On the One and Only Transmigrant

Man is born once; I have been born many times.

Rūmi

Bei Gute werden nur die Götter angenommen.

Angelus Silesius

Liberation is for the Gods, not for men.

Gebhard-Le Strange

Aśraya evopāśita, ogra hy eke sarva ekam bhavanti

BU 1.4.7

N'atthi koci satto yo imamba kaya anyam kayam sankamati

Miś 72, cf. 46.

I

Śaṅkarācārya’s dictum, “Verily, there is no other transmigrant but the Lord” (satyam, nevarid anyah samsāri, Bṛṣīḥ 1.1.5), startling as it may appear to be at first sight, for it denies the reincarnation of individual essences, is amply supported by the older, and even the oldest texts, and is by no means an exclusively Indian doctrine. For it is not an individual soul that Plato means when he says: “The man of man is immortal, and at one time comes to an end, which is called dying away, and at another is born again, but never perishes ... and having been born many times has acquired the knowledge of all and everything”; or that Plotinus means when he says: “There is really nothing strange in that reduction

[This study was published in supplement No. 3 to the Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1944.—ed.]

1 Cf. T.A.G. Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, II (Madras, 1914–1916), p. 405, “When Śiva absorbs in himself, he is known as the Puruṣa, and as Samsāri when he has manifested himself.” Cf. n. 66.

2 Meno 81c, where this is cited as the doctrine of learned priests and priestesses, and is approved by Socrates. Of the same sort is Agni’s omnipresence as Jātavedas, “Knower of Births,” and the Buddha’s, whose abhijñā extends to all “former abodes.” He who is “where every where and every when is focused” (Dante) cannot but have knowledge of every thing.

3 Plotinus, IV.9.4, 5 (condensed); cf. I.7, passim. In our Self, the spiritual Self of all beings, all these selves and their doings are one simple act of being; hence it is not the separated selves and acts, but rather the Real Agent that one should seek to know (BU 1.47, Kauś. Up. 11.8, Hermes, Lib. XI.2.12a). “Thou hast seen the kettles of thought a-boiling; consider also the fire!” (Mathkauvi v.2902).

4 Hermes, Lib. v.10a (cf. BU 1.5.21), and XI.2.12a (cf. KU.11.22).

5 In “Recollection, Indian and Platonic” [the preceding essay in this volume—ed.], we have shown that timeless omnipresence and providential omniscience are interdependent and inseparable notions. The related thesis of the present article is that the omnipresent omniscient is “the only transmigrant,” and that in the last analysis this “transmigration” is nothing but his knowledge of himself expressed in terms of a duration. If there were really “others,” or any discontinuity within the unity, each “other” or “part” would not be omnipresent to the rest, and the concept of an omniscience would be inconceivable.

6 “He is given names that correspond exactly to the forms in which He is apprehended.” Cf. “All names are names of Him, who has no name, for that he is their common Father,” Hermes, Lib. v.10a.

7 “Who takes up his stand in every heart” (hṛdi sarvasya adhisthitam, BG X.11.7): “Quodque nos cum mortali est permutare, quodque la terra in se stringere atque aduna,” Dante, Paradiso 11.16—stringere, as in SB vii.7.3.10, etc.
This "higher" (para) Brahma is that "One, the Great Self, who takes up his stand in womb after womb (yo yonim yonim adhitithathi) ekoḥ...mabhāmā) as the omniform Lord of the Breaths (visvarāpaḥ..."

2 Cf. the "potters' wheel"; cf. Mund. Up. ii.26; BU ii.15; Plotinus, vi.5:3: Isa. 64:8, etc.

3 Of the "chariot," cf. RV vi.75:6; KU ii.3.3 ff.: J vi.25:2: Plato, Laws 582c, "Soul is the driver of all things." In MU ii.6, the driver's "reins" or "rays" (raimayā) are the intelligent powers (buddhisvarīnyā) by which the equine powers of sensation (karmendriyā) are governed. Similarly, Herms, Lib. x.223, "The energies of God are, as it were, His rays," and xvi.7, "His reins are (His rays)." Cf. Boethius, De consolatione philosophiae vi.11; "Hic regnum sceptrum dominus recte, Orbiqne habet truncos, et volucrum currum stabiles regit, Renun coruscos arbitrit;" Math. i.3468, 3472, 3575-3576, "Under the theory of presence by powers, souls are described as rays" (Plotinus, vi.4.3). This is "the living doctrine that ascribes to God the totality of all powers," and to be distinguished from "the pierced and cloven doctrine that is conscious of a man's own mind at work" (Philo, Legum allegoriarum, 1.93, 96).

4 Of the "elemental self" (bhūtātmanam) as "agent" (kartri) of the Inner Man. "He is blind indeed who sees only the active self" (kārtara śūnyaṁ kavya iṣya yathā pāyati...na sa pāyati, BG vii.16), whereas "He sees indeed, who sees the Overself, the Lord who is in all beings, imperishable in those that perish...the Overself who, although present in the body, neither acts nor is contaminated by action" (na karoti na pāyati, BG vi.27, 31).

5 "The dead know not anything" (Ecc. 9:5). Na pretya śunyātā (BU ii.14:12); sātvāḥ, bhikkhaic, inke inkaṃhammo, S vii.140, cf. Sn 770, 1791, and M 1.266. The Self is indestructible (BU vi.5:14; GV ii.13), but "consciousness" in terms of subject and object is a contingency, and loses its meaning "where everything has become just the Self" (BU ii.4:14), "activily itself when it is not intelligizing" (Plotinus, vii.4:2).

12 "Spirit (ruḥ), concealing its glory and pinions and plumes, says to the body, 'O dynchhi, who art thou? Through my beams (cf. n. 9) thou hast come to life for a day or two...The beams of the spirit are speech and eye and ear" (Mathnawi i.1267-1273).

13 The body being the domain or garden (ārāma, BU iv.3:14) or platform (ādhitvāham, CU viii.12.1) of the unseen, incorporeal, and impassible Self. Ađhitāḥ (sometimes anuṣṭhā, ārūḥ) is regularly employed in connection with the "mounting" of the psycho-physical vehicle (ratha) by the Spirit (ātman), e.g., AV x.8.1, (Brahma) karmav...adhitvāham; ĀS iii.3.8:9, prāna adhitvāham (devaramāh); KU ii.22, ārūvā suvāsvitam...āsvanām; BG xii.17, arūḥ...adhitvāhan. At the same time adhitvā implies administration, management, as in Praśna Up. i.10: similarly anuṣṭhā in KU vi.1.

