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Philosophy 15 - Religions of the World

December 6, 2023

2795 Words

RECONCILING CHRISTIANITY WITH THEOSOPHY

The goal of this paper is to develop and describe my current Theosophical worldview against the backdrop of my native Christianity. While Tibetan Buddhism and Philosophical Hinduism perhaps come closer to Theosophy in general, I chose instead to seize the opportunity to develop the main thesis of my academic life, which is resolving Christianity with the ageless wisdom known as Theosophy.

The Gods & the Perennial Philosophy

I will begin by stating my belief in a *perennial philosophy* that is being revealed to mankind over many ages in two primary ways. The first method is within each individual consciousness, for as a student/disciple progresses on the Way, the nature of their consciousness changes, earning wisdom in the form of personal revelations. This action occurs largely between the Soul and its vehicle, the Personality incarnate in the physical body, and this process is marked by various *spiritual initiations* that result in greater and more inclusive states of awareness. This is the basis of my belief that all religions and spiritual paths are essentially valid, because they can all be used by the Soul to develop and perfect the Personality. In Theosophy, this process is the microcosmic correspondence of the Great Work.

The second method is the macrocosmic technique of divine revelation for all of humanity, which is even more gradual and entails occasional revelations given out by a guiding body that I will call our *spiritual leaders*. These revelations are then used to guide the evolution of the entire human species for a specific time and purpose. I believe this is the method used by the Christ Jesus, and that His teaching was split between the exoteric admonishment to *love thy neighbor* and a deeper, esoteric message that He wanted to deliver to mankind, but had trouble teaching even to his disciples. I believe these deeper, esoteric truths, broadly called wisdom or mystery teachings, hold the true significance of His message and actions.

I believe that students of the ancient mystery schools of Sumer, Egypt, Persia, India and Greece were trained in occult knowledge that resulted in spiritual initiations for some of the students. They were first instructed by those whom they held to be gods, with the one known as Thoth, Hermes Trismegistus and Quetzalcoatl being especially linked with magic and the wisdom traditions. As time and human civilization progressed, these seemingly god-like beings made war against one another using human civilizations as their armies. At these times, one or other of these gods would make *testaments* with certain tribes, promising success in war, offspring and other issues, in return for submission and obedience. The specific identity of these beings is difficult to determine, as is their polarity with respect to mankind, but included many deities, some of whom I believe are theonymical as individuals or as clans/bloodlines. These include Enki/Ptah/Poseidon/Neptune, Enlil/JHVH/Zeus/Jupiter and many other names that we all know from history and myth. These gods eventually withdrew from human society and replaced themselves with designated demi-humans to lead the human population as priest-rulers.

I believe that these actions were coordinated with the group of spiritual leaders composed of those rare demi-gods and humans who achieved the higher spiritual initiations. This ever-growing and changing group now serves as the planetary heart center and includes the Buddha, Jesus and many others, and can be described as the Ashram of the Christ, or as humanity's Spiritual Hierarchy. These advanced products of human evolution coexist, communicate and cooperate with building devas great and small, some of whom are believed to be angels and archangels, such as Gabriel, who plays an instrumental role in all Abrahamic traditions. Under whatever name these spiritual leaders are known, they are universally considered to be working under the will aspect of Shambala, the planetary crown center and the ashram of the planetary logos, a being known in the bible as *the Ancient of Days*. (Daniel 7:9) (1)

It is against this broad backdrop of belief that I will employ Stephen Prothero's (2) four-step approach (Problem, Solution, Technique, Exemplars) to defining and comparing Christianity and Theosophy.

