

## **VISIONS OF UNIVERSAL IDENTITY IN WORLD RELIGIONS: FROM LIFE-INCOHERENT TO LIFE-GROUNDED SPIRITUALITY**

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### **Summary**

After developing sound criteria to recognize false religion across cultures and times, critical explanation lays bare the principles of life-coherent spirituality and lack of it in the primary sources of the world's great religions, with emphasis on Hinduism/Vedanta, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam/Sufism. The ultimate concepts of universal identity, non-attachment, levels of sacrifice, human life necessities/needs, and spiritual ecology provide bridges of understanding between earth and heaven, science and religion, evolution and immortality.

## **1. Understanding False Religion across History and Cultures**

In recent years, an international cultural battle has arisen between 'fundamentalist religion' and an emergent 'new atheism' which reviles it as a poison of the mind. This explanatory analysis adopts neither of these reductionist standpoints. Instead it brings to view what has long been intuited without principled understanding – that religion itself falls into profoundly opposing forms. On the one hand there is what has not been defined – false or life-incoherent religion which may be evil or systematically life-destructive. And on the other hand, there is what has little better been defined and moves in the opposite direction - the all-embracing spiritual consciousness which lies at the core of the world's great religions. Fully comprehending both and their ultimate opposition is a guiding thread of the following investigation.

Scientific civilization and the global market may seem to have superannated religion and spirituality themselves. Yet what is little recognized in our era is that the growth of religious fundamentalism and capitalist globalization have strongly correlated over the last 30 years. Most revealing of the ideological confusion in these matters, global capitalism itself – as we will see - demonstrates the characteristics of a fundamentalist religion, although hardly recognized as one. Many increasingly intuit the idea, but it is too opposed to ruling doctrine and habituated thought frames to be recognized and accepted in principle. While the recognition of a dogmatic and harmful "economic fundamentalism" has arisen in recent years among critical-thinking economists, it remains a slogan without thought-through understanding. Research has, however, provided the principled map which can be summarized in a generic narrative as follows. The generic narrative reveals the inner logic of religious absolutisms from biblical times on in many different forms across cultures. We might call it the unseen meta narrative of false religion.

An almighty God or divine design ruling by an invisible hand whose non-human laws cannot be questioned is assumed as an a-priori given. Absolute dogmas rule as punishable or heretical to critically examine. Conformity to the one right way of social rule is required of all to survive or get ahead. Privileged priesthoods are assumed to know what others cannot, and criticism from outside is attacked as nonsense or subversive. Evil is whatever confronts or threatens the one true faith. Unbelievers are vilified and, if formed into an alternative or prospective alternative order are genocided as diabolical. The possibility of the ruling God or belief system itself being wrong in principle or outcomes is unspeakable. Infallibility of first principles is sacred and that by which all else is justified. Most tellingly, systematically life-destructive operations and rising ill consequences of the ultimately man-made theism never affect its assumption as absolute truth.

Observe that if we place the concept of “capital” in place of “God”, “laws of economics” in place of “absolute dogmas”, “economists” in place of “priesthoods”, “competitiveness in the market” in place of “conformity”, and “communism” or “socialism” in place of “evil”, we can discern the undeniable profile of theo-capitalism. The generic logical spaces are constant. Only the nominatives which occupy them vary. The same goes for the remaining generic properties. The possibility of the ruling belief system being false or wrong is unspoken in public speech. The infallibility of the regulating order is assumed at the system level. What effectively opposes the ruling dogmas is pervasively fulminated against, threatened and attacked by force until its order is annihilated. Genocidal armed invasion and occupation of other societies proceeds from the absolutist theo-system. Sustaining the closed box of system worship, no matter how life-destructive the belief system and its ruling dogmas are, the disconfirming evidence is blocked out by the ruling categories of understanding. A false religion is incapable of self-correction however life-destructive it may be.

### **1.1 Spiritual Consciousness versus False Religion**

Once we recognize false religion in underlying pattern across places and times, then what is *not* false religion is admitted into view which has been before blocked out. This is the spiritual consciousness at the core of the great religions – that is, the internally moving sense of an all-inclusive being across divisions and differences, an underlying oneness felt from within. It is this ultimate onto-ethical core of religion which is the positive object of this study. At this highest level of principle, it does not matter whether it is called love, soul, satori, atman, satyagraha, moksha, buddhahood, pratyasamutpada, jen, or Tao – all these ideas refer in some way to a felt *universal identity* within. Spiritual consciousness is not opposed to reason or science as fundamentalist religion is by definition, but enlists them in its ultimate inward concern. Albert Einstein and Arthur Eddington, for example, are twentieth-century examples of minds at the apex of physical science understanding. Yet Einstein famously considers his search for the ultimately unifying laws of nature as seeking to understand “the mind of God”, and he rejects merely probabilistic quantum physics because he cannot accept that “God plays dice with the universe”. Eddington argues that that “Science versus Religion” is “largely a false antithesis” and that religion “interprets” and seeks “the purpose” behind the law-governed mechanisms of the material universe which science discloses. They are or should be complementary forms of inquiry and meaning, he reasons, and are misleadingly opposed.

Spiritual consciousness which is deeply rational goes back in fact to the beginnings of humanity’s time on Earth, but within the limits of the knowledge of its day. We will find it ahead at the heart of the ancient *Upanishads* of India, in select Western biblical scriptures new and old, in China’s various classical conceptions of the *Tao*, in the American first peoples before the Conquest, and in the Sufis of Islam, for example. Yet what is typically shut out by both fundamentalist religion and scientific atheism and by normalized consciousness across cultures is rarely addressed in principle. Rather it is mystified as “faith not reason” by instituted religions as well as by philosophy and science. Spiritual reason seems a contradiction in terms so buried has this core of higher religion been in obfuscation, sectarian appropriation, scientific indifference, ideological distortion, and – most of all - false religion. It is as if it were inconceivable through

normalized frames of reference, and this has extended to contemporary philosophy within the externalist paradigm of science which rules out the inner life a-priori. Even in the primary sources of the great religions – the baseline of this study - the conflicts between false religion, collective worship, and spiritual consciousness are unrecognized. Throughout the modern age, polar reductionism one way or the other – to fundamentalist faith, on the one hand, or physical science on the other, are alike in ruling out the ultimate choice space. What is required is what has been missing: criteria to identify false religion in whatever form it may appear. Spiritual consciousness is thereby released from the pincers of life-blind fundamentalism and external scientism into the light of reasoned definition and practicable meaning.