14 He wanders about (samaratī = samaratī) by his own actions, the fruition of which he enjoys (apabhokṣṭ), and, being associated with conceptuality and the notion 'I am,' is known as the 'lower' (apara)...Neither male nor female nor neuter, whatever body he as-

15 Not, as understood by Deussen and Hume, the "individual soul," which is not a "Lord" but a component of the Breaths or Beings that are the subjects (uruḥ) of the Great Being or Breath from which they arise and into which they return (JU v.17; MU iii.3, bhūtāgana). It would be an antinomy to describe the composite individual soul, subject to persuasion, as a sovereign power. "The Lord of the Breaths," who is "the Leader of the Breaths and of the body" (prāṅstavarṇanena, Mund. Up. ii.23) is much rather the Being and Breath that is "Lord of all (pūrṇāḥ...bхūtadhvidyāsvardhā, AV 2.4:1.10)," the "Lord of the gods (powers of the soul) who enters the womb and is born again (yoniḥ at a va a pāya punah, sa devānām aśeṣya bābhūva)," AV xiii.2:25) or "Lord of Beings" (bhūtātman ādhipaḥ, AV iv.8:1; TS vi.11:14; MU v.2), i.e., the imperial Breath on whose behalf the "other Breaths" function as ministers (Praśna Up. xi.4), and the Brahma whom all things hail as king (BU vi.3:37). The "Lord of the Breaths" (prāṇādhipaḥ) is the Breath whose superiority to all the other Breaths (pūrṇāḥ = devāḥ, bхūtānā) is again and again insisted upon in the contests of the Breaths for supremacy (bhūtānanam and Upānasādus, pūrṇam), and other than the subjected elemental self (bhūtātman) that is a host of beings (bhūtāgana, MU iii.3). The Lord of the Breaths, "neither male nor female," is the Breath thus described in AA n.3:8, in which all the gods (Breaths or powers of the soul) are unified (AA ii.2; Kauś. Up. i.13; cf. BU 1.47), the Breath that mounts the bodily vehicle and is regularly identified with the Sun, Brahma, Atman, Vāmanā, Indra, etc. This Lord of the Breaths is likewise the Inner Person (anuśāstaman = anuśāstamaṁ of Śvet. Up. iii.13; KU vi.3:17) who wanders (karoti) from body to body, overcome by the force of the actions that determine the ugly or the fortunate bodies in which the elemental self alone suffers (MU iii.1.3).

When at death this Self recollects itself (BU iv.4:3, vii.11.13, etc.—ātman eṣa eva vārṇaṁvarān to ṛṣṇaṁ (Plotinus vi.5:2)—then we are no more (BU iv.14, iv.4:3; CU vii.17, etc.), "we who in our junction with our bodies are composite and have qualities shall not exist, but shall be brought into the regeneration by which becoming joined to immaterial things, we shall become incomplete and without qualities" (Philo, De cherubim 113 ff.; cf. Plato, Phaedo 78c ff.).

16 Cf. n. 20, 26, 40.

18 Apabhokṣt = bhojkṛ in KU iv.4 (Atman) and MU iv.6 (Prajāpati). This fruition does not necessarily involve a subject: insofar as it remains a spectator (udhi cakṣatii, RV 1.64:20; prakāsa, MU i.17; Pali upakāsa), or in other words disinterestedly enjoys only the flavor of life (ākāmo...rāṣṭra trpaḥ, AV x.8:44), the governing and immortal Self of the soul, or Inner Self (ātma grhaṁ, ātman), retains its identity (KU vi.13; MU m.3, etc) As Experient (bhokṣṭ) this immanent Person (puruṣo maṣṭakaḥ) is himself without qualities (sargaṇa), while the elemental self (bhūtātman) with its three qualities (trdaṇga) — i.e., the individual soul—is his "food" (ātman, MU vi.10). The contemplative Experient is both the Governing and a Mighty Lord (bhokṣṭa ca prakāsa ca eva ca...bhokṣṭa maṣṭakāvadh, BG 18.24, 13, 23); the All-soul that "suffers no hurt whatever by furnishing the body with the power to existence" (Plotinus, iv.8:2; cf. KU vi.1 and BC xii.32).
sumes, therewith he is connected (yanâyate) through the delusions of concept, touch, and sight, there is birth and growth of the Self by the rain of food and drink; the embodied Self (dehi) assumes functional forms in their stations in regular order (karmanugâna anukramena dehi sthânesu riipây abhisampadyate) and because of conjunction with

For, as Meister Eckhart says, "With the love with which God loves Himself, He loves all creatures, not as creatures but more; as creatures as God. . . . God tastes (Skr. bhânti) himself in all things. . . . Men as creatures taste as all creatures in measures and quantities, as wine and bread and meat. But my inner man tastes not as a creature, but more: as a gift of God. But my innermost man does not taste as a gift of God, but more: as eternity" (Pfeiffer ed., 180).

17 "Yanâyate, like sansyoga below, as in BG 1.26, where every birth is said to depend upon a "connection" or "suction" (sansyoga) of the Knower of the Field with the Field. Conversely, sansyoga, "liberation," "unyoking," MU vi.1.1.

18 "The nourishment of 'sense-perception' which he (the author of Gen. 2:5) figuratively calls 'rain'" (Philos. Legum allegoricae, 1.48). Here with reference to the fowl-brought Soma, and the "Shower of Wealth (vastrâ kân.)" "Tooch," because "all experience is contact-born" (BG v.31); cf. Coomaraswamy, "Note on the Suckfast Motif," 1944.

19 The embodied Self (dehi) of KG 11.18ff., and quick or vibrant (vipasitâ) Self of KG 11.18, that never becomes anyone, but passes over from body to body, and is not slain when the body is slain, unborn though it can be thought of as continually born and continually dying. This is precisely the doctrine of the immortal Soul, which Plato cites as that of learned priests and priestesses: "They say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time ends, which they call 'dying away,' and at another is born again, but never perishes" (Men. 66a). The embodied Self (dehi, paramânâra . . . jivavasthab) is to be distinguished from the elemental self (khuddam, khuddamaha, MU ii.2, 3). The former is the unperishing; (samaññâ) Self of CD viii.15 and BG xiii.27, the latter arises out of the elements and perishes (samaññiyâ) with them (BG i.4.12).

