



MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

Swami Abhayananda

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Swami Abhayananda may be contacted by email
at: abhayananda@bellsouth.net, and may be found
on the web at: www.themysticsvision.com.

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Introduction

Mystical Theology represents my long-term attempt to present a comprehensive metaphysics, according to my experience and understanding. It contains some material that appeared in one of my previous books, but I feel that, owing to the importance of this material, it deserves to be repeated. It begins with a history lesson that recounts the metaphysics expounded by some of the early mystics and philosophers of the Western intellectual tradition. This is followed by some observations on the effect that recent scientific discoveries—especially in the realm of physics—have had on our current metaphysical perspective. This leads to an enquiry into the nature of the soul, and consequently to some theories relating to the correlation of the properties of the soul with the conditions of the solar system at the time and place of the soul's incarnation. An array of natal charts is offered, showing the planetary patterns in effect at the birth of a number of well-known personalities, regarding which, the reader is urged to make his or her own interpretations. And finally, a few words about the soul's ascent in consciousness to God, revealing its eternal identity as the one Divine Self.

MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

by Swami Abhayananda

“What man can comprehend the plan of God,
or who can grasp what the Lord wills?”
—*The Wisdom of Solomon*, 9:13

I. Some Early Sources

From what we presently know, a mystical theology first appeared in India with the writings that were later gathered into the collection that we now call the *Upanishads* (ca. 800-500 B.C.E.), and in the chapter of the epic *Mahabharata* that we know as the *Bhagavad Gita* (ca. 500 B.C.E.). It is possible that this Eastern mystical literature influenced the mysticism of the early Greek philosophers, but it is also possible that a mystical theology arose in Greece independently. There is no way to know for sure. Though the Buddha lived and taught around this same time, there was no Buddhist literary representation until many centuries thereafter; and the Biblical literature of the Middle Eastern Jews, whose culture was somewhat closed to outside influences, shows no clear signs of a mystical strain at any time, until the accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus written by his

followers in the first and second centuries—and even then, his mysticism was widely unrecognized and misinterpreted. The most easily traced early historical development of a mystical theology is that appearing in Greece in the Platonist and Neoplatonist traditions, and it is that development which we shall here consider.

Since the beginning, men have been gathering knowledge about the world in which they live in the effort to answer such questions as: ‘Where did this world come from?’ ‘Who made it?’ and ‘What is it made of?’ The earliest efforts to formulate a cosmogony came in the form of simple stories, myths, which were necessarily vague. Hesiod’s *Theogony* (7th or 8th century B.C.E.), for example, posited the originating agent as “Chaos”, a primordial abysmal condition from which all else mysteriously arose. But, by the 6th century B.C.E., enquiring minds had become a bit more sophisticated; and as the ancient philosopher, Xenophanes (580-480 B.C.E.) observed, “Not at first did the gods reveal all things to mortals, but in time, by inquiring, they [mortals] make better discoveries.” And this gathering of knowledge through ‘better discoveries’ tended to be cumulative over the ages, though inquiry led only

very slowly and laboriously toward a true understanding.

It had been clear, even to men of more primitive societies, that mind and matter, soul and body, were two very different categories of being. Then, as now, men struggled to understand the nature of the material world and the nature of their minds or souls as well. In answer to the question, 'What is the world made of?' ancient Greek thinkers, like Thales or Anaximenes, became convinced that everything in the sensible world was made from water or from air, respectively. But these theories were unsatisfying, and the search for the ultimate irreducible 'stuff' composing all matter continued in earnest during those early centuries with little success. For some thinkers, it had become increasingly evident that *in addition* to the physical world, the world of 'nature', there had to be an intelligent Spirit or Cause *behind* the manifestation and development of this complex and manifold universe. Matter itself appeared to be devoid of life and awareness; there had to be an intelligent Cause of this universe, pervading, guiding and developing the intricacies of its design, and accounting for the inherent life and consciousness of the various creatures, including mankind.

At first, the early poets and mythologizers, such as Hesiod and Homer, dreamed up gods who were styled after mankind, possessing both the noble and the ignoble characteristics of mortal men and women. But there were some who contemplated a God who was incorporeal and all-pervading, an eternal, noumenal Reality whose consciousness filled the entire Cosmos.

Xenophanes (580-480 B.C.E.) was one of those who, whether he had experienced it in vision or simply inferred it through his faculty of reason, thought that there *was* a non-material, i.e., supernatural, cause behind this world of sense experience, who exists within the world as the Intelligent creator, guide and controller. He said:

There is one God, among gods and men the greatest, not at all like mortals in body or in mind. He sees as a whole and hears as a whole. And without toil He sets everything in motion, by the thought of His mind. And He always remains in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it necessary for Him to change His place at different times. ¹

A contemporary of Xenophanes who knew something of the Divine Thought pervading the universe was **Heraclitus** (540-480 B.C.E.), who, utilizing the Greek word, “Logos”, to represent

that all-pervading Intelligence, gave eloquent expression to his philosophical vision. Indeed, Heraclitus seems to have experienced a personal mystical vision, revealing to him the one Mind whose presence (as *Logos*) fills the entire universe, and who comprises the underlying identity of all humankind. However, due to the ignorance of unenlightened commentators, of whom there were plenty even then, Heraclitus was much misunderstood and maligned, both in his own time and ever since. But judge his vision for yourself; here is a reconstruction of Heraclitus' thought, based on existing fragments from his book, *On Nature*:

I have explained the Logos, but men are always incapable of understanding it, both before they have heard it, and after. For, though all things come into being in accordance with the Logos, when men hear it explained—how all things are made of it, and how each thing is separated from another according to its nature—they seem unable to comprehend it. The majority of men are as unaware of what they are doing after they wake from sleep as they are when asleep.² ...Everyone is ruled by the Logos, which is common to all; yet, though the Logos is universal, the majority of men live as if they had an identity peculiar to themselves. ³ ...Even when they hear of the

Logos, they do not understand it, and even after they have learnt something of it, they cannot comprehend; yet they regard themselves as wise. ⁴

Those who believe themselves wise regard as real only the appearance of things, but these fashioners of falsehood will have their reward.⁵ Though men are inseparable from the Logos, yet they are separated in it; and though they encounter it daily, they are alienated from it. ⁶ What intelligence or understanding do they have? They believe the popular orators and are guided by the opinions of the populace; they do not understand that the majority of men are fools, and the wise few. ⁷

Of all the wise philosophers whose discourses I have heard, I have not found any who have realized the one Intelligence, which is distinct from all things, ⁸ and yet pervades all things. ⁹ That Intelligence is One; to know It is to know the Purpose, which guides all things and is in all things. ¹⁰

Nature has no inherent power of intelligence; Intelligence is the Divine.¹¹ Without It, the fairest universe is but a randomly scattered dust-heap. ¹² If we are to speak with intelligence, we must found our

being on THAT which is common to all. ...For that Logos, which governs man, is born of the One, which is Divine. It [the Divine] governs the universe by Its will and is more than sufficient to everyone.¹³

One should not conjecture at random about the Supreme [Truth].¹⁴ The eyes are better witnesses to the truth than the ears;¹⁵ but the eyes and ears are poor witnesses for men if their souls cannot understand.¹⁶ You could not in your travels find the source or destination of the soul, so deeply hidden is the Logos.¹⁷ [But] I searched for It [and found It] within myself.¹⁸ That hidden Unity is beyond what is visible.¹⁹

All men have this capacity of knowing themselves,²⁰ [for] the soul has the Logos within it, which can be known when the soul is evolved.²¹ What is within us remains the same eternally; It is the same in life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age; for, It has become this world, and the world must return to It.²²

The best of men choose to know the ONE above all else; It is the famous "Eternal" within mortal men. But the majority of men are complacent, like well-fed cattle.²³ They revel in mud;²⁴ like donkeys, they prefer chaff to gold.²⁵

[The Eternal is attained only by those who seek It with all their desire;] for if one does not desire It, one will not find the Desireless, since there is no trail leading to It and no path. ²⁶ Such a man is satiated with things seen and kindles his inner light during the night. While living, he is like a dead man; while awake, he is like a man asleep. ²⁷ But such men, the best of men, are one in ten thousand. ²⁸

You needn't listen to me; listen to the Logos [within]. When you do, you will agree that all things are One. ²⁹ This ordered universe, which is the same for all, was not created by any one of the gods or by man, but always was, is, and shall be, [similar to] an ever-living Flame that is first kindled and then quenched in turn. ³⁰ [The universe bursts forth and then is reabsorbed, yet its Source is ever-living, like a Sun that never sets;] and who can hide from that which never sets? ³¹

[That eternal Intelligence in man] is forever beyond change; ³² [It is God.] To God all things are beautiful, good and just, but men see some things to be just, and others unjust. ³³

One should understand that the world appears by the opposition of forces; order exists in the world by this play of

opposites.³⁴ We would never have heard of “right” if we did not know of “wrong;”³⁵ whole and not-whole, united-separate, consonant-dissonant, —all these are interdependent.³⁶ [But] in the One, above and below are the same,³⁷ [just as] beginning and end are one in the circumference of a circle.³⁸ That, which is in conflict, is also in concert; while things differ from one another, they are all contained in the most beautiful Unity.³⁹

[Yet the philosophers cannot understand this;] they do not understand how that which contains differences within it is also in harmony, how Unity consists of opposing forces within Itself, just as the strings of a bow or a lyre [produce harmony while being pulled by opposing forces.]⁴⁰

[When one’s mind becomes stilled, the soul separates from the world-appearance;] just as a mixture of wine and barley meal separates when it is not stirred.⁴¹ [The impulses of the mind must be stilled;] though it is difficult to fight against impulse. [The impulses of desire arise, but] whatever the mind wishes, it purchases at the expense of the soul.⁴² [Such desires feed on pride and arrogance, and] it is a greater task to quench one’s own arrogance than it is to quench a raging fire.⁴³

Pride is the greatest hindrance to the progress of the soul.⁴⁴ Moderation is the greatest virtue, and wisdom is to speak the truth and to act in accordance with nature, while continuously attending to one's own Self.⁴⁵ [A man should see to his own character,] for a man's character is his destiny.⁴⁶

Not long thereafter, **Anaxagorus** (500-428 B.C.E.) came to a similar conclusion. The universe, he said, began as a primordial, undifferentiated and chaotic mass—he doesn't even attempt to guess at its origin; but he states that this chaotic mass was then arranged and organized by "Thought". He doesn't say "Divine Thought" or "the Thought of God", but that is clearly what he intended. In this, his philosophy was similar to that of Heraclitus, who called that 'Divine Thought' the *Logos*. Anaxagorus speaks of a "limitless and independent Thought" that is:

the finest of all things and the purest, and it possesses all knowledge about everything, and it has the greatest strength. And Thought has power over all those things, both great and small, which possess soul. ...And Thought knows everything ...what was to be and what was and what now is and what will be. ...Thought has power over whatever

exists and now is where the other things also are [i.e., it permeates all things].⁴⁷

Socrates (469-399 B.C.E.) was a contemporary of Anaxagoras and was the student and beneficiary of all previous philosophical enquiry. It would seem that he had also been the beneficiary of a personal mystical vision in which the Divine had made itself known to him. However, since he wrote nothing, but preferred to teach men face to face, we must rely upon his student, **Plato** (d. 347 B.C.E.), for our knowledge of his thought. Plato's various *Dialogues* purport to be conversations between Socrates and his many admirers; but it is impossible to separate out the thought of Socrates from the thought of Plato; and so, we must treat them as one.

By the time of Plato, belief in the *Psyche*, or "Soul" as the eternal and incorporeal essence of one's being was implicit, as was the belief in the soul's ability to reincarnate. Plato saw the soul as tripartite, being made up of *logos*, the mind or reason; *thymos*, emotion; and *eros*, or desire. For both Socrates and Plato, *Psyche*, or Soul was seen as the entire inner consciousness of man, synonymous with the very fact of life. It was soul that gave life to the body, and without which the

body was merely a corpse. It was Plato who introduced Socrates' idea that, through introspection, a man's soul was able to ascend in spirit and directly perceive and know the Divinity within himself; and it was for that reason that Socrates had so emphasized the need to care primarily for "the greatest improvement of the soul."

Here are a few illustrative excerpts from the Dialogues of Plato that purport to be the words of Socrates:

As for the sovereign part of the human soul, we should consider that God gave it to be the Divinity in each one, it being that which, inasmuch as we are a plant not of an earthly but a heavenly growth, raises us from earth to our brethren in heaven.

When one is always occupied with the cravings of desire and ambition which he is eagerly striving to satisfy, all his thoughts must be mortal, and, as far as it is possible to become such, he must be mortal every whit, because he has made great his mortal part. But he who has been earnest in the love of knowledge and true wisdom and has exercised his intellect more than any other part, must have thoughts immortal and divine. If he attains Truth, in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in

immortality, he must altogether be immortal. And since he is ever cherishing the divine power, and has duly honored the Divinity within, he will be supremely happy.⁴⁸

The true lover of knowledge is always striving after Being—that is his nature; he will not rest at those multitudinous particular phenomena whose existence is in appearance only, but will go on—the keen edge will not be blunted, nor the force of his passion abate until he have attained the knowledge of the true nature of all essence by a sympathetic and kindred power in the soul. And by that power, drawing near and becoming one with very Being, ...he will know and truly live and increase. Then, and only then, will he cease from his travail.⁴⁹

The immortality of the soul is demonstrated by many proofs; but to see it as it really is—not as we now behold it, marred by communion with the body and other miseries—you must contemplate it with the eye of reason in its original purity; and then its beauty will be revealed.⁵⁰ ...When a person starts on the discovery of the Absolute by the light of the reason only, without the assistance of the senses, and never desists until by pure intelligence he arrives at the perception of the absolute Good, he at last finds himself at the end of

the intellectual world...⁵¹

Of that Heaven which is above the heavens what earthly poet ever did or ever will sing worthily? It is such as I will describe; for I must dare to speak the truth, when Truth is my theme. There abides the very Being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colorless, formless, intangible Essence visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul.

... Every soul which is capable of receiving the food proper to it rejoices at beholding Reality. ...She beholds Knowledge absolute, not in the form of generation or of relation, which men call existence, but Knowledge absolute in Existence absolute.⁵²

To find the Father and Maker of this universe is most difficult, and, to declare Him, after having found Him, is impossible.⁵³

A man must have knowledge of the Universal, formed by collecting into a unity by means of reason the many particulars of sense; this is the recollection of those things which our soul once saw while following God—when, regardless of that which we now call being, it [the soul] raised its head up towards true Being. And therefore, the mind of the philosopher alone has wings;

and this is just, for he is always, as far as he is able, clinging in recollection to those things in which God abides, and in beholding which, he is what He [God] is. And he who employs aright these memories is ever being initiated into perfect mysteries and he alone becomes truly perfect. But since he stands apart from human interests and is rapt in the Divine, the vulgar deem him mad and do not know he is inspired. ⁵⁴

He who would be dear to God must, as far as is possible, become like Him. Wherefore the temperate man and the just is the friend of God, for he is like Him. And this is the conclusion—that for the good man to ... continually hold converse with God by means of prayers and every kind of service, is the noblest and the best of things, and the most conducive to a happy life. ⁵⁵

This is that life above all others which man should live, ...holding converse with the true Beauty, simple and divine. In that communion only beholding Beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but Reality [Itself]; ...and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue, to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life? ⁵⁶

For all his high-mindedness, and his great effect on all subsequent philosophy, Plato gives no indication in his writings that he himself had experienced the unitive knowledge of God. In fact, he departed from the simple ideas of Xenophanes, Heraclitus and Anaxagorus regarding the guidance and direction of the universe by means of Divine Thought, emphasizing instead the theory of the dependence of all objects in the material world upon the intelligible *Forms*, or *Ideas (ideai)*, that he saw as constituting their archetypal essence and reality. This theory was born, not of a mystical vision, but of Plato's speculative imagination.

Democritus (468 B.C.E.-?), though not a mystic, nonetheless plays a minor role in our story. He was a contemporary of Socrates, though not of Socrates' circle. He wrote many books, on many subjects, none of which has survived; but he is best known for anticipating our current atomic theory. He, and perhaps his teacher, Leucippus as well, held that all things are made of tiny entities of many geometric shapes, imperceptible to the senses, which he called "atoms"—meaning 'irreducible elements'. Though he had no means of discovering or proving this through empirical means, he nonetheless hit upon a conception that

seemed reasonable at the time, and which, only twenty-five hundred years later would be shown to be, if not wholly accurate, an amazingly prescient theory of the atomic nature of matter, the intricacies of which were ferreted out in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of our current era. Of course, Democritus could not have dreamed that these tiny ‘irreducible elements’ were really electrically charged wave-particles formed of the intense energy of the Light that created the universe.

Philo Judaeus (20 B.C.E. to 40 C.E.), an Alexandrian Jew of the first century, was a follower of Plato; but he didn’t subscribe to Plato’s concept of the individual *Forms* or *Ideas* underlying each physical object. Rather, he saw the *Idea* of the universe as inhering entire in the Divine Mind, and which, borrowing from Heraclitus and the Stoics, he called the *Logos*. Philo explains, in the Platonist manner, that God has two aspects: the transcendent, of which nothing at all can be said; and the immanent aspect, the *Logos*, by which He is the governing Thought or Idea filling all the material universe:

God is high above place and time ...He is contained by nothing but transcends all. *But though transcending what He has made,*

nonetheless, He filled the universe with Himself. [My italics.] ...When, therefore, the God-loving soul searches into the nature of the Existent, he enters on a quest of That which is beyond matter and beyond sight. And out of this quest there accrues to him a great boon—to comprehend the incomprehensible God. ⁵⁷

The *Logos*, as Philo describes it, is the *Idea* in the mind of God which is the archetypal pattern from which the design of all the physically manifested universe is produced. It is, in effect, the directive and organizational Intelligence of God that permeates all matter, bringing all into conformity with Its will and design. For Philo, God *thinks* the universe; He is continually *thinking* the universe. It is this underlying Thought which is the *Logos* of God, the subtle guide and governor of the material universe of our experience.

