

# Pantheism—Part 1: An Exposition

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Pantheism is the polar opposite of deism. The latter stresses God's distinction from the real world and the former emphasizes God's identity with it. Deism holds that God is beyond the world but not in it in a miraculous way; pantheism believes that God is in the world or, rather, God is the world. So deism stresses God's transcendence and pantheism his immanence in the world.

There are several kinds of pantheism. The *absolute* pantheism of Parmenides identified only one being in the universe and designated all else as non-being. There is the *emanational* pantheism of Plotinus who believed that everything flows from God the way a flower unfolds from a seed. Further, there is *developmental* pantheism wherein God is unfolded in an evolutionary or historical way. Hegel is a developmental example of the latter where God unfolds historically. Other pantheisms are *modal* such as in Spinoza where finite things are considered modes or moments in one infinite substance. Finally, there are *manifestational* or multilevel pantheisms such as are found in various forms of Hinduism. It will be instructive to look at several of these pantheistic systems.

## An Exposition of Pantheism

The metaphysical background of pantheism is monism, and Parmenides is the father of Western monism. Hence, it is philosophically foundational to begin our analysis of the pantheistic world view with Parmenides.

### ***Parmenidean Monism***

A monist believes that reality is ultimately unified. An absolute monist believes that reality is ultimately and only one; all multiplicity lacks any reality. Being is, and non-being is not. All is One and One is All. Being is one and multiplicity is non-being and illusion.

Parmenides' logic of monism can be summarized very simply. There cannot be two realities or beings; for if this were so, one would have to differ from the other. If there were no difference then they would be one identical reality and not two. In order for there to be really different things, there must be some real difference. Everything that differs must differ either by being or by non-being, since there are no other ways to differ. However, two beings cannot differ by nothing or non-being, for to differ by nothing is not to differ at all. And if they do not differ at all then they are identical and one. On the other hand two things cannot differ by being for being is the very feature they have in common and things cannot differ by what they have in common; that is, the point of identity cannot also be the point of diversity. It follows, then, argued Parmenides, that there cannot be two beings in the universe. All things are ultimately and absolutely one. Any seeming multiplicity is but an illusion.

Parmenides' disciple, Zeno, used a *reductio ad absurdum* argument to prove his master's monistic position. If one assumes multiplicity is possible, said Zeno, he ends in irresolvable paradoxes. For instance, if a line is divisible from point A to point B, then it can be divided in

half and half of half and so on infinitely. But infinite divisibility is impossible since an infinite number cannot be reached. Hence, divisibility is not possible. Therefore reality is indivisible. Likewise Zeno argued that motion is impossible since to move from A to B, one must first go halfway and half of half before that and so on infinitely. But since an infinite can never be traversed, one can never really move from one point to the next. It follows then that all is one indivisible and untransversible point of absolute identity. Or as Parmenides would have said, there is one solid, eternal indivisible ball of Being.

### **Plotinian Emanational Pantheism**

Early Greek monism came to final fruition in the late Greek mysticism of Plotinus who is the classic example of Western pantheism. In him Greek rationalistic monism blossoms into pantheistic mysticism. A survey of his system from the *Enneads* will exemplify an emanational type of pantheism.

Contrary to Greek thought generally, Plotinus held that ultimate reality goes beyond being to absolute unity. (1) The One is the absolute source of all being and multiplicity. Everything in the universe differs as to its degree of unity as it both flows from and varies from the absolute Unity (God). God must be absolutely One because all multiplicity presupposes some prior unity, but each multiple is made up of little unities. Further, the absolute Unity (God) is not self-conscious, since self-reflection involves a basic duality of knower and known; and absolute unity as such has no duality. (2) Hence, when out of the absolute necessity of its own nature the One unfolds as a seed into a flower or as center into radii, there emanates *Nous* (Mind). This first emanant is the universal Mind which makes all knowing possible. *Nous* is the One becoming self-conscious and forming what Plotinus calls *One-Many*. When *Nous* reflects backward upon its source (the One) it becomes knowingly self-conscious. Then when *Nous* reflects inward upon itself it produces other minds or knowing beings. (3) And when it reflects outward it gives rise to Life (or World Soul); this is called *One-and-Many* by Plotinus. From World Soul springs all other living things (souls) as species within a genus. The One, *Nous*, and World Soul form an emanational triadic Godhead from which all other things flow both emanationally and necessarily.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Beneath Mind and Soul there is Matter, which is the most multiple of all, the *Many*. Since the entire process is a necessary unfolding from unity to greater and greater multiplicity, it is necessary at last that the most multiple should be reached: this is Matter. Matter is not absolutely nothing; it is the last remnant of something before the emanations reach the brink of oblivion. Matter is the point at which no more multiplicity is possible without going into non-being. Further, since unity is absolutely good, it follows that multiplicity is evil. Matter itself has no residue of good; it has only the bare capacity for good. There is then a complete hierarchy of being and goodness from First to last, from God to evil, from Unity to multiplicity, and from the One beyond Mind to matter.<sup>2</sup>

