

XIX. Plotinus and Indian Philosophy

By Gordon Stavig, *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture* 53 (Aug. 2002), pp. 313-18; (Sept. 2002), pp. 360-64.

Neoplatonism which was founded by Plotinus (c. 205-70), is a grand creative unified synthesis of the four major schools of Greek metaphysical philosophy. It is the culmination of Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Neo-Pythagorean doctrines. This apex of Greek thought resembles Indian philosophical and religious ideas in many ways.¹ After his death Plotinus' ideas were rejected and purposely suppressed by the Christian Church, because these Greek philosophical notions were not known to the authors of the *Bible*. This is not surprising since of all the ancient civilizations, these sophisticated philosophical ideas were originally known only to the Indians and Greek speaking peoples, who developed a high level of abstract, rational and scientific thinking. The last Neoplatonic School which was centered at the Athenian Academy was closed down in the year 529 by the Emperor Justinian.² Augustine (354-430) in the west and Dionysius the Areopagite (fl. end of 5th century) in the east, were successful in introducing a restricted and somewhat cryptic form of Neoplatonism into the Christian teachings.³

The Nature of the World

Eternity of the universe: "The universe has always existed before and will always exist" in the future (ii, 1.1). It has no temporal

beginning in time (iii, 7.6). "Of necessity, then, all things must exist forever in ordered dependence upon each other: . . . Things that are said to have come into being did not just come into being [at a particular moment] but always were and always will be in process of becoming" (ii, 9.3). "The One is always perfect and therefore produces everlastingly" (v, 1.6). Though its parts are perishable, the cosmos has always existed in its totality. This sensible world is an image of the eternal contemplation of the Divine Intellect reflected on matter. These two principles are coeternal and correlative, since the image which is a copy exists as long as the divine archetype.⁴

Eternal Recurrence: There are a finite number of Ideal Forms which are embodied in the sensible world. They are reproduced, repeatedly in an infinite succession of world-periods (v, 7.1-2). For each individual, there is an Ideal pattern which is successively embodied in the changing phenomenal world. Since the number of these individual patterns is limited, there will be a time when all of the Ideal Forms have objectified, and then each macro-cycle must repeat itself. "The whole revolution of the universe contains all the forming principles [logoi], and when it repeats itself it produces the same things again according to the same forming principles." "Unless the universe returns on itself in regular periods; this will put a limit to the infinity of forming principles, because the same things in this case recur." Eternal repetitions of events occur not in each cycle, but only after a finite number of cycles when all possible happenings have transpired (v, 7.1). Nevertheless, each macro-cycle will not be identical and there will be some variation from one aeon to the next.⁵

Maya: Nature is a dream world and sense perception deals with apparitions. “The activity of sense-perception is that of the soul asleep; for it is the part of the soul that is in the body that sleeps; but the true waking is a true getting up from the body, not with the body” (iii, 6.6). “That which is known by sense-perception is an image of the thing, and sense-perception does not apprehend the thing itself: for that remains outside.” By understanding things as being external, the senses do not possess the truth about them (v, 5.1). “The form on the matter in the things of sense is an image of the real form, . . . and is a likeness of that from which it comes.” “Real beings are unchanging, but the appearances change” (v, 9.5). “For really here in the events of our life it is not the soul within but the outside shadow of man which cries and moans.” This world is a play in which we are the actors (iii, 2.15). The sensible world is a reflection and shadow of the true reality, which has a quasi-existence projected on the mirror of matter. Prime matter is non-being, “the producers of the appearances,” (iii, 6.7) which “is actually a phantasm: so it is actually a falsity: . . . 'what is really unreal' ” (ii, 5.5). It is a deceitful and fallacious medium that creates the illusion that the reflection is the object which is reflected.⁶

The problem of evil: What is good for the whole, may be bad for a part, if it is not harmoniously in accord with the whole (iii, 2.3; ii, 9.7). Formative principles of the universe take that which appears to be evil and uses it for the good of the whole (iii, 2.5). Humans are as good as they can be, given their place in the order of things. We do not blame plants because they do not possess sense perception or animals for lacking abstract intelligence, so humans cannot be

blamed for not being better than they really are (iii, 3.3).