The supremely generic is God, the next is the Logos of God; ⁵⁸ ...That which comes after God, even if it were the most venerable of all other things, holds second place, and was called feminine in contrast to the Creator of the universe, who is masculine. ⁵⁹

That aspect of Him which transcends His powers cannot be conceived of at all in terms of place, but only as pure Being; but

that power of His (the Logos) by which He made and ordered all things ...pervades the whole and passes through all the parts of the universe.⁶⁰

Philo had experienced the unitive vision, and understood the spiritual foundation of our world; and he knew that that vision was not of his own making, but was a gift of God's grace:

Without Divine grace it is impossible to leave the ranks of mortality; [but] when grace fills the soul, it is possessed and inspired, ...and hastens to that most glorious and loveliest of visions, the vision of the Uncreated.⁶¹ The soul, stirred to its depths and maddened by heavenward yearning, [is] drawn by the truly Existent Being and pulled upward by Him.⁶²

It is the characteristic of him who would see God not to leave the holy warfare without his crown, but to persevere till he reaps the prize of victory. And what victory garland more fitting or woven of rarer flowers than the clear and unalloyed vision of Him who IS. It is a worthy conflict that lies before the striving soul: to win eyes for the clear vision of Him Whom alone it is worth man's while to see.⁶³

...Go up, then, O soul, to the vision of Him

who IS—go up quietly, mindfully, willingly, fearlessly, lovingly ⁶⁴...[for] to know God is the highest happiness, and immortal life. ⁶⁵ ...It is worth more than all wealth, private or public. For if the sight of elders or holy teachers, rulers or parents, moves one to reverence and modesty and zeal for a pure life, how great a support for virtue in our soul shall we find, who have learnt to pass beyond all things created, and to see That which is uncreated and divine, the highest good, the greatest Joy; nay, to speak the truth, That which is greater than the greatest, more beautiful than the greatest beauty, more blessed than the most blessed, more joyful than the joyfulest; aye, more perfect than any words such as these [can tell]. ⁶⁶

The Wisdom of Solomon, an apocryphal book of the Bible,⁶⁷ written around the same time and place in which Philo flourished, speaks of the governing Spirit of God, not as *Logos*, but as *Sophia*, or “Wisdom.” Wisdom, according to the anonymous author of this book, is “the artificer of all; ...[she] pervades and permeates all things...”

She is an exhalation from the [creative] power of God, a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty; therefore, nothing tainted insinuates itself into her. She is an effulgence of everlasting light, an

unblemished mirror of the active power of God, and an image of His goodness. Though but one, she can do everything, and abiding in herself she renews all things; ...She is brighter than the sun and surpasses every constellation; compared to the light of day she is found more radiant; ...She stretches in might from pole to pole and effectively orders all things.⁶⁸

According to this unknown author, *Wisdom* is the breath of God by which the universe comes into being; it is a breath of “everlasting light”, more radiant than the sun and all the constellations, that forms and effectively orders all things. Philo and the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* are in full agreement that the Divine Mind (as *Logos/Sophia*) directs, orders and controls every facet of the material universe. It is also she who graces the pure-hearted, bringing them to enlightenment through union with herself.

She is an inexhaustible treasure for mankind, and those who acquire it attain friendship with God, commended by the gift derived from her instruction. ...I learned both what is hidden and what is manifest, for *Wisdom*, the artificer of all, taught me.⁶⁹ ...Generation by generation she enters into holy souls and renders them friends of God and prophets ...⁷⁰

Like Philo, the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* appears to have been graced with the vision of God, and he had seen that God breathes the universe into being with a tremendous effluence of light that transforms itself into the vast universe. And that God's very breath has inherent within it the power and wisdom to fashion matter and to bring the cosmos into order, to initiate life and bring intelligence to mankind. According to him, the material universe, formed of God's light is governed by His inherent *Wisdom*, by which He organized and arranged the universe, and fashioned all life and mankind to His will. In our modern conception as well, informed as it is by empirical science, we understand that God manifested matter through His emanation of light, and permeated that universe of matter by virtue of His omnipresence, effectively informing all matter, directing its evolution, and fashioning all things according to the coordinated beauty of His design.

Plotinus (205-270 C.E.) is credited with ushering in a new perspective on Platonism—a “Neoplatonism”, based on his own mystical experience, but utilizing the terminology of Plato to give it a familiar expression. Though Plato had hinted of the ascent of the mind (soul) to God,

Plotinus was the first to describe that mystical experience of union with the Divine in great detail. Like everyone else prior to the twentieth century, Plotinus was unclear about the origin and nature of matter, but he clearly delineated the spiritual hierarchy to which Plato had pointed. He reiterates and confirms, from his own unitive vision, a transcendent Godhead, an absolute Source of all Being, which he calls “the One”. Arising from that ineffable Godhead is a creative Power, which he calls *Nous*, “The Divine Mind”. The Divine Mind is the executive power of the One; It is God, the Creator, the initiator of the Light that forms the universe. And from that omniscient and omnipotent Power is emanated an extension of Itself, which Plotinus, like Plato, calls *Psyche*, or “Soul”. Soul is the immanent Divine Spirit that permeates the universe, guiding it, inspiring it, and bringing to it life and awareness, and leading each individual soul to awaken to its essential identity as the Divine Mind, its eternal source and Self.

Here are a few choice quotes from Plotinus

On The One:

Deriving then from nothing other, entering into nothing other, in no way a comprised thing, there can be nothing above It. We need not, then, go seeking any other

Principles. This—The One and The Good—is our First. Next follows the Divine Mind, [which is] the Primal Thinker. And upon this follows Soul. Such is the order in nature. The Spiritual realm allows no more than these and no fewer.⁷¹

The One is all things and none of them. The Source of all things is not all things; and yet It is all things in a transcendental sense.⁷²

It is infinite by right of being a pure Unity with nothing towards which to direct any partial content. Absolutely One, It has never known measure and stands outside of number, and so is under no limit either in regard to any external or within Itself; for any such determination would bring something of the dual into It. And, having no constituent parts, It accepts no pattern, and forms no shape.

Reason recognizing It as such a nature, you may not hope to see It with mortal eyes, nor in any way that would be imagined by those who make sense the test of reality and so annul the supremely Real. For what [appears to us and] passes for the most truly existent is most truly non-existent—the thing of extension least real of all—while this unseen First is the source and principle of Being and sovereign over Reality.⁷³

He is the First, the Authentic, immune from chance, from blind effect and happening. God is [the] cause of Himself. For Himself and of Himself, He is what He is, the first Self, the transcendent Self.⁷⁴

On The Divine Mind:

There exists a Principle which transcends Being; this is The One, whose nature we have sought to establish insofar as such matters lend themselves to proof. Upon The One follows immediately the Principle which is at once Being and the Divine Mind. Third comes the Principle, Soul. ...Thus our soul, too, is a divine thing, belonging to another order than sense; ...⁷⁵

From such a Unity as we have declared The One to be, how does anything at all come into substantial existence—any multiplicity, dyad, or number? Why has the Primal not remained self-gathered so that there be none of this profusion of the manifold which we observe in existence and yet are compelled to trace to that absolute Unity?⁷⁶ ... [In other words, how does there come to be] a universe from an unbroken Unity, in which there appears no diversity, not even duality?

It is precisely because there is nothing within the One that all things are from It. In order that Being may be brought about, the Source must be no Being but Being's generator, in what is to be thought of as the primal act of generation. Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed; and Its exuberance has produced something new; [and] this issue has turned again to its begetter and been filled and has become its contemplator and so a Divine Mind.⁷⁷

Here [in the Divine Mind] is contained all that is immortal: there is nothing here but Divine Mind; all is God; this is the place of every soul. Here is rest unbroken: for how can that seek change, in which all is well? What need that reach to, which holds all within itself? What increase can that desire, which stands utterly achieved? All its content, thus, is perfect, that itself may be perfect throughout, as holding nothing that is less than the Divine, nothing that is less than Intellective. Its knowing is not by search but by possession, its blessedness inherent, not acquired. For all belongs to it eternally and it holds the authentic Eternity imitated by Time which, circling round the Soul, makes towards the new thing and passes by the old. Soul deals with thing after thing—now Socrates, now a horse:

always some one entity from among beings—but the Divine Mind is all and therefore its entire content is simultaneously present in that identity. This is pure Being in eternal actuality. Nowhere is there any future, for every then is a now; nor is there any past, for nothing there has ever ceased to be. Everything has taken its stand forever, an identity well pleased, we might say, to be as it is. And everything, in that entire content, is Divine Mind and Authentic Existence; and the total of all is Divine Mind entire and Being entire.⁷⁸

The Divine Mind is the first Act of The Good [the One] and the first Existence; The Good remains stationary within Itself, but the Divine Mind acts in relation to It and, as it were, lives about It. And the Soul, outside, circles around the Divine Mind, and by gazing upon it, seeing into the depths of it, through it sees God.⁷⁹

On The Soul:

The authentic Reality [the One] gives life to the Intelligible [Spiritual] realm. The Divine Mind is the noblest of Its content, but It contains also souls, since every soul in this lower [earthly] sphere has come from there. *There* is the world of unembodied spirits, while to our world belong those that have

entered body and undergone bodily division. *There* the Divine Mind is a concentrated all; nothing of it is distinguished or divided. And in that unitive realm all souls are concentrated also, with no spatial discrimination.

The Divine Mind is forever repugnant to distinction and to partition; however, Soul, though without distinction and partition there, has a nature lending itself to divisional existence, and this division is secession, entry into body. [And so] in view of this seceding and the ensuing partition we may legitimately speak of it as a partible thing. But if so, how can it still be described as indivisible?

[It remains indivisible] in that the secession is not of the entire Soul; something of it holds its ground: that in it which recoils from separate existence. The entity described as “both the undivided soul and the soul divided among bodies,” is a Soul which is at once above and below, attached to the Supreme and yet reaching down to this sphere, like a radius from a center.

Thus, it is that, entering this [earthly] realm, it possesses still the vision inherent in that superior [indivisible] phase by virtue of which it maintains its integral nature unchanged. Even here [on earth] it is not exclusively the partible soul: it is still the impartible as well.⁸⁰

Soul, therefore, is, in this definite sense, one and many; the Ideal-Form [soul] residing in the body is many and one. Bodies themselves are exclusively many; the Supreme is exclusively one.⁸¹

The souls of men ...have entered into that realm in a leap downward from the Supreme. Yet even they are not cut off from their origin, from the Divine Mind. It is not that they have come bringing the Spirit down in their fall; it is that though they have descended even to earth, yet their higher part holds forever above the heavens.⁸²

Let every soul recall ...the truth that Soul is the author of all living things, that it has breathed the life into them all—whatever is nourished by earth and sea, all the creatures of the air, the divine stars in the sky. It is the maker of the sun; itself formed and ordered this vast heaven and conducts all that rhythmic motion. And it is a principle distinct from all these to which it gives law and movement and life, and it must of necessity be more honorable than they, for they gather or dissolve as Soul brings them life or abandons them, but Soul, since it never can abandon itself, is of eternal being.⁸³

Once pure in the Spirit realm [within the Divine Mind], the soul too possesses that same unchangeableness: for it possesses

identity of essence. When it is in that region it must of necessity enter into oneness with the Divine Mind by the sheer fact of its self-orientation, for by that intention all interval disappears; the soul advances and is taken into unison, and in that association becomes one with the Divine Mind—but not to its own destruction: the two are one, and [yet] two. In such a state there is no question of stage and change. The soul, motionless, would be intent upon its intellectual act, and in possession, simultaneously, of its self-awareness; for it has become one simultaneous existence with the Supreme.⁸⁴

On The Return:

That which the soul must seek, That which sheds Its light upon the Divine Mind, leaving Its mark wherever It falls, surely we need not wonder if It has the power to draw [all back] to Itself, calling [the soul] back from every wandering to rest before It. From It came all and so there is nothing mightier; all is feeble before It.⁸⁵

This Light [from the Highest] shining within the soul enlightens it; that is, it makes the soul intellectual, working it into likeness with itself, the Light above. Think of the traces of this Light upon the soul, then say to yourself that such, and more beautiful and broader and

more radiant, is the Light itself. Thus, you will approach to the nature of the Divine Mind and the Spirit-realm, for it is this Light, Itself lit from above, which gives the soul its brighter life.⁸⁶

We may know we have had the vision when the soul has suddenly taken Light. This Light is from the Supreme and is the Supreme. ...The soul remains unlit without that vision; lit, it possesses what it sought. And this is the true end set before the soul, to take that Light, to see the Supreme by the Supreme and not by the light of any other principle: to see the Supreme which is also the means to the vision; for that which illumines the soul is That which it is to see, just as it is by the Sun's own light that we see the Sun. But how is this to be accomplished? Let all else go.⁸⁷

Suppose the soul to have attained: The Highest has come to her, or rather has revealed Its presence; she has turned away from all about her and made herself apt, beautiful to the utmost, brought into likeness with the Divine by those preparings and adornings which come unbidden to those growing ready for the vision. She has seen that presence suddenly manifesting within her, for there is nothing between. Here is no longer a

duality but a two-in-one; for, so long as the presence holds, all distinction fades.

It is as lover and beloved here [on earth], in a copy of that union, long to blend. The soul has now no further awareness of being in body and will give herself no foreign name, not man, not living being, not Being, not All. Any observation of such things falls away; the soul has neither time nor taste for them. This she sought and This she has found and on This she looks and not upon herself; and who she is that looks she has not leisure to know.

Once There she will barter for This nothing the universe holds; not though one would make over the heavens entire to her. There is nothing higher than this, nothing of more good. Above This there is no passing; all the rest, however lofty, lies on the downward path. She is of perfect judgment and knows that This was her quest, that nothing is higher.

Here can be no deceit; where could she come upon [something that is] truer than the Truth? And the Truth that she affirms, she is herself; but all the affirmation is later and is silent. In this happiness she knows beyond delusion that she is happy; for this is no affirmation of an excited body but of a soul become again what she was in the time of her early joy. All that she had welcomed of old—office, power, wealth, beauty, knowledge—of all she tells

her scorn as she never could had she not found their better. Linked to This she can fear no disaster, not even if she has had the vision but once. Let everything about her fall to pieces, she wouldn't mind if only she might be wholly with This, so huge [is] the happiness she has won to.⁸⁸

It was these early figures, then, who helped to establish the foundations of Western mystical theology that would be reiterated and expanded upon by the Christian and Islamic mystics of later centuries.

II. Recent Developments

Over the centuries since the time of Plotinus, many others have also experienced the unitive vision of God, but our metaphysical understanding has changed very little. What *has* changed is our understanding of the origin and nature of the material world.¹ Ancient Greek thinkers found the subject too daunting, and simply accounted for the existence of the material world by positing an unoriginated sea of Chaotic matter, which the divine Thought (*Logos, Sophia, Psyche*) then permeated, bringing organization and life into it by Its power. But the last few centuries of our current era have seen a worldwide focus on the discovery

of the secrets of nature, most especially through the study of *physics* and *astronomy*.

In the twentieth century, Hubble's discovery that the universe is expanding led to the formulation of the concept of a definite *beginning* to our universe approximately fourteen billion years ago, and Einstein's realization that energy and matter (mass) are interconvertible gave a solid explanation for the manner in which the universe of matter came into being, and impelled science into the forefront of a rare advancement in our philosophical understanding.

Most of us, when asked, "What is matter made of?" would answer, "It is made of elementary wave-particles, such as quarks, which constitute all hadrons (such as protons and neutrons); and all leptons (such as electrons and neutrinos). But if we were asked, "What are these various particles made of?", we might answer, "No one knows." However, that would be incorrect. Physicists know very well that all these wave-particles are made of energy—electromagnetic energy—or more succinctly, light-energy. *All matter*, and therefore the entire universe, came from the initial burst of *Light* that we refer to as "the Big Bang".² The question of where that universe-originating

light-energy came from, however, is still a controversial matter of opinion.

Clearly, there was a sudden immense burst of electromagnetic energy where prior to it there had been nothing; and that energy coalesced into the wave-particles that make up our material world. Philosophers can no longer hold to the notion of an eternal *universe*; there *was* a creation moment, and the ultimate ‘stuff’ of the universe is now revealed: it was light—an inconceivably large burst of high-frequency light (which we refer to as ‘electromagnetic energy’)—that almost immediately converted to material wave-particles.³ Up to the point of that empirical discovery, philosophers speculating on the origin of matter were free to imagine many possible scenarios; but now speculation is dead. Matter is converted light; that is a proven fact. And material particles, when collided at high velocity, convert back into light (photons). What previously had seemed two different things—energy and matter—were now seen to be one.

Though so much of what passes as ‘science’ today is merely the passing fashion of the moment or a speculative theory that can never be substantiated, the current understanding among scientists that all

matter is the evolute of an original light is one which seems to allow of no possible future refutation. That energy and matter are interconvertible, and that the light-energy of the so-called 'Big Bang' of fourteen billion years ago transformed into the quarks and leptons that make up the entire world of matter is a discovery that is so incontrovertible, so uncontestable, as to effectively put an end to all future speculation as to what our world is made of.

And so, for the first time in history, after centuries of philosophical inquiry and intense scientific exploration, we now know with certainty exactly what the material world is made of. Physicists have announced it, astronomers have proclaimed it, and technicians have proven it without a doubt in their laboratories; and yet hardly anyone in the world seems to be aware of the fact that *everything is made of light*. Even those physicists who describe how the primordial photons of light transformed themselves into material particles do not seem to fully grasp the significance of the fact that *everything in the universe is made of light*.⁴

And, despite the fact that scientific thinkers believe that that pristine burst of light was a 'natural' phenomenon (whatever that means), and spiritually

oriented people are certain that the light came directly from God, the fact remains that an unimaginably immense blast of high-energy light flashed at the dawn of time in a nascent universe, and each photon of that light became a matter-antimatter pair that contributed to make the phenomenal universe of form and substance that we live in today, where *everything is made of that light*.⁵

Everyone has heard of the 'Big Bang', and of how all forms of energy and all material particles were produced from that initial 'fireball' of high-energy photons; and yet, in the minds of many, there is still the burning question: 'Where did that abundance of light come from?' Scientists have concluded that the light from which the world of matter is made had to have come from the explosion of an unstable super-dense chunk of matter which they call a "singularity", while people of religious or spiritual beliefs have understood since the most ancient of times that that light was caused by an act of God.

That the matter constituting this physical universe was produced by an initial high-energy burst of Light around fourteen billion years ago is accepted by the entire scientific community; the empirical

evidence for this conclusion is formidable and incontestable. And physicists and cosmologists of integrity have declared that this is as far as science can reach, that to extrapolate farther back than that would be nothing more than conjecture and supposition—certainly not science. Nonetheless, some scientists have reached beyond the empirical evidence into the realm of unfounded speculative theory and have declared that the *cause* of that burst of Light was the explosion of a submicroscopic speck of matter that existed prior to the manifestation of the universe, a speck that contained all the mass of the universe within it. And often this is declared with a straight face.

On the other hand, those who have experience of God's presence, regard science's discovery that an ancient originating Light was the source of the entire material universe to be a delightful confirmation of the Divine Creation that has been famously heralded by the wise of long ages past. It is clear, however, that neither the speculation of the theoretical scientists nor the tradition of the religions is subject to incontrovertible proof; we can only weigh the two positions and see which seems to us the more credible.