This process, however, is not one-directional. God not only emanates forth but the emanants return to the Source from which they come. There is a kind of boomerang of being whereby what comes down must go up again. What flows from ultimate Unity seeks to return again to this sanctuary. But the lower and latter is always inferior to the higher and former. Hence, absolute multiplicity cannot destroy absolute unity; evil cannot defeat good and non-being cannot annihilate being.<sup>3</sup>

Man, the microcosm who possesses mind, soul, and matter, is the point at which the return trip is made conscious. Wandering about as he does in the foreign land of evil and multiplicity, man's higher soul becomes homesick for the Fatherland of goodness and unity. Man's higher soul is as it were on an elastic band that can be stretched only so far into the material world. Sooner or later a "snap" pulls man back toward the source from which he was originally stretched out. When a being overlooks the brink of utter oblivion, it recoils backward toward Being and the Source of Being. The final remnant of good is repelled as it stares into the naked face of evil.<sup>4</sup>

Mounting one's way back to unity is not easy; matter is a drag on the soul. Hence, asceticism is a necessary preliminary stage in the ascent to God. One must turn from the outward multiple world to the inner more unified world of soul. The denial of the physical is essential to the attainment of the spiritual. The move from the external to the internal is the first move toward attaining union with God.<sup>5</sup>

The second stage is a move from the *internal* to the *eternal*, that is, the inward to the upward. This movement is from the lower soul to the higher soul and from soul to mind which is above soul. This is accomplished by meditation. In short, one must move from the sensible to the intellectual, by which Plotinus does not mean the realm of one's individual intellect but an identification of our mind with Mind (the Nous). Knower and known must become one; herein is the highest and most unified act of knowing. However, even when one's individual mind has become one with Mind there is still a basic duality of knower and known; absolute unity has not yet been attained.<sup>6</sup>

For the highest and final union neither the preparatory asceticism nor the preliminary meditation will suffice; the One can be attained only by a "leap" of mystical intuition in which one becomes "one with the One" and "alone with the Alone." It is a leap beyond Being and beyond knowing. There is no consciousness but only convergence. The center of our being corresponds with the Center of all Being. In this state one has gone beyond the cognitive to the intuitional, beyond the rational to the mystical. Herein everything is absolute unity again. The prodigals have returned home and the strays are back in the fold. What emanated out has returned; everything came from God (*ex deo*) and to him all must return.<sup>7</sup>

Plotinus acknowledges that he has but negative knowledge of the One. He knows not what it is but that it is not-many. All positive, rational, or cognitive knowledge of absolute Unity is impossible. The best one can do is attribute to the One perfections that it produces but does not itself possess. Hence, we call what the One produces good, beauty, and being; but it does not really and intrinsically possess these characteristics that are attributed to It. We can speak about It only in terms of what comes from It, but the sequents do not really tell us anything of their Source. God is literally ineffable.<sup>8</sup>

In summary, Plotinus' form of pantheism is emanational in that everything flows out of God and returns to him. Ultimately All is in the One; the One is not in the All. The source of all reality is Unity, and it is the degree of unity by which something is constituted in the very nature of its being. The less unified, the less real something is. Hence, there is not in Plotinus a rigid and inflexible monism but an emanational and unfolding divine unity that cascades down the great chain of being from Unity toward greater multiplicity.