While inward connectivity to planetary life is more than ever needed in a global crisis that threatens every level of it, false religion rules it out even more than the past. For the scientifically masked and empowered modern religion of theo-capitalism has replaced God in the old sense with system worship - in which the Supreme Ruler is this-worldly, but remains deified as almighty, infallible and eternal. While its exponentially growing money-sequences in fact despoil life-organization at every level without cause-effect connection, it is ideologically implied to be the World Redeemer for all forever. It alone can deliver people by its spread and growth. It cannot be superseded any more than can physical laws. Its market magic and miracles are perpetual in uplifting the world's peoples. Despite the unfamiliarity of this decoding of theo-capitalism, its innermost logic goes back to biblical times. While heretical to suspect and never spoken, the ultimate generic principle is equation of divine design and power to a ruling group's attacking of other groups and taking what they own. More exactly, an underlying syntax may be deciphered out from different god-systems over millennia: a ruling human group solicits special favor from an assumed non-human almighty for major material acquisition from enemies by the power of its group god who is worshipped in return. This complex principle can in turn be analyzed into four moments: (i) the assumption of and exchange with a believed all-powerful god to (ii) destroy other tribes' defences and seize or lay waste to their possessions and life conditions for (iii) the ruling group's own profit and territorial expansion (iv) in return for worship of the supreme supernatural power. This pattern obtains in some mode across the known theist religions – in the sacred books of Judaism and Islam as well as Hinduism, for example, and in historical Christianity over at least 1200 years. The evidence is too rich and various to catalogue here, but we may test this general hypothesis above and its specified conditions by seeking to find where it does *not* rule. We will find in this testing out that it has been an inner through-line of false religion from the Rg Veda of India and books of the Judaic-Christian-Islamic testaments to armed religious crusades East and West to theo-capitalist global empire today. This *transcultural* pattern is hardly deniable, but is anathema to call into question within any false religion itself.

## 1.2 Variations of Sacrificial Theme

It is important to keep in mind that this syntax of false religion is not confined to any culture and reaches back to the earliest civilizations. In ancient India, for example, blood sacrifice (literally “making sacred”) is accompanied by priest-delivered magic spells or syllables to extract by their exact pronunciation and gift offering the special favour which is desired, whether it is victory in battle, material success in the future,

bountiful possessions and progeny, or whatever. Biblical Israel is not much different. And one could go on. This is the primeval level of religious sacrifice across dominant cultures over millennia, and the life sacrifice is, in fact, recurrently mass homicide of peoples for the gods they worship. The Unbeliever Enemy has many forms. This pattern persists in a less known form today, but its expressions continue to include destroying human societies and seizing their lands resources in claimed fulfilment of a higher design. The model can be seen early on. Thus, for example in the relative beginnings of false religion, to God is attributed the still believed intention to “take the whole of Canaan to own in perpetuity” (Genesis 17:21), and in prohibition of “any pact with them” to “exterminate” all its inhabitants, “Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusite” (Exodus: 23:24).

This genocidal logic is not confined to the sacred records of the Judaic and Christian bibles. It is the most dominant form of life oppression in history. While the blood sacrifice of animals and its supersession has attracted most attention in understanding the development of world religions since, this has obscured the deeper disorder which has continued into the present across the world - mass *human* sacrifice for ruling-group gain in the name of its god. While this is a pathological phenomenon across cultures over three millennia and abhorred by many in forms not surrounding them, it remains without *cross-cultural criteria* of principled recognition. In fact, the perpetration of systematic homicide as compelled by divine command begins from the dawn of surviving religious records East and West. For example, the early Indian Vedas and the Bhagavad-gita recognisably resemble the Old Testament in an inner logic of divine war by mass human sacrifice to serve God’s will. From the start, the ancient Vedic hymns to Indra (god of thunder) invoke death against enemies and booty seized from them by the supernatural powers of he “who lets blinding darkness follow those our foemen - - - that we may be made partakers of the new favours that shall bring us profit - - - in the fights where spoil is gathered; while the Hymn to Usas (god of dawn) calls for similar “riches in spoil and wealth” in armed war against the ever recurring “sworn enemies” of the supposed true faith. This hold of life-incoherent religion has in fact never disappeared, only adopted new forms. Whatever its cultural site or form, wars are declared against unbelievers and, if joined to superior armed force, crusades recur in blood and treasure campaigns across the world in the name of some higher salvation. Most revealingly, globalization of theo-capitalism sanctifies countless ruined lives and environments as “necessary sacrifices”, while those chosen by its “invisible hand” enjoy a paradise of limitless wealth. In short, the primeval drums of life-incoherent religions haunt humanity from the beginnings of civilization and emerge now more powerful than ever in a new god-system.

It is widely believed that religious wars since the Old Testament have been for a monotheist God against pagans, unbelievers and idolaters, that is, wars advancing an ultimate principle of civilization. On the other hand, Jean-Jacques Rousseau famously argues against this assumption in his *The Social Contract*. He claims that in fact religious aggression, wars and intolerance originate in monotheism itself. The very fact that there were as many gods as there were peoples produced a kind of religious forbearance. For the existence of other gods in no way puts in question the existence of our own: “the Gods of the pagans were not jealous Gods. They divided dominion over the world among themselves”. In contrast, when only one God Almighty exists, other

gods become a hated blasphemy to be destroyed. More deeply, the rights of other peoples to their land and wealth which are held from their own local gods are invalidated and so their resisters may be killed and their lands and wealth justly seized in the name of the One Almighty. Wide-lensed analysis can discern this inner logic at work over millennia into the present, especially against first peoples across the world. They may believe in the one Great Spirit as with North American natives, but that is not the true God, knows nothing of money-capital and the market, and cannot defend against gattling guns with arrows. In the end, the issue is whose God is backed by superior armed force to seize others' lives and life conditions as their own by divine sanction – the meta-program of all false religion from the beginning. One cannot find easily exception from the prehistoric Indus valley and Canaan to original inhabitants now. In recent centuries, God has effectively become private money capital globalizing as the supreme being and law. In the words of John D. Rockefeller, “The disparity in income between the rich and the poor is merely the survival of the fittest - - - the working out of a law of nature and a law of God”.

When analysis steps back to consider the throughline of false religion across cultures and times, it invariably discloses an underlying form of articulation - praises and sacrifices to an eternal almighty conferring immense and exclusive favors of wealth on a special group entitled by its immutable law to other people's lands and resources, with successful slaying of their inhabitants in indefinite numbers perceived by the believers as the divine ordering of the world. Needless to say, there are many sanctifying justifications and interpretative readings by which this unconscious logic is masked. What discloses their unreason, however, is that they presuppose life-blind beliefs in the armor of unrevisable dogma, and recognize no limit to their divinely rightful appropriation of others' lives and life conditions. This is the nature of false religion.