Can we really accept that a tiny rock is the ultimate creative Force from which sprang the entire vast living universe? Or perhaps the tiny rock is not the Creator, but rather the Creator, having decided to make a universe, first put the whole thing into a tiny speck, and then had it all burst forth somehow. Did life exist in the rock prior to its existence in the universe, or did life spontaneously arise once the rock exploded? Well, you see how difficult it would be to defend such an originating principle. But such difficulties do not arise if we assume that the God whom we know in our hearts was the originator of the universe and all its living variety.

If we accept that God breathed forth or otherwise manifested an immense burst of light-energy that contains in it the capacity and propensity to 'evolve' into wave-particles in time and space, constituting the elements of our universe, then why couldn't He have similarly predisposed the resulting matter to produce living bodies by a further evolutionary development? And why couldn't those first primeval living bodies, such as bacteria and eukaryotes, be predisposed to evolve further into larger creatures, such as fish and fowl, mammals, primates, and eventually humans? Somewhere along that chain of evolution, why couldn't consciousness and self-awareness emerge

as well from the initial predisposition programmed into that divine light from the very beginning?

Such a scenario lends credence, not only to a theistic interpretation of evolutionary history, but justifies a naturalistic interpretation as well. For, from the theistic perspective, the divine Creator's initial act brings about each emergent quality of that evolution from light to life and intelligence; and from the 'naturalist' perspective, every step of universal evolution occurs in a natural causal sequence, seemingly without any extraneous input. It has to be said, however, that a light such as that, with so many inherently emergent long-term evolutionary developments, would have to have come from a divinely omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent source; of that we must be certain.

How could we possibly doubt that that *Light* is a miraculous energy that proceeds from the power of God? At its highest frequencies—such as that produced in its original appearance that we call 'the Big Bang'—it has the ability to convert to electrically charged wave-particles that make up the atoms of every known or unknown substance that has existed through time, and provides the energy of every known or unknown invisible force or field of force appearing in the universe at both

the microscopic and the macroscopic level. That is to say that, not only did that Light produce all the matter in the universe, but it produced the force of gravity, the so-called weak and strong forces that bind matter into cohesive entities, and all the electric and magnetic forces that exist in every wave-particle and produce so many effects on earth and beyond.

These electric charges are not only produced in every particle of matter, constituting its properties, but also constitute every chemical reaction governing your digestion and metabolism, and every electrical impulse such as the firing of axons in your system of nerves, the firing of neurons in your brain, the beating of your heart, and the blinking of your eye. Everything—every visible or invisible thing and every perceivable or imperceptible variety of energy owes its existence to that initial Light. How can we believe, as some scientists profess to believe, that the Light, containing in its potentiality an entire universe such as this one, is the result of a random accident?

And yet, in the view of some materialistic scientists, this efficient mechanism of matter-energy interactions provides evidence that every bit of the functioning of man and the universe can

be accounted for without the need to postulate a supernatural origin or underlying spiritual support. By some process of selective reasoning, they are able to ignore the question of where that light came from, and how it happened to distribute itself as discreet particles and electrical charges in just the proper “fine-tuned” relationships to form so inconceivably complex a cosmos of form and awareness.

Be that as it may, it is certain that any physical or metaphysical theory framed in the twenty-first century must begin with the certain premise that the origin of all matter is light—regardless of whatever one might speculate was the cause of that burst of light. And, even if it had not been revealed to every enlightened soul that the material world is a manifestation of Divine energy, if we were to apply the rule of Ockham's razor, which suggests that we shave away unnecessary assumptions, the simplest and most obvious attributable cause of that burst of light is the Divine Creator. The assumption that the explosion of an unstable and super-dense chunk of matter (a singularity) was the cause is simply an unwarranted, irrational, and unjustified supposition.

But those of a materialist bent could scarcely be expected to concede that that Light came from a supernatural Source; they could be expected rather to fight against this notion with all the powers of their imagination. “The light resulted from the explosion of a single densely compacted speck of matter,” they said; “a ‘singularity’”. Nevermind that it was now necessary to explain where *that* came from. For these people, that was the end of the line. Their position is reminiscent of the dismissive attitude of those people who held that the world was supported by a giant turtle, and who, when asked ‘What supports the turtle?’ answered, “It’s turtles all the way down.”

Today, it is common knowledge that all wave-particles of matter were born from the high-frequency (EM) energy released in the ‘Big Bang’ event of fourteen billion years ago; and that it was those wave-particles that evolved into the stars, our world, and all that we know as matter and energy. However, an important question arises: ‘Did the qualities of life and consciousness exist intrinsically in the light-energy and in the wave-particles that arose from it [as many scientists believe], or was there an *infusion* or *suffusion* of a divine consciousness into that primordial matter that served to purposely organize and arrange

those wave-particles toward the presently evolved state of life and consciousness that we know and experience today?’ And what should we call such a principle? Anaxagorus called it “Thought”; Heraclitus, and later Philo, called it “Logos”; the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* called it “Sophia”, or “Wisdom”; Plotinus called it “Psyche”, or “Soul”.

No matter what word we use to denote this principle, it is necessarily a divine, consciously governing and organizing Spirit akin to the “Thought” or “Will” of God, acting in and through all the sensible universe. There are no other alternatives: either that initial Light itself was and is purposeful, living and conscious, or that purposeful living consciousness acts within and through that light but is distinct from it. And since light-energy and matter in its pre-organic state seem to be inert and not alive, we must assume that they are also not conscious, nor do they intrinsically contain the seed of consciousness. It would seem, therefore, that we are forced by the evidence to conclude that an invisible living consciousness operates *within* and throughout the material universe, guiding its operations, advancing its evolution, and bringing Its own life and consciousness to light in the living creatures

appearing on at least one planetary body orbiting the star we call the Sun.

Philosophers and sages from the beginning of time have declared that, in addition to the light from which all 'things' are made, there must be a conscious deliberate force at work in the world that functions as the organizing principle of design, and as the source of life and awareness—a conscious force which has been referred to as "spirit" or "soul". Materialists deny that such a universal principle exists—even though by doing so, they tend to deny the existence of their own intelligence; while the mystics, seers, and all the worshippers of a transcendent/immanent God affirm the principle of a divine "soul", and stake their lives and actions upon it, living so as to give expression to the Divine source within them.

It is commonplace knowledge—and among those who have experienced the Divine Mind it is *certain* knowledge—that the Creator God is the active emanate of a yet higher, inactive Source known as the “Godhead”. But of that higher Source we cannot speak; It is beyond linguistic description, and even beyond rational conception. The Upanishads call It *Brahman*; Buddhists call that ultimate Source the “Void”; the third century

Roman mystic-philosopher, Plotinus, simply referred to It as “the One”; and Lao Tze called It “the Tao”:

Before heaven and earth existed, there was something unformed, silent, alone, unchanging, constant and eternal. It could be called ‘the Source of the universe’. I do not know its name and simply call it ‘Tao’⁶

And Chuang Tze, commenting on the words of Lao Tze, said:

If you want to know the Tao, said Lao, give a bath to your mind; wash your mind clean. Throw out all your sage wisdom! Tao is invisible, hard to hold, and difficult to describe. However, I will outline It for you: The visible world is born of the Invisible; the world of forms is born of the Formless. The creative Energy [Teh] is born from Tao, and all life forms are born of this creative Energy; thus, all creation evolves into various forms.

...Life springs into existence without a visible source and is reabsorbed into that Infinite. The world exists in and on the infinite Void; how it comes into being, is sustained and once again is dissolved, cannot be seen.

It is fathomless, like the Sea. Wondrously, the cycle of world-manifestation begins again after every completion. The Tao sustains all creation, but It is never exhausted. ...That which gives life to all creation, yet which is, Itself, never drawn upon—that is the Tao.⁷

It is *that*—the One, the Tao, Brahman, the Void, from which the active Creator-God—called *Brahma* by the Upanishads, *Teh* by Lao Tze, *Nous* (the Divine Mind) by Plotinus—was born. How do we know this? Because those whose minds have ascended to that transcendent Self have seen It, have experienced It, and have spoken of It. Without a creative Power, that One would simply remain in Its own blissful eternity without the means to create. But It produced from Itself an entity to serve as Its executive Power of Creation so It could create, even while remaining in Its blissful eternity, Its eternal blissfulness.

Though we cannot speak of the Godhead, except to say that It is the Source of the active Divine Power that we refer to as ‘God’, or ‘the Creator’, we *are* able to speak of this active Creator-God, who is the producer of the phenomenal universe. When the soul of the mystic is uplifted to union, it is to the

Creator-God that she is united. And yet, in that union with the Creator-God, she “sees” God’s Source as well. And though she is not *united with* the Source, she perceives that Source, that ‘Godhead’, as the ultimate Ground of existence, her ultimate origination, her ultimate Self.

God, the Creator, derives His own eternal Being from the One, His source. It is He who has created this universe. He transcends the material universe and yet is present as an immanent conscious force within it. As Spirit, He is above and beyond our world; and yet He produces this spatio-temporal world from Himself, and acts as a conscious force within the temporal universe. We are reminded by this knowledge that He is unlike any other thing that we are aware of—but one. The only other instance of such a bifunctional entity is the human mind (or soul), which both transcends its thought productions and dream productions, and yet acts as a conscious (or subconscious) force within those thought and dream productions. In this, it would seem, the human mind is patterned after the eternal Mind. And because, The Divine Mind is the source and essence of the human mind (or soul), the two are linked in such a way that the human mind is capable of ascending to the Divine Mind and recognizing its own identity with It.

Let me illustrate this with a recounting of my own experience: I experienced the revelation of God when I was twenty-eight, living in an abandoned cabin in the mountains of Santa Cruz, California. I had gone there, inspired by the prompting Spirit of God within me, in the hope of meeting with Him in the solitude of the forest. On one November night, I sat in that darkened cabin by the woodstove, gazing into the burning embers through the stove's grating, and longing for God's visitation. As my mind became solely fixed, and my breath subsided, I entered into the eternal Consciousness, and knew for the first time the secret of my own being.

I will not tell all the details of this revelation, for I have done so elsewhere on numerous occasions; I wish only to tell of one element of my vision which is pertinent to what follows: It was toward the end of that 'vision' that I viewed the breathing out of the universe, and, being at that moment identical with the Divine Mind, I wrote:

I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged and set in order once again. A million worlds begin and end in every breath, and in this breathing, all things are sustained.

The only visual impression I currently retain is of a vast amount of indescribable ‘stuff’ flying outward, expanding into the surrounding void. Shortly thereafter, my mind returned to my place in time, and I collapsed, exhausted, on my bed.

That was in 1966, and I’ve had many years to contemplate the meaning of my experience and the words written by the light of a candle during its occurrence. Since that time, I have written extensively about that revelation and its meaning; for it has been, over these years, my deep desire to reconcile that vision with the picture of reality portrayed by the empirically-based sciences, and to come to some fully satisfying conclusions about the origin and nature of this universe in which we live.

I confess that I did not see in my vision an originating flash of light resembling what is described as “the Big Bang”. I was only conscious of the “breathing out” of the expanding matter that constitutes the universe. It is only by inference that I conclude that that original light, which scientists say transformed itself into the material particles forming the expanding universe, is synonymous with what I experienced as the

Creator's outgoing breath. What I saw was seen from an eternal vantagepoint; and what to timebound eyes would require billions of earth-years to capture in its entirety, was reduced to a mere exhalation and inhalation of a moment's passing.

I cannot doubt the authenticity of this vision in eternity, though it was a compressed, or encapsulated vision. It was the Divine Mind, or Brahma, or God, from whom that breath arose, and this breathing of the universe was shown to me as it occurred and recurs. It is to that unerring vision that I must reconcile any account that scientific theorists may give of that universal beginning. The assumption by theorists that the original state of the universe was squashed into a single point of super-dense material is an unwarranted assumption; rather, I believe that assumption is the product of the attempt to mentally reverse the present expansion of the universe to its ultimate logical extreme: a single compressed point of origin. But that single point of ultimate compression calculated by mathematicians, is merely an erroneous projection of the imagination.

That the universe began in a sudden burst of light is unquestioned; but that light did not burst forth

from a “singularity” into which all the matter of the universe had been compressed. Rather, that initial abundance of light burst forth from another kind of ‘singularity’: the energy potential of the eternal Mind, who is both the universe’s Creator and the universal Soul pervading it. Who else could produce an Energy that transforms itself into substantial forms as material particles along with the purposeful forces required to establish such a universe? Who else could pervade that universe as Mind, and animate each fully evolved form with a living consciousness? Who else could fill the universe with His own Consciousness, imbuing living beings with distinct identities and an individualized self-awareness?

Clearly, that eternal Mind that we call ‘God’ is the source and power of all that is. He has produced all these bodies and their evolutionary developments from His all-powerful light; and He is the inner Soul permeating all matter which we identify within ourselves as ‘I’. Indeed, all is He, and all glory is His. What else might we imagine exists? Who else might we imagine ourselves to be?

All the material universe and all the forces operating within it are evolved from His outspreading light, breathed forth nearly fifteen

billion years ago. Yet this immense burst of light-energy would have remained but a teeming chaotic mass, random and lifeless, without His conscious direction, without His in-dwelling Spirit. His manifestation of a material universe is plainly evident to us; but His guiding Spirit is subtle and hidden from our view. We may infer the existence of that subtle Spirit by observing Its effects in the universe and in ourselves; but It is known directly and with certainty only when He reveals Himself as our inner Self.

So, as I hope I have made evident, there are *two* different ways in which the one Creator-God manifests: (1) As the producer of the light-energy that transforms into the material wave-particles that make up the physical universe; and (2) As the Mind, Spirit, or Soul that permeates all matter as Consciousness, and which constitutes the limited mind, or soul, of each individual sentient being.

With these two aspects of Himself, He constitutes both matter and Spirit, both body and soul; thus, He constitutes all that exists. Though some might object philosophically to what appears to be a dualistic perspective, I would point out to those objectors that, since both the substance of the material universe and the indwelling Mind, or

Spirit, both derive from one and the same supreme Being, there is, in fact, no duality, but rather an undeniable Nonduality—or, if you prefer, a Unity. That the one God manifests in these two different ways does nothing to detract from His integrated singularity.

There is one other issue I wish to resolve: and that is whether the light-energy that the Creator produces to form the material universe is His own substance or a second substance other than Himself. I maintain that the great burst of light-energy which formed the vast universe is a projection of His own power and is therefore identical with His own essential Being. He did not borrow some other substance to make the physical cosmos; from where would He borrow it? No; He breathed forth that active light-energy from Himself. Though the universe is not *synonymous with* the supreme Consciousness, it is a projection of His inherent power and does not belong to any other category than Himself. It emanates from Him and is therefore of His Being.

Both the light-energy that transforms into the material universe and the indwelling Spirit, or Soul, derive from the same Divinity; and yet they are not the same. They are different in quality and

characteristics and are distinct and obviously separable from one another. The forms that evolve from His light-energy are subject to entropy and dissolution. They appear for a brief time; and when those material forms cease to function as viable entities, the indwelling Spirit departs. The forms of His light-energy are therefore transient and subject to decay and dissolution; while the Spirit, or Soul, continues to exist eternally. It is immortal.

Now, to the question of *how* the Spirit, the Soul, or Divine Consciousness “permeates” the material world: Some ancient philosophers posited a *pneuma* that the Creator breathed into man exclusively, constituting the human soul; others suggested that the Divine Consciousness fills the entire universe as a numinous and all-pervading intelligence. Accumulated evidence—both from empirical and mystical sources—supports the latter premise. An all-pervasive Consciousness may be inferred from the “fine-tuning” effects evident throughout the cosmos, though such an all-pervading Intelligence remains undetected by our technological instruments. It is witnessed directly, however, by the human mind, or soul, during what we call “mystical” experience.

During the so-called “mystical” experience, the individual mind (or soul) is drawn into union with God, the Divine Consciousness, and perceives through and as that Divine Consciousness, seeing from the perspective of that Divine Consciousness. While seeing from God’s perspective, the all-pervasiveness of the Divine Mind is experienced and known. In such awareness, that Divine Consciousness is revealed to the soul as both the initiator of the Creative Act of universal manifestation *as well as* the living Spirit pervading that universal manifestation. Though this knowledge (*gnosis*) is not what we consider to be ‘empirical’ knowledge, it *is* experiential knowledge. It is knowledge obtained from a transcendent perspective and carries a certainty for the experiencer far above any mere temporal knowledge.

‘Very well,’ you may say; ‘but just *how* does the Divine Consciousness pervade the material universe? How can I picture it or form a conception of it?’

I don’t believe it can be pictured, since that Divine Consciousness is an invisible and noumenal reality. But we can conceive of it by way of analogy: He is present within this world as our

individual consciousness is present within our thoughts and dreams. Our thoughts and dreams are within our minds; and because of that, they are permeated by our own consciousness. In this same way, God is present within ourselves, and within this world, because this world exists within Him.

This universe, fostered by His light, exists *within* Him. He is all-encompassing. When the “Great Radiance” of God’s light burst forth as an expanding universe of time and space, of substance and form, where must that ‘Radiance’ have occurred? It had to have occurred in the Mind of God! Where else could you put a universe when there is nothing outside of that Divine Mind, when nothing exists or *can* exist but that all-encompassing Mind?

And so, without the need for an “infusion” of the spark of life and consciousness, this world, by virtue of its presence in the Mind of God, is naturally and effortlessly suffused with His living presence. And what we speak of as the ‘soul’ of individuals is simply the embodied expression of His all-encompassing conscious presence. The inclusion of the universe within the Divine Mind obviates the need for an *infusion* of God’s presence as ‘soul’, since His Life and Consciousness are

inherently the very Ground, substance, and support of the world, and constitute its very being. It is this realization that prompted St. Paul to declare, “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

Some people speak of “intelligent design” in the universe, as though God were similar to a human craftsman or architect who had thought out and prepared a blueprint prior to building the universe. But a little reflection on the nature of God reveals that He is neither a maker of blueprints nor a builder. What He *is* is an unfathomable Intelligence, the all-pervading Mind in which the universe exists, and by whose power it operates. God does not stand apart from the universe, like a builder fashioning a building; He does not “fine-tune” the universe as an object separate from Himself; rather, the universe exists within the Mind of God, and every single speck of it is controlled and coordinated by His will.

