

[Teilhard de Chardin] saw God as the source of all being, and in particular as the source of the evolutionary force. In view of the systems concept of God as the universal dynamics of self-organization, we can say that among the many images mystics have used to describe the Divine, Teilhard's concept of God, if liberated from its patriarchal connotations, may well be the one that comes closest to the views of modern science.

Fritjof Capra *The Turning Point* 1982, p332

There is no God that “there is.”

(Einen Gott, den ‘es gibt’, gibt es nicht.)

This could be paraphrased as follows:

The God, of whom people say, “There is a God,” does not exist.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Act and Being* 1950, p126 (Akt und Sein 1936)

Suppose we become acutely aware of our own human limits: we realize that we are always inside human language and only ever see the world through our human eyes. All that is ever accessible to us is the relative god, my god. As I see this, metaphysics dies and I am left knowing only my god, my guiding religious ideal. And this is the non-realist philosophy of religion in a nutshell.

Don Cupitt *Is Nothing Sacred? The Non-Realist Philosophy of Religion*

The concept “God” was invented as the opposite of the concept life — everything detrimental, poisonous and slanderous and all deadly hostility to life was bound together in one horrible unit in Him.

The concept “sin”...was invented in order to confuse and muddle our instincts and to render the mistrust of them man’s second nature

Friedrich Nietzsche

Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,
We gave him justice as the ages rolled,
Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,
And long suffering, and mercies manifold.

And, tricked by our own early dream
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived,
Our making soon our maker did we deem,
And what we had imagined we believed.

‘Till, in Time’s stayless stealthy swing,
Uncompromising rude reality
Mangled the Monarch of our fashioning,
Who quavered, sank; and now has ceased to be...

In order to find an absolute ground for love and to “outlove” the radically destructive reality of death—that is why we humans began to believe in God. If we understand the question of God today as a question about the possibility of love and humanity, nothing less is at stake than the question whether the preciousness we long for in love and feel in the experience of love ultimately merely grasps at nothing and ceases with death, or whether it has an absolute ground, which confirms that longing. It is the need to believe in the reality of love that provides the foundation for belief in God.

The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of being is *God*... And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it, and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of our being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation.

Paul Tillich *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p 63f

God does not exist. He is being-itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him...

Instead of arguing for the existence of God, analyze the human situation in such a way that the question of God becomes possible and necessary...

Religious symbols are double-edged: they point towards the infinite and towards the finite. ...If Father is employed as a symbol for God, fatherhood is seen in its theonomous, sacramental depth.

Paul Tillich *Systematic Theology*

We are, in researching nature, pantheists
In poetry, polytheists
In morality, monotheists.

Goethe Maxims and Reflections No 807

Extended, the lines of relationships intersect in the eternal You. Every single You is a window to that You. Through every single You the basic word addresses the eternal You...People have addressed their eternal You with many names... All divine names remain sacrosanct, because in them God is not merely spoken of, but also to.

The eternal You cannot become it, by its very nature...And yet we make the eternal You into an it, turning God into an object...Humans desire to have God: they desire the continuity of having God in time and space...That is the way God becomes an object of faith. Originally, faith completes relationship acts, gradually, it replaces them.

Martin Buber *I and Thou*.

My essential concern, the close connection of the relationship to God with the relationship to one's fellow human being. ...

We recognized that the You that goes from person to person is the same as the You that descends to us from the divine and ascends from us to it. ..That biblical twinning of divine and human love in the twofold law of love turns our attention to the transparency of the finite You, but also to the grace of the infinite, to appear where and how it will.

Perhaps after all the Freudians are right, that such a God—the God of traditional popular theology—is a projection, and perhaps we are being called to live without that projection.

John Robinson *Honest to God* 1963, p 17-18

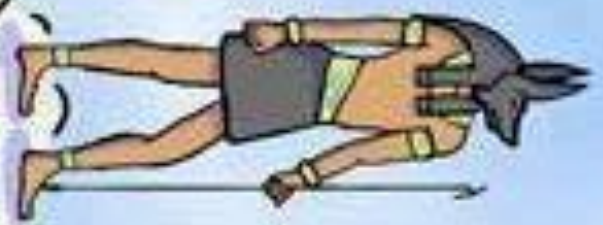
Feuerbach called on his hearers to embrace what he called the religion of man, saying, "We must replace the love of God by the love of man as the only true religion . . . the belief in God by the belief in man. The fate of mankind depends not on a being outside it and above it but on mankind itself . . . My wish is to transform friends of God into friends of man, believers into thinkers, devotees of prayer into devotees of work, candidates for the hereafter into students of this world".