### **1.3 The Unseen Contradictions**

Spiritual consciousness is opposite in nature, and much religion is spiritual. It is aligned with the course of nature as life-giving, and variously seeks to identify with the lives of others from within as one's own. Its ritual, myth and veneration stay within a sacred social space. Yet far more dominant false religions instrumentalize these chords of fellow being, but fail to be understood in their underlying principles of deformation. Their ultimate contradiction with universal life requirements and support systems themselves has been regarded as necessary sacrifice to their god-system. At the same time, the spiritual consciousness which false religion always claims or intimates as its inner source has been a propelling justification of the most profoundly anti-spiritual avarice. Consider for example the words of Leo Strauss who has been the most influential foreign-policy theorist of the crusading nation whose coinage motto is “In God We Trust”. In his summative *Natural Right and History*, Strauss argues that “the spirit of capitalism is rightly identified with the view that limitless accumulation of capital is a moral duty, perhaps the highest moral duty.” F.A. Hayek, an economic mentor of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan as heads of state, goes further. He declares in *The Fatal Conceit* the “transcendent order of capitalism” and denounces any interference in the invisible hand's working by public authority: “Thy will (i.e., not mine)”, he says, “be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

Understanding requires a defining set of principles whereby *any* false religion from traditional scriptural theisms and non-theisms to theo-capitalist worship can be recognized as in contradiction with human life itself as well as its own spiritual justification. The properties are exactly definable as an interlocking and complete logical set, and they apply across false religions in all their diverse forms: (1) the continual sacrifice of others' lives or life conditions in an almighty's name for (2) exclusionary payoffs to the party invoking it as worship object, so that (3) no matter how life-destructive this god-system becomes in reality, (4) the evidence is blocked out or erased so that (5) two levels of incoherence occur: (i) between serving the good in claim while enriching the self-group at the cost of others; (ii) between the claimed emancipation of life and systematic violation of life in fact. Thus locked into systemic contradictions: (6) the ruling religion's deity and laws are sustained by attacking any deviation from them, while (7) homicidal and life-condition destruction proceed with no limit in the name of a supreme, immutable and non-human authority which cannot be opposed without risk of social ruin.

The modern era itself has not been exempt from false religion. Centuries of witch-hunts to serve God and, in repressed fact, to take the property of the accused and their families may have ended, but have been replaced by holy-war anti-communist hunts across the globe centuries later. More enduringly, centuries of Euro-British-American imperialism have sacrificed tens of millions of in wars as a "sacred trust for human freedom", and to this day have invoked God's blessings for wars to control the planet's richest natural resources against the indigenous and third-world societies traditionally living on them. Even the purged "communist menace" expressed a new form of false religion in the process - with the supreme being as supra-human laws of history, the ruling elite as beneficiary, blood sacrifices of millions in the name of humanity's liberation, and annihilation of those calling the new god into question. Whether one ignores, understands or rationalizes this deep meta pattern, the underlying logic of life-blind rule cannot be reasonably denied. While it may be thought that humanity has always been imprisoned within this closed circle by one false god-system or another, the reality is that it succeeds only insofar as it is not diagnostically public. Whatever its man-made god is, whatever culture it comes from, and however dressed it is in the vestments of authority, civilization or science, it is evil as well as false to the measure to which its beliefs and practices are ordered to attack life systems.

## **2. From Life Sacrifice for Selfish Gain to Sustainment of the Great Round**

The logic of the second level of religious reverence also follows a principle of exchange between men and God, but without the spoils and blood so characteristic of life-sacrificial religions which have dominated civilizations for so long. Here the exchange is one of human praise/offerings to God in return for blessings *in order to sustain the round benefitting all*. Peoples over the world follow this form of sacred exchange. In place of life sacrifices and spoils are thanks-givings for the ordered cosmic cycle of life renewal. This is the veneration of the Great Round of life-giving which begins with primitive humanity and lasts into countless festive rites today.

The universal theme of a divine life to come after individual organic death is a core variation on this meta meaning of eternal life renewal. Yet seldom are the themes of

afterlife and the this-life round related in principle. Lao tzu's Taoism implies the ultimate connection, but who connects solstice ceremonies like Christmas to one's own after-life? The almighty's lordship is instead worshipped. At the ritual level, the ceremonies of the cosmic return are still there, but are not well decoded in their unifying meaning across the self-God divide. All are varieties of recognition of life giving from on high - for the winter solstice, for the spring's fertility, for the fall's harvests, and - the great mystery - for the believed-in life to come for individual human beings. The underlying cultural universals are lost in particular ceremonies and belief systems, while the life-world itself is not conceived in *its* needs of reproduction. Its fate is left to the Supreme Ruler to decide - whether God, Allah or the Market. Nonetheless the underlying common theme of death and rebirth is universal. Observe how the solstice and the harvest imply both death and rebirth. Observe too how the idea of an "eternal spring" is paradise where no death can occur. On the personal level, funeral services follow the pattern. Whatever the culture, the organically-ended individual life is sustained by remembrance on earth and usually by after-life in a wholly other realm of existence. Yet in the last decades, an increasing tendency has been to celebrate the life the person has lived and lives on in people's souls rather than mourn the passing of the body which has ceased to work. We may see here an unmarked sea-change towards ultimate life value on earth.

In general and progressively over time, a life-affirming development has occurred in the logic of the God-human relationship and the nature of life-and-death understanding itself - less emphasis on sacrificial death and more on life emancipation. This tendency was expressed dramatically, for example, in the post-War Second Vatican and the rise of "liberation theology" which found the spiritual call from the suffering of the world's poorest people. Salvation was at hand in the liberation of the oppressed to lives of dignity as God's unique creations. This "popular church" teaching has, however, been suppressed since as violation of the received dogmas. False religion does not die easily in any of its forms, but general movement beyond it is found wherever ritual observances, prayers and thanksgivings have decisively transcended the primeval level of blood sacrifices for self gain. This movement has been going on for millennia, but false religion continues to control in the form analysed in Section 1. Ritual collectivities celebrating the ancient drum-beat of death to others with God's blessing it all manifest in many shapes. Even in Sabbath football, armed-force displays of almighty powers and weapons of death frame the events of system violence for gold with invocations of the Lord. One can go deep in unpacking the conflicting meanings between false religion and celebrations of common blessings. One calls for life-giving to all, while the other divides in war against others for God's favors. There are myriad variations on the theme. Here too false religion works on two levels at once - a preconscious plane of fundamentalist mass ignorance and a plane of manipulation by privileged groups seeking maximum payoff to themselves in the name of God's will. The evolution to higher religious forms is a long labor of humanity's meaning. Yet it moves on in great turns over history - in the Buddhist reform of militarist and life-sacrificial Hinduism, for example, and in the much glorified step of Judaic-Christian monotheism beyond cult sacrifices, idol worship and mass superstition. On the other hand, life-destructive and celebrative levels of religion may remain locked in heinous hybrid as, for example, with the Aztec human sacrifices for return of the one sun God. On the light side, we see apparent celebration of the life-giving round of nature and the Sun. On the dark side, we

see false religion in mass sacrifice of countless lives seized in aggressive war conquests, all in worship of the one God. Less observed, we see the European Conquest which ended the mass-sacrificial ritual of the Aztecs by performing a more genocidal blood sacrifice of their own – the mass murder of the Aztecs to loot their vast stores of gold in the name of God's worship. Here we see false religion ruling in death and treasure across civilizations into modernity, but without impartial principles to recognize its derangement.