20 These words describe the entry of the Self into any one body and its extension therein in the form of the Intelligences (Breaths, powers of the soul) that work through the doors of the senses, as in MU ii.6, etc. Karmângâmi, "corresponding to the variety of actions to be performed," as in BU i.5.21, "I am going to speak," began the Voice," etc. The powers of speaking, seeing, thinking, etc., "are just the names of His acts" (BG 12.7)—not "ours" (BG 11.27). "Stupefied by the notion of an 'I that acts,' the self believes that I am the actor," similarly, countless Buddhists texts: cf. Philo, Legum allegoricae, 1.78, "I deem nothing so shameful as to suppose that 'I know and I perceive.' My own intellect authorizes the intellect and the art of intelligizing, how could that be?" Anukramena, like yathâhutamana in Kaus. Up. iii.3 and At. Up. iii.3, and yathâkramena in MU vi.26. "As rays from Sun, so from him (immortal Brahman, Fire of Life) his Breaths and the rest come forth continually here in the world in due order (tasya prâmâyey vas tu punar eva tamâm abhucaranti yathâkrameu)." Sthânesu, "in their places," as in Praîna Up. iii.2, sthânam. Rûpâmi, "forms," i.e., "Phrajapati's breath-forms" (prâmarûpâ, Sâyana on RV x.9.16, and as in BU i.5.21, where the Breaths are the "forms" of the median Breath and called after him; similarly in Praîna Up. ii.12.

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the qualities, both his own and of action, he seems to be 'another' (tesam samyogahetur apara) 'pi drstâtha, Svet. Up. vi.1-13, condensed).

This transmigrating "Lord of the Breaths" is the Breath (prâna), "the most excellent (vaitthika, BU vi.1, 14)," Brahama, Prajâpati, who he divides himself five- and manifold to support and sustain the body, to awaken his children, to fill these worlds (Praîna Up. ii.3; MU ii.6, vi.26), remaining nevertheless undivided in things divided (BG xiii.16, xviii.20).

To him as Prajâpati it is said, "Tis thou, thyself, that art counterborn (pratijayase)," to thee all thy children (prâjah = râyamaya, prâjah, devâ, bhûmâ) bring tribute (bâlam haranti). O Breath (Praîna Up.

21 Apara, "lower" or "other" as in MU ii.3 (Atman), and to be contrasted with para (Brahma) in verse 1 = para (Atman) of Praîna Up. vi.7. For the "essence and two natures" of Brahama see BU iii.3, Praîna Up. vi.2, MU vi.3, 22 and vii.11.8, devâlîhâm. This is the doctrine of Hermes, viz. that to say that "God is both One and All does not mean that the One is two, but that the two are One" (Lib. xvi.3). Similarly Plotinus, iv.4.10, "The ordering-and-governing-principle (to koumôs = Plato, Phaido 276c, d à diáskopis eis kai pàrân átrop) is twofold, one that we call Demiurge and one the Soul of All (to nàv xarka xeru): we speak of Zeus sometimes as Demiurge (Creator) and sometimes at the Leader of all (to skopou kai pàrâm)," which is as much as to say that we speak of Varuna sometimes as such and sometimes as Mitra or Savitar (metr, RV v.50.1 = prâsmiñaratri, Mund. Up. ii.3.8 = ātmano 'tma neśīmâkhyâh, MU vi.3.7), of Brahama as prâpara, duśrisû, and devâlîhâm, of Agni as Indrâgî, and of Prajâpati as parâmiñarpamita, niruktrini, etc., in the same way imposing two contrasted natures to one and same essence. And just as in one of these natures the deity is immortal and impassible and in the other mortal and possible, so in the one he is without need and in the other has ends to be attained. At the same time, in him these are not two, but one simple essence: the distinction is "logical but not real." So Nichom. of Coscop speaks of the "wall of Paradise" that conceals God from our sight as constituted of the "coincidence of opposites" and of its gate as guarded by "the highest spirit of reason, who bars the way until he has been overcome" (De visione Dei ii.10, xxii.)—as in JUB i.5.22. Implying Agni who as the "Fire of Life" is the "Breath of Life," cf. Heraclitus, fr. 20, and Coomaraswamy, "Measures of Fire" (in this volume—e.g.).

23 BU ii.1.8 prutirâpu 'smâi ja'ya; cf. Svet. Up. ii.16, vi.11. The Self is the Father of the Breath and consubstantial (MU vi.1.) like the human father and son, in accordance with the normal doctrine that the father himself is reborn in his progeny (RV vi.22.6, vii.70.3; BD vii.50; AB vi.13; AA ii.5; BG iv.7, 8, etc.), the only Indian doctrine of rebirth on earth. It is a character that is thus reborn; it is in his "other self" that the father departs at death; and we are often reminded (ŚB pasmi) that the dead have departed "once for all." The heredity of vocation is connected with the traditional (for it is not only an Indian doctrine of progressive rebirth. In the same way in 'dvâsim', the Father is born as the Son: cf. the Christian Alma redemptoris Mater . . . tu quae genuisti tuam sanctum genitorum.