### **Spinoza's Modal Pantheism**

Benedict Spinoza was a rationalist in his epistemology but a pantheist in his metaphysical position. He begins axiomatically and definitionally. "By *God*, I mean a being absolutely infinite—

that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality." By "substance" Spinoza means "that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself." "Attribute," differing only formally not actually from "essence," means "that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance." A "mode," on the other hand, is a "modification [affection] of substance, or that which exists in, and is conceived through, something other than itself." Armed with these definitions and some basic axioms, Spinoza proceeds to deduce the existence of a pantheistic God.<sup>9</sup>

First, "substance is by nature prior to its modifications." Two substances whose attributes differ would have nothing in common. Two or more distinct things would have to differ either by their substance or by their attributes, since "everything which exists, exists either in itself or in something else." It follows then that "there cannot exist in the universe two or more substances having the same nature or attributes." The proof Spinoza offers for this is reminiscent of Parmenides: "If several distinct substances be granted, they must be distinguished one from the other, either by the difference of their attributes, or by the difference of their modifications." But if they differ "only by the difference of their attributes, it will be granted that there cannot be more than one with identical attributes," for they cannot differ by that in which they are identical. On the other hand, if they differ by their modifications only, "it follows that setting the modifications aside, and considering substance in itself, that is truly, there cannot be conceived one substance different from another—that is (by Prop. IV), there cannot be granted several substances, but one substance only. Q. E. D." Hence, monism follows geometrically from self-evident definitions and axioms of thought.<sup>10</sup>

Not only is there only one substance in the universe—everything else being merely a modification of it—but that substance is infinite. Spinoza's proof of this contention is as follows: "There can only be one substance with an identical attribute, and existence follows from its nature (Prop. VII); its nature, therefore, involves existence, either as finite or infinite." But "it does not exist as finite, for (by Def. II) it would then be limited by something else of the same kind, which would also necessarily exist (Prop. VII); and there would be two substances with an identical attribute, which is absurd (Prop. V). It therefore exists as infinite. Q. E. D." So there exists one and only one infinite substance, namely, God.<sup>11</sup>

According to Spinoza, "the more reality or being a thing has, the greater the number of its attributes." From this it follows that "there is but one substance in the universe, and ... it is absolutely infinite..." For "nothing in nature is more clear than that each and every entity must be conceived under some attribute, and that its reality or being is in proportion to the number of its attributes expressing necessity or eternity and infinity." Consequently, "it is abundantly clear, that an absolutely infinite being must necessarily be defined as consisting in infinite attributes, each of which expresses a certain eternal and infinite essence." And if God must be defined as a substance consisting of infinite attributes, he must necessarily exist. For "if this be denied, conceive, if possible, that God does not exist: then his essence does not involve existence. But this (by Prop. VII) is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists."<sup>12</sup>

God then is the only substance that can exist. For "if any substance besides God were, granted, it would have to be explained by some attribute of God, and thus two substances with the same attribute would exist, which (by Prop. V) is absurd; therefore, besides God no substance can be granted, or, consequently, be conceived." From this it follows "that extension and thought are either attributes of God or accidents (affections) of the attributes of God." For "whatever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or be conceived." This does not mean that God has a body, mind, and passions like man. This is wrong because there is no definite quan-

tity in God; he is absolutely infinite. Yet we must draw the conclusion that “extended substance is one of the infinite attributes of God.” The fallacy in opposing arguments, said Spinoza, is that they all assume wrongly that extended substance is composed of parts. This is not true. God is infinitely extended and yet he has no parts. God’s substance is indivisible, for “if it could be divided, the parts into which it was divided would either retain the nature of absolutely infinite substance, or they would not. If the former, we should have several substances of the same nature, which (by Prop. V) is absurd.” And “if the latter, then (by Prop. VII) substance absolutely infinite could cease to exist, which (by Prop. XI) is also absurd,” for nothing can divide and destroy what is by nature a necessary existence. Therefore, God must be infinitely extended and without parts.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, “all things... are in God, and all things which come to pass, come to pass solely through the laws of the infinite nature of God, and follow... from the necessity of his essence.” For “from the necessity of the divine nature must follow an infinite number of things in infinite ways—that is, all things which can fall within the sphere of infinite intellect.” This follows because “from the given definition of any thing the intellect infers several properties which already necessarily follow therefrom.” And since God is necessary, “it follows that from the necessity of its nature an infinite number of things... must necessarily follow.” Hence, “God acts solely by the laws of his own nature, and is not constrained by anyone.” In this sense God is said to be “free”; that is, God “acts by the sole necessity of his nature, wherefore God is ... the sole free cause. Q. E. D.” God is not “free” in any deliberative sense, for “neither intellect nor will appertain to God’s nature.”<sup>14</sup>