Religious celebration unmixed with mass sacrifice and sect treasure discloses an opposite exchange pattern – praise and thanksgivings to God or the Cosmos in return for the favours of life's reproduction and growth for all. Ritual thanksgivings and gifts for children, health, marriage union, long life, and so on are all examples of offerings to the Supreme Being to renew the living round. Yet it is important to recognize that any can be contaminated with blood-and-take religion. Paradise for those killed in national wars over vast possessions for some is a meta repertoire of false religion across civilizations. The contradiction between giving life to enable life versus more wealth for some remains unacted on. Part of the reason for this is that one life-blind meta principle governs in the unseen abstract. Both life-thanking and life-attacking forms of religion instantiate a single underlying syntax of worship: *praise and gift (whatever its homage) to the Supreme Being (whatever the name) in exchange for divine returns (whatever they are)*. Thus the blood-and-take pattern can coexist with the thanksgiving-for-life pattern without distinction between them. The ultimate contradiction is nonetheless self-evident to reason. In the life-coherent form of sacred exchange, the ultimate nature of the Supreme's gift is *sustainment of the cycles of life by the One renewing them for all*. In false religion, *reward and victory are assured to the self-group by death or defeat to others by the might of one's own god or god-system*. The contradiction is absolute in principle, but perverted hybrids recur again and again in even contemporary forms. For example, supreme crimes of aggressive war are still waged as God-blessed with devotional masses praying to the divine for their victory and annihilation of the adversary for vast gain to the chosen.

### **2.1. Sustainability of Life Systems versus Sustainability of Profit**

In contrast, the thanksgiving logic of religious homage requires no such perversion. Rather, spiritual consciousness has begun to emerge insofar as the returns sought by the worshipper are *not* for the self or self-group at the expense of others, but for all in compossible coherence of common life systems. Spiritual consciousness is thus *the overcoming* of false religion. Private self-seeking transforms to celebration of the common life interest that none can disavow. Religious thanksgiving to renew the great round of life is opposed in principle to false religion, but does not reach the moral or spiritual level so far as there is no concern for life harmed and oppressed within the ruling cycles themselves. They remain normalized however life-blind their rule is. Only when the great round includes in its conception a higher moral or natural law that structures out this life oppression is this problem addressed. Most religious ceremonies celebrating life reproduction in seasons, marriage unions, births and so on, however, stay far away from any application of life renewal principles at the system-wide level. Rather, they mask what rules in private rituals of individual life events.

Nonetheless a bridge between the natural great round and the ruling social system arises to view in contemporary “sustainability” thinking that seeks to ensure that society is governed by effective laws protecting natural and human life support reproduction – the great round scientifically understood with social laws protecting its life-carrying capacities for all life. In this direction advanced thought now moves, but without the inner dimension of spirituality which identifies with the whole from within. Although the deep ecology movement led by Arne Naess has adopted this direction, it remains overwhelmed by the unnamed false religion and is itself unbased in universal life necessities. Meanwhile concern for ecological ‘sustainability’ grows, but is reconceived at the top as insurance of future profit cycles - with civil and ecological life systems continuing to be fed to the this god-system’s expansion. As in past false religion, the invisible hand of the new god is assumed to produce the best of possible worlds whatever the depoliation of life support systems beneath it.

Leaving false religion behind to make room for the spiritual consciousness it perverts, analysis now considers the innermost immediate round of life that has been assumed away.

### **3. The Animating Breath of Life: The Unseen Common Ground of the Spiritual as Real**

The concept of spirit derives from the Latin root *spirare* – to *breathe* - and one can easily see how breath crosses the divisions between selves, groups and things. There is one earth atmosphere that all life is animated by. Everywhere the taking in and giving out in respiration enables life from which all exist to the benefit of each in one planetary creation. Breathing in and out in some form is the unifying source of life on earth. Invisibility, immateriality, ultimacy beneath embodied divisions – spirit ultimately lies in the feeling of vital breath itself. In almost all the great religions, it is life from God.

*Ruah* is the ‘breath of God’ in Hebrew, and God breathes into Adam to give his life in Christian and Islamic religions as well. The more ancient Tao of Chinese spiritual philosophies is moved by the invisible and indivisible animating energy of *ch’i*, the cosmic vital force. *Pneuma* is the ancient Greek for spirit and with or without a God as its source is, once again, vital breath and spirit. *Prana* is the timeless Hindu concept of breath, and at the core of Indian philosophy’s ontology and practise – the animating energy of the cosmos, of the *atman* or soul, and the divine substance of the primary ‘prana yoga’. In the cosmology of First Peoples in the words of Chief Seathl, “all things share the same breath – the beasts, the trees, the human”. One can see that despite millennia of theological mystification, otherworldly location and dogmatic divisions, the breath and spirit of life are one in bridging heaven to earth across religions. There can be no duality in respiration by its nature.

Without the invisible and indivisible breath of life, the implied idea is that there is only dead matter - inert, purposeless, and lifeless. Spirit is “that which moves what moves”, to invoke the language of the *Upanishads* of India. It is what the aware person enjoys when he “takes breaths from the great depth of his heels” as Chuang tzu, advises from ancient China. It is consciousness entering into breathing as regulator in the *pranayama* of Buddhism. It is letting the breath come and go naturally so you can forget all about it

as in Ch'an and Zen. Most dominantly in religious theisms of all kinds, breath is God's creative animation of all that lives. Whatever the religion, breath crosses the divisions of beings in an unseen and undivided field of presence – the spirit as alive in the embodied here and now. It is the coming in from 'the all' and a going out into 'the all' without which nothing can be alive. One might say that in this sense the spiritual-as-breath-of-life is the ultimate reality of all religious belief systems with or without God, the unrecognized unifier of their ontologies and belief systems - the bridge of the inside to the outside, the unseen to the seen, the moving spirit to the matter it moves.

Yet because spirit is understood to transcend matter by its nature – invisibly moving all that lives from nowhere that can found – it is inferred as otherworldly in its source. Perhaps no more ultimate alienation has afflicted human thought. The moving common life breath is projected elsewhere to a supra-natural realm. God, the Pure Realm, the Abyss are its mysterious ground. The vital common mover, what all breathe or respire from life in undivided air and light with no rank or possession, is projected to another world and not lived in this one. Science comes to replace this otherworld of religion, but for it only extension exists, felt being is erased, divisions alone define, and no unity of life across species and distances computes. Life falls apart in both directions – its bonding unity of the here-and-now spirit alienated to the unknowable God as source, or reduced to a an external world of science with no inner life.