Evil is not a positive entity, but is a privation, the absence of good or being. God is present to varying degrees in all things. The extent to which he is not present in a particular entity, is the measure of evil in that entity. “There is no [Ideal] Form of Evil; since evil here is the result of want and deprivation and failure and is a misfortune of matter and of that which becomes like matter” (v, 9.10). Everything in the universe seeks the Good, to varying degrees.⁷ Correspondingly, the lowest degree of reality on the existential scale is prime matter and on the ethical scale is evil. Formless prime matter is the cause of evil, being absolutely negative. Evil is a privation, the negation of existence and goodness, the inability to create. It is not created by the Ideal Forms, but arises in prime matter, the lowest entity on the scale of being which is absolutely deficient (i, 8.5, 3).⁸

The Ascending Process to the Divine

Divinity of the soul: According to the doctrine of the undescended soul, The highest part of the soul which is our true self, never descends to the earth but permanently abides in the divine realm. Supersensory, eternal, indestructible and spiritual aspects of the individual soul which is a divine entity, remain in constant and direct communication with the intelligible reality. “Our soul does not altogether come down, but there is always something of it in the intelligible [Divine realm]; but if the part which is in the world of sense-perception gets control . . . it prevents us from

perceiving the things which the upper part of the soul contemplates” (iv, 8.8). “We are each one of us an intelligible universe, making contact with this lower world by the powers of soul below, but with the intelligible world by its powers above” (iii, 4.3). The soul was not created at a specific time, but is eternally generated and that is why it is divine in its essential nature. Nevertheless, the higher soul is not identical with the eternal Forms in the Divine Intellect, but is illumined by the Intellect. “This light [of the Nous] shining in the soul illuminates it; that is, it makes it intelligent” (v, 3.8). In the Nous all things are one-many, a unity in diversity organized in a complex unity of a single unified divine life of intelligences. Each Idea-being is intelligibly distinct, yet they are neither separated nor divided. (v, 3:15). “From the heavenly soul comes out an image of it and so to speak flows down from above and makes the living things on earth” (ii, 1.5). It is not the higher soul that descends into matter but an image, reflection or shadow of it. What descends to earth is an irradiation from the higher soul, an image or expression of it on a lower level. This semblance of the self which actualizes on a lower plane of being, combines with a physical body to form the human personality. “This kind of soul tries to imitate the soul up there but is unable to because it is using worse bodies for its making” (ii, 1.5). In the unawaked state because of its association with the body, only the image of the soul suffers and commits evil deeds.⁹

The soul has a single nature operating on three levels, “one part of our soul is always directed to the intelligible realities, one to the things of this world, and one is in the middle between these” (ii,

9.2). The inner part of the soul is a divine entity, intuitively directed to the Divine Intellect [Nous] and the outer part to the external world and the physical body (v, 3.7; v, 1.10). All humans are a double, a combination of a higher free nature and a lower self (ii, 3.9). This middle part of the soul can be turned toward the higher self in contemplation or toward the lower self in attempting to satisfy corporeal desires and needs (iv, 8.2). Though the soul is divine, it descends into a body and becomes a feeble and isolated part of the universe. “What is it, then, which has made the souls forget their father, God, and be ignorant of themselves and him, even though they are parts which come from his higher world and altogether belong to it” (v, 1.1)? Soul’s become occupied with sense objects and transitory pleasures and are deceived, not being conscious of their higher nature (ii, 9.2). Sin, suffering and repentance belong only to the lower self, which is an expression of the higher self that identifies with the various mundane physical and mental activities.¹⁰

Since the soul is divine, it can attain to a conscious presence of God (Theos) and become aware of what it already is (v, 1.3). God realization is possible because of the ontological affinity between the soul and the Nous [Divine Intellect]. Through a process of purification we can return to the Nous, because there is an individualized Ideal Form of each one of us there (v, 7.1). “There must be true knowledge in the souls which are in us, and these are not images or likenesses of their Forms as things are in the sense-world, but those very Forms themselves” (v, 9.13). Plato’s doctrine of Recollection does not denote a remembering of what the soul

knew in a past life, but rather an awakening to what it knows eternally (iv, 3.25). The divinity of the soul makes it possible for a person to attain to the level of the Nous without relying on any external aid. Identifying with the Nous leads to virtue, wisdom and divine joy, while a perverse attachment to matter which is a privation of being, results in vice and unhappiness.¹¹