Though we have given names to all the various forces comprising our universe, such as ‘electromagnetic fields’, the ‘force of gravity’, the ‘strong’ force, and the ‘weak’ force; all these are simply manifestations of the cohesion inherent in His Mind-born creation. We have also named the material particles mysteriously formed from His

light, such as 'quarks', 'protons', and 'electrons'; but these also are but the evidence of the scintillating effusion of His imagination. Only in these last centuries have scientific investigators come to understand just how inconceivably evanescent and indescribable these sub-microscopic particles really are.

As dream-stuff responds to our human will, the stuff of this universe, produced from Himself, responds to His will. And, since He transcends the confines of space and time, those evolutionary changes that, from our human perspective, require eons for their accomplishment, He accomplishes in an instant. Because His Consciousness is all-pervading, all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. What appears to our eyes to be random and uncaused is, in fact, the unfoldment of His will.

Consider: If an invisible and omnipotent Mind caused the decay of one particle of uranium and left a second particle intact, would it not appear to those witnessing it that what had occurred was the random spontaneous decay of a particle? And if that same invisible and omnipotent Mind caused a gene in a strand of DNA to mutate, would it not

appear to those examining that DNA that what had occurred was the random mutation of a gene? How would one be able to distinguish such a caused event from a random one? All is occurring within that one Consciousness. He has only to breathe, and a million worlds begin and end; and in this breathing, all that is contained within this universe is nourished and sustained.

This body that you regard as your own is actually His—as pebbles are the earth's, as waves are the ocean's. In accord with His purpose, the sun daily stirs the waters of your heart, and the vapor of your love flies to the four corners of the world; while at night the moon stills you, and the cold darkness is your bed. All is in accordance with His design. He is the life-pulse of every creature; and when the clanging bells of joy exult within you, it is His joy; the fire of song that inspires you is also His. Even the obscuring dust of unknowing that blinds us to His presence is brought by Him. He is in the clouds and in the gritty soil; and if you bend over a pool of clear water, you may see on the water's surface the reflection of His face.

How does He pervade every particle of this universe? He is the Mind from which the universe took birth, and the universe exists within Him. All

is contained in Him. In Him, there is no I or Thou, no now or then. In Him, life and death are undifferentiated. And that transcendent deathless Self is our eternal identity. So, you see, there is nothing to vanquish, nothing to lament, and nothing on which to pride oneself. In Him, and by Him, all is accomplished in an instant.

III. Science of The Soul¹

We have established that the eternal Self, or God, is the ultimate Identity of everyone; but we have to ask, ‘what is it that makes “individuals” of each of us?’ Why does one person have a passion for music and another for physics? Why does this one become an architect, and the other becomes a writer of fiction; this one a neurobiologist and this other a stock broker? These are questions about the individual soul-characteristics with which each of us is born. We cannot deny that such differences exist among human beings, even though we are united as one at the Source. One person is born with every advantage; another is born infirm and in very limited circumstances. How do we account for such differences? Clearly, each individual is endowed with his or her own unique characteristics, qualities, virtues and vices

by which each is set apart from the others. These may extend to physical characteristics, but they belong primarily to an interior reality, which we have traditionally termed 'the soul'.

For those who have experienced the one eternal Self, the previous identification with a separative individual self is seen to have been produced by our erroneous conviction that we are a distinct 'I' embodied in a distinct body. Having known the eternal Self to be one and transcendent, we tend to explain our previous sense of self as merely a limited 'reflection' or 'contraction' of the Divine Consciousness and pass over the whole subject of 'soul' as though it were identical in all respects with the one Divine Self, ignoring the distinctiveness of individual souls. But many questions continue to arise: What of individual characteristics? What of individual free will, and the culpability of the individual? What about individual karma? Mustn't karmic choices attach to a separate reincarnating entity? So many questions! And, while we repeatedly encounter the barriers to knowing the answers to these questions, still we cannot cease from seeking answers. For the overarching desire to *know* is one of the most evident characteristics of being human! And, just as surely, that inherent desire is a Divinely

implanted one, leading us, slowly but surely, toward the clarity of a Divine understanding.

Certainly, the *physical* characteristics of our bodies are encoded in our DNA, and these physical characteristics are passed along from one generation to the next. But the genetic makeup of our DNA pertains only to our *physical* lineage, and has no rulership over, nor any relation to, our soul characteristics. By “soul characteristics”, I mean those subjective proclivities that constitute our ambitions, our life-purposes, our primary interests, our passion, the direction of our focus in life. These proclivities arise and persist within us as individuals in a manner wholly unrelated to our physical lineages or ancestry. Some would claim that such proclivities arise accidentally in the course of one’s early learning experiences; but to others, these proclivities appear to be imprinted within the very fabric of our souls. But how and why?

Is it merely a random accident that determines one’s path in this life, or is there an evolutionary continuity, a carrying forward of the interests and talents, the virtues and vices, the karma of past good and bad deeds, from one incarnation to the next? If not, we live but once, under positive or

negative circumstances, purely by accident; and there is no ongoing consequence to any of our actions. If there is no retention of soul-identity across lifetimes, then personal evolution halts at the end of this current life, and no trace remains of the hard-won qualities of the soul, and there is no consequence for atrocities committed. In this case, life is, as Shakespeare characterized it, “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Fortunately, there is some evidence that order prevails and has always prevailed in God’s universe. From the earliest times, this order has been observed and noted by men who gazed, intrigued, at the lights in the heavens passing in their predictable courses overhead. And perhaps by revelation, perhaps by an extraordinary leap of inference, some Chaldean ancestor thought to compare the characteristics of his own soul with the pattern of the planets in effect at his birth and discovered there an unlikely correspondence. In subsequent times, other early star-gazers continued his study, and no doubt regarded this correlation of soul-qualities and planetary positions as “the science of the soul”, but we have come to refer to it as *Astrology*.

The synchronous relationship between the Sun, moon, and planets and the human psyche, or soul, may readily appear to be an implausible if not impossible relationship if we regard it as occurring in a classic (Newtonian) mechanical universe. But this interconnecting relationship between the planetary environment and the soul appears in an entirely new light when it is seen to operate in a universe of Spirit, in a universe imaged in the Mind of God. And though astrology has been continually practiced for more than four thousand years, it has been, and probably shall always continue to be, practiced and understood by only a very small group of people. This is because the development of the intuitive faculty required for its comprehension and practice is confined to but an advanced few.

To the many, a belief in the effectiveness of astrology is considered to be the epitome of ignorance. Those who feel this way cringe at the very suggestion of a connection between the planetary environment of the solar system and those living within that environment, citing the absence of empirical evidence for such a claim. However, the claims of Astrology begin to seem plausible when one is able to examine the astrological correspondences in the charts of well-

known individuals with certain marked characteristics. An examination of the astrological charts of such various famous people can help us to understand the seemingly inexplicable correlation that exists between the planets of the solar system and the lives of humans living on the planet Earth.

And yet, anyone with an inquisitive and critical intellect must ask, 'How could such a correspondence be possible?' By what possible means could the positions of the Sun, moon and planets at the moment of an individual's birth constitute the psychological framework of that individual? And how could the angular relationships of the continuing movements of those planets to their positions at birth have the slightest effect on that individual's evolution and development?

These are questions that have been asked of the defenders of astrology for the last two millennia; and the lack of any verifiable (or even unverifiable) theories to account for the correlations purported by astrologers to exist between planetary patterns and human character, psychology, and behavior is the primary reason cited by skeptics for their rejection of the claims of

Astrology. No electromagnetic-type fields of force have been discovered to account for it; no observable 'planetary rays' seem to be present; no viable theory of universal sympathy or synchronicity has even been put forward. How then account for either a causal or an acausal synchrony between the angular positions of the Sun, moon and planets and the minds and bodies of human beings living on earth?

Most astrologers admit they haven't a clue as to how the planets and human consciousness are connected. 'We see the effects of this correspondence,' they say, 'but we do not understand the mode of its efficacy.' And they point out that the same is true of so many phenomena—like the force of gravity, and the weak, strong and electromagnetic forces. Certainly, we know they exist and operate, but no one knows *how* they work or why. We know that gravity exists by observing its effects, though we don't fully understand the mechanism behind it or how to reconcile it with our quantum theories of the microcosm.

Likewise, we see the effects of molecular formation in the objects around us and in ourselves; but we don't really understand why the

elementary particles form out of the initial burst of light-energy, or where the force comes from that causes them to bind together into molecules and from thence into larger living structures. Indeed, what is it that constitutes the life-force of sentient beings? How does it originate? And how does it operate? And what of that most fundamental phenomenon: light? It is a complete mystery. The ambiguous wave-particle duality of light, shown by many different experiments in the scientist's lab, reveals the indefinability of light at the quantum level. We know it is, but we don't know *what* it is or *how* and *why* it works.

The observed correlation of the positions of the Sun, moon and planets in the solar system with the lives and psyches of the inhabitants of Earth fits right in with all those other unsolved mysteries. We see and experience the connection, though we can't explain the why or how of it. Clearly, the subjective and objective data accumulated tells us that such a correspondence exists. Yet, the critics tell us that astrology *cannot* work in the material and mechanistic universe which science has presented this universe to be. 'In a universe such as contemporary science describes,' they say, 'astrology cannot possibly work!' And, of course, they are right. Therefore, either something is

wrong with the astrological idea of correspondences between planets and people, or there is something wrong with the model of the universe which contemporary science portrays. Perhaps the answer to how astrology works must be sought in an entirely different framework of understanding from the usual empirical cause-effect framework in which most of us operate.

Let us look then for some alternative answers from one of our foremost thinkers on the subject of astrology: Richard Tarnas, the author of the watershed classic, *Cosmos And Psyche*. In that book, Tarnas suggests that astrology, from its earliest beginnings, is based on a worldview which he refers to as a “primal” one, a mindset that sees the inner and outer worlds as co-constituents of an all-embracing world-Soul (*anima mundi*) that permeates both cosmos and psyche. In this “primal” worldview,

The human psyche is embedded with a world psyche in which it complexly participates and by which it is continuously defined. The workings of that *anima mundi* (“world-soul”), in all its flux and diversity, are articulated through a language that is mythic and numinous. Because the world is understood as speaking a symbolic language, direct

communication of meaning and purpose from world to human can occur. The many particulars of the empirical world are all endowed with symbolic, archetypal significance, and that significance flows between inner and outer, between self and world. In this relatively undifferentiated state of consciousness, human beings perceive themselves as directly—emotionally, mystically, consequentially—participating in and communicating with the interior life of the natural world and cosmos.²

This “primal” mindset is contrasted with the “modern” mindset, influenced as it is by the methods and conclusions of the empirical sciences, which assumes a distinct separation between subject and object, between self and world, allowing for no breach of this cognized barrier. The demands of this empirical mindset have taught us to see the world objectively, divorced from human subjectivity, and this perceptive framework has effectively erected a mental defensive barrier against the “primal” worldview. In the primal (or mystical) worldview, all in the universe is one organic and interrelated whole, and each separate element fits into that whole as an integral component. All things do indeed move together of one accord; not a sparrow falls, nor a grain of sand is moved by the currents on the ocean’s floor that

is not coordinated with all else in a continuum of Divine interaction. All is contained in the Mind of God, as images contained in a dream are contained and coordinated in the mind of a dreamer.

We, who are but insubstantial images in that Mind imagine in our turn that we are, and all about us is, substantial, real, a solid edifice of reality that we can cling to and hang our hats on. But even this body which we label “I” is but a fleeting shadow, a flickering image on a passing screen in the Mind of the One whose bodies all these truly are. We exist in a dream-world, a projection of a dancing spray of light-beams upon an infinite expanse of Thought.

In our accustomed “modern” view of a universe of material effects from material causes, all separately isolated from one another, the seemingly dead planets circling the Sun have no bearing whatever on the minds of men on earth. In such a world of independently moving subjects and independently moving objects, how could there possibly be a correlation between the two? Impossible! Inconceivable! But—suppose a world all magically interconnected, a world intimately pervaded by a unified Consciousness whose single will governs all—why then, the

possibility of a coordination, or synchrony, between the planets of the solar system and its inhabitants no longer seems so dubious.

In the Indian religious tradition, this phenomenal world is referred to as *Maya*. *Maya* is the Thought production of the Divine Mind. It is a play of light and energy; this light-energy forms the substance of *Maya*. We must grasp it as a Whole, without attempting to reduce it to elementals or causal relationships. Within it there are cohesive forces, but these too are irreducible to separable elements, just as it is impossible to define the elements or cohesive forces within our own dreams or fantasies. There are no individual elements or forces; the universe, like a dream, is a Whole, and operates as a Whole. Under the spell of *Maya*, we are deluded into believing that we are our bodies and are independent entities separate and distinct from the world of our experience.

It is only through an occasional glimpse of clarity that we become awakened to the truth that we live within the one Spirit, the one world-Soul, and that this body and all nature is His; that it is an illusory world made of projected light, thought, and images in which all things are united and joined in the one all-pervading Spirit. In the delusive world of

Maya, where all appears solid and permanent, the planets moving in the heavens appear to be only inert objects, disconnected from our lives and minds. But, in the revealed world of the living Spirit, there is an active force that interconnects the heavens and the earth and all that exists in one Consciousness, deliberate and entire, guiding and directing every soul and everything in this universe by Its power.

Now, astrologers must possess something of this primal worldview in order to accept and account for the interplay between cosmos and psyche, between world and self, in the universal consciousness that is the *anima mundi*. And it is here, at the most fundamental level, that we discover the great divide between the “primal” and “modern” worldviews, as well as between those who are able to accept and embrace astrological principles and those who are not. From the “primal” perspective, to look for *empirical* proofs for astrological “influences” is irrelevant and beside the point. The connection between planetary positions and human psychology is neither physical nor mental; it is a consonance taking place within the one Spirit—a Spirit or Soul that is both immanent and transcendent, that resides in the individual’s innermost being, and yet

is all-pervasive, that acts not only as the Providence and guiding Logos of all things and all beings, but as the very Self of those beings. For those of us to whom experience has taught the truth of such notions, the rationale for astrology is thus rendered adequate; and for those to whom such notions are nonsense, Astrology must also appear to be nonsense.

IV. The Soul And Free Will

Some of the keenest intellects of a few early civilizations recognized the correlation between the changing positions and patterns of the planets in our solar system and the changing mental and physical conditions of life on earth. As they learned by observation of the distinct nature of the effects associated with each planet, they ascribed to each a specific kind of influence, considering each of the heavenly bodies, including the sun and moon, to be embodiments of divine powers, or “gods”. These gods were both benevolent and mischievous, bestowing both blessings and calamities upon earth and her inhabitants. Each had its own personality and characteristics and dealt with men on earth in ways compatible with their separate natures.

Today, of course, these beliefs are regarded by many as mere primitive superstitions, having no basis in fact whatsoever. But let us not be so hasty in our judgment of these early mythologizers. Over the centuries, the correlations between planetary patterns and specific psychological and physical effects on Earth have continued to be chronicled by observers of the heavenly dynamics, and much evidence has been accumulated to show a factual basis for these planetary myths of correspondence. Today, the notion of “gods” is frowned upon; instead, we like to call those various distinct energies associated with the planets “archetypes”, after Carl Jung, who utilized the term (originally coined by Plato) to speak of those intangible influences. This may also prove in time to be an inadequate term; but for now, we shall speak of the power of the gods as “archetypes”.

For a long time now, this study of the correspondence of the archetypal energies associated with the planets and the patterns of mental and physical changes on earth has gone by the name of *astrology*. It is fashionable among those “learned” in the universities to regard this study as having no scientific basis and as being

merely a throwback to superstition and ignorance, appealing only to the indiscriminate and gullible masses. But we should remember the words of the great astrologer, Ptolemy, who warned, “It is a common practice with the vulgar to slander everything which is difficult of attainment.”¹ How, then, shall we define these *archetypes*? Here is what philosopher, astrologer, and author of the highly regarded affirmation of astrological principles, *Cosmos and Psyche*, Richard Tarnas, says:

Archetypes can be understood and described in many ways, and in fact much of the history of Western thought from Plato and Aristotle onward has been concerned with this very question. But for our present purposes, we can define an archetype as a universal principle or force that affects—impels, structures, permeates—the human psyche and human behavior on many levels ... Moreover, archetypes seem to work from both within and without, for they can express themselves as impulses and images from the interior psyche, yet also as events and situations in the external world.

Jung thought of archetypes as the basic constituents of the human psyche, shared cross-culturally by all human beings, and he regarded them as universal expressions of a

collective unconscious. Much earlier, the Platonic tradition considered archetypes to be not only psychological but also cosmic and objective, as primordial forms of a Universal Mind that transcended the human psyche. Astrology would appear to support the Platonic view as well as the Jungian, since it gives evidence that Jungian archetypes are not only visible in human psychology, in human experience and behavior, but are also linked to the macrocosm itself—to the planets and their movements in the heavens. Astrology thus supports the ancient idea of an *anima mundi*, or world soul, in which the human psyche participates. From this perspective, what Jung called the collective unconscious can be viewed as being ultimately embedded within the cosmos itself.

The basic principle of astrology is that the planets have a fundamental cosmically based connection to specific archetypal forces or principles which influence human existence, and that the patterns formed by the planets in the heavens bear a meaningful correspondence to the patterns of human affairs on the Earth. In terms of individuals, the positions of the planets at the time and place of a person's birth are regarded as corresponding to the basic archetypal patterns of that person's life and character.²

According to this interpretation, the natal chart represents the psychological make-up or orientation of the individual at birth; and the ongoing progressions and transits reflect the changing modes of thought and experience occurring throughout one's present life. The position of the transiting planets therefore represents a sort of evolving map of the intricately changing network of our mental experience. But there must inevitably arise the question of *how* and by what means are the changing positions of the planets synchronously related to the human psyche.

The changing aspects of transiting planets to the positions of planets existing at birth can clearly have no effect on a person unless those natal planetary positions are an integral part of the makeup of an individual's personal psyche. It seems that the position of the planets at birth is somehow imprinted on that soul and is in a way synonymous with the characteristics of that particular individual's psyche; so that, the transiting aspects to the planetary positions of the natal chart are relating to something integral to the individual. They are relating to the living psyche of the individual, which in turn is synonymous

with the planetary arrangement existing at his/her birth.