To which I add, "In the evolving world of human thought the idea of God has now done its work and a great work it was. It is over to us, as humanity come of age, to shoulder responsibilities we once expected the heavenly parent to do for us."

In what sense is God 'real'? God as mystery may seem altogether unreal. A good analogy is that of love. No one would deny the reality of love. It is one of life's most powerful forces, but where does love come from? Is it from some outside source, some reservoir of love on which we can draw, perhaps like one of Plato's forms? Or is it something that springs into life spontaneously whenever people act lovingly to one another? Whatever one's view, the reality of love is the same. The experience of God as love is widespread, and the reality of God may be conceived in the same way as the reality of love.

I cannot conceive of a personal God who would directly influence the actions of individuals, or would directly sit in judgment on creatures of his own creation. I cannot do this in spite of the fact that mechanistic causality has, to a certain extent, been placed in doubt by modern science. My religiosity consists in a humble admiration of the infinitely superior spirit that reveals itself in the little that we, with our weak and transitory understanding, can comprehend of reality. Morality is of the highest importance -- but for us, not for God.

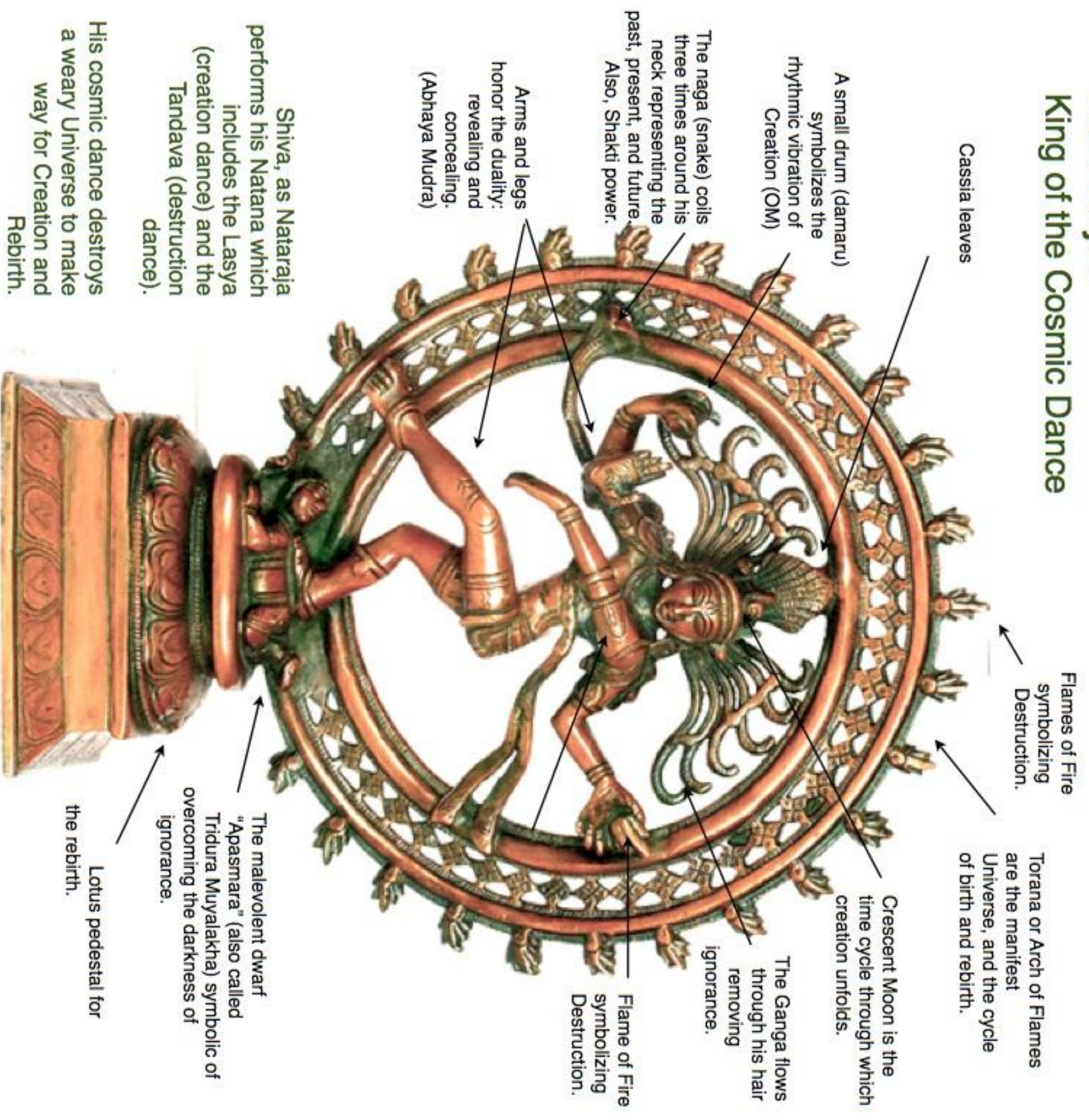
Albert Einstein, *The Human Side*, edited by Helen Dukas and Banesh Hoffman, p66