Since God is necessary and since all things flow necessarily from him, it follows that “an infinite number of things... have necessarily flowed forth in an infinite number of ways, or always follow from the same necessity; in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows... that its three interior angles are equal to two right angles.” So “all things which are, are in God.... God, therefore, is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things.” And since God is eternal as well as necessary, then all things flow both eternally and necessarily from God. For “all things which follow from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must always exist and be infinite.” This is true of modes as well as attributes. For a mode which can only be conceived to exist through some necessary perfection of God must therefore itself exist necessarily. Otherwise, it could not even be conceived to exist.

From this it follows that every event and act in the finite world is determined by God. For “every individual thing, or everything which is finite and has a conditional existence, cannot exist or be conditioned to act, unless it be conditioned for existence and action by a cause other than itself....” But since this causal-conditioned series cannot go on to infinity, we must arrive alas at a first conditioning cause of every other act or event in the finite world. In short, “all things which are, are in God, and so depend on God, that without him they can neither be nor be conceived.” For “nothing in the universe is contingent, but all things are conditioned to exist and operate in a particular manner by the necessity of the divine nature.” Whatever is, is in God. “But God cannot be called a thing contingent. For he exists necessarily, and not contingently. Further, the modes of the divine nature follow therefrom necessarily, and not contingently.”<sup>15</sup>

In Spinoza’s pantheistic universe, as well as in Plotinus’, evil flows necessarily from God. For “things could not have been brought into being by God in any manner or in any order different from that which has in fact obtained.” It clearly follows that “things have been brought into being by God in the highest perfection, inasmuch as they necessarily followed from a most perfect nature.” For “God’s will cannot be different... from God’s perfection. Therefore neither can things

be different.” If one were to ask Spinoza why, if God is perfect, there are so many imperfections in nature, he would reply: “The perfection of things is to be reckoned only from their own nature and power; things are not more or less perfect, according as they delight or offend human senses.” As to why God created men who could and would be controlled by anything less than reason, it was, according to Spinoza, because “matter was not lacking to him for the creation of every degree of perfection from highest to lowest; or, more strictly, because the laws of his nature are so vast, as to suffice for the production of everything conceivable by an infinite intelligence, as I have shown in Prop. XVI.”<sup>16</sup>

In summary, God is an infinitely perfect and necessary being. Everything else is either an attribute or mode of his substance. Since God is infinite and necessary, an infinity of necessary degrees of perfection flow necessarily from his nature. Evil is necessary because with degrees of perfection come also corresponding degrees of imperfection. All is in God and flows from God. God’s substance is absolutely good; it is only the infinite modal manifestations of this one substance that manifest the degrees of perfection (and imperfection). Hence, there is no evil in the infinite oneness and necessity of God. Evil is found only in the modal manifestations which are less than ultimately real.

### **Radhakrishnan’s Neo-Hindu Pantheism**

The Indian religious experience is rich in variety. Everything from impersonal monisms to various forms of theism is found in the Upanishads. One of the most interesting and influential forms of neo-Hinduism is that of Radhakrishnan. His pantheism is modified in the direction of a favorable appeal to those influenced by Western theism.