If this interpretation of “planetary correspondences” is correct, then every individual born bears within itself the imprint and structure of the planetary arrangement existing at that very moment and is in fact an embodiment of that planetary arrangement. And the movements of the planets, along with their changing relations to one another during the course of the life of the individual, are intimately correlated with the unfolding life and psyche of that individual. It is not that one is considered to be *causing* the other; they are regarded instead as merely correlated events in the universal unfoldment. They are merely two synchronous mirror images of the activity of the Divine Mind. Here, again, Richard Tarnas, on why astrology works:

It seems unlikely to me that the planets send out some kind of physical emanations that causally influence events in human life in a mechanistic way. The range of coincidences between planetary positions and human existence is just too vast, too experientially complex, too aesthetically subtle and endlessly creative to be explained by physical factors alone. I believe that a more plausible

and comprehensive explanation is that the universe is informed and pervaded by a fundamental holistic patterning which extends through every level, so that a constant synchronicity or meaningful correlation exists between astronomical events and human events. This is represented in the basic esoteric axiom, “as above, so below,” which reflects a universe all of whose parts are integrated into an intelligible whole.³

In dealing with astrological “influences” one needs, therefore, to take a universal all-inclusive perspective, and to recognize the truth of the fundamental dictum that “all things move together of one accord.” From this perspective, the universe is the manifestation of the one Intelligence, the *Nous* or *Logos*; all is one integral life in which every entity and every action is interrelated, functioning as coordinated aspects of the universal expression. In such a view, the planets are merely “signs”, indicators of prevailing influences or energies currently operating, and have no causal function. This view, also, asserts a marvelously complex and exquisite perfection in the unfolding of the universe, and underscores the existence of a Divine Intelligence in operation down through each member, upholding, activating, and supporting all. The individualized soul, the

result of its previously created karma, comes into the world at exactly the moment that the planetary arrangement mirrors the qualities of its being. What a truly extraordinary wonder of Divine creative perfection!

But should we gather, then, that we are wholly governed by these planetary energies (archetypes), that there is a cosmic determinism at work here that is inescapable? Should we believe that our sense of individual freedom is merely an illusion, and that we must unwittingly and unerringly follow the cosmic fiat as inscribed in the movements of the stars? And, perhaps most importantly, if there is, instead, a means by which each individual soul possesses a free and undetermined will, quite beyond the “meaningful correspondence” that exists between astronomical and human events, what is the explanation for such a free will?

The soul, or psyche, of each individual, though embodying the cosmic arrangement at the moment of its birth, and constituting the specific tenor and structure of the life of the individual, has at its core the eternal Consciousness which is the principle and primary element of its being, constituting its permanent Ground and Self, beyond all projected

energies resulting from any temporary arrangements of the cosmic array. Therefore, the cosmic arrangement at the moment of our birth into this universe may constitute our temporal identity; but the One who projects this universe, and in whose Mind we exist, constitutes our eternal Identity. This eternal Identity remains throughout our existence, and is unaffected by any transient conditions, such as the planetary patterns of relationship appearing within the manifest universe.

The Neoplatonist conception, as put forward by Plotinus (205-270 C.E.), as well as the Vedantic conception, put forth in the Upanishads, satisfactorily explains this eternal Principle of freedom. The Divine Mind (*Nous* or *Brahma*), which is the active element of the Divine Consciousness, projects a coordinated Dream-world of immense vastness and complexity (the manifested *Cosmos* or *Maya*). Yet the source and heart of all existence, the substratum of Divine Consciousness, the Ground of the Soul (*the One* or *Brahman*), remains constant. It is independent of and unaffected by this surface play of universal phenomena; for the world of physical and mental phenomena is but an appearance, a sort of

superimposition, on this substratum of Divine Consciousness.

For most of us, the mind's continuous display of this superimposition of both physical and psychological states synchronous with the positions and angular relationships of the planets is extremely persuasive, becoming the primary basis of our psychologically perceived reality. But, through deep meditation or deliberate recollection, we are able to maintain identity with the Conscious substratum of Being and are able to view the ongoing parade of transient physical and mental conditions and images related to existing planetary energies as but the superimposed activities of that Conscious substratum.

Therefore, when we consider the correlation of planetary events and human events, we are not dealing with a straightforward cause-effect relationship. This is because we humans are of a two-fold nature; we are, in essence, identical with the divine Consciousness, our Divine Self, which assures us of a free will; and we are only secondarily products of the creative Power (*Nous* or *Brahma*) which begets the material body-mind complex along with its accompanying karmic tendencies. The winds of all the influences of all

the planets may blow, but the Divine Self may yet remain unmoved, withholding and denying her consent to the influential powers; or better, she may use the influences of those planetary powers to her own Divine purposes, rather than to the merely pleasurable mental, physical and emotional activities to which they tend to incline. Conversely, if an individual's sense of the Divine Self is weak, the individual's will may be swayed by the mental and physical influences impinging on her and surrender to their power. But, with a determined dependence on and identification with the Divine Self, the individual will has the free and final word on the course of the life it rules.

We are a combination, a duality, of identities: we are the Divine Self (*the One, Brahman*), and we are also distinctly individual souls by virtue of our embodiment. Our essence, the one Divine Consciousness, is the only true 'I' in all the universe and beyond; It is everyone's eternal Identity. But, by His mysterious Power of illusion (*Maya*), the Spirit born into this world as Soul takes on a limited set of characteristics as well, which constitutes one's limited temporal identity, otherwise known as the *jiva*, or individualized soul. According to that soul's previous mental tendencies, and in synchrony with the evolving

motions of the planets and celestial bodies as they relate to the place on Earth where that soul takes birth, the characteristics of each soul are made manifest. The astrological interpretations of the planetary positions at one's birth can therefore be helpful indications of the soul characteristics of each person born.

The astrological natal chart is an authentic diagram of the individualized soul, but it says nothing of the Divine Identity, or Self, underlying the manifestation of that soul. The 'soul' is in essence the Divine as it appears within the dream-fabric of *Cosmos/Maya*. It partakes of both the Divine and the illusory—just as in a dream, we partake of both our true conscious selves and an illusory self. The analogy is exceedingly apt, as in both instances, we retain our fundamental reality, while operating in an illusory 'imaged' reality. The individual soul (or *astral* body), as portrayed in the astrological chart, is, to a great degree, who we are; and we operate in this life from the past karmic tendencies embodied in that natal chart. However, at a more fundamental level, we are identical with the Divine Self, which comprises our freedom to will and act from a level of consciousness beyond our soul properties and characteristics. The past karmic tendencies are very powerful in their influence;

and they can lead us astray, unless we are able to identify with the Divine Self and turn those inherent tendencies to Divine purposes.

A recent example will suffice to illustrate this dual identity: A young man, a college student, named Seung-Hui Cho, went on a recent rampage, killing thirty-two of his classmates at a Virginia College. The young man's natal chart shows the difficult karmic limitation suggested by the Sun's square aspect to a close conjunction between Mars and Pluto. This is a predictably volatile and violent aspect indeed! Also, at the time of his birth, Jupiter was in exact conjunction with Neptune. Such natives have a tendency, if there are other conflicting factors, to "lose contact with reality and live in a world of private fantasy". This natal chart describes the soul characteristics under which this young man took birth. They were not conditions which were imposed from without; they were conditions previously forged in his own soul, and they describe the embedded tendencies (as depicted in the natal chart) which constituted the framework of his recent life.

But underneath this projected framework there stood the divine Consciousness, the free Will of the Self. Would he identify with that higher Soul

Essence and be triumphant in overruling the limiting structure of his accumulated tendencies, or would the tendencies win out? We now know the terrible answer to that question. But we must acknowledge that, despite the overwhelming strength of the negative tendencies embodied in this soul, at his core, he was free to refuse assent to their promptings. The negative soul tendencies won out. They proved too deeply entrenched, too overwhelmingly reinforced in this present life, to be overcome; but we must never doubt that, in his essential Being, he was free to choose. “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.”⁴

It is important to have a clear understanding, not only of one’s Divine Ground, and to identify with one’s eternal Freedom, but one should also have a complete understanding of the makeup of one’s soul as indicated by the planetary pattern existing at birth, as well as of the nature and occurrence of the various changing planetary conditions as they manifest daily in our lives. An awareness of the archetypal energies currently prevailing in one’s life gives an extraordinary advantage in the timing and utilization of those specific energies for the enfolding of one’s potential to manifest and express the freedom of the Divine Will. As Richard Tarnas explains,

Astrology can serve to greatly increase personal freedom... Partly this is because awareness of the basic archetypal structures and patterns of meaning in one's birth chart allows one to bring considerably more consciousness to the task of fulfilling one's deepest potential, one's authentic nature. But [also because] the more deeply we understand the archetypal forces that affect our lives, the more free we can be in dealing with them. If we are altogether unconscious of these potent forces, we are like puppets of the archetypes; we then act according to unconscious motivations without any possibility of our being intelligent agents interacting with these forces. To the exact extent that we are conscious of the archetypes, we can respond with greater autonomy and Self-awareness.⁵

The soul is essentially identical with the transcendent Source of all, and is supremely, absolutely, free. In its transcendent aspect, it is always free, immutable and unaffected by the bodily conditions or worldly circumstances of individuals; however, when the soul identifies with the conditional, it is bound; it is subject to being carried along in the floodwaters of the archetypal forces of Nature. Only when it knows and identifies with the Divine Self, does it realize and manifest its true freedom.

According to this understanding, a man is free insofar as he is cognizant of his essential identity with the Highest and bound when he departs from the knowledge and awareness of his Divinity, identifying with the body/mind complex. He then succumbs to the rule of earthly necessity and is moved willy-nilly by the causative forces inherent in Nature. He has the power, as the Divine Self, to will freely, unencumbered, uncompelled by circumstance; and, for that reason is responsible for his individual actions. All souls are linked by inclusion to the one Soul, and by extension to the Divine Mind; but only he who is cognizant, aware, of his Divine Identity, is truly free.

V. As Above, So Below ¹

An experienced astrologer, familiar with the language of astrological symbolism, can look at the natal horoscopic chart of Isaac Newton and easily discern the primary features of the soul who bore that name, and recognize in these features the historical man; or he may look at the chart of Ralph W. Emerson and discern the soul tendencies impelling that kindly figure, and recognize, as by an interior photograph, the very blueprint of the

man's soul. And likewise, with every notable character with whom we are familiar: to those conversant with the language, each birth-chart is a faultless portrait of the man or woman thus represented. The charts are faultlessly accurate portraits because they represent the cosmic factors involved in the makeup of those souls in the space-time moment of their embodiment. They stand, indeed, as illustrative proof of the interconnection of the soul's qualities and the heavenly environment which accompanies its incarnation.

We are able to see the concentration of genius in the chart of Einstein; we can see the concentration of harmony in the chart of Beethoven; the concentration of madness in the chart of Manson, the concentration of artistry in the chart of Sinatra, the concentration of poetry in the chart of Swinburne, the concentration of Spirit in the chart of the contemporary saint, Amma Mata Amritanandamayi. And we must ask, 'Were all these manifestations of God's life brought to light instantaneously *solely* by the happenstance of the architecture of the heavens at the moment of their birth?' If we answer "yes" to this question, we have rejected the evolution (reincarnation) of the soul, self-effort, karma, and the efficacy of the individual will, and relegated our personhood to

the fiat of the stars. No; that cannot be. We must recognize that all souls pass through lengthy preparations and development in previous incarnations, and bear in their present incarnation the results of that development and are called to take their place upon the world's stage in correspondence with the mirroring spectacle of the heaven's design.

Those souls whose purpose sets them apart, whose aims are strong and focused upon the accomplishment of their destined role, are brought to birth in concert with the starry pattern that portrays their gathered wealth of wit or wisdom or vision or art. All come into life at the intended moment, in concert with the perfect unfolding of the universal array in the Divine Mind and at the behest of the one all-encompassing Soul, which is manifest activity of the Divine Mind.. "All things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain." The positions and angular relationships of the planets, the necessity of the times, and the appearance of the souls of the great and small, all live and move and exist, entwined together, by that one assent, and of that one accord.

Here, then, let me present to you the planetary pictures at the birth of some well-known historical figures in chronological order. I believe the cumulative effect of these examples will enable you to perceive and comprehend some of the wonders of the incomprehensible Soul and its creative diversity: ²

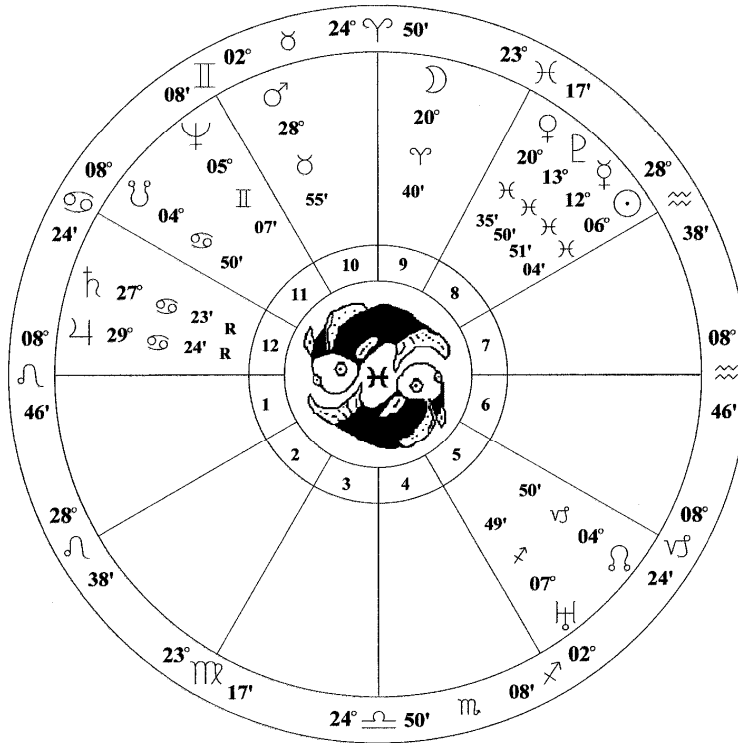
First, the soul of one of our early great scientists, **Galileo Galilei**. Here, on the opposite page, is the planetary chart of his birth.

If you are new to astrological symbolism, you will need to become familiar with the basic symbols; I will not be presenting a beginner's course in astrological interpretation. Those who are already proficient will recognize at a glance the following major planetary aspects:

The Sun, Mercury, Pluto, and Venus conjunct,
The Sun in T-square to the Uranus-Neptune
opposition, Jupiter conjunct Saturn sextile Mars,
Uranus conjunct the North Node, and Neptune
conjunct the South Node.

Galileo Galilei
15 February 1564 03:14:25 PM
Astronomer, physicist
Pisa, Italy
Time Zone: -00:41:32 (LT)
Longitude: 010° E 23'
Latitude: 43° N 43'

Placidus Houses
Tropical Zodiac
Mean Nodes

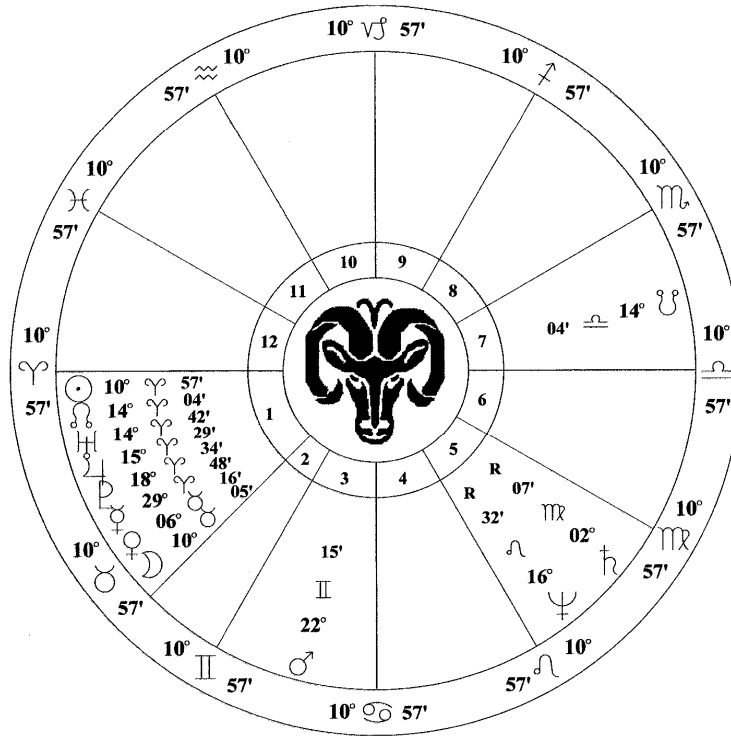


The next chart is that of the brilliant French philosopher, **René Descartes**:

One cannot help noticing at first glance that this is an extraordinary chart. Firstly, The Sun, North Node, Uranus, Jupiter, and Pluto are conjunct in Aries; followed by Mercury, Venus, and the Moon conjunct in Taurus. The first multi-conjunction is in trine aspect to Neptune, and the second multi-conjunction is trine to Saturn; and the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction is sextile to Mars. How appropriate that the man responsible for *Cogito ergo sum*, “I think, therefore I am”, was born with many of his soul-characteristics in the astrological “I am” sign of Aries.

Rene Descartes
 Sunday, March 31, 1596 12:00:00 PM
 Philosopher, Mathematician
 Descartes, France
 Time Zone: -00:02:48 (LT)
 Longitude: 000° E 42'
 Latitude: 46° N 58'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

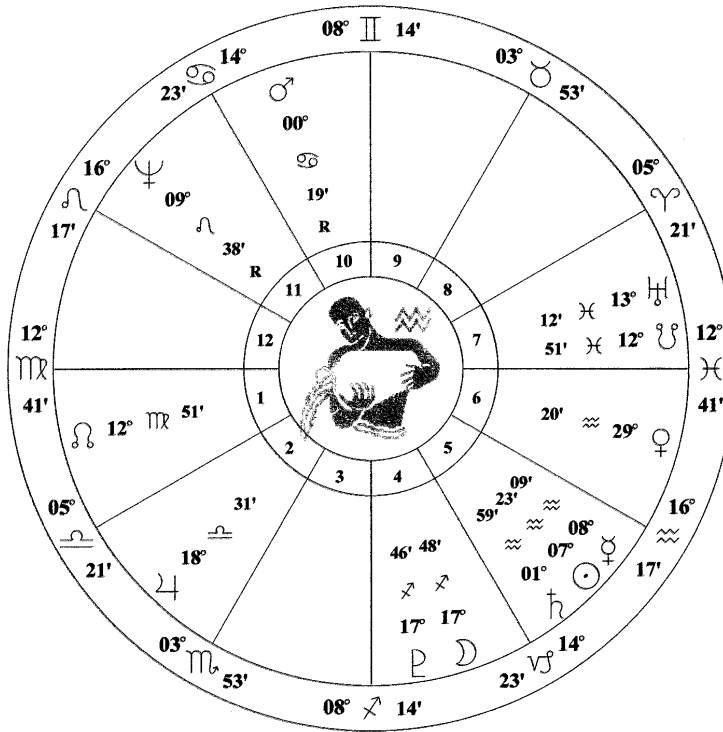


The next chart is that of famed musician,
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart:

Here, again, a strongly emphatic chart; the major planetary aspects include: The Sun, Mercury, and Saturn conjunct in Aquarius opposing Neptune; The Moon exactly conjunct Pluto and sextile Jupiter; Venus trine Mars; and Uranus conjunct the South Node.