24 Cf. AV x.7.38, 39, x.8.15, xi.4.19; CB vi.1.17; JUB vi.3.17, iv.24.1-7; BU vi.1.3; Kaus. Up. ii.11. The various names by which the recipient and the tributaries are referred to in these contexts all imply the Breath and the Breaths, i.e., God and gods under various aspects. Hence "All these gods are inc" (JUB i.1.4.2; CB ii.3.2-3;
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born again when thou, O Breath, givest life" (AV x1.4.14, cf. JUB m11.8.10-11.1); "Thou alone, O Sun, art born about the whole world" (ekho viivam pari bhuma jayase, AV x11.2.3);28 "One God indwelling the mind, of old was he born and is even now in the womb" (AV x8.28 = JUB m11.10.12). Similar texts could be cited at greater length, but it will suffice for the present to observe the emphasis laid upon the fact that it is always One that is diversely and recurrently born: He, that is, who is "undivided in, though as it were divided by his presence in divided beings" (BG xv11.16 and xv11.20), being "One as he is in himself, and many as he is in his children" (SB x5.2.16), who are not Beings independently, but Beings by participation.29

All this is also the oldest Sāṃkhya doctrine, where it is the Sun or Fire that enters into the womb and transmigrates:30 thus RV x72.9, where Aditi "bears Mārtanda unto repeated birth and death (prajñayā mṛtyaye tuvāt punah)"; vi11.439, "Thou, O Agni, being in the womb, art born again (garbhe san jayase punah)"; x5.4, where Agni is "of many births (bhūrijamā)"; m11.1.20, where as Jātavedas he is "set down in birth after birth (janmājanman nihityah)," i.e., as Śāṇaya adds, "in all these human beings." As Jātavedas he is omniscient of births (1.70.1, 1.89.1, 1.53.3), and necessarily so because, as SB x1.5.1.68 paraphrases, "he finds birth again and again (jītma jītaṁ vindate)." In the same way "filling the (three) light-realms of this,31 the mobile and inmobile, he cometh manifoldly into being, the Sire in these wombs" (purusrā yaḥ abhavat, sūr ahaṅkhyo garbhebhīḥ); RV x11.46.1, 5), "yet in one semblance manifold, as giver-of-being to all thy people32 (viśo viivā anu prabhūh, RV vi11.18)."

Sun (JUB m11.9.1, m11.10.4). Cf. St. Bernard, praus morimur nascitur (De grad. humilisitis 30). AV apānti = JUB mṛtyate.

28 Who as the sacrificial Person "was poured out upon the earth from East to West" (ary aricāya paścāt bhūmaj uhot parā), RV x9.95).

29 "Et inspexi cetera infra te, et vidi nec omnino esse nec omnino non esse; esse quidem, quantum abs te sunt, non esse autem, quantum id quod ex non sunt" (St. Augustine, Confessions vi11.11). This "is and is not" is essentially the Buddhist doctrine of sātu, "existence."

30 Throughout the present article and elsewhere we are careful to distinguish transmigration from reincarnation; the former implying a transition from one state of being to another, the latter to the transmission or renewal of a former state of being. Cf. n. 23, and Coomaraswamy, "Measures of Fire."

31 I.e., as Prajñāti divides himself to fill these worlds.

32 Viśah, i.e., Viśvedeha, Marut, prāṇāḥ, prāṇānyah directly and hence to prañānah, "living beings," indirectly. Viivam turo bhāyaṁ jayāmānaṁ ... prajīs
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It need not be demonstrated here that the Samhitās do not know of a “reincarnation” (individual rebirth on earth) since it is generally accepted that even the Brāhmaṇas know nothing of such a doctrine (cf. the Keith edition of AA, Introduction, p. 44)—except, of course, in the normal progenitive sense of rebirth in one’s offspring (RV v.4.10, vi.70.3; AB vii.1.5; AA ii.5). Our concern is rather to point out that the Veda speaks both of transmigration and of a one and only transmigrant, and distinguishes “liberation” from “coming back again” (samucchayam punah, RV v.46.1). Our argument is that the expressions punarṇāpya and punarjanma which occur already in RV and the Brāhmaṇas do not in the later scriptures acquire the new meanings of “dying again” (elsewhere) and “being born again” (here) that are generally read into them. In the majority of cases the references of “repeated death” and “repeated birth” are to this present life or “becoming,” as in AB viii.25, sarvam āyur eti, na punar mriyate, and SB v.4.1.1, sarvān . . . mṛtyūn atimucyate, where it is the relative immortality of not dying prematurely that is involved, and there is no question of never dying at all. In “becoming” (bhava, ēvārtha) we die and are reborn every day and night, and in this sense “day and night are recurrent deaths” (punarārtha . . . yad ahorātre, JB 1.11). Panarnāpya is not some one other death to be dreaded as ending a future existence but, together with punarbhava or janma, the condition of any form or type of contingent existence; and it is from this process, this wheel of becoming (bhavacahā, δ τροχός τῆς γενεσίως in James 3:6) here or hereafter, and not from any one death only, that liberation is sought. 38

We have so far considered the Transmigrant, Parijman, only as the Great Catalyst who remains unaffected by the actions he empowers. The Supreme Lord and Self who is seated one and the same in all beings’ hearts (BG x.20, xii.27), the citizen in every “city” (BU i.5.18; Philo,

tāta yatra nivātā miṣṭa’ni, MI vi.9. “La circular natura, ch’è sugello alla eterna mortal, fa ben suo arte, ma non distingue l’un dall’altro ostello,” Dante, Paradiso viii.127-
129 (ostello = nisūn, esp. in the Pāli Budhāya: expression subśebuṇsaṇa anāvasthitā). “One Divine Life, mov’d, shin’d, sound’d in and out all’,” Peter Sterry (V. de Sola Finto, Peter Sterry, Platonist and Pausan, Cambridge, 1934, p. 161).


De cherubim 121), participating in action not because of any need on his part but only sacrificially and to maintain the world process (BG xii.9, 22), wherein as it were disposing (BrSBh i.1.32, 33) he remains undivided amongst divided beings and indescructible amongst the destructible (BG xiii.16, 27). So long as he (Makha, the Sacrifice) is One, they cannot overcome him (TA v.1.3); but as One he cannot bring his creatures to life, and must divide himself (MU xii.6). We are repeatedly told, indeed, that he, Prajapati, “desired (ākāmaya) to be many, and so, as it seems to us, it is not quite disinterestedly but “with ends not yet attained and with a view to enjoying the objects of the senses” that he sets us going (MU xii.6d). But this is a dangerous enterprise, for being their experient, he is carried away by the flood of the qualities of the primary matter (prakṛtir gunaḥ) with which he operates; and as the corporeal (jātīra) elemental self (bhūtāt-

34 Cf. Coomaraswamy, “Līlā,” 1941, and “Play and Seriousness,” 1942 [both in this volume—ed.]. Cf. Dante, Purgatorio xxvii.95, 96:

Per sua diffusia in pianto ed in affanno cambiò onesto riso e dolce gioco

and Mathnawī i.1787, 1788:

Thou didst contrive this “I” and “we” in order that Thou mightest play the game of worship with Thyself, That all “I’s” and “thou’s” should become one life.