On the other hand, the breathing of life remains recognized as the essence of embodied existence. From the *Upanishads* and Lao through William James, the formula – “I am my breath” – lies at the heart of spiritual meaning. To be is to breathe, and to breathe has no edge to it. All is implicit in its creation. The 'within' and 'without' are made one in world respiration across beings – as core to body as to soul. In breath's invisible community of all life, the inside is perpetually made outside and the outside made inside, always undividable in their reality and function. Beneath the ruling dualisms is the oneness of life breath, the all breathing each. This is the grounding unity which is unspoken by both externalist science and otherworldly religion.

#### **4. Sacrificing Self to Enable Life across Divisions: The Ancient Spiritual Vision**

Almighty, all-knowing, and all-benevolent Gods are, instead, religion's ultimate absence of ground. Over millennia deviants from this absolutist belief construction have been attacked by priest systems each with a different version of it. It has been sacrosanct across theisms of Brahman, Yahweh, God, and Allah. Understanding God more life coherently as all-inclusive being growing more all-inclusive being does not fit any ideology of ruling power. It strips out the false religion, but it is blasphemy. Yet what is blasphemous in the instituted religions has an ancient lineage of meaning. In the pre-historical *Rg Veda* of India, the all-inclusive becoming more all-inclusive is revered as the cosmic Person (*Pususha*) who gives life to the world by foregoing Godness itself. The nature of God is all-life-giving rather than all-powerful – an idea that recurs in the crucified God of Christ. While the ageless Vedic hymn “To Puruṣha”, begins with the attributes of all-powerful might spanning the cosmos, a striking turn occurs in explaining the Creation (*italics added*). God is “*this all, that which is and shall be*. He is Lord of immortality *which he grows beyond through food*”.

In this last sentence, God is conceived *as* the food cycle - “the food that eats food” (as later stated in the Upanishads). The world is not divided off from God as pure eternity, but God incarnates as the world in reproduction and growth. This is the first announcement of the ecology principle in world religion. Life is reproduced *by* life across species in an all-encompassing and interrelated life whole perpetually becoming more. Before entering more deeply into the inner logic of this primal religious vision in the Hymn to Purusha, we need to observe that the logic of God’s nature is opposite in principle to that of false religion. Instead of God being adored and sacrificed to in order for his worshippers to receive exclusionary favors of conquest and booty at the cost of others’ lives, God sacrifices himself to the creation of life – the innermost meaning of higher life on earth. “In all directions he is spread abroad as that which eats and eats not” - the all-inclusive earth-life becoming more. “With the Puruṣha as the sacrifice - - - spring was its ghee, summer the fuel, autumn the oblation. - - From that sacrifice - - he made the beasts of the air, of the forest, and those of the village”.

The Hymn to Purusha also identifies “*Viraj*”, the female principle, with whom the material universe is produced, a theme as old and lasting as the Vedic religion which is, like Taoism, dialectical with no one-sided male-God reduction. The female-male interaction at the level of opposing cosmic forces is that out of which all life and creation come. On the other hand, the props of false religion emerge at the same time - the “sacrificial Formula” whose syllabic incantation is endowed with magical powers to reward gift-bearing supplicants, and the Cosmic Body in which the *brahmin* priests are the mouth and speech, the *rajanya* or warrior commanders are the arms, the *vaisya* are the traders and farmers, and the *sudra* the lowly servant class paying for their alleged bad karma of previous lives with lives of oppression. None of these add-ons of class rule, however, sustains the self-sacrifice principle which concerns analysis here - *the giving of the self for life to become more life as the nature of divinity itself*. On the contrary, it is directly opposed by the deified regulation of classes in top-down command order, and the priestly powers of magic-syllable incantations over others’ sacrifices for themselves to consume. Leaving aside the onto-ethic of false religion, philosophical decoding asks, *what* is the nature of the consciousness which sacrifices its own contentment for other life to be and grow in unified all-cycle in which every being departs for other life to grow? Or, more exactly, what is sacrificed by the all-inclusive being to create life becoming ever more on earth? By the answers to these questions, we come to understand what is usually wrapped in mystery and obfuscation - the nature of the all-being *and* the human consciousness which is to become one with it.

First of all, the nature of the divine is pure and infinite light consciousness prior to any manifestation in the world (an ultimate conception which only becomes clear in the later Upanisad Vedas). What the divine sacrifice consists in – which has its human counterpart in spiritual consciousness – is loss of this purely self-sufficient consciousness. *What* is sacrificed follows from the nature of embodied being itself. We may identify five levels of the giving over of divine consciousness to become world life at the primeval beginnings of its long ascent to divine consciousness within those who become enlightened:

- (i) the sacrifice of inner infinitude to the finite limits of the world of embodied beings;
- (ii) the sacrifice of unity without division to conflict among competing lives;

- (iii) the sacrifice of pure light-bliss to self desires looking outwards to the objects of the world;
- (iv) the sacrifice of eternity to transitory existence and death for separate material beings;
- (v) the sacrifice of heavenly peace to the suffering of birth, age, disease, and death.

All of India's spiritual philosophies and their variations – Hinduism and Buddhism and Jainism which may be the most ancient – conceive in terms of the underlying principles (i) to (v). Although they are nowhere spelled out in principle, all characterizations of the divine in these literatures confirm these defining properties, with or without the claim of God. Buddhism and Jainism have no Supreme Being, but aspire to the *higher consciousness* which these five cardinal attributes define: *pure light-bliss, unqualified infinitude, unity without remainder, deathless eternity, and heavenly peace*. So also does Platonic Christianity. The nature of divine being, God or not, is agreed upon across these great religious traditions. Moreover, the opposite properties of the embodied world *in its ignorance* follow the same inner logic of converse meaning - *a finite and limited world comprised of divided and conflicted beings pursuing self-desires in a transitory existence comprised of anxiety and pain in a fleeting existence*. This is why in all Indian philosophy (besides the materialist Carvaka apostasy whose records are scarce), the ultimate goal across religions is “release from the wheel of embodied rebirth”. It is to return to the pure light and bliss consciousness that the enlightened are said to aim whether in Vedanta, Buddhist, or Jain scriptures.

Thus a profound question arises which challenges religions and spiritual philosophies across the world. Why did God create the embodied realm with such unhappy consequences following from it? Or, if Buddhism in which no God exists, how does ignorance arise that loses the unbound light consciousness of bliss? The answers to these questions are at the heart of spiritual philosophies across the historical spectrum. Yet a still deeper issue comes from outside these religions. Why should a secular or scientific rationality accept there *is* such a higher consciousness as is described? What are the reasons to think that any consciousness can be so infinite and undivided by self-other lines? Prior to the issue of the divine consciousness giving itself over to the creation of embodied life, the all-inclusive being becoming more all-inclusive by sacrificing its eternal repose for life giving life in the food cycle of world existence, the very meaning of this higher consciousness may be dismissed as absurd. What reason can there be to think such a boundless light consciousness exists in even subjective possibility?