Wolfgang Mozart
 Tuesday, January 27, 1756 8:00:00 PM
 Musician; Composer
 Salzburg, Austria
 Time Zone: -00:52:08 (LT)
 Longitude: 013° E 02'
 Latitude: 47° N 48'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

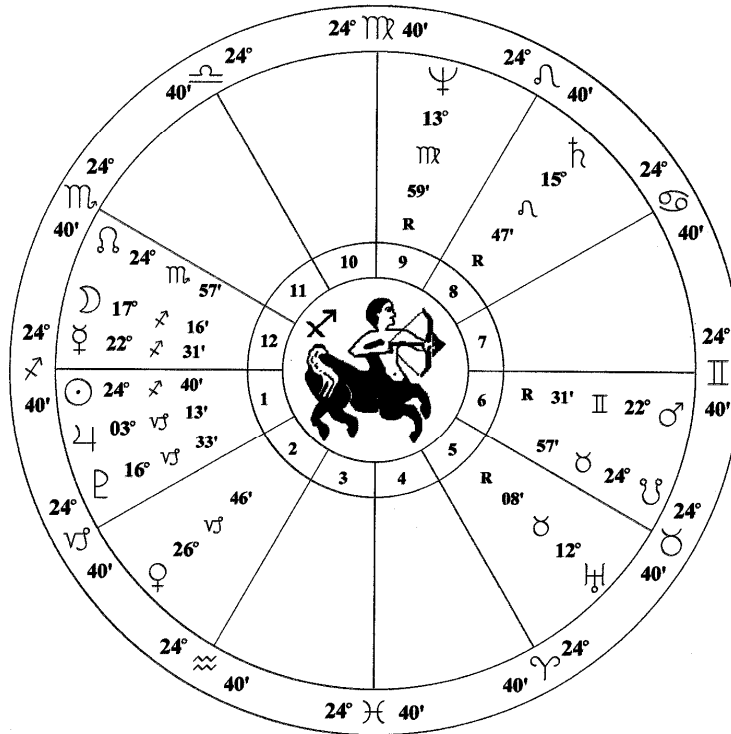


Next, another famed musician, **Ludwig van Beethoven**:

Beethoven's chart is equally grand, containing the following major aspects: The Sun, Moon, and Mercury conjunct in Sagittarius; The Moon and Mercury are making a trine to Saturn, and squaring Neptune; Mars is conjunct the South Node; but most spectacular is the Grand Trine between Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, only one of which was discovered during his lifetime: Uranus was discovered by Herschel in 1781, but of Neptune and Pluto Beethoven knew nothing. Neptune was not discovered until 1846, and Pluto in 1930.

Ludwig van Beethoven
 Sunday, December 16, 1770 12:00:00 PM
 Musician; Composer
 Bonn, Germany
 Time Zone: -00:28:20 (LT)
 Longitude: 007° E 05'
 Latitude: 50° N 44'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

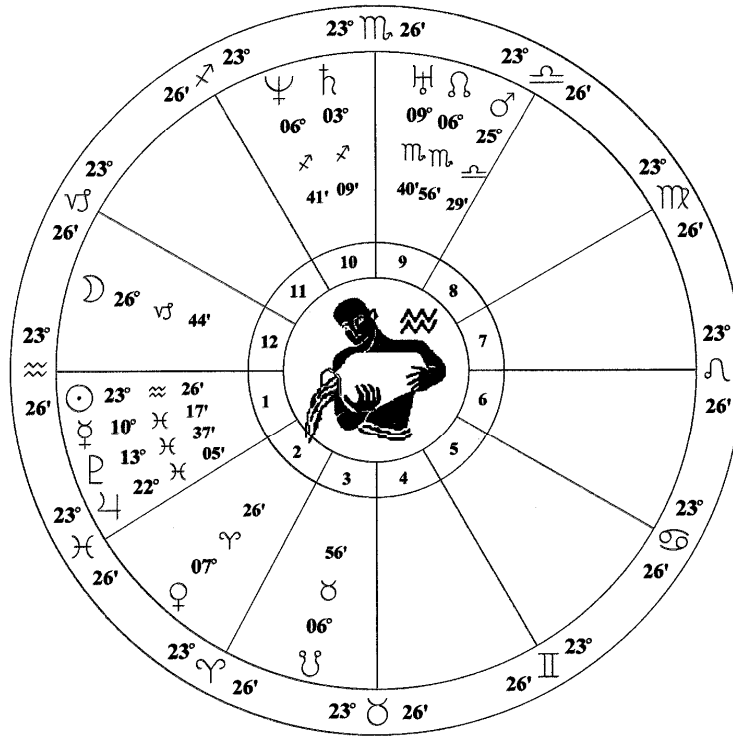


Next, we have the father of the theory of biological evolution, **Charles Darwin**:

Charles Darwin was obviously destined for great accomplishments; among the planetary aspects in his chart are: The Sun in trine aspect to Mars; The Moon in square aspect to Mars and sextile Jupiter; Mercury conjunct Pluto in trine to Uranus; Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune conjunct, and trining Venus; And Uranus conjunct the North Node.

Charles Darwin
 Sunday, February 12, 1809 12:00:00 PM
 Naturalist
 Shrewsbury, England
 Time Zone: 00:11 (LT)
 Longitude: 002° W 45'
 Latitude: 52° N 43'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

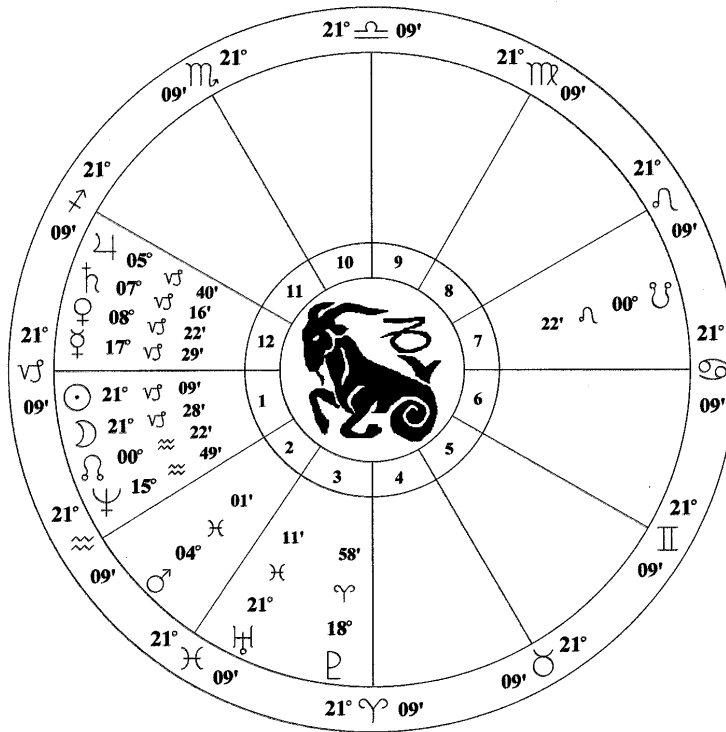


Next, we have the chart of the eminent American psychologist, **William James**:

James' chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun, Moon, and Mercury are conjunct, making a sextile to Uranus, and squaring Pluto; Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn are conjunct; and all three form a sextile to Mars.

William James
 Tuesday, January 11, 1842 12:00:00 PM
 Philosopher; Psychologist
 New York, New York
 Time Zone: 04:56:02 (LT)
 Longitude: 074° W 00' 23"
 Latitude: 40° N 42' 51"

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

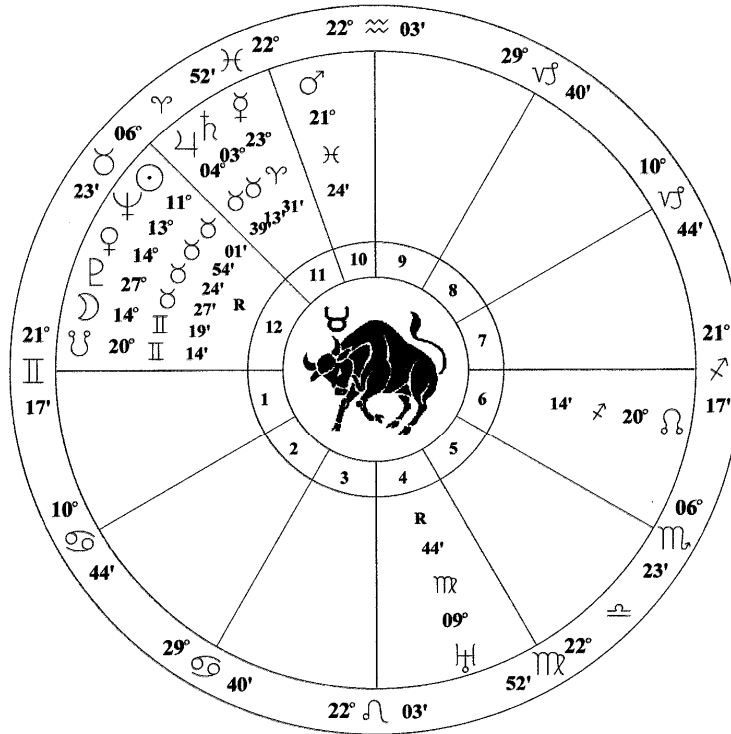


Next, the chart of the priest-paleontologist, **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin:**

Teilhard de Chardin's is an extraordinarily focused chart, with: A conjunction of the Sun, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune, all forming a trine to Uranus. Notice, also, that the Moon, Mercury, Mars, and Pluto make no aspects to other planets.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
 Sunday, May 01, 1881 7:00:00 AM
 Jesuit priest; Author
 Orcines, France
 Time Zone: -00:12 (LT)
 Longitude: 003° E 05'
 Latitude: 45° N 47'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

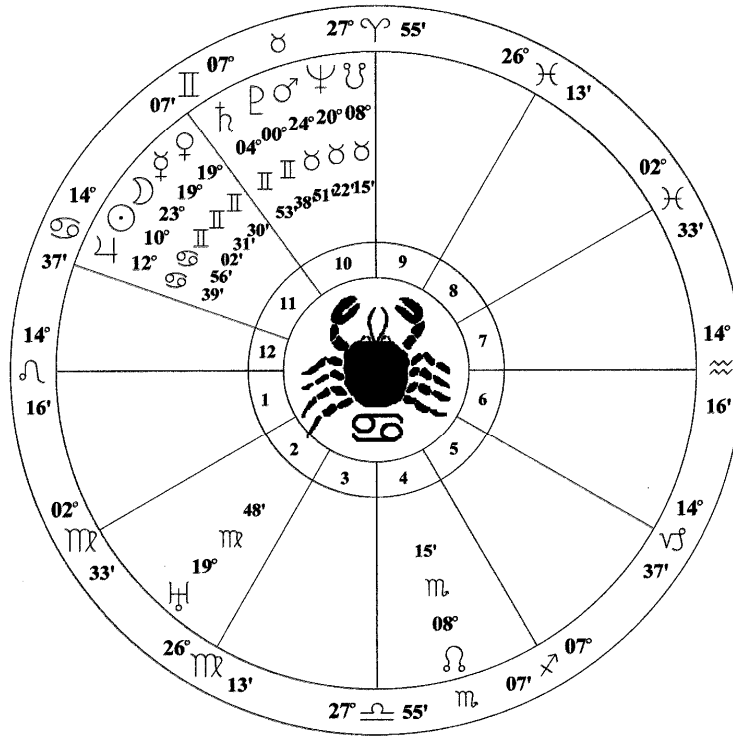


Another highly focused chart is that of storyteller extraordinaire, **Franz Kafka**:

Kafka's chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is conjunct Jupiter; The Moon, Mercury, and Venus are conjunct and all in square aspect to Uranus; Mars is conjunct Neptune; and Saturn is conjunct Pluto.

Franz Kafka
 Tuesday, July 03, 1883 7:00:00 AM
 Author
 Prague, Czechoslovakia
 Time Zone: -00:57:43 (LT)
 Longitude: 014° E 26'
 Latitude: 50° N 05'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

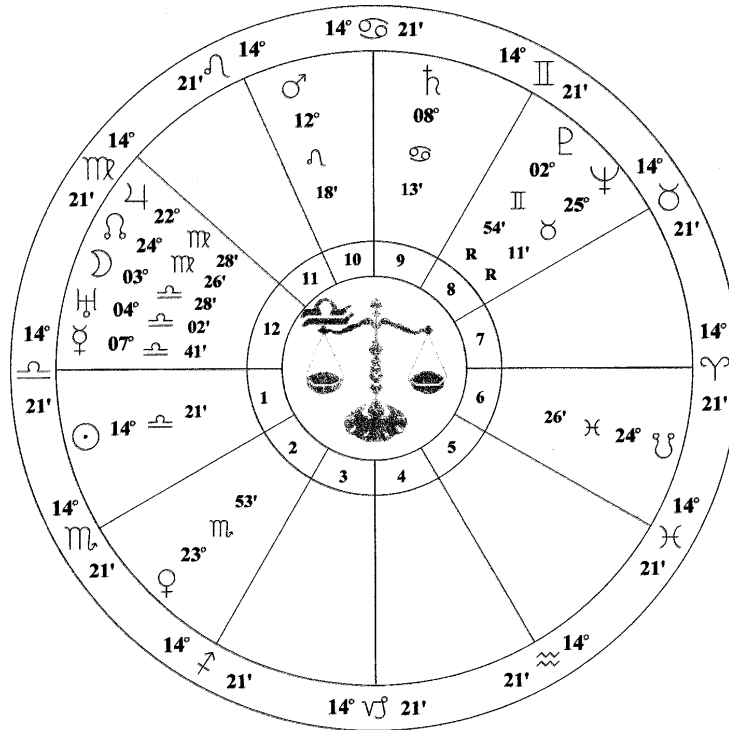


Our next chart is that of legendary physicist, **Neils Bohr**:

Bohr's chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is conjunct Mercury and sextile to Mars; The Moon is conjunct Mercury and square to Saturn; Jupiter is conjunct the North Node and sextile Venus; and Venus is in opposition to Neptune.

Neils Bohr
 Wednesday, October 07, 1885 12:00:00 PM
 Physicist
 Copenhagen, Denmark
 Time Zone: -00:50:20 (LT)
 Longitude: 012° E 35'
 Latitude: 55° N 40'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

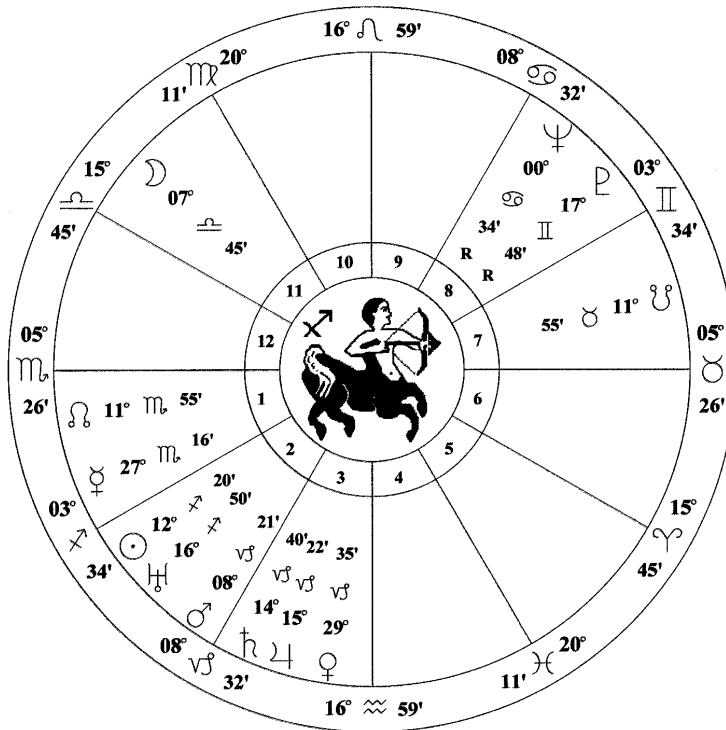


Next, we'll look at the chart of Bohr's co-revolutionary in physics, **Werner Heisenberg**:

Heisenberg's chart contains these major planetary aspects: The Sun is conjunct Uranus, both of which are opposed by Pluto; The Moon is in square aspect to Mars; Mercury is sextile Venus; and Jupiter is conjunct Saturn.

Werner Heisenberg
 Thursday, December 05, 1901 4:45:00 AM
 Physicist
 Wurzburg, Germany
 Time Zone: -01:00 (CET)
 Longitude: 009° E 56'
 Latitude: 49° N 48'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

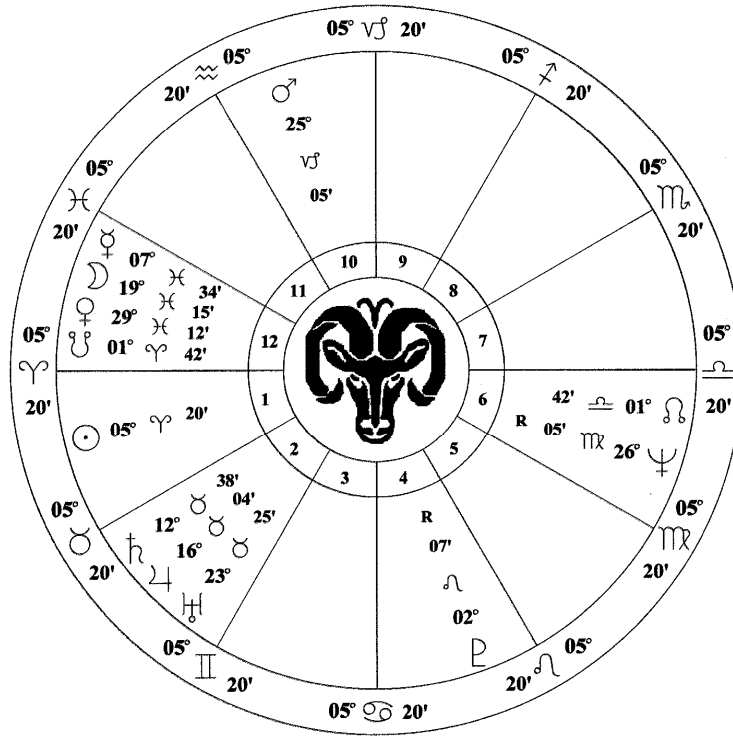


Next, as we reach contemporary times, let us have a look at the chart of evolutionary biologist and atheist theorizer, **Richard Dawkins**:

Richard Dawkins' chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is trine Pluto; The Moon is sextile Jupiter and Uranus; Jupiter is conjunct Saturn and Uranus; Venus is in opposition to Neptune; Mars is trine Neptune; and Neptune is conjunct the North Node.