When, as in MU i.6-ii.2, we speak of Him as having ends still to be attained, we also conceive that He is caught in the net, and that He is liberated again, and this is the truth in terms of human experience. But like all else that pertains to the via affirmationis, this is a truth to be finally denied. For the vie, see MI vi.6.

35 Whenever we explain the existence of the world not directly by God’s being, or by His knowledge of Himself, but as a consequence of His Will, i.e., “of expression,” as here, or when it is said that “Prajapati desired (ākāmaya), May I be many” (Brāhmaṇas, passim), we are speaking metaphorically as if He really had ends to be attained, as is explicit in MI ii.6, and, just as in dividing effect from cause, we impose our duration upon His eternity. More truly, “There is nothing whatever that I might obtain that I am not already possessed of” (na . . . me kimam anavatam anāparyayam, BG i.122): “Non per aver a sé di bene acquisto, ch’esser non pub” (Dante, Paradiso xxx.13, 14).

So Pentheus conceives that Dionysies can be bound; but He declares that “Of himself the Daimon shall release me when I will,” and later, that “I myself did save, fully easily and painlessly” (Euripides, Bacchae 459, 613). The “Daimon” is, of course, “himself.”

36 Just as the Man (Aithproros). Son of the Father, is seduced by the reflection of the divine beauty in the mirror of Nature, and loving it becomes involved in it (Hermes, Eih. i.14, 15; TS v.3.2.1; AB iii.33; PB viii.8.1). The “flood of qualities by which the soul is swept away” (gunaḥkāra utkāmāṇam) corresponds to Plato’s “river of sensations” (Timaeus 438); to the “crossing over” (dīavnepa = tasma)
naughty (sadasat), overcome by the fruits of actions and by the pairs of opposites" (MU ii.9, vi.10).

There is, indeed, a corrective (pratīvidhi) for this elemental self, viz. in the study and mastery of the wisdom of the Vedas and in the fulfillment of one’s own duty (svadharmā) in its regular stages (āśrama, MU iv.3). “By the knowledge of Brahman, by arodor (tapa) and contemplation (cintā = dhyāna) he geteth everlasting bliss, yea, when this ‘man in the cart’ (rathātā) is liberated from those things with which he was filled up and by which he was overcome, then he attains to conjunction with the Spirit (ātman eva sāyujam upatti, MU iv.4), i.e., “being very Brahman enters into Brahman (brahmaṇaḥ san brahmāpyeti, BU iv.4,6), and thus “authentically Brahman-become, abides (brahmabhūttena attana vihitāt, A ii.211).” That is Nicholas of Cusa’s deificatio, for which the sine qua non is an ablatio omnis alteritas et diversitas.42

41 “For the movement of the Kosmos varies the birth of things, and gives them this or that quality; it fouls with evil the births of some and purifies with good the births of others” (Hermes, Lib. 9.5).

Asi as “evil,” here and elsewhere, corresponds exactly to English “naughty,” in accordance with the principle ens et bonum convertuntur.

42 Conversely, “liberated from the pairs of opposites” (BG xv.5, vii.29), and “becoming a bird, the sacrificer goes to the world of heaven” (PB v.3.5, cf. xiv.1.13). With this whole context, cf. Plutinus, Ennomos: 1.1, especially 1.12.

43 As in BG iv.33, xviii.41-48. This is the vā sāvayān pārāvācapārātā, kārtā pūrṇam that Plato makes his type of justice.

44 Apparently pp. of ratk, not otherwise known as a verb, and signifying “embodied” (MU ii.9.4 svahā survan ratkham; MU ii.3 śakataṁ tvaśtenam tatre nāram). That to “bear about” is a traditional punishment and disgrace involving loss of honor and legal rights is metaphysically significant, and corresponds to the submission of the free spirit to the body and senses: while conversely, it is a royal procession when the spirit drives the vehicle to a destination that it itself wills (as in BU iv.2.). On the Royal Road, cf. Philo, De posteritate Caiini et, and, on how one strays, Legem allegoricae, iv.79 ff.

The ignominy (like that of crucifixion) is one in which the Solar Hero may have to condescend in his pursuit of the imprisoned Psychic; and Lancelot’s “hesitation” in the Chevalier de la charrette corresponds to Agni’s reluctance to become the charioteer of the Sacrifice (RV 8.51), the Buddha’s hesitation to “turn the wheel,” and Christ’s “May this cup be taken from me.”

Yah puriparnah, as in CU iv.10.3 yādāhātah prīpam puriparnā (sī, “I am filled up with diseases.” For “the body fills us up with loves and passions and all kinds of images and false to that, as they say, it verily and really prevents our ever understanding anything” (Plato, Phaedo 66c) from which plethora we ought to purify ourselves as far as possible “until the God himself deliver us!” (Phaedo 67a).

Qui autem adhucres Dominus, semper spiritus esset, s Cor. 6.17.

47 “If you cannot equate yourself with God, you cannot know Him; for like is known by like” (Hermes, Lib. xi.2.208).
MAJOR ESSAYS

Otherwise stated, Prajāpati "desires (ham, man)" to become many, to "express (svi)" his children, and having done so is spilled and falls down unstrung (Brāhmaṇas, pasṣam). It is "with love (preṇa)" that he enters into them, and then he cannot come together (sambhāra) again, whole and complete, except by the sacrificial operation (TS v.5.2.1); he cannot from his disjointed parts put himself together (samhan), and can only be healed through the sacrificial operations of the gods (SB 1.5.3.36, etc.). It is sufficiently well known, and needs no demonstration here, that the final purpose of this operation in which the sacrificer symbolically sacrifices himself is to build up together again, whole and complete, both the sacrificer and the divided deity at one and the same time. It is evident that the possibility of such a simultaneous regeneration rests upon the theoretical identity of the sacrificer's real being with that of the immanent deity, postulated in the dictum, "That art thou." To sacrifice our self is to liberate the God within us.

