is evil violence, but this evil violence is called love, it's neither hatred nor fear. Love is an emotion the Nazis felt for Hitler – just watch the movie “Triumph of the will”. They all radiate love. That's love for you, and the result of love is usually some great evil, some slaughter or repression of “others”, who happened to get in the way of your love. I've seen enough of it to know it's more a rule than an exception. Love is very far from being an affirmative force, and that's why the saints put so much of an accent on the “unconditional” aspect of the “Divine love” – because it's not love at all. The only reason why those two are confused is the poverty of human language and experience, because people know only a couple of primary biological emotions, and they don't have a clear idea what to do with anything else, other than try to fit it into some known category, no matter how inadequate.

You people should liberate yourselves from the biological restraints you put on spirituality, and understand that God is something that greatly exceeds all of your socio-biological concepts. This inability to separate the biological mechanisms from spirituality produced all the nonsensical clutter that's taking useful space in your minds. For instance, the concepts of sin,

remorse, God's will – these are all mere projections, social mechanisms that came into existence when some primitive tribe of shepherders perceived God as some kind of a great king, who declares his will and imposes laws, and whoever violates those laws will suffer the fury of the Lord. Then you have the concept of remorse, where the subject wallows in dust at his Lord's feet, declaring his subservience and begging for mercy, which in turn gives the alpha male Lord the feeling of control, power and mercy toward the subject, whom he spares and sends away with a mere warning.

In reality, all those concepts are spiritually worthless and harmful. There is no God in sense of a Lord who declares the laws. All the real “laws” arise from the very nature of Brahman and reflect its qualities. If you want to align yourself with Brahman, you need to avoid things that are illusory, that restrict your spirit, that are spiritually static, limiting and crazy, and stick to those that make you lucid, brilliant, creative, spiritually dynamic, that make you feel the kind of focused blissful joy and touch with reality which is Brahman. These are not laws because there's no lawmaker, but they are laws in a sense in which gravity or conservation of energy are laws. People misinterpreted those concepts and the religions reflect their delusions, and it's about time you got rid of them.

Instead of passively reproducing the biologically conditioned mechanisms without awareness, allow yourselves something new – a step into the unconditionality of the spiritual. We had enough of the passive reproduction of the same old ideas. Admit to yourself the possibility of the different, of the new – of your own self-sufficient light, your own personal path, because the same Brahman that is the foundation of this world, is also the foundation of your own personal reality. All the enlightened ones, the wise and the Gods are already there, and are inviting you to become one of them, and have done so for centuries. You, as a person, yourself, are more important to them than any religion, society or mankind, because you as a person have a personal connection with God, and

mankind, with all its self-important religions and pecking orders, is merely a speck of dust which will soon disappear in the ocean of time, together with the other, already abandoned sections of the great poem of creation.