According to Radhakrishnan there are several statuses or levels of reality. “We have (1) the Absolute, (2) God as Creative power, (3) God immanent in this world. These are not to be regarded as separate entities. They are arranged in this order because there is a logical priority.” One proceeds from and is based on the preceding. “We thus get the four poises or statuses of reality, (1) the Absolute, *Brahman*, (2) the Creative Spirit, *Isvara*, (3) the World-Spirit, *Hiranyagarbha* and (4) the World [*viraj*].”<sup>17</sup>

Radhakrishnan compares this to neo-platonic pantheism: “In Plotinus we have a similar scheme, (i) The One alone, the simple, the unconditioned. ... (ii) The *Nous*. The Intelligible world which Plotinus calls One-Many, the world of Platonic forms or archetypes.... (iii) One and Many. The soul of the All is the third, which fashions the material universe on the model of divine thoughts, the ideas laid up within the Divine Mind.... (iv) The many alone. It is the world-body, the world of matter without form.”<sup>18</sup> The Hindu scheme of reality, however, differs from plotinian emanationalism in that Brahman is manifest on different levels but does not emanate forth, with lower levels flowing out of higher ones. In this sense neo-Hindu pantheism is more a multi-level pantheism than emanational pantheism.

**Brahman, the Ultimate Reality.** For Radhakrishnan, *Brahman* comes from the root, *brh*, meaning “to grow, to burst forth.” Brahman is the one single reality from which the world of multiplicity springs. It is the subtle and infinite essence of which everything perceived is made. As formally defined in one Upanishad, “That from which these beings are born, that in which born they live, and that into which they enter at their death is Brahman.” That “on which all else depends, to which all existences aspire, *Brahman* which is sufficient to itself, aspiring to no other, without any need, is the source of all other beings....” It is the Primordial and the Supreme. “Verily, in the beginning this world was *Brahman*.”<sup>19</sup>

Like Plotinus, Radhakrishnan believes *Brahman* to be indescribable. “We can only describe

the Absolute in negative terms. In the words of Plotinus, 'we say what he is not, we cannot say what he is.' The Absolute is beyond the sphere of predication. It is the *sunyata* of the Buddhists."<sup>20</sup>

**Isvara, the Creative Spirit.** The next level of this neo-Hindu triadic manifestation of God is personal. It is like the plotinian *Nous* or the platonic *Logos*. Here there is simple duality of subject and object. It is *mahat*, the great one, or *buddhi*, the intellect. As cosmic intelligence it contains all the ideas which serve as the principle of individuation for all other things. *Isvara* is the Supreme Light, the principle of communication. He is the Supreme Lord who, like Plato's Demiurgos, is the creative Mind behind the universe. Together with *Brahman*, "we thus get the conception of an Absolute-God, *Brahman—Isvara*, where the first term indicates infinite being and possibility, and the second suggests creative freedom." As the Absolute *Brahman* is perfect and needs nothing. "It is free to move or not to move, to throw itself into forms or remain formless. If it still indulges its power of creativity, it is because of its free choice." In *Isvara* "the Supreme who is unmeasured and immeasurable becomes measured and defined. Immutable becomes infinite fecundity."<sup>21</sup>

**Hiranya-garbha, the World-Spirit.** The world is not only a creation of *Isvara* but it is a manifestation of *Hiranya-garbha*. The world is the free self-determination of God. For the power of self-expression belongs to God. *Hiranya-garbha* is the spirit that pervades and animates the universe. "The World-soul is the divine creator, the supreme lord *Isvara* at work in the universe." It is a definite possibility of the Absolute being realized in the universe. According to Radhakrishnan, the World-Soul is grounded in *Isvara*; there is no sharp distinction drawn between them in the Upanishads. In point of fact, each is a successive manifestation of the absolute. "The absolute conceived as it is in itself, independent of any creation, is called *Brahman*." And "when it is thought of as the spirit moving everywhere in the universe, it is called *Hiranya-garbha*; when it is thought of as a personal God creating, protecting and destroying the universe, it is called *Isvara*." *Isvara* becomes *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Siva* when his three functions are taken separately, but "the real is not a sum of these. It is an ineffable unity in which these conceptual distinctions are made. These are fourfold to our mental view, separate only in appearance. If we identify the real with any one definable state of being, however pure and perfect, we violate the unity and divide the indivisible."<sup>22</sup>