In still another way we can illustrate the thesis by referring to those texts in which the immanent deity is spoken of as a "citizen" of the body politic in which he is, as it were, confined, and from which he also liberates himself when he remembers himself and we forget ourselves. That the human body is called a "city of God (puram...brahmāna, AV x.2.25; brahmānatā, pasṣam)" is well known, and he who as a bird (pakṣi bhātā) becomes a citizen in all these cities (srotās puraṇa puruṣyaḥ) is hermeneutically puruṣa (BU 1.5.18). The Solar Man or Person who thus inhabits us and is the Friend of All is also the beloved Vāmadeva, the Breath (prāṇa), "who set himself in the midst of all that is (sa yad idam sarvam madhyatavo) dāhe... and protected all that is from evil" (AA 1.2.1); and being in the womb (garbha...san) is the knower of all the births of the gods (Breaths, Intelligences, powers of the soul) who serve him (RV iv.27.1; KV v.3, etc.). He says of himself that "although a hundred cities held me fast, forth I sped with falcon speed" (RV iv.27.1), and that "I was Manu and the Sun" (RV iv.26.1; BU 14.10, etc.).

"Forth I sped... thus spake Vāmadeva incarnate (garbhe...sayānāḥ = puruṣyaḥ). The Comprehensory thereof, when separation from the body takes place, forth-standing upwards (ārthaka utkramya) and obtaining all desires in yonder world, has come together (samabhava), immortal" (AA 11.5; cf. 13.8, conclusion). Vāmadeva is here equated with that "other self (itara ātmā)" which, being all in act (kṛtayāpyaḥ).

stallion might pull out the pegs of his hobbles all at once, even so he pulls up the Breaths all together" (BU vi.1.13, cf. vi.10.26; CU vi.12)—thus recollecting himself (BU 14.3).

"Not knowing himself" (Sāyana); "become a Stranger to himself," Peter Sterny (de Sola Pinn, p. 166).

"Knowing himself" (Sāyana). "Now that I see in Mind, I see myself to be the All. I am in heaven and on earth, in water and in air; I am in beasts and plants; I am a babe in the womb, and one that is not yet conceived, and one that has been born; I am present everywhere" (Hermes, Lib. xii.1.18, cf. xi.2.208, cf. AV xi.4.20, RV iv.4.5, etc.).

With "I was Manu and the Sun" may be compared the verses of Amergin (Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse, ed. D.E.L. Nicholson and A.H.A. Lee, Oxford, 1916, p. 1) and those of Talesis (John Guenogry Evans, Poems from the Book of Talesis, Trelvan, 1915: Robert Douglas Scott, The Thumb of Knowledge in Legend, by Frank Sigard and Talesis, New York, 1915, p. 124 ff.). For example, Amergin: "I am the wind which blows o'er the sea, I am the wave of the ocean... a beam of the sun... the point of the lance in battle, the God who creates in the head the fire," and Talesis: "I have sung of what I passed through... I sing of true lineage... I was in many a guise before I was disenchanted... I was the hero in trouble... I am old. I am young... I am universal, I am possessed of penetrating wits." There is no doctrine of "reincarnation" here, but of the eternal amaraṇasa and sarvajñāna of the "Immortal Soul" (Spirit) of Meno 81 and Agni Jātavedas of the Indian texts.

When Death, the Person in the Sun, the Breath, abandons his stand in the heart and strides off (ārthakram), we are "out." Hence, with reference to the two selves of AA 11.5, etc., the question of Prajāpa Up. vi.3, "When I go forth, in which shall I be going forth (ārthakram)?"

Samabhava is more than just "became": it is rather "came together, whole and complete." Contrast TS v.5.2.1, where Prajāpati "cannot come together again (puruṣa samabhavam na itāknot) out of his children" until the Sacrifice has been performed, of which the sacrificer is born again in the sense of AA 13.8, amarāt evamānam abhisamabhava, samabhavati, "is regenerated, yea reborn as (or united with) the Immortal Self." In the same context Keith misunderstood it to be "samabhava, which is not "adorns this trunk" (as Vairocana might have supposed, CU viii.8.3) but "integrates, or completes, himself," as in AV vi.27, where Keith's "perfects himself" is quite acceptable. Contrast TS v.5.2.1 puruṣa samabhavam nāsaknot.

"Other" (and "dearer," BU 14.8) than the psycho-physical self that is reborn in the normal course of progressive reincarnation "for the perpetuation of these worlds and the doing of the holy tasks" (AA 11.5)—thus providing servants
when “old age is reached (vayogataḥ), departs (pāraisi) and is regenerated (punar jāyate = samabhavaat),” i.e., reborn for the third and last time.62

The escape of this “Dwarf,” Vāmana, the superintendent of the city (puram ... anuṣṭhāya), enthroned in the middle (madhye ... āśiṣam), and whom the Viśve Devāḥ (Breaths, functional powers of the soul) attend upon (upāsate),63 is further described in KU v.1-4, where it is asked, “When this unstrung body-dweller is released from the body (asya visrānasamānasya ... sarirasthāsya dehinah dehad muycyamānasya), what survives (kim pariṣīṣate)?” and answered: “That,” viz. Brahma, Ātman—the predicate of the dictum “That art thou.”64 Thus Ātman means that remains if we take away from our person all that is Not-self;65 our end is to exchange our own limited manner of being “So-and-so” for God’s unlimited manner of being simply—“Ego, daz wort ich, ist nieman eigen denn gebe alleine in siner einkeite.”66

A consideration of all that has been said so far will enable us to approach such a text as that of BU iv.4.1-7 without falling into the error of supposing that the “land leech” of verse 3 is one individual and definitely characterized “soul” that passes over from one body to another. Rather, it is the undivided and never individualized Self that having now re-collected itself (ātmānām upasamharati, cf. BG 11.68), and free from the “ignorance” of the body (with which it no longer identifies itself), transmigrates; this re-collected Self is the Brahmac that takes on every form and quality of existence, both good and evil,68 according to its desires and activities (verse 5); if it is still attached (saktah), still desirous (kāmyamānaḥ), this Self (ayam, i.e., ayam ātmā) returns (punar aśū) to that world to this world, but if without desire (aṅkāma-yamānaḥ), if it loves only itself (ātmakāmaḥ, cf. iv.3.21), then “being very Brahma, it enters into Brahma (brahmacāva san brahmāpyeṣi),” then the mortal becomes the immortal (verses 6, 7). The meaning of these passages is distorted, and given a reincarnationist sense, by all those translators (e.g., Hume and Śwāmi Madhavānanda) who translate ayam of verse 6 by “he” or “the man,” overlooking that this ayam is nothing but the ayam ātmā brahma of the preceding verse.69 The distinction is not of one “man” from another, but of the two forms of Brahma-Prajāpati, “mortal and immortal,”70 desirous and undesirous, circumscribed and uncircumscribed, etc. (SB iv.7.5.2; BU iv.11; MU iv.36, etc.), and of the “two minds, pure and impure” (MU iv.34.6), from one another.71 If we were in any doubt on this point, it is made very clear by the words of BU iv.35-38, “Here

62 As in MU vii.11.8 carati ... satyāntropakogārtaḥ daeitikāhra māhāmānaḥ, “The Great Self, having two natures, proceeds (moves, circulates, transmigrates) with intent to experience both the true and the false.”