EVOLUTION OF GOD

Teddy Tiez
© 2012

Nataraja: King of the Cosmic Dance



Nataraja Nartana Sundara Nataraja
The Lord of the Cosmic Dance. Beautiful dancer.

...in place of theism—belief in a person-like Creator God—or deism—belief in an original or underlying Intelligence—and in place too of pantheism and panentheism, we have theopraxy: God as the very practice of realizing God. This is the only God we need as well as the only God who has been God all along

Michael Benedikt *God is the Good We Do: Theology of Theopraxy*, 2007 Loc 1663

I am not an Atheist and I do not know if I can define myself as a Pantheist. The problem involved is too vast for our limited minds... We see a universe marvelously arranged, obeying certain laws, but we understand the laws only dimly. Our limited minds cannot grasp the mysterious force that sways the constellations. I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings.”

Albert Einstein

Read a well-written love song and as a rule you won't know whether it is religious mysticism or a "profane" poem between two lovers.

The Song of Songs in the Bible—what are they? Intoxicated witnesses to the longing of the soul for its God or sensuous lyrics of sexual encounter?

Or the Indian songs between Krishna and the cowgirls—are they documents of sacred or profane courtly love?

Neither nor, one can only say... all love is directed to God; it comes from the realm of the absolute and requires a response back to there. The experience of love is that there is *no distinction any more* between heaven, earth and human being.

For the Jew Jesus, the question of God was never theoretical. In ancient Greece, centuries before him, there were excited and exciting debates, whether there really are gods nor not;—a man like Socrates was condemned to death because he did *not* believe in gods, but, with Anaxagoras, declared the sun to be a stone. For a man like Jesus, there was no problem of “atheism” in the Greek sense. Whether God “really” “is” or not, was for him decided exclusively by whether and how he had effects in human life...God in the Hebrew view is a power whose reality lies in its ability to order the human heart. It was the achievement of the man from Nazareth to have seen this ordering power exclusively in love, not in the observance of external laws, not in priestly rituals and not in scribal tradition, only in love.

Jesus talked of God, not to explain the order of the world, but to heal the disorder of the human heart. Confessing God as “creator” of the world did not mean for the Jew Jesus naming in a Greek way a principle that brought about the world, it ‘merely’ meant anchoring the human world, threatened by chaos, in God.

Jesus talked of God as his “Father,” not because goodness and humanity were clearly “discernable” in world events, but because he faced the lostness of human existence as a whole and wanted to heal it with the power of an infinite goodness. Everyone, Jesus saw, would need to feel entitled to be in the world and not (spoken with Ivan Karamazov) have to earn the “entry ticket” into life. This feeling of an unconditional entitlement to existence was what Jesus wanted to gift everyone; *that* was the content of his faith in God and out of this faith alone grew the power of a humanity that was in a position to stand up to the inhumanity of world and history.

It's all a question of story...We are in between stories.
The Old Story—the account of how the world came to
be and how we fit into it—is no longer functioning
properly, and we have not yet learned the New Story. .

Thomas Berry

The Enlightenment idea of simply replacing Christianity with an uncomplicated science-based secular humanism that would invoke no more than a few universal ideas about reason, fact, experience, consciousness, human nature and the like—*that* project has turned out to be a failure.