## **5. What Is the I that Has a Body? Rational Explanation of the Infinite Consciousness Within**

Belief in an ultimate consciousness which is more than the body's brain is typically thought of as merely an act of religious faith. Yet such a higher subject of consciousness is already implied by the deep structure of our everyday speech and thought. Thus when we say such things as “I have a car” or a house or anything else, there is always (i) the subject ‘I’, (2) an object other than the ‘I’ and (3) a relationship of possession between them such that ‘I’ *has* these things. Thus “I have a home” falls into the logical form: I-subject + relationship of possessing + the property that is possessed. So far, so simple. Yet when we say things like “I have a body”, or “I have a mind”, or “I lost my soul”, or

“I gave my life”, we imply by the structure of our speech and thought that there is a subject ‘I’ which *has* a body, a mind, a soul, or a life and can *choose what sort of body, mind or life it has or leads*, or even destroys. It can abuse one or other, enable or disable one or all, open any to new ranges of possibility and so on – the vast choice space in the ultimate experience of being human. This is why people naturally talk of persons “treating their bodies well or badly”, or “no longer caring for life”, or “teaching one’s mind to think in a new way” or “identifying with other life as her own”. Clearly the body, mind, or life in each case is directed in possibly opposite ways depending on the deciding subject’s choice path. The body, mind or life is *used by* the I-subject to turn in diverse and opposite directions. Each may be “run down” or even “destroyed”, or – in opposite management by the I-subject - nourished to new and astonishing feats of capacity.

*Spiritual* consciousness distinguishes itself by crossing the divisions of selves and things in an encompassing field of life identification – whether of the potential “higher community” sociologist George Herbert Mead describes in understanding the “internalized others” of social self conception; or the voices of angels experienced daily by the poet William Blake; or the Nobel-Prize geneticist Barbara McClintock who describes her engagement with genes as “feeling as if I were right down there, and these were my friends”. *The I-consciousness is capable of any direction imaginable of the life it leads*, and spiritual consciousness realizes this can be an all-inclusive way of being and identifying – becoming one with the world and its ascension of consciousness as the innermost vocation of the spirit. The problem with a scientific rejection of such a way of being is that the rejection denies the proven nature of the I-consciousness – that it is unlimited in its being within so far in every way can it go, and its direction this way or that cannot be predicted by anybody except the person deciding it. The only understanding consistent with the known evidence is that the human subject is an infinite life-space within and can choose thoughtfully or mindlessly what way of thinking it follows. The spiritual choice space emerges, however, only insofar as its wider inner-life presence is *opened to* by the I-subject. We have seen that breath itself can be so recognized, or not, in breathing. The I-consciousness so opening to its encompassing possibilities of inward being is without any bound at all, “so deep and far in every direction does it extend” to quote the pagan Heraclitus over 2500 years ago. This inner life-ground of the spiritual is, however, hardly understood. In the modern age of science, it has been erased from view with philosophers arguing it is an illusion. There are many variations on this denial, but all are distinguished by their refusal to engage the fact itself. Thus thinkers from Kant to Wittgenstein reduce the I-consciousness to a merely a-priori operation or grammatical function, they never deal with the direct perception of an unlimited inner space observed by Heraclitus that anyone can confirm. The same goes for contemporary cognitive science which simply blinkers out the replicatable experience of this inner infinitude from the start. The fact-blind dogma here belongs to science not spiritual consciousness. The horizonless intrinsic powers of human consciousness are perfectly demonstrable to consciousness test, but inner experience itself, however universal, has been occluded by externalist science method. Thus the this-worldly ground of the spiritual is not conceived in a rational or factual way. It is denied, fled from, dismissed a-priori – as one might expect in a mechanical age.

The undeniable powers are nonetheless self-evident. They range from the I-subject's ability to *identify with other beings* without limit (in fact a propensity of human beings from childhood on); to move to a *non-positional reflective consciousness* of whatever situation or problem is adopted as an object of it; and to think *as if one were in any situation whatever*, whether an oceanic ooze or 1000 years hence or in a light-bliss forever. In fact, these possibilities of the I-consciousness are all directly confirmable except the last – that which spiritual consciousness has specially cultivated in the East. The problem lies not with the testability of these modes of inner infinitude, but with dogmatic blindness to this testability. More generally, the *externalist fallacy* has been conventionalized in the scientific age just as certitude of God's almightiness was in the religious age. The externalist fallacy is recognizable by the following logical form of supposition or argument: What is observable as external phenomena rules out as valid what is internally experienced. Its error proceeds in three steps: (1) what is *not* externally observable and (2) *not* measurable by a physical metric, is therefore (3) invalid or superfluous. (3) is the false inference. It rules out consciousness itself – the ultimate metaphysic of the dehumanized mechanism which now rules.

As we have seen, the directly experientiable I-consciousness has the verifiable properties italicized above. The properties of the 'divine consciousness' elicited earlier in (i) to (v) are a map of the parameters of its sublime possibilities, and yogic disciplines of countless varieties seek possible paths of this joining of human consciousness to these divine properties in practice, with or without God believed in. Beneath both unbeliever yogas and believer theisms is the nature of this accessible life consciousness itself, and its internal capacities to be or to lead anywhere including to these sublime states. The 'I that has a body' is, in short, an open life space within without edge, and non-dualist spiritual philosophies are its developed forms of world-connective understanding. The ultimately unifying spiritual purpose is, as we will find in the most timeless literatures, to comprehend and experience life "*beyond the dualities*" of spirit-matter, mind-body, and victory-defeat themselves.

## **6. Counter-Argument: How Analytic Philosophy and Science Explain Away Inner Life**

The most distinguished philosophical reductions of the inner consciousness come from Immanuel Kant, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. Their arguments are alike in principle in asserting that 'I' itself is a *non-referring* term. Kant's argument in his *Critique of Pure Reason* is complex, and features what he calls the "transcendental unity of apperception". This may sound like an impossibly difficult concept, but it just means that the 'I' is an organizing structuring of consciousness which synthesizes one's *sensa* and representations into a unity. It is a formal condition of the manifold of sensations and ideas holding together, rather than remaining – as Kant argues – as an incoherent conglomeration of disparate sensations and representations. Its "transcendental character" means only that it is a *a-priori* condition of unified perception and conceptual understanding – the preconscious rules which organize the synthesis of anyone's consciousness behind the eyes. The modes of infinitude of the inner consciousness explained in the prior section are systematically avoided.