63 On the interpretation of this ayam, cf. Śaṅkaraśāra on BU 14.10, “One must not think that the word ‘Brahma’ here means ‘a man who will become Brahma,’ for that would involve an anomaly. . . . If the objection be made that from BU iv.3.13 punyena karmāṇi ṭhavati ‘by good deed one becomes good,’ . . . it follows that there must be a transmigrating self other than and distinguishable from the Supreme (paramātmanaḥ nāyōḥ samādhiḥ), . . . we say, No . . . for one thing cannot become another.” It can only become what it is. Tāvām preñeta: Werbe was du bist.

64 RV 1.154.38 amaryta moryenā sayōmah. On these two selves (Plato’s mortal and immortal souls that dwell together in us) see Coomaraswamy, Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power, 1942, pp. 72 ff.

65 P. Deussen, Outline of Indian Philosophy (Berlin, 1907), 20. As in Buddhist procedure, where each of the five factors of the psycho-physical personality is dismissed with the words, “That is not my Self (na me so atāḥ).”

be bound by any one set of accidents” (Śaṅkaraśāry on BrSBh iv.2.10), is only an expansion of the implications of the logos, “That art thou.”

We have also indicated more briefly the ὑμολογία of the Indian and Platonic traditions, and have alluded to the Islamic parallels: rather to make the doctrine more comprehensible than to imply any derivation. From the same point of view we have still to refer to the Judaic and Christian doctrines. In the Old Testament we find that when we die and give up the ghost, “Then shall the dust return to the dust as it was: and the spirit (ruah) shall return to God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7). Of this, D. B. Macdonald remarks, the Preacher “is heartily glad, for it means a final escape for man.” To be “glad” of this can be thought of only for one who has known who he is and in which self he hopes to go hence. For the Jews, who did not anticipate a “personal immortality,” the soul (nēfēs) always implies “the lower, physical nature, the appetites, the psyche of St. Paul”—all that in Buddhist terms “is not my Self”—and they must therefore have believed, as Philo assuredly did, in a “soul of the soul,” the anēphos of St. Paul.76

When the soul-bird at last escapes from the net of the fowler (Psalms 124:7) and finds its King, then the apparent distinction of immanent from transcendent being dissolves in the light of day, and it hears and speaks with a voice that is at once its own and its King’s, saying

I was the Sin that from Myself rebell’d:
I the remorse that tow’rd Myself compell’d . . .
Pilgrim, Pilgrimage and Road
Was but Myself toward Myself: and Your
Arrival but Myself at my own door.71

II

It has been, we think, sufficiently shown that the scriptures of the Vedānta, from the Rg Veda to the Bhagavad Gītā, know of but One Transmigrant. Such a doctrine follows, indeed, inevitably from the word Advaita. The argument, “Brahma is only metaphorically called a ‘life’ (jīva, living being) on account of his connection with accidental conditions, the actual existence of any one such ‘life’ lasting for only so long as He continues to

68 “The eternal procession is the revelation of Himself to Himself. The knower being that which is known” (Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., T. 394). “It knew itself, that I am Brahman, thither it became the All” (BU 1.4.10).

71 I know these lines only from H. P. Shastri, Indian Mystic Verse (London, 1941).

72 Faridu’d-Din Ṭāṭār, Manṣūq’s Ta’irl; cf. Rūmī, Mathnawi, 1.3956-3965, and JUB 114.1-7.

82

74 Ibid., p. 139. So in Islam, e.g., Rūmī, Mathnawi, 1.1325f., “This carnal self (nafs) is Hell, and Hell is a Dragon. . . . To God (alone) belongs this foot (the power) to kill it”; 1.1327, “When the Soul of the soul (jān-jān = God, 1.781) withdraws from the soul, the soul becomes even as the soulless body, know this”; cf. JUB 1236, “Mind is a hell, speech is a hell, sight is a hell,” etc. The internal conflict of Reason (ṣuq = ṣuq) with the carnal soul (nafs) is compared to that of a man and woman living together in one house (ibid., 1.1361 ff.). As Jahangir said in his memoirs apropos of Gosain Jadrāp, Tasawwuf and Vedānta are the same. As R. A. Nicholson (on Mathnawi 1.3812) puts it, the Sufi doctrine is that “God is the essence of all existences . . . [while] everything in the world of contingency is separated from the Absolute [only] by individualization. The prophets were sent to unite the particular with the Universal.”

75 With reference to the doctrine elsewhere, A. H. Ghehrad-Lestrage states very correctly that “the transmigration of souls is generally misconstrued as the passing of a soul from one person to another. . . . What actually takes place is that the Individual [i.e., the God-Soul incarnates again and again until it attains the aim of incarnating as a Seeker who will go upon the Quest and eventually lose individuality and become one with the freed God-Soul” (The Tradition of Silence in Myth and Legend, Boston, 1940, p. 63). Notable repudiations of reincarnationist interpretation will be found in Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, tr. N. Rowe (London, 1905), v.53; in Hermes, Lib. 1.19-22; and in Manilao Viciano, who held, in the words of Kristeller, that “wherever Plato seems to speak of a transmigration of the human soul into other natural species, we must understand by it the different forms and habits of human life” (Paul O. Kristeller, The Philosophy of Manilao Viciano, New York, 1943, p. 118). Cf. Eissler, “Orphisch-Dionysische Mysteriengedanken,” p. 395.
In Christianity there is a doctrine of *karma* (the operation of mediate causes) and of a fate that lies in the created causes themselves, but no doctrine of reincarnation. No stronger abjections of the “soul” are anywhere to be found than are met with in the Christian Gospels. “No man can be my disciple who hateth not . . . his own soul” (εὐαγγελίαν, Luke 14:26); that soul which “he who hateth in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:25), but which “whoever seeks to save, shall lose” (Lukas 9:25). Compared with the Disposer (κατάσκευα sāmkhya), other beings “are neither beautiful, nor good, nor are at all” (neq sunt, St. Augustine, *Confessions* x.s.). The central doctrine has to do with the “descent” (avatāra) of a Sotra whose eternal birth was “before Abraham” and “through whom all things were made.” This One himself declares that “no man hath ascended up to heaven, but that he came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven” (John 3:13); and says, moreover, “Whither I go, ye cannot come” (John 8:21), and that “If any man would follow me, let him deny himself” (Mark 8:24).