**Viraj, the Manifestation of the Absolute in the World.** According to Radhakrishnan, the world is not an illusion but a lower level manifestation of the Absolute.<sup>23</sup> By contrast with *Brahman* itself, the world seems almost nothing, but it is the last manifestation of reality. "*Maya* is the power of *Isvara* from which the world arises." However, "God does not create the world but becomes it. Creation is expression. It is not a making of something out of nothing. It is not making so much as becoming." Hence, *maya* is not illusion but the creative manifestation of God in the multiple world. Of course the world of duality and multiplicity is admittedly not the absolutely real. It is only an echo of the real. "The world is neither one with *Brahman* nor wholly other than *Brahman*." The world is grounded in *Brahman*. "The many are parts of *Brahman* even as waves are parts of the sea. All the possibilities of the world are affirmed in the first being, God."<sup>24</sup>

**Karma, Rebirth and Eternal Life.** When *buddhi*, intelligence, turns itself from *jiva* (individual self, ego) toward *atman* (universal self) it develops true knowledge or intuition (*vidya*). *Atman* is *Brahman* as the universal basis of human personality. Hence, *Brahman* is known through the inner self of man. Thus one must turn from the outward and multiple to the inner world of thought and unity. "Knowledge presupposes unity or oneness of thought and being, a unity that

transcends the differentiation of subject and object.” Logical reasoning is incapable of comprehending God and “logical incapacity is not evidence of actual impossibility.” The individual should develop the habit of introversion, of abstracting from the outside world and looking within himself. For “by a process of abstraction we get behind knowing, feeling and willing to the essential Self, the God within. We must silence our speech, mind and will. We cannot hear the voice of the spirit in us, so long as we are lost in vain talk, mental rambling and empty desires.”<sup>25</sup>

“Until we negate the ego and get fixed in the Divine Ground we are bound to the endless procession of events called *samsara*” (cycles of rebirth). The principle which governs this world of becoming is *karma*. It is the law of retribution by which a man inherits in the next life his deserts from this life. *Karma* is not an external law imposed by God but an unfolding of the law of our being. As Radhakrishnan noted, “If there is a fundamental difference between Christianity and Hinduism, it is said that it consists in this, that while the Hindu to whatever school he belongs believes in a succession of lives, the Christian believes that ‘it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment.’” By meditation, however, the Hindu believer can overcome the cycle of rebirths dictated by the law of *karma* and be united to *Brahman*. For “he who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*. Perfection is a state of mind, not contingent of time or place.” Life eternal, or *moska*, is liberation from births and deaths, for “he who knows himself to be all can have no desire. When the Supreme is seen, the knots of the heart are cut asunder.... There can be no sorrow or pain or fear when there is no other.”<sup>26</sup>

Radhakrishnan believes “the individual soul is eternal. It endures throughout the cosmic process.” Nevertheless, “the individual soul is an aspect of the Transcendent in the universe and when liberated from all limitations, he acts with his centre in the Supreme.”<sup>27</sup> And its inner peace is manifested in the joyous freedom of outer activity. Thus union with *Brahman* is a state of bliss or nirvana that is not only attainable in this life but is the guarantee that one will not have to undergo another life of pain and frustration stemming from selfish desire. For in nirvana the self attains its release from individual striving by achieving union with God.

## Summary of the Central Tenets of Pantheism

There are many kinds of pantheism. There is the *absolute* pantheism of Parmenides where all reality is one monistic whole and all multiplicity is an absolute illusion or non-being. But all other forms of pantheism provide some reality status to some things other than God, at least for a time. Spinoza’s *modal* pantheism holds that everything other than the one infinite substance exists as a mode or moment in the divine essence. Plotinus’ *emanational* pantheism provides that creation comes out of God in various degrees of reality depending on their distance from God and their degree of multiplicity. Hindu pantheism comes in various varieties but the position of Radhakrishnan is a kind of *manifestational* or multilevel pantheism in which the one absolute is revealed on different or descending levels of reality. Other forms of Hindu pantheism would claim that lower levels are not so much manifestations of the absolute as they are mere appearance or, in the case of some, that the world of senses is an outright illusion, an unreality. Finally, there is *developmental* pantheism in which God is unfolding himself in the historical or evolutionary process. In the view of Hegel the development is manifest in history. History is the footprints of God in the sands of time. Or, better, history is a phenomenological theophany.