Four-Step Analysis of Christian & Theosophical Beliefs

The Problem

The problem that Christianity attempts to deal with is the *original sin* committed by Adam and Eve, which many mainstream adherents believe occurred around 4000 BC. This entails Adam and Eve eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which results in the fall of mankind from a perfected state. In addition to my belief that human civilization is far older than some Christians believe, Theosophical writings (3) teach that a cosmic version of evil or sin is inherent within the planetary logoc sheath, the being upon whose physical body "*we live and move and have our being*." (Acts 17:28) (4) Therefore, the seed of

sin is present in all planetary atomic forms and is therefore a part of our bodies as well. This includes not only the physical body but the astral/emotional and mental sheaths as well, none of which are considered to be *principles* in Theosophy. The majority of human evolution is aimed at the purification of these sheaths by the development of control over the activities related to the chakra centers below the diaphragm, to purify and develop the manas (mind) and agape (love) in response to the archetypes set before us by the planetary and solar logoi.

The Solution

The solution that Christianity offers is *salvation*, which is essentially an eternal reward of life in heaven with God. Viewing life as suffering, as Hindus and Buddhists do, I see this reward as not being so very different from their respective goals of freedom from the Wheel of Samsara (reincarnation) or even Nirvana. I believe these words to be symbolic forms of the various states of consciousness, or of Being, that exist as subtle, less-concrete states than our dense physical bodies and senses. Theosophy asserts that we are all destined to evolve into the higher states of consciousness as God's plan develops, and that reincarnation is compulsory only until the 5th Initiation is taken.

The Technique

Depending on the branch, the techniques employed by Christianity to achieve salvation require orthodox belief, or a combination of *doctrinal faith and good works*, as necessary to achieve salvation. The Nicene Creed, immortalized in 381 AD, contains a greater number of stated beliefs than the later Apostle's or Athanasian Creeds, and the Nicene Creed is considered to be the only ecumenical creed because it is accepted by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and major Protestant churches.

The Nicene Creed

The Father

The first and most important belief the Nicene Creed asserts is in the monism of one Father, Creator of heaven and earth. In my opinion, the jealous God of Israel is not the creator of the entire universe. Theosophy uses the principle of correspondence or analogy (as above, so below) to explain the macro/micro relationships that constitute us being *created in our father's image*. (Genesis 1:26) (5) The first divine manifestation was the Lord of the 1st Ray, or the emanation of *divine will*, Shiva, and is analogous to the Father on the highest levels of creation. Other beings hold the position of Father relative to other beings as the macrocosm approaches contact with the microcosm.

The Son

The Son, Vishnu, viewed macrocosmically, is equal to the 2nd Ray of Love-Wisdom and is the cause of the attraction and cohesion of all forms, thereby providing confirmation and insight to the special language used in the Nicene Creed. Microcosmically, Christ became the human embodiment of the 2nd Logos, the Son of God, as a bodhisattva or world teacher.

The Holy Spirit

The Nicene Creed then describes the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and Son, completing the divine triplicity. Theosophy views the first divine emanation as splitting into the duality of Father/spirit and mother/matter, the latter holding a position analogous to the Holy Spirit, Brahma, the 3rd Ray, or Divine Intelligence. Viewing the entire created universe as Brahma, this perspective of the 3 Rays as the divine archetypes of Father-Son-Mother or

Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma, Theosophy can be said to broadly concur with the Nicene Creed on these important points.

Vicarious Atonement

The Nicene Creed asserts belief in the vicarious atonement of Jesus for the sins of the world. Theosophy also acknowledges that Jesus came to effect our salvation, and that He knew that it would require dying for us as well. Yet the understanding is not one of atonement achieved automatically by this one act of Jesus, but that He set the example, becoming the blueprint for achieving the first seven spiritual initiations on Earth and merging with the Father, i.e. the planetary logos, the planetary embodiment of the Ray 1 energy of divine will. Therefore, the two worldviews can be reconciled once again with a shift in perspective and interpretation of the words used in scripture and in the Nicene Creed. These are further examples of how apparently contradictory beliefs can all be true at once, and is a warning to any who would commit the *heresy of certainty* that their interpretation is the only correct one.