Universal liberation and salvation: All people will eventually return to the divine Intelligible world. First, all things are moved toward the Good [Nirguna Brahman], which is the source and goal of finite existence. Soul's are moved by a drive to transcend nature and aspire for a higher realm. Things are desired because a trace of the Good is reflected in them. Secondly, the one infinite principle of reality is identical to the real self of the individual. By realizing the ground of the Nous within itself, the soul ascends to Nous. Thus, all people wish to identify with their higher self. The One, Divine Intellect and All-Soul are each within us (v, 1.10). Thirdly, there is a one cycle cosmological process consisting of a decent into the sensible world and an ascent back to the divine realm. Descent is an outward and downward process from oneness and unity to plurality and discord. There is an emanation of the soul producing embodied life, whereby a person seeks divinity in their own egocentric nature. Then the lower aspect of the soul falls from contemplation to activity which is a weakened form of contemplation. Fortunately, there is a natural tendency to reverse the process and to return to the higher states of consciousness. "The individual soul longs for what corresponds to its own nature" (iii, 5.4). "The individual souls, certainly, have an intelligent desire consisting in the impulse to

return to itself springing from the principle from which they came into being” (iv, 8.4). Ascent is a movement of return to the fullness of being, brought about by the higher contemplation. As the soul ascends, it enters more and deeply into itself.¹²

Mysticism: A person should strive to reach the higher realms. “The perfect life, the true, real life, is in that transcendent intelligible reality . . . as long as all living things proceed from a single origin . . . the origin must be the first and most perfect life” (i, 4.3). Follow the spirit which is above you and comply with the better part of yourself, in order to rise to the heights (iii, 4.3). Identifying with the divine in the realm of the Intellect greatly surpasses discursive thinking (iv, 8.1). A soul “must see that light by which it is enlightened: for we do not see the sun by another light than his own” (v, 3.17). A person’s level of happiness is dependent on what realm they identify with. Illumination “turns the soul back upon itself and does not allow it to disperse, but makes it satisfied with the glory in itself; and it is certainly not a life of sense-perception either; for sense perception looks outside and perceives the external world” (v, 3.8). Union with the Good, awakens knowledge of our true self. After preparing oneself for the divine vision, a person “must not chase after it, but wait quietly till it appears, preparing oneself to contemplate it” (v, 5.8).

"The soul also loves the Good, moved by it to love from the beginning" (vi, 7.31). Strive for the upper world of God and the Intellect, by overcoming the realm of sense perception (iii, 4.2). “When he sees the beauty in bodies he must not run after them; we must know that they are images, traces, shadows, and hurry away

to that which they image” (i, 6.8). When the soul ascends upward; it forgets the events of this life. "Here below too it is best to be detached from human concerns, and so necessarily from human memories" (iv, 3.32).

The higher form of meditation is more intimate and united with the object of contemplation (theoria). “In the soul of the good and wise man the objects known tend to become identical with the knowing subject . . . in intellect both are one . . . substantially, and because ‘thinking and being are the same’ ” (iii, 8.8). When the soul is in the intelligible world, it is in unity with the Divine Intellect. It has “become one and the same thing with its intelligible object” (iv, 4.2). A person may know "himself according to Intellect [Nous] because he has become that Intellect . . . not any longer as man, but having become altogether other and snatching himself up into the higher world" (v, 3.4). The person has become the Intellect which is identical with the intelligible reality. “Contemplation must be the same as the contemplated, and Intellect the same as the intelligible” (v, 3.5). "There were not two, but the seer himself was one with the seen (for it was not really seen, but united to him) . . . He was one himself, with no distinction in himself either in relation to himself or to other things" (vi, 9.11).