It is a dream whose pursuit has become a nightmare...there is a need now for a new Grand Narrative theology that will get us out of the nightmare. The new task is not to spin a new updated *cosmic* history...it is to explain the history of our “ideal culture.”...In short, I want a Christian narrative, and a story that makes religious sense, about the birth, the life, the death, *and* the afterlife of God.

We need myths that will help us:

- Identify with all our fellow-beings, not simply with those who belong to our ethnic, national or ideological tribe
- Realize the importance of compassion, which is not always regarded as sufficiently productive or efficient in our pragmatic, rational world.
- Create a spiritual attitude, to see beyond our immediate requirements, and enable us to experience a transcendent value that challenges our solipsistic selfishness.
- Venerate the earth as sacred once again, instead of merely using it as a 'resource.' This is crucial, because unless there is some kind of spiritual revolution that is able to keep abreast of our technological genius, we will not save our planet.

Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*.

America's religious marketplace has all the features of competitive success:

- Salesmanship...
- Innovation...
- Product proliferation. There is a different church or religion for every possible market niche.
- Customer focus...
- Product variety. You can find everything from Buddhist sects to feuding branches of Judaism in any reasonably-sized city.

America leads the world in producing religious entrepreneurs.

I continue to be impressed by the vitality and strength of youth spirituality, and its astonishing appearance in the midst of a secular education system that does not encourage it, a religious system that does not understand it, and a materialist society that gives no official sanction to it.

David Tacey *The Spirituality Revolution* 2003, p175

But if our psychology is not itself to be debased by scientific objectification, then it must follow where liberated consciousness leads it; into the province of the dream,
the myth,
the visionary rapture,
the sacramental sense of reality,
the transcendent symbol.

Theodore Roszak *Where the Wasteland Ends* 1972, p 414

Our age-old religious quest for reconnection with origins has been the search not only for our origins, but for our Creator as an inspirational source of guidance and security that would lead us to a better life.

In the early childhood of human civilization we imaged this source in sacred nature itself, symbolized by the Great Mother.

Then we shifted our attention and loyalty to a Father God, casting him in human image, making him a mathematician when we invented mathematics and an engineer when we invented machinery.

In our adolescent cheek, science rejected the father God, believing there was nothing greater or more intelligent in all the universe than ourselves.

Now, on the brink of maturity, we can see that our earliest intuitions were most valid. The source of our creation is indeed an inspirational being far greater and wiser than ourselves—...Gaia, our living Earth....

The ecological community is not subordinate to the human community. Nor is the ecological imperative derivative from human ethics. Rather our human ethics is derivative from the ecological imperative. The basic ethical norm is the well-being of the comprehensive community, and the attainment of human well-being within this comprehensive community. The Earth is not part of the Human Story, the human story is part of the Earth Story.

Perhaps a new revelatory experience is taking place, an experience wherein human consciousness awakens to the grandeur and sacred quality of the earth process. Humanity has not participated in such a vision since shamanic times, but in such a renewal lies our hope for the future for ourselves and for the entire planet.

Thomas Berry *Ethics and Ecology*, p9

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; ... that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, ...all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's salvation henceforth be safely built.

Bertrand Russell

We have a new story of the universe.
Science has given us a new revelatory experience.
It is now giving us a new intimacy with the earth.

Thomas Berry

We are a storymaking species...Indeed, all societies are structured on and by story, history, herstory, and although much of this is believed to be true, it comes from human perception and therefore will always be incomplete.

...What we call fiction is not so much creation as a rearrangement of experience, actual or vicarious. ...At the deepest level, fiction is a vehicle for the universal truth that is hidden in us all, truth that is rarely contained in factual writing.

..the story as told here is not the story of a mechanistic, essentially meaningless universe, but the story of a universe that has from the beginning had its mysterious self-organising power, that, if experienced in any serious manner, must evoke an even greater sense of awe than that evoked in earlier times.

Maybe the evolutionary sequence really is from matter to body to mind to soul to spirit, each transcending and including, each with a greater depth and greater consciousness and wider embrace. And in the highest reaches of evolution, maybe, just maybe, an individual's consciousness does indeed touch infinity—a total embrace of the entire Kosmos—a Kosmic consciousness that is Spirit awakened to its own true nature. It's at least plausible.

And tell me: is that story, sung by mystics and sages the world over, any crazier than the scientific materialism story, which is that the entire sequence is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying absolutely nothing? Listen very carefully: just which of those two stories actually sounds totally insane?