Kant was influenced by David Hume who argued that his own introspection could find nothing resembling an I-subject or self at all, but merely “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement”. The infinite consciousness within is thus collapsed into a mechanical ordering of associative conjunctions, setting the stage for reductionist analytic philosophy thereafter. Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* almost two centuries later simply rejects “I” as anything more than an empty grammatical function which signifies nothing. He argues that attributing any more to the I-subject or other such functions in “language games” is only a linguistic muddle, the generic ground of all philosophical problems. Throughout these abstractions away of substantive meaning, no direct experience of the infinite within is allowed into the discussion. Gilbert Ryle is more swaggering in dismissal. He argues in *The Concept of Mind* that looking for “the ghost in the machine” of I-consciousness is like wondering where Oxford University is after visiting all the colleges. Trying to find a substantive meaning to the I, he says, is akin to a man “never succeeding in jumping on to the shadow of his own head”. It is empty of any significance. Such is the modern era’s systematic erasure of humanity’s inner life..

Cognitive science assumes a world without internal life a-priori. Externally observed brain phenomena are the limit of thought. Nothing more can be seen. The human being may as well be a robot because the inner life and experience of being itself do not exist in the mechanical model that is assumed for both. Externalist science and dogmatic religion thus invisibly coincide in life-blind frameworks of conception. External brain models rule out internal life and the infinite in cognitive science. Locked-in dogmas rule it out in dominant religions. Yet what is blinkered out in both cases is, in reality, open to any possible elective life space. Whether repressed or not, it may be turned to a boundless universe within, enter into the life of any being in informed empathy with its life, or identify with the world itself as its true body – all opening choice paths followed by spiritual consciousness across the ages. On the other hand, what has occurred in the main across epochs is conditioning of the inner life infinite into group-mind structures which rule out any encompassing life presence or connectedness at all – false religions of all kinds through the ages and scientific formalism and mechanism devoid of any inner life at opposing poles of conception.

The opening of human consciousness into comprehension of “the sky within our heads” has been left to poets, but is in fact accessible to anyone. It is a known ultimate release of consciousness from its chains of conditioning, but more deeply for the spiritual tradition across religions, it is the shift of human being that is required to reconnect the species to the wider life-ground and divine inward capacities at once. This infinite connectedness within and without has been, however, only rarely spelled out or even recognized. Revealingly, no matter what form the dogmatic imprisoning or the explaining-away of this infinite inner life has been, not one explains its proven phenomena. Every such position avoids its self-evident life space or proscribes it a-priori. Dogmatic religion has led in this repression over millenia, but modern analytic reductions, brain-scan machines and cadaver models keep the mind-box closed. An ultimate alienation of humanity from its very experience of life has occurred across the science-religion divide.

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Huxley, Aldous (1956/1990), *The Doors of Perception-Heaven and Hell*, 185 pp. New York: Harper and Row. [ Huxley’s experimentation with mescaline-peyote is reported in which habit-formed perception is opened to opposite possibilities of inner experience, “heaven and hell”.]

James, William (1902/1990), *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 517 pp. New York: Vintage Books. [James’ classic work on religion where his signature concept of pragmatism - the truth is what works - is used to assess religious belief, leading to his notion of “a mother sea of consciousness” as a dynamic “finite God”.]

Jonas, Hans (1963), *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* 432 pp. Boston: Beacon Press. [The eminent theologian and phenomenologist explains an heretical topic with depth, featuring the Gnostic split between the divine paradise of God and the fallen world of the Demiurge maker which it is the mission of Jesus and humanity to heal.]

Jones, Alexander (ed) (1972), *Jerusalem Bible*, 1693pp. [The most scholarly of contemporary translations, this primary source includes all Old and New Testament books with notes.]

Jung, Karl (1957), “On the Tibetan Book of the Dead”, in Evans-Wentz (trans), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, pp. xliv-lxiv. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [This valuable overview provides a synthesis of Jung’s wholly psychological ontology and that of Tibetan Buddhism, distinguished by striking parallels on “the estrangement of consciousness from the liberation of truth” which is won by recognition that light

consciousness with no circumference or center is the ground and ultimate reality and “that the ‘giver’ of all ‘given’ dwells within us”, including the “categories of the imagination” which project onto the world unconscious forms as real.]

Kierkegaard, S. (1978), *Kierkegaard's Writings*, (eds. H.V. and E.V. Hong) 24 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [The most comprehensive collection of Kierkegaard's work which explains his unprecedented exploration of the “infinite inwardness” of human emotional life which he relates to a transcendent and unknowable God.]

*Kabbalah* (trans. D.C. Matt), 221 pp. San Francisco, Harper. [A highly lauded translation of selections of the Jewish mystic tradition which seeks cosmic consciousness without renouncing the embodied world.]

*Koran* (trans. Dawood, N.J.), 454pp. London: Penguin. [This is a scholarly translation and transparent arrangement of the Holy Qur'an with historical notes. As the bible of Islam (meaning “submission”), its text as with other bibles is to be distinguished from the religions, sects and authorities deriving from it. See Nicholson and Shah for accounts of dynamic Sufi development.]

Marx, Karl and Engels, F. (1975-), *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, 44 vols. (ed. R. Dixon et al). New York: International Publishers [Marx's underlying conflictedness between profound moral concern and scientific method, abhorrence of life-destructive capitalism but ultimate grounding in its technological advances are the meta problem of his thought system.]

McMurtry, J. (1989), *Understanding War*, 90 pp. Toronto: Science for Peace [A concise overview demonstrating the locked choice-spaces of the military paradigm of war with decoding of religious justifications as cover stories of political-economic power.]

McMurtry, J. (1998), *Unequal Freedoms: The Global Market As An Ethical System*, 372 pp. Toronto and Westport CT: Garamond and Kumarian [Introduces concepts of universal life identity and civil commons in moving underneath theo-capitalist doctrine.]

McMurtry, J. (1999), *The Cancer Stage Of Capitalism*, 277pp. London: Pluto Press. [This book analyzes money-sequence capitalism as carcinogenic at the social level of life organization and explains the civil commons as social immune system. Religious correlatives are implied.]

McMurtry, J. (2000), “Caging the Poor: The Case Against the Prison System” in W.G. West and R. Morris (eds), *The Case for Prison Abolition*, pp. 167-87. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. [Explains how the modern prison regime is structured to achieve the total defeat of the legally disobedient by systematic deprivation of their human properties and capacities.]

McMurtry, J. (2002), *Value Wars: The Global Market versus the Life Economy*, 262pp. London: Pluto Press [Tracks the underlying principles of money-value versus life-value in the ‘new world order’ across wars, ecological crises, financial predation, and public-sector meltdowns.]

Merton, Thomas (1961), *Mystics and Zen Masters*, 302 pp. New York: Delta. [A leading Christian monk provides an inside survey of mystic thinkers across the world featuring Zen/Buddhism, and seeks an inclusive common vision “transcending time and space”.]