The Virgin Birth

The Nicene Creed asserts Jesus' virgin birth through the agency of Gabriel. Although widely believed to be an archangel, Gabriel may instead prove to be another name for one of the gods, with evidence already pointing to the Enlilite God of Thunder, Ninurta or Thor. Macrocosmically, the perspective of the virgin birth should be extended to the point of origination of the 2nd Ray, the Father's only begotten Son, who is unbegotten by the Mother. The first spiritual initiation is known in Theosophy as *The Birth* and helps the seeker move from the Path of Ignorance to the Path of Knowledge.

Baptism

Baptism in water is an integral part of the beliefs of most of the world's Christians. This is intended to be symbolic of a baptism in spirit, but as water indicates, this baptism may be occurring only in the physical and subtle astral/emotional planes, not in the fiery mental planes, the airy buddhic planes or the boundlessness of the spiritual planes, which Theosophy teaches exist *above* the denser planes of form-based consciousness. The second spiritual initiation is called *The Baptism*, and it places the seeker firmly on the Path of Discipleship and may involve a removal or lessening of the karmic burdens one has accumulated through many lives upon various Paths. This understanding renders Theosophy compatible with mainstream Christian belief once again if allowances are made for perspective.

The Church

The Nicene Creed asserts the belief in a single, holy catholic and apostolic church. Theosophy believes that the Christ, as World Savior, is the head of the ongoing spiritual leadership of humanity. It also holds all of the Masters of Wisdom from the various religions and mystery traditions to be its exemplars and apostles. When one considers also the whole of humanity to be the collective congregation of Christ's church, I believe Theosophy's views are consistent with this portion of the Nicene Creed as well.

The Resurrection, Ascension & Second Coming

The final portions of the Nicene Creed deal with the Christ's resurrection and ascension, and with His second coming to judge the living and the dead, and usher in the new kingdom at the *end of days*. Theosophists believe in literal interpretations of Christ's resurrection, citing the

ability of a Master of Wisdom to create a mayavirupa; a physical vehicle with which they can interact with the dense world of men.

Theosophy attempts to recognize and reconcile many disparate pairs of opposites, and such seems to be required to interpret the ascension narrative. The ascension of the body of Christ to heaven as a physical event seems to be a narrow interpretation of the event as a whole, yet perhaps this might be precisely how the event appeared to His disciples. Either way, there is more to the story of the Christ's ascension as the Initiate Who demonstrated the process of developing from an incarnate son of man into a Son of God. Theosophy teaches that the first two initiations (Birth & Baptism) are followed by the Transfiguration, Renunciation, Revelation, Decision and Resurrection.

According to Theosophical writings (6), these seven spiritual initiations were all achieved and demonstrated for the first time on Earth through a human body by the initiate, Jesus, while incarnating as the Christ, bodhisattva or world savior. According to many students of Theosophy, the Second Coming of Christ is viewed as the fruition of the Love-Wisdom nature within mankind, yet many also believe that a world savior will arrive in the form of the Maitreya buddha, another flesh-and-blood world savior, or Christ. Theosophy therefore, broadly accepts these tenets of the Nicene Creed as also being true according to their own traditions.

Theosophy employs additional techniques that Christianity speaks little about but I believe were part of Christ's teachings to his inner circle. They may yet be practiced in some form within holy orders, and I believe they largely consist of kriya and raja yoga (union) meditations, although the higher initiations are known to involve the raising of the serpent-fire, kundalini, within the human spinal column. Agni Yoga, on the other hand, guides disciples

through day-to-day living while they do the work of purification necessary for the higher work associated with ascension in form.

Exemplars

Christianity is exemplified by a large number of prophets, martyrs and saints who serve as important examples for later disciples to follow. Jesus stands alone as the Son of God, but along with Judaism, Christianity also shares reverence for the biblical Kings David and Solomon. King Solomon in particular is a key figure in speculative Freemasonry, a mysterious tradition that is very much linked with Theosophy. Few Christians seem convinced that the teachings of and about the prophet Muhammad were part of the divine dispensation from the God of Abraham, and most seem to shun the religion completely. Theosophical writings seem to have little to say about mainstream Islam as well, but they share much with certain perspectives held by Sufi mystics, such as the intoxicated poet, Rumi.