Richard Dawkins
 Wednesday, March 26, 1941 12:00:00 PM
 Science author, ethologist
 Nairobi, Kenya
 Time Zone: -02:45 (BEAUT)
 Longitude: 036° E 49'
 Latitude: 01° S 17'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



The next chart is that of renowned physicist and author, **Stephen Hawking**:

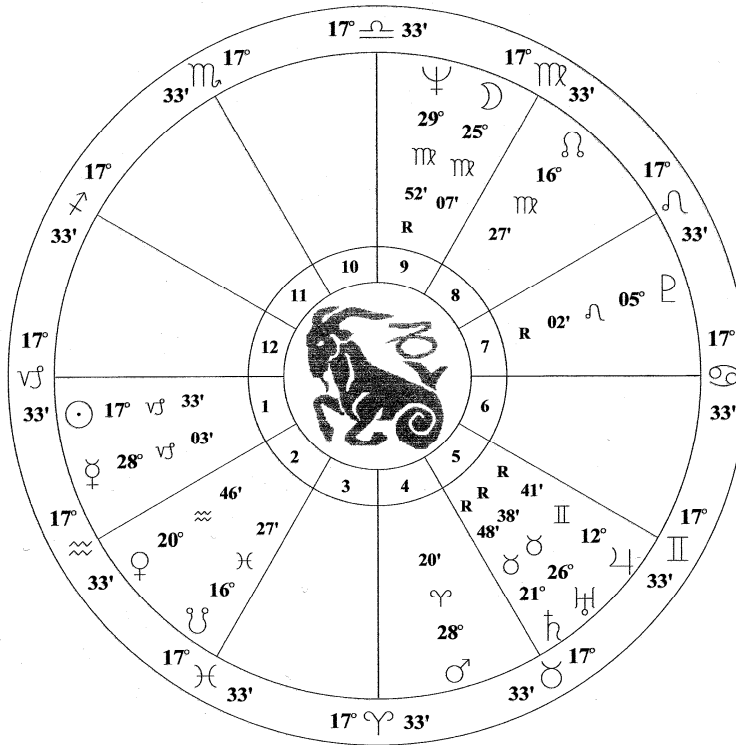
Hawking's chart shows the following aspects:

The Sun is trine Saturn, trine the North Node;

The moon is conjunct Neptune, trine Mercury, and trine Saturn and Uranus; Mercury is square to Mars and forms a grand trine with the Moon-Neptune conjunction and the Saturn-Uranus conjunction; and Venus is squaring the Saturn-Uranus conjunction.

Stephen Hawking
Thursday, January 08, 1942 12:00:00 PM
Physicist; Astronomer
Oxford, United Kingdom
Time Zone: -01:00 (CET)
Longitude: 001° W 15'
Latitude: 51° N 46'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
Tropical Zodiac
Mean Nodes

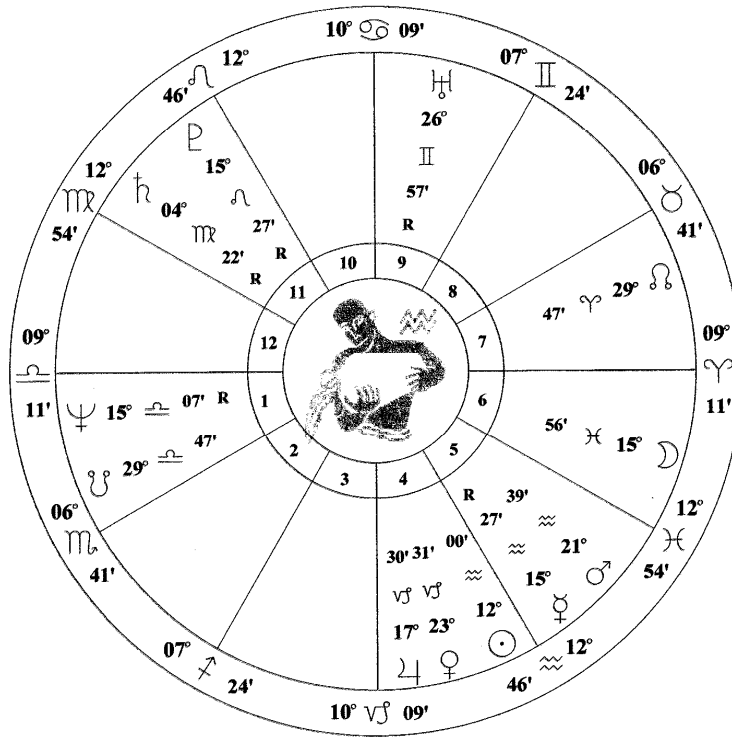


The following chart is that of the mystic-philosopher, **Ken Wilber**:

The following major planetary aspects appear in Wilber's birth-chart: The Sun is conjunct Mercury, both are forming a trine to Neptune and opposing Pluto; The Moon is sextile Jupiter and trine Pluto; Mercury is conjunct Mars; Venus is conjunct Jupiter; and Neptune is sextile Pluto.

Ken Wilber
 Monday, January 31, 1949 10:30:00 PM
 Mystic philosophy psychology
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 Time Zone: 06:00 (CST)
 Longitude: 097° W 30' 58"
 Latitude: 35° N 28' 03"

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

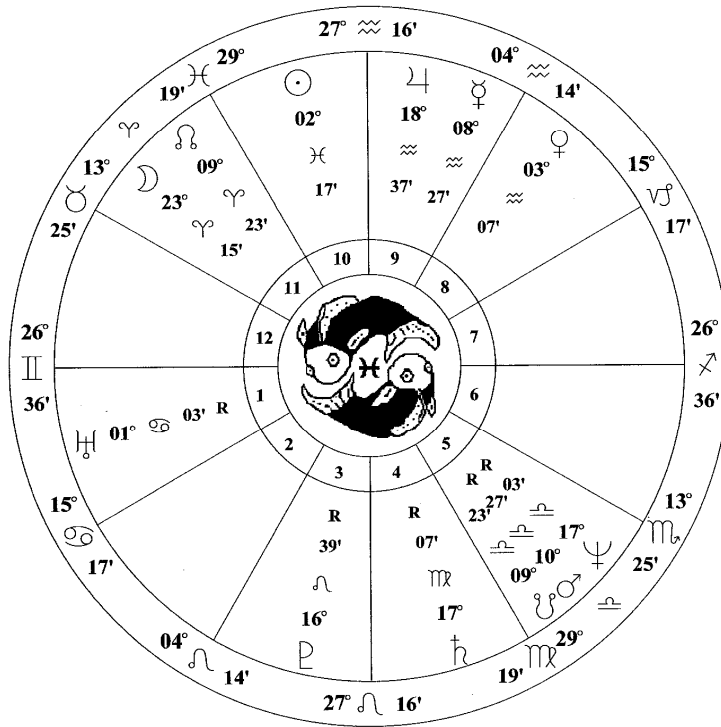


The next chart is that of astrologer and cultural historian, **Richard Tarnas**:

Richard Tarnas' chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is trine Uranus; The Moon is sextile Jupiter, trine Pluto, and opposing Neptune; Mercury is conjunct Venus in trine aspect to Mars; Mars is conjunct the South Node; Jupiter trines Neptune and opposes Pluto; and Neptune is sextile Pluto.

Richard Tarnas
 Tuesday, February 21, 1950 12:30:00 PM
 Geneva, Switzerland
 Time Zone: -01:00 (CET)
 Longitude: 006° E 09'
 Latitude: 46° N 12'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



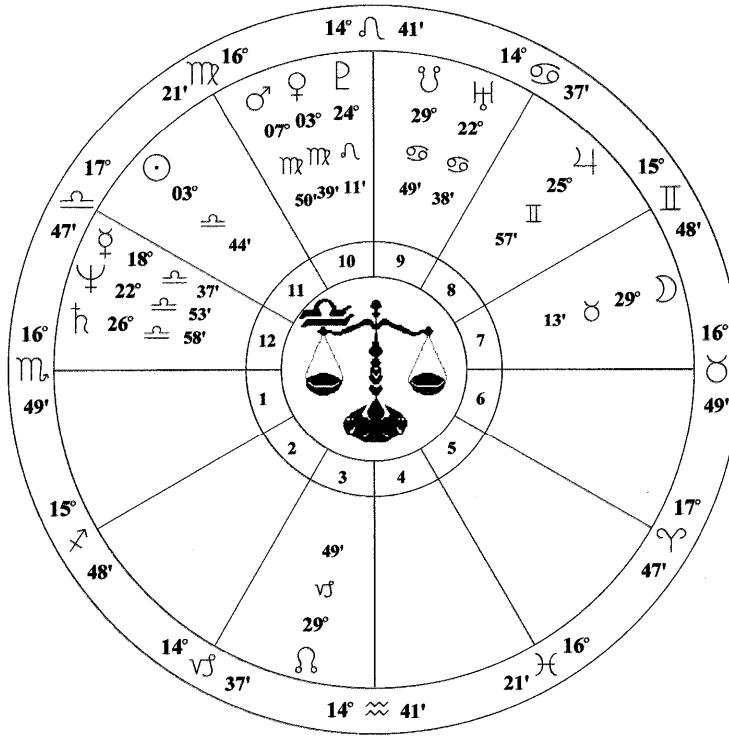
Next, is the chart of the charismatic spiritual leader, **Mata Amritanandamayi**:

The chart of this highly esteemed female saint contains the following major planetary aspects:

The Moon is forming a trine to the Sun and is square to Pluto; Mercury is conjunct Neptune, trine Jupiter, and square Uranus; Venus is conjunct Mars; Saturn is conjunct Neptune, sextile Pluto, trine Jupiter, and square Uranus.

Mata Amritanandamayi
 Sunday, September 27, 1953 9:10:00 AM
 Indian Saint; AKA Ammachi
 Vallickavu, India
 Time Zone: -05:30 (IST)
 Longitude: 076° E 31'
 Latitude: 09° N 10'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

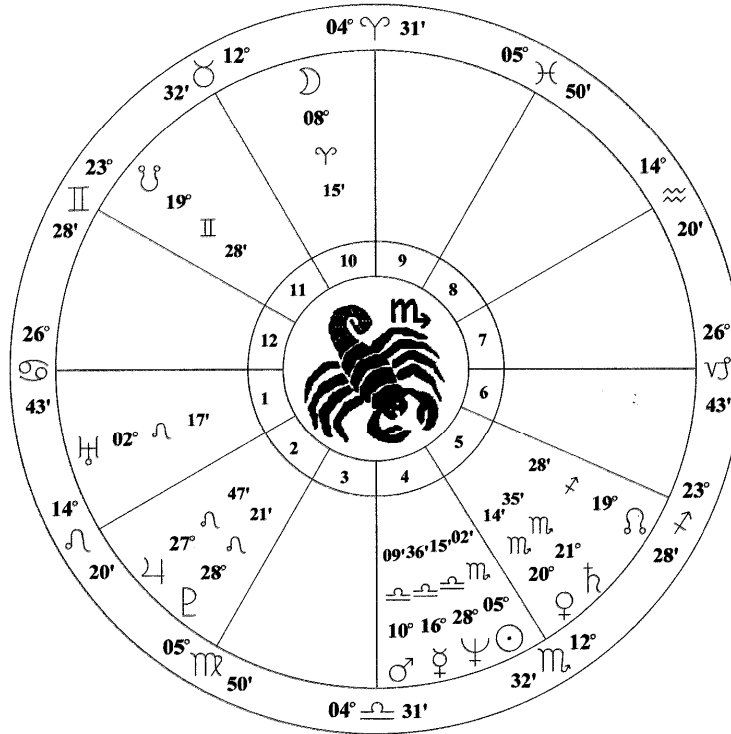


And now for the last of our eminent representative's birth-charts: Here is the chart of software entrepreneur and philanthropist, **Bill Gates**:

And here are the major planetary aspects that appear in his chart: The Sun is conjunct Neptune, and square Uranus; The Moon is opposing Mars, and trine to Uranus; Mercury is conjunct Mars; Venus is conjunct Saturn; and Jupiter is conjunct Pluto.

Bill Gates
 Friday, October 28, 1955 10:00:00 PM
 Software entrepreneur
 Bremerton, Washington
 Time Zone: 08:00 (PST)
 Longitude: 122° W 38' 54"
 Latitude: 47° N 35' 12"

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



As in all of the other charts, I leave it for the reader to make his or her own in-depth interpretations; but in light of our knowledge of the lives and contributions of these very creative men and women, their charts speak volumes regarding the many harmonious as well as conflicting elements that make up their psyches. Above all, these charts provide abundant evidence of the soul qualities contained at birth in these individuals whose varied talents and proclivities have been revealed in the activities of their lives. The qualities of the soul come first; then come the actions that reveal those soul-qualities. As Heraclitus observed, “character is destiny”.

VI. The Ascent of The Soul

The Egyptian-born Roman mystic-philosopher, Plotinus (205-270 C.E.) was one of the greatest seers of the nature of the soul. Plotinus had experienced “the vision of God”, had ascended in awareness to the transcendent Ground, the absolute Self; and he described in his writings the ascent from body consciousness to God consciousness. He asserts that, in the manifestation of this universe, Consciousness moves downward toward increasing limitation, from the One to the Divine Mind to Soul to body (or matter); and, once manifested in the human form, it has the power and strong inclination to rise once again from body to Soul to Divine Mind to the eternal One.

Consciousness, according to Plotinus, is on a graduated scale from God to matter, from matter to God. We are not separated from God; we live in a continuum (or spectrum) of consciousness, where the pure Consciousness of God rests at a higher, but accessible octave. On that variable scale of Consciousness, we may know ourselves as an individualized soul at one moment, and as the undifferentiated Source of all at another.

From the standpoint of the human experience, the various levels of our being are not clearly separated off from one another with clear demarcations to indicate where one ends, and another begins, but tend to merge one into the other in a gradual and vaguely perceived manner. We are aware of being identified with one or another level of Being according to the activities which follow upon it. When we are identified with the physical body, we are operating almost solely through our senses, and we find our gratification in things of sense. When we identify with the mental realm, we are conscious of the inner play of random thoughts and images, and we delight in the play of thought. When we ascend a bit to the intellectual realm, we identify with the critical intelligence which discriminates, censures, and deliberates; thereby elevated in concentration above the rambling mind, we take pleasure in the clarity of intellectual discernment.

Above this intellect, we experience our soul—at its lower level the repository of our karma, and at its higher level the bearer not only of our highest moral directive and purpose, but the driving impetus guiding us toward our own Source with a heartfelt longing, like that of a moth to a flame. The soul is drawn to the Light within it,¹ and

looks, not below to the realm of mental activity or the realm of sense, but above toward the Divine whence it comes.

Plotinus asserts that man, as an evolute of the One, contains within himself all levels of manifestation, from the absolute Unity to the creative Energy, to the soul, to mind, and finally to the gross physical body; and is capable of returning in consciousness to his Origin. It is in relation to man that this outflowing radiance from subtle to gross is described in the Eastern yogic tradition as well. Man, who is at his center the unqualified Self (*Atman*, or *Brahman*), manifests from the supracausal (*Turiya*), to the causal (*Prajna*), to the subtle or astral (*Taijasa*), and lastly as the gross physical body (*Vishva*). Soul, for Plotinus, is an outpouring of the Divine Mind, a living radiance which fills the cosmos and manifests as individual souls.

The levels of human reality, from the gross physical body inward, have been variously named and described; and in all true metaphysical systems the primary teaching has been that one is able to reach to and experience that Self by way of the inner journey only, seeking it by way of self-examination, purification, contemplation and selfless devotion. Self-examination reveals to us

that we are more than the physical body with which the immature consciousness identifies. We are more than the effusive mind with which some others identify, more than the intellect which reasons and oversees the mind, more than the individual soul which evolves from lifetime to lifetime. The purification of the soul occurs through the grace of God, causing the soul to desire only God; and the absence of all other desires *is* the soul's purification, leading it naturally to contemplation and selfless devotion.

From the perspective of those who have experienced it, the ascent of consciousness occurs, quite unexpectedly in a moment of concentrated awareness focused inwardly. The individual soul ascends to what Plotinus calls the "All-Soul," all the while drawn on by its inherent thirst to know its Source. When it comes inwardly to a perfect, concentrated stillness, it emerges from its time-bound isolation as an individual creature and awakes to its participation in the consciousness of an all-inclusive creative Power. And yet above that creative Power, at a yet subtler stage of consciousness, it knows itself as the eternal One from which the creative Power takes its origin. It knows this, not as an object is known to a knowing

subject, but as the subject's own primary and eternal Identity.

The soul, seeking God, scans the inner darkness, as though to discover another, as though awaiting something external to itself to make its presence known. But as the concentration focuses within, the mind becomes stilled, and suddenly the seeking soul awakes. No external has made its appearance; it is the soul itself, no longer soul, which knows itself to be the All, the One. Like a wave seeking the ocean, the seeker discovers that it is, itself, what it sought. Through contemplation and selfless devotion to that highest Self, we discover that we are the Life in all life, the integrated Whole of which all manifest creatures and things are a part. And, at last we awake to the supremely ultimate Identity, knowing ourselves as the one Light of existence, the Source of all manifestation, the one God who is the true Self of all, and from Whom all else follows.

Those who have experienced the union of their souls with the Divine Mind experience themselves no longer as individual separate identities, but rather as ideational wave-forms on the one integrated ocean of Cosmic Energy. They no longer identify with the composite of body, mind,

and soul, but know themselves as having their real identity in the entire undivided ocean of creative Energy in and on which these temporary forms manifest. The conscious awareness focused on this clear vision of the subtler level of its own reality then moves forward, as one moving through a fog comes to a clearing where the fog is no more, to the ultimate and final level of subtlety, the Divine Source, the Unmanifest. Then, it knows the pure unqualified Consciousness that is the Father, the One, prior even to the creative Power which acts as creator; and it knows, "I and the Father are one."