Since space will not permit detailed evaluation of the various kinds of pantheism, we will concentrate on theses which are common to most forms, noting significant points in some of the representative types discussed above.

1. A basic *intuitive epistemology* is characteristic of pantheistic approaches to God. God is

understood in the highest and most significant sense not by sensible observation nor by rational inference but by mystical intuition that goes beyond the law of noncontradiction.

2. The stress of the *way of negation* in religious language is essential to pantheism. God cannot be adequately expressed in positive terms. Nothing in our experience may be appropriately affirmed of the way God is. God is beyond being and beyond rational knowing.

3. The central pantheistic conception of God is the *absolute unity* and *transcendence* of God. The supremacy and unity of God are the core of ultimate reality and the basis for everything derived from him.

4. *Creation is ex Deo, out of God.* Creation from nothing, *ex nihilo*, is meaningless. God is the source for everything; all is rooted in his being. Creation springs out of God's being either by manifestation, emanation, or some kind of unfolding.

5. Both *creation and evil flow necessarily from God.* The absolute is not personal and creation is not a free choice. It flows from God with necessity. Plotinus would say, "The good is diffusive of itself," that is, it must issue forth the way rays must radiate from the sun or radii from the center of a circle or as a seed unfolds into a flower. And whatever evils, lacks, or deficiencies are seen in the emanations or manifestations are there because they must be there.

6. In the highest and absolute sense God is *neither personal nor conscious.* The Absolute and Supreme is not a He but an It. Personality comes about at best by emanation or manifestation on a lower level.

7. The *universe is ultimately One*, not many. In absolute monism, as in Parmenides, there is no reality status to anything but absolutely one Being. In other pantheisms there is agreement that whatever lesser reality there is in multiplicity and finitude, the many is always in the One but the One is not in the many. That is, unity is the basic reality from which multiplicity flows, not the reverse. Further, whatever lesser reality is accorded to the finite and many, *ultimately* there is only one reality. Temporarily and/or manifestationally there are many modes and aspects of reality. But like radii, there is really only one central point of reality all have in common, i.e., in the only Being or One.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI, 8, 9; III, 8, 9; V, 1, 8; VI, 8, 18; VI, 7, 37; IV, 2, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Plotinus, II, 4, 11; I, 8, 7; VI, 9, 1; I, 8, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Plotinus, IV, 8, 4; I, 7, 7; VI, 9, 11; I, 3, 6; II, 4, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Plotinus, I, 6, 8; I, 2, 4; I, 8, 5; I, 8, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Plotinus, I, 6, 3-4; I, 6, 8; VI, 9, 11; I, 3, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Plotinus, III, 8, 10; V, 3, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Plotinus, VI, 7, 35; V, 5, 6; VI, 9, 4; VI, 7, 34; VI, 9, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Plotinus, V, 5, 6; V, 3, 13; VI, 9, 4; VI, 7, 29; V, 3, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Definitions I, III, IV, V.

<sup>10</sup> Spinoza, *Propositions*, I, II, IV, V.

<sup>11</sup> Spinoza, Proposition VIII.

<sup>12</sup> Spinoza, Propositions X, VII.

<sup>13</sup> Spinoza, Propositions XIV, XV.

<sup>14</sup> Spinoza, Propositions XV, XVII.

<sup>15</sup> Spinoza, Propositions XVII, XVIII, XXI, XXVIII.

<sup>16</sup> Spinoza, Propositions XXXIII, XXXII, and Appendix.

<sup>17</sup> Sarvepali Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, intro., p. i.

<sup>18</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 65, 66.

<sup>19</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 52, 55, 56, 59.

<sup>20</sup> Radhakrishnan, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 63, 64.

<sup>22</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 71, 66.

<sup>23</sup> Other commentators on Hinduism, as M. Hereyanna, understands the world as *maya*, i.e., an illusory appearance of Brahman the way a rope may appear to be a snake from a distance (*The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, pp. 158-59.). In the Sankara tradition the world (*maya*) is completely illusory or non-being.

<sup>24</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 80, 82, 83.

<sup>25</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 77, 96, 97, 102.

<sup>26</sup> Radhakrishnan, pp. 114, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Radhakrishnan, p. 127.