Modern Theosophy is exemplified by a few key individuals starting with H.P. Blavatsky and H.S. Olcott in the late 19th century. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* (7) is considered to be part of the ongoing dispensation of ageless wisdom teachings imparted by man's spiritual leaders, in her case by the Master Morya. Their work is (arguably) believed to have continued through the work of the master, Djwhal Khul, to Alice A. Bailey. The Bailey canon is so extensive that it took me 8 years to read all of her 24 books, which are more than *five times longer* than the Old and New Testaments combined, each offered with the order and clarity of a modern textbook. More broadly however, Theosophy acknowledges adepts (4th Initiation) and masters (5th+ Initiation) of every path, including Hindu yogis, swamis and sages, various buddhas and lamas, as well as many catholic and protestant saints and highly-developed moral and spiritual

exemplars from other paths. Some of the more famous names include the masters Kuthumi, St. Germain, Paramahansa Yogananda, Swami Vivekenanda and many others, who are all thought to be participating in the spiritual guidance of humanity from the Buddhist plane of consciousness, called in the Holy Bible *the Kingdom of God*.

Summary

In summary, the problem Christianity identifies is original sin, whereas Theosophy identifies it as reincarnation and the subsequent lives of suffering. The solution Christianity offers is salvation through the technique of belief and good works for the reward of heaven, while Theosophy emphasizes moksha as the means to achieve freedom from reincarnation. Christianity emphasizes the techniques of doctrinal faith and good works, while Theosophy focuses upon the purification of the physical, astral and mental bodies in order to achieve union with and identification as the soul, the Son, and eventually merging consciousness with the planetary logos, the Father. These include the states of consciousness referred to as heaven, nirvana, devachan and others.

I hope that I have shown Theosophy to be essentially compatible with Christianity upon every point of the Nicene Creed, but I understand that many Christians will disagree. Theosophy requires the Christian seeker to make a very real *leap of faith* to even acquaint oneself with its seemingly heretical doctrines, and years of difficult study, prayer and meditation to develop the knowledge and discernment required to decipher Christ's message in these broader, more esoteric perspectives. Yet, Theosophists perceive these to be indispensable truths pertaining to the meaning of life and the techniques of ascension, linking them with Jesus' promise that "...the Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) (8)

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A.U.M. Chart IV

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

ATOMIC
SUB-ATOMIC
THIRD SUB-PLANE
FOURTH SUB-PLANE
FIFTH SUB-PLANE
SIXTH SUB-PLANE
SEVENTH SUB-PLANE

I. DIVINE
ADI OR PLANE OF THE LOGOS
FIRST COSMIC ETHERIC

II. MONADIC
ANUPADAKA
SECOND COSMIC ETHERIC

III. SPIRITUAL
ATOMIC PLANE
THIRD COSMIC ETHERIC

IV. INTUITIONAL
BUDDHIC PLANE
FOURTH COSMIC ETHERIC

V. MENTAL
MANASIC PLANE
COSMIC GASEOUS

VI. EMOTIONAL
ASTRAL/KAMA PLANE
COSMIC LIQUID

VII. PHYSICAL
PHYSICAL PLANE
COSMIC DENSE

MONAD
SPIRITUAL TRIAD
PERSONALITY

WILL

ACTIVITY WISDOM

SPIRITUAL WILL
ATOMIC PERMANENT ATOM

INTUITION
BUDDHIC PERMANENT ATOM

MIND
MANASIC PERMANENT ATOM

DIVINE EGO Δ EGOIC OR CAUSAL BODY

MENTAL UNIT

ASTRAL PERMANENT ATOM

PHYSICAL PERMANENT ATOM

ATOMIC
SUB-ATOMIC
SUPER-ETHERIC
ETHERIC

FIRST ETHER
SECOND ETHER
THIRD ETHER
FOURTH ETHER
GASEOUS
LIQUID
DENSE