The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (ψυχῆς) from spirit (πνεύμα, Heb. 4:12).” When St. Paul, who distinguishes the Inner and the Outer Man (11 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16), says of himself, “I live, yet not I, but Christ in me” (Gal. 2:20) he has denied himself, has lost his soul to save it and knows “in whom, when he departs hence, he will be departing”; what survives (assemble) will not be “this man,” Paul, but—the Savior himself. In Sūtra terms, “St. Paul” is “a dead man walking.”

When the Savior’s visible presence is withdrawn he is represented in

us by the Counsellor (παράκλητος),74 “Even the Spirit of Truth (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας) . . . which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, . . . He will lead you into all truth” (John 14:17, 26; 16:13). In him we cannot but see Plato’s immanent Δαίμων and “Hymen,”75 “who cares for nothing but the truth” and whom God has given to each one of us “to dwell along with him and in him” (Hippias major 288b, Timaeus 90a); St. Augustine’s Ingenium, the scholastic Synteresis, Dante’s Amor, and our Inwrit or Conscience in its fullest (and not merely ethical) significance.

“His world is the World—indeed,”76 whose Self, the All-maker, All-doer, who indwells this abysmal bodily-composite, has been found and is awakened (yasyānunaitā praviruddha ātma)77 . . . the Lord of what hath been and shall be . . . Desiring him only for their World, the Travellers (pravijān) abandon this world” (BU iv.4,13, 15, 22)—lest the Last Judgment come and find me unannihilate, and I be seized and bound and given into the hands of my own selfhood” (William Blake).

Only, indeed, if we recognize that Christ and not “I” is our real Self and the only experient in every living being can we understand the words, “I was an hungered . . . I was thirsty . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:35). It is from this point of view that Meister Eckhart speaks of the man who knows himself as “seeing thy Self in everyone, and everyone in thee” (Evans ed., II, 132), as the Bhagavad Gita speaks of the unified man as “everywhere seeing the same Lord universally hypostasized, the Self established in all beings and all beings in the Self” (vi.29 with xiii.28). Were it not that whatever we do to “others” is thus really done to our Self that is also their Self, there would be no metaphysical basis for any doing to “others” as we would be done by; the principle is implicit in the rule and only more explicit elsewhere.

The command to “hate” our relatives (Luke 14:26) must be understood

76 *Cathedram habet in cuelo qui intus corda docet* (St. Augustine, *In epist. Ioannis ad Parthos*). Ommne verum, a qui omnia dictatur, est a spiritu sancto (St. Ambrose on 1 Cor. 13:3). Dhīyo yo naḥ pradnyaṇāya (RV vii.62.10) . . . yo buddhāvantuka dhyāyaḥ (MU vi.34).

77 *Armano tāma netā mṛtah, MU vi.7. Viśva devaṁyā (savitum) netu marto vurtam rakṣam, RV vii.50.1.*

78 “World” (loka) here absolutely (as in BU i.4,15–17, 15.17; CV i.4.3; MU vi.34; SB i.8.1,35, etc., where the contingent and real worlds are contrasted); the Kingdom of Heaven, “within you” (BU iii.9.17, 35).

79 Pratibuddhā agreeing with ātma, not with yasa. Cf. BD vii.57 (n. 84).
from the same point of view: "others" are no more valid objects of love than "I" am; it is not as "our" relatives or neighbors that they are to be loved, but as our Self (ātmanas tu āmāya, BU 11.4.5); just as it is only himself that God loves in us, so it is God we ought to love in one another.

Upon this immanent Spirit of Truth, the Divine Eros, our very life depends, until we "give up the ghost"—the Holy Ghost. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh availeth nothing" (John 6:63). "The power of the soul, which is in the semen through the Spirit enclosed therein, fashions the body" (Sum. Theol. iii.32.11). This is the "Sower (σπέρμα) went forth to sow... Some fell upon stony places... But other fell into good ground... The field is the world" (Matt. 13:3-9, 37)—sadasud yonim āpadyate (MU 111.2). And is this Divine Eros, the "Know-er of the Field" (BG 311), any other than the Prodigal Son "who was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found"—dead for so long as he had forgotten who he was, and alive again "when he came to himself" (Luke 15:11 ff.)?

It has been said, "Ye crucify him daily" (cf. Heb. 6:6), and so assuredly does every man who is convinced that "I am" or "I do" and therewith divides up this One conceptually into many independent and possible beings. Of all the conclusions to be drawn from the doctrine of the One

and Only Transmigrant, the most poignant is this, that whereas He is the bird caught in the net, the Ram caught in the thicket, the sacrificial Victim and our Savior, he cannot save us except and unless we, by the sacrifice and denial of our self, also save Him. 

As is also implied in the Christian doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Cf. St. Augustine, "When we all sing, it is that One Man who sings in us" (In Pr. 136); in praying, we should not say "we" but "I," because although it is actually a multitude that speaks severally, really "it is that One Man who speaks, who is distributed throughout the world" (In Pr. 122); and so, "If, on the one hand, we die in him and in him are resurrected, he on the other hand dies and is resurrected in us" (Epist. 140).

The Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ is represented in Buddhism by that of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It is in the Samgha (सम्बन्ध) that the distributed Buddha-nature is reintegrated; in this communion those separated members are reunited, which Prajñāpati "could not put together again" (na kṣāja sambhātam, SB 1.6.3.36) otherwise than by means of the Sacrifice in which the sacrificer (identified with the oblivion) and the Sacrifice are jointly regenerated.