Miller, P. And Westra, L. eds (2002), *Just Ecological Integrity: The Ethics of Planetary Life*, 326pp. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield. [Written for the Earth Charter 2000, this multi-disciplinary work engages the interface between human values and ecological disintegration.]

Mirowski, P. (2000), *Machine Dreams*, 540 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [This study tracks the machine God of contemporary theory into the “automaton theater” of the leading edges of economic, military and decision-theory research.]

Muller, Max, ed. (1879-1910), *Sacred Books of the East*, 50 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [Virtually every known sacred scripture of the East is translated comprehending Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islam, Parsi/Zarathustran, Confucian and Taoist religions, still the most comprehensive reference source in existence.]

Nicholson, Reynaud Alleyne (1914/1963), *The Mystics of Islam*, 178 pp. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. [This is a classic account of Sufi mysticism outside Islamic orthodoxy.]

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1964), *The Complete Works of Nietzsche* (ed. O. Levy). New York: Russell and Russell. [Nietzsche explains his defining concepts of “will to power/superior-inferior/master-slave” and his abhorrence of religio-moral levelling by life-value incoherent polemic.]

Pagels, Elaine (1979) *The Gnostic Gospels*, 182 pp. New York: Random House. [This is a very clear and accessible account of a recondite subject, based on the Nag Hammadi manuscripts.]

Perry, R.B. (1969), *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization*, 487 pp. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Perry justifies the ruling idea that the good = what is desired, an axiology which implicitly justifies the value-system of the market order with no other value.]

Plato (1961), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns), Pantheon Books: New York. [Plato’s “Theory of Forms”, posit pure, transcendental and eternal ideas of which all material entities are but inferior, mutable copies.]

Radhakrishnan, S. and Moore, C. (1957), *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, 683pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [This is the premier reference source of Indian philosophy including the full texts of the eleven principal Upanishads and the Bhagavad-gita, and definitive sources of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo bring it to the present. The most comprehensive, well chosen primary source of Indian religion and philosophy extant.]

*Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1888/1967), trans. Edward FitzGerald, 176 pp. London: Cassell

[The most famous Sufi work in the West, the astronomer-poet’s work is a hauntingly beautiful rendering of this-worldly spirituality.]

Ryle, G. (1976) *The concept of mind*, 334pp. London: Hutchinson. [Ryle’s analytic classic argues against any “inner life” or “ghost in the machine”, No soul, behavioural dispositions only.]

Samuelson, Paul and Nordhaus W.D. (2005), *ECONOMICS*, 784 pp. New York: McGraw-Hill. [This is the standard global reference text of contemporary economics in which the preface invokes the value imperative to “Spread the gospel of [capitalist] economics anyway we can”.]

Shah, Idries (1964), *The Sufis*, 452 pp. New York: Doubleday. [Shah assembles Sufi stories in illustration of spiritually open and dynamic philosophy outside of Islamic rules and dogma.]

Schweitzer, Albert (1936), “The Ethics of Reverence for Life”, *Christendom*, 1, 225-39. [This is the most crystalline argument for theologian Schweitzer’s argument for “an absolute ethics of will-to-live [which] must reverence every form of life”, without discrimination we might add.]

Smith, Adam (1776/1966), *An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. 2 vols. New York: A.M. Kelley. [This is the founding work of “the moral science” of economics in which the “invisible hand” of the competitive “free market” is selectively understood to produce the “common good”.]

Solomon, R.C. and Higgins, K. (1995), *World Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, 350 pp. New York: McGraw-Hill. [This text moves beyond the Western canon to provide selections from Japanese Zen Buddhism, Chinese Taoism and Confucianism, South-Asian Hinduism and Buddhism, Arabic Islam, Persian Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Sufism, American Indian ecology, Latin American identity thought and liberation theology, African critical and ethno philosophy religion.]

Spinoza, Baruch (1985), *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (ed. E. Curley), 7 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Spinoza argues that God is infinite substance whose thinking and extended modes and attributes are rational in structure and can be better (more adequately) or worse (less adequately) comprehended by deductive reasoning which culminates in scientific intuition (*scientia intuitiva*) of one logically determined whole.]

Spring, David and Eileen, eds (1974), *Ecology and Religion in History*, 154 pp. New York: Harper and Row. [Articles on various world religions rebut the idea that their scriptures gave man an absolute dominion over other life.]

Suzuki, D.T. (1956). *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki* (ed. W. Barrett). 294 pp. Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday [A useful selection of writings of the most widely recognized scholar of Zen.]

Tatia, Nathmal (1994), *Tattvartha Sutra: That Which Is*, 324 pp. New York: HarperCollins. [The sacred texts with notes of the Jains in fuller and more revealing form than elsewhere available.]

Thoreau, Henry (1965), *Walden, and other writings*. 732 pp. New York: Modern Library. [Most famous work of Thoreau, self described as “mystic, transcendentalist, and natural philosopher”.]

Tillich, Paul (1958), *Dynamics of Faith*, 276 pp. New York: Harper Torchbooks.[Theologian Tillich draws from critical biblical scholarship to explain a demystified religious reason which represents the presence of God’s will in humanity as “ultimate concern”.]

Tolstoy, Leo (1905), *My Confession*, 205pp. London: J.M. Dent and Sons.[This volume explains the great novelist's philosophy of life after his conversion.]

Trungpa, C. (1988). *Shambala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. 202 pp. Boston: Shambala Press [A leading example of contemporary conception of religious illumination and practice as that of a “warrior path” of happiness, “the vehicle of the thunderbolt” of Tibetan Buddhism.]

Whitehead, A.N. (1938), *Modes of Thought*, 172 pp. New York: Macmillan [Whitehead’s “process philosophy” conceives Nature as “alive”, “feeling”, “purposing” and ever “creative” in the energy flows described by physics, the totality of which processes he conceives as God.]

Zimmer, Heinrich, ed. Joseph Campbell (1951), *The Philosophies of India*, 436 pp. New York: Bollingen Foundation. [Zimmer’s richly resonant work is classical in the field.]

Zimmerman, M.E, Callicott, J., Clark, Sessions G., K. J. Warren eds. (1998). *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall [This work features articles by school-leading figures like Thomas Berry, Aldo Leopold (the Land Ethic), Arne Ness (Deep Ecology), Carolyn Merchant (ecofeminism), James O’Connor (socialist ecology), Tom Regan, Peter Singer, and Paul Taylor (animal rights), and Gary Snyder (bio-regionalism), with rational spiritual intimations throughout.]

### **Biographical Sketch**

**John McMurtry** holds his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Toronto, Canada and his Ph.D from the University of London, England, and has been Professor of Philosophy at the University of Guelph for over 20 years and University Professor Emeritus since 2005. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and his many articles, chapters, books and interviews have been internationally published and translated.