From that vantage point in Eternity one sees one's own Creative Power manifesting all that has manifest existence in a cycle of creation and dissolution. There is a bursting forth, just as the spreading rays of the Sun burst out from their source, and then a returning to that source in a cyclic repetition, much as the cycle of the breath's inhalation and exhalation. One witnesses this from that transcendent vantage point, aware of one's Self as the Eternal One, totally unaffected and unaltered by the expansion and contraction of the out-flowing creative Force—as a man might watch the play of the breath or the imagination without being at all affected by its rise and fall. That One

is the final irreducible Reality, and It is experienced as identity. Nothing could be more certain than the fact that It is who one really is, always was, and always will be.

VII. Seeing Is Believing

We have been considering the Western philosophical tradition exclusively; but the metaphysical understanding is virtually identical in both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions. Only the names are different. The current metaphysics in both East and West holds that the Absolute Ground, the transcendent One, possesses a Creative Power that we refer to as God, the Creator. In the beginning, God manifested His light of creation; that light became form, and by virtue of His omnipresent Spirit, He permeated every form with His own Consciousness. For, just as our own consciousness exists as the substratum of every one of our dream-forms or thought-constructs, so does He, the universal Consciousness, permeate the forms of this world, made of His self-produced light. Over the course of time, He awakens His own life within these forms;¹ and the forms evolve, culminating in man, in whom God's consciousness exists as each individual's

soul. When He reveals Himself, that conscious soul within us realizes itself to be none else but Him.

When we say that the universe is “ensouled”, it means that all exists within the Mind of God and partakes of the essence of God. That presence manifests in this universe as an all-pervading Spirit, or Soul, which enfolds, inheres in and permeates every element of this cosmic appearance. It is a unified Spirit in which all exists, and by which all constituent appearances are permeated and governed—just as, in our own experience, are all images contained, permeated and governed by the mind in which they appear. It is in such a conception of the universe and the Soul that we find the possibility of a correspondence between existing planetary patterns and the incarnation of individual souls, the sum of whose karmic histories are depicted in those patterns. Indeed, such a miraculous correspondence *requires* a universe that is ensouled, a universe in which all things move together of one accord, in which assent is given throughout to even the most insignificant occurrence.

Soul, as an intelligent organizing principle, is present in every single particle of matter; but the

limited sense of an independent self which we identify as 'our soul' is perceived subjectively as a conscious identity that exists distinct from body and material things. It is a conscious 'I' that, while *associated* with the body, brain, and sense perception, is independent of all these.

However—wonder of wonders—when our soul ascends to its transcendent Identity by the grace of God, it experiences that Identity as *both* the material manifestations *and* the universal Soul within material manifestations as well. In God (the Divine Mind), the two are undivided; they are one unitive Spirit. One all-pervading Consciousness is the substratum of both the material world and the all-pervading Soul. That Divine Mind who manifests as the manifold world and all souls remains one undivided Spirit, guiding all things, and so throughout the cosmos “all things move together of one accord, and assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” What a mysterious and wonderful world Thou hast made, O Lord! Who can fathom it?

When God (the Divine Mind) reveals Himself in man, the duality of body and soul vanishes. Like all dualities, this one exists only in the spatio-temporal reality. When the mind (soul) ascends to

the Eternal, it then sees from the unitive perspective of the Eternal, wherein body and soul are both contained. Here, all dualities vanish, and only the undivided Mind remains. Here, the division between *I* and *Thou* is no more; *now* and *then* both vanish in the timeless; *life* and *death* no longer stand apart. Only the One and Its Creative Power shines eternally.²

This experience is the revelation from which all religion derives. It is this mystical experience that provides the irrefutable evidence for the divine identity of the soul. Those who have not experienced that 'mystical' union may argue the question of the immortality of the soul, but for those who have been graced with that unitive experience, no question remains. The Divine Mind is an experiential reality that is a thousand times more impressive than mere thought or sense experience. It is an experience more indubitable than the light of day.

God's creative light is eternal; the forms it takes are temporal and transient. Likewise, Soul is eternal; the forms it takes are temporal and transient and are stamped with the pattern of the heavens at the time of their embodiment. As limited souls, we journey from body to body in

quest of the perfect joy and satisfaction that already exists in its fullness within us. Our souls are limited rays of the one Sun, droplets of the one ocean of Joy; and when we are ripe for seeing, He opens our eyes: He reveals our true nature, showing us that we are His own Beauty, His own unlimited Vastness, His own sweet Joy; He shows us who we have always been.

It is this experience that prompted the authors of the Upanishads to write, “That thou art”; it is this experience that prompted Jesus to declare “I and the Father are one”, and al-Hallaj to declare, “*an al Haqq*”, “I am the transcendent Reality”. It is this experience that provides the self-evident proof of our Divine Ground and ultimate Identity. It is an experience that is accessible, by the grace of God, through purification and contemplative introspection.

The soul experiences its “union” with God when it is shown the everlasting unity of itself and God. This vision is the greatest attainment possible to man, and yet it cannot be taught. The reason is that it is not something that can be accomplished by man. A man can only make himself receptive to it, but it is accomplished by God Himself. It is a gift. I am not speaking of the mere intellectual

recognition that the one all-pervading Spirit is the only one who exists; the *experience* of union entails the actual upliftment of the soul to its divine Source, so that it is no longer aware of its separate existence on this earth, but knows itself, for as long as that experience lasts, as God—transcendent to the cosmos and yet the life and conscious Spirit pervading the cosmos. It is a going-out of the limited soul-identity and an awakening to the consciousness of an unlimited, eternal and all-inclusive Identity. All questions are answered in this altered awareness—or rather, they are dissolved away in the sweetness of eternity, an eternity that is realized to be one's own indubitable Self. Truly, there are no words to describe this 'awakening'; but it is the foundation of all religion and all philosophy, and the bedrock of all certainty and satisfaction.

It is this metaphysical view, this mystical theology, that is commonly referred to as 'the Perennial Philosophy'; it is the eternally revealed knowledge of the one Spirit. Yet such reasoned arguments for the Divine creation of our world and the existence of our Divine soul are oftentimes utterly impotent to convince the determined advocates of a Godless and materialistic worldview. The materialist worldview is based entirely on the material

sciences, and does not even give consideration to a metaphysics, insofar as “metaphysics” implies a non-physical reality creating, underlying and controlling the physical reality. The materialist worldview acknowledges the insubstantiality of matter at the quantum level, but it does not accept the notion of a supernatural cause of matter, a noumenal Source of the phenomenal world.

The proponents of materialism say that, ‘when the body dies, the consciousness associated with it dies as well; there is no second entity such as an enduring soul.’ ‘Life and consciousness’, they say, ‘are merely transient properties of matter, and have no existence apart from individual material bodies.’ And without some inner experience of God, they remain skeptical of the spiritual view, and rely solely on what they perceive through sense experience.

Also, those who *have* known God have found no objectively rational way of convincing such people of the existence of the Spirit, though throughout history many have tried to do so. The Spirit must be experienced subjectively, and then only by God’s self-revelation. It would seem that He has retained control of this knowledge among humans by causing it to be unknowable by the senses or by

rational thought, and realizable only through His grace. Once He reveals Himself within our soul, we realize that we are His creations, and that we are utterly dependent upon Him. Then we learn to surrender our own will to His will; and this, in turn, alleviates us of all our errors, and brings about our own highest good and happiness. Without that self-revelation, we remain blind to Him in ourselves and in the world. This, too, is His doing; as He says: "I bring the dust of blindness". But He is also the remover of that blindness. He is not only the Light of the phenomenal world; He is also the inner Light that reveals His presence as our own Soul, our own Self.

This being the case, how can we enjoin others to awaken to the knowledge of God when such knowledge is only obtained through the grace of God? Even the desire to know God arises through the workings of His grace! What, then, can we do? It has been said that 'The breeze of His grace is always blowing; but it is we who must set our sails to receive that breeze'. I reply that it is only by His grace that we are inspired to set our sails to receive Him. The truth is that He is doing everything, whether we are aware of it or not.

“We” are *His* manifestations, and we live and move within His omnipresent Spirit.

However, as His manifestations, we possess the abilities that He has granted us; and one of those abilities is the power to exercise our individual wills. We are able to choose, and we are responsible for our choices; and it is we, as individual souls, who receive the consequences of those choices. Every moment, He offers us the choice of turning our intention to Him or to the illusory world. And we choose, ultimately, not from reason’s arguments or empirical proofs, but from the yearning that arises from the loving kinship of the soul to God. And the rationale for expounding rational arguments that tell of His presence and the possibility of knowing Him is that such reasonings are on rare occasions capable of prompting a recognition and a yearning in those who are readied for it, leading them to seek His revelation in their own hearts. And that too is His doing, as His presence in our hearts inspires both the expounding and the recognition.

Nonetheless, I fear that the great majority of souls living on earth today have yet to see beyond immediate appearances, have yet to experience God in their lives, have yet to experience the joy of

the soul upon being uplifted to union with the Creator. They cannot therefore be expected to give credence to such a mystical worldview. They are bewitched by a fascination with and desire for the things of creation, and fail to recognize their Creator, or even their own souls. I have not the slightest doubt that these people will eventually come to recognize the Divine in themselves and in the world; but for the time being, they are blind and therefore suffer many miseries. It is certain, however, that the Lord, in His justice and mercy, will bring them, in the course of time, to awaken from their slumbers, and will make Himself known to them, leading them to comfort and joy in His bosom.

*I have given sweets that decay to those
that crave them;
I have given my wealth unto the poor and
lonely.
My hands are open—nothing is concealed.*

* * *

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3. *Ibid.*, nbr. 2
4. *Ibid.*, 17
5. *Ibid.*, 28
6. *Ibid.*, 72
7. *Ibid.*, 104
8. *Ibid.*, 108
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13. *Ibid.*, 114
14. *Ibid.*, 47
15. *Ibid.*, 101a
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18. *Ibid.*, 101
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22. *Ibid.*, 88
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49. Plato, *Republic*, 490A-B; *Ibid.*
50. Plato, *Republic*, 611B-C; *Ibid.*
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74. *Ibid.*, VI.8.14: On Free Will And The Will of The One.
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II. Recent Developments

1. Of course, not everyone agrees with the notion of a material universe. Some believe it was never created. Since there is no way to prove the existence of the universe outside of our mental perceptions of it, every few centuries someone frames the theory that the entire physical universe has no actual being outside that interior perception,

that it exists solely in the human mind. It is a theory that has been postulated by the eighth century Indian mystic-philosopher, Shankara; by certain Buddhist philosophers; by the eighteenth century English philosopher, George Berkeley; and by certain popular modern thinkers. But it is a theory that is at once contradicted by the fact that man (*homo sapiens*) did not exist prior to two million years ago—modern humans (*homo sapiens sapiens*) did not exist until around 200,000 years ago; and life, even in its most rudimentary stage, did not exist on this planet prior to around four billion years ago. However, the universe itself is around fourteen billion years old—clearly older than man—and therefore could not have been *originated* in the mind of man, or in the consciousness of any living creature, since the nature of time does not allow an effect to precede its cause. The only continuous consciousness capable of producing the appearance of the universe is that of the eternal Mind of God. Therefore, the theory of a humanly subjective production of the phenomenal universe will not be considered here.

2. According to the current scientific evidence, around fourteen billion years ago the universe was created by a great burst of light that some call “the

Big Bang” and others prefer to call “the Great Radiance”. In order to produce an entire universe as vast as this one, that light had to have been at the highest end of the energy spectrum. The most energetic light in the electromagnetic spectrum is that with the highest frequency, and shortest wavelength; that radiation is referred to as “gamma-rays”, a term coined by Ernest Rutherford in 1903.

3. Gamma-rays, or gamma radiation, is radiation that reaches a frequency of 10 exahertz, or 10^{19} Hz, with a wavelength less than 10 picometers, and energies from 400 GeV (billion electron volts) to 10 TeV (trillion electron Volts). Since energy and mass are interconvertible ($E=mc^2$), energy converts to mass, and mass converts to energy. In that immense “fireball” at the beginning of time, trillions upon trillions of photons of gamma radiation collided, and each of these photons converted to a particle-antiparticle pair. So long as the energy of the photon is equal to or exceeds the mass of the particles produced, this conversion occurs. The reverse process also occurred: for example, the mass of an electron-positron pair equals 1.02 MeV (million electron volts); when such a pair collides, it is annihilated, and, in its place, are two photons of at least 0.51

MeV each. In “the Great Radiance”, particle-antiparticle creation and annihilation were occurring at once on a grand scale. A full explanation of this process in the creation of the material universe may be found in my earlier book, *Body And Soul*.

4. The medieval English philosopher, Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253) theorized that primeval matter was expanded to form the universe by the impetus of light. But he had not the benefit of the knowledge introduced much later by Einstein that light and matter are alternate forms of the same thing. Regarding light and matter as two distinct categories, he understood that light, since it “diffuses itself in every direction,” provides a likely medium for the extension of matter in all dimensions.

Thus light, which is the first form created in first matter, multiplied itself by its very nature an infinite number of times on all sides and spread itself out uniformly in every direction. In this way it proceeded in the beginning of time to extend matter which it could not leave behind, by drawing it out along with itself into a mass the size of the material universe. (Robert Grosseteste,

On Light, trans. from the Latin by Clare C. Riedl, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Marquette University Press, 1942, 2000; p. 11.)

From our vantage point today, it seems quite amazing how close Grosseteste came to anticipating the cosmological theory that only emerged seven hundred years after him. His theory influenced his Oxford student, Roger Bacon (1214-1292) as well, though both still held to an Aristotelian cosmology consisting of spheres within spheres. Neither could guess that it was the light from the Divine that actually transformed or converted into the material particles that constitute the universe of form, and which, through its expansion, gave birth to space and time.

5. When gamma radiation photons collide, they convert to matter, becoming a particle-antiparticle pair, such as a proton and an antiproton, or an electron and a positron. These two members of a symmetrical pair possess opposite electric charges, and annihilate upon contact, turning back once again to light (photons). One would expect that, this being the case, every matter-antimatter pair would have annihilated over the course of time, and that consequently there would be no material universe. However, there *is* a material universe.

And so, we must assume there was an asymmetry that found its way into this process, sparing approximately one matter particle in every 10 billion produced, which matter particles now constitute what is our material universe. Why and how this asymmetry should exist, however, has not yet been explained.

6. Lao Tze, *Tao Teh Ching*, 1

7. *Chuang Tze*, 22

III. Science of The Soul

1. This chapter, as well as the following chapter, is adapted from material appearing in a previously published book: Swami Abhayananda, *The Divine Universe*, New York, iUniverse, 2008.

2. (Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos And Psyche*, N.Y., Viking, 2006; p. 17.

IV. The Soul And Free Will

1. *Tetrabiblos*, Book I, Ch. 1, from J.M. Ashmond, *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos*, Chicago, Aris Press, 1936; p.1.

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4. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

5. Richard Tarnas, Ph.D., *An Introduction to Archetypal Astrological Analysis*, pp. 2-3

V. As Above, So Below

1. All of the charts reproduced here were generated by the AstrolDeluxe ReportWriter software by John Halloran, at www.halloran.com, and are used by permission.

2. In this article, I have made little use of the Astrological signs; nor do I utilize or seriously regard the House cusps in any way. My primary interest is in the aspects (angular relationships) made by the planets in the natal planetary maps. It should be clear, therefore, that so long as I am consistent in my use of a particular Zodiacal format, the choice of Tropical or Sidereal is totally irrelevant; since one may translate back and forth between the two systems, and the aspects remain the same.

For those unfamiliar with the distinction between the Tropical Zodiac and the Sidereal Zodiac, the following clarification is offered: Both Zodiacs are synonymous with the apparent path of the Sun (remember, it is the Earth that changes position, not the Sun; but the Sun appears from the Earth's vantage point to move through 360° in the course of one year). The Tropical Zodiac, however, begins with 0° Aries at the point of the Vernal Equinox, the beginning of Spring; it is a season-based system. The Sidereal Zodiac is based on the Sun's apparent path through the actual positions of the star-constellations in the heavenly background; so that, 0° Aries is based on the apparent conjunction of the Sun with a Fixed Star in the constellation of the Ram, designated Aries by the Greeks over two thousand years ago.

At the time that it was so designated, around 2600 years ago, the Vernal Equinox coincided with the beginning of the constellation Aries; but since that time, due to the slight wobble in the Earth's orbit, producing what is called "the precession of the Equinoxes", the Vernal Equinox no longer coincides with the constellation of Aries, but has slipped backward into the constellation of Pisces. In fact, today the Tropical Zodiac is about 24° off of the Sidereal (star-based) Zodiac. When it

comes to making interpretations based on sign positions, this is a crucial difference; and advocates of the Sidereal system (used in the *Jyotish* system of Vedic Astrologers in India and elsewhere) often make much of the authenticity of a star-based Astrology as opposed to a solar seasonally based system such as the Tropical Zodiac. But all this, as I mentioned, is quite irrelevant if, like me, you only consider the aspects produced by the natal planets and lights, consistently using the Tropical system.

VI. The Ascent of The Soul

1. “From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all.” (from Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Over-Soul”, *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Tudor Publishing Co., p. 174).

VII. Seeing Is Believing

1. Many believe, as the respected Biologist, Michael Behe, believes, that the propensity for ‘life’ was pre-programmed into the evolution of matter from the beginning:

“I am not saying the origin of life was simply an extremely improbable accident. I am saying the origin of life was deliberately, purposely arranged, just as the fundamental laws and constants and many other anthropic features of nature were deliberately, purposefully arranged. But in what I’ll call the “extended fine-tuning” view, the origin of life is merely an additional planned feature, culminating in intelligent life. The origin of life is simply closer to the very same goal that the other, more distant anthropic features (laws, chemical properties, and so forth) were also put in place to bring about.” (Michael J. Behe, *The Edge of Evolution*, New York, Free Press, 2008; p. 216.)

2. This ‘coincidence of opposites’ in the unitive experience was first noted by Heraclitus. In fact, Heraclitus touched on nearly all of the elements of mystical experience, and yet his valuable insights have never been fully acknowledged or appreciated.

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About The Author

I was born Stanley Trout on August 14, 1938 in Indianapolis, Indiana. In 1966, at the age of twenty-eight, I was graced by God's vision. A few years later, I met a holy man called Swami Muktananda, and I journeyed to India to live with him and to learn from him. After some time, he invited me to join the spiritual Order of *sannyasa*, and gave me the name "Swami Abhayananda", which means 'the bliss of fearlessness.' I have kept that spiritual name ever since, though I eventually parted with Swami Muktananda and his organization.

My focus has always been on God and His revelation, and my writings are simply a means of sharing that revelation. I am not hindered by organizational ties or religious affiliation, and so my vision and my philosophy is my own, and not restricted to the mystical tradition of either the East or the West. Today, I live a simple, solitary life, devoted to meditation on God and the sharing of His truth in the sincere wish that God may bless you as He has blessed me.

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