The saving grace of attaining divinity comes from the inherent nature of the soul which is divine. As the sunlight shines on all who avail themselves to it, the One confers grace equally on all souls. Contemplation is a power all people potentially possess, but few develop. The path to salvation involves: 1) catharsis which is the purifying of the soul by practicing moral virtues (i, 2.3). One must

become detached from the world and the domination of the body; 2) dialectics which is the study and practice of philosophy for intellectual purification, for rising above sense experience, and for realizing ones divinity and attaining union with the Nous. Practice requires contemplation and undergoing spiritual disciplines; and 3) illumination or enlightenment which is a state of mystical union (ekstasis) with the Nous and eventually with the One.¹³

Five Levels of Existence and Value

The five ontological and axiological levels are: the One (Hen) or the Good (Sk. Nirguna Brahman); Divine Intellect (Nous; Sk. Ishvara, Brahma Loka); All-Soul (Psyche; Sk. Mahat, Hiranyagarba); Nature (Physis; Sk. Virat, Samsara); and Prime Matter (Hule; Sk. Prakriti, Pradhana).

The One which is also called the Good is the Absolute: XXXXX (Brahman 1)

Nous the Divine Intellect: The Nous emanates from the transcendent first principle, the One and manifests as the Universe. There is a spontaneous and necessary flow of life and power that is eternally generated from the One. Creation of the Nous from the unchanging One, is analogous to the radiation of light from the sun, heat from fire, cold from snow or perfume from a scented object (v, 1.6; v, 3.12). This process of emanation does not involve a transformation of the One. Creation is not a free act of will, which would involve a change in the immutable God. The Source always remains unchanged and undiminished. By contemplating the One and

not the sensible world, Nous becomes the omnipotent creator.¹⁴

According to the general principles of cosmic creation, each hypostases must by necessity eternally and perpetually produce the realm of being immediately below it (ii, 9.3). In the process of emanation, the higher entity experiences no loss when it diffuses itself to the lower level. There is an eternal succession of descending stages from the One to the Intellect and the Forms, through the Soul, down to the realm of matter. The movement is from unity to ever-increasing multiplicity. It is characteristic of the inner nature of goodness that it should create to the fullest degree possible, resulting in a universal hierarchy exemplifying every possible grade of existence and value.¹⁵

Divine Intellect which contains the archetypes of all things is a world of interpenetrating spiritual beings each containing the others, organically united in a state of contemplation. "In the intelligible world, everything is substance because all are one." It is like a seed where "all things are together and each is all, and there is not a hand separately and a head separately" (ii, 6.1). "Each part is not cut off from the whole; but the whole life of it and the whole intellect lives and thinks all together in one, and makes the part the whole" (iii, 2.1). "In the world above every thing is all things" (iii, 2.14). It has "existence from itself: and it must be all things together, and all of them one." Its intellect and life are not external additions to it (iii, 6.6). In the Nous a thing "has everything in itself and sees all things in every other, so that all are everywhere and each and every one is all . . . each comes only from the whole and is part and whole at once" (v, 8.4).

For the Divine Intellect “ ‘thinking and being are the same thing’ and ‘knowledge of immaterial things is the same as its object’ ” (v, 9.5). “Intellect and being are one and the same thing; for Intellect does not apprehend objects which preexist it-as sense does sense-objects-but Intellect itself is its objects” (v, 4.2). The intelligible realm exists prior to color or form. “In the intelligible world seeing is not through another [medium], but through itself, because it is not [directed] outside” (v, 3.8). In the Nous intuitive thought grasps its object directly and immediately and not through a process of discursive reasoning.¹⁶

“There must be nothing to which its power does not extend, nor must its power be quantitatively limited; . . . it must be eternal and always the same, and unreceptive of anything, and nothing must come into it” (iii, 6.6). Real being “has nothing lacking to its existence. Since it is completely [sic] it has no need of anything for its preservation and existence but is cause to other things (iii, 6.6). What is eternal is changeless, without extension or intervals, always in the present, all things at once and partless. Eternity does not come accidentally from outside but is part of the essential nature of the intelligible existence (iii, 7.3, 4). It is a timeless realm, without memory or discursive thought (iv, 4.1). “The matter of eternal things is always the same and always has the same form. . . . the intelligible world matter is all things at once; so it has nothing to change into, for it has all things already” (ii, 4.3).

“That which is conscious of itself and thinks itself comes second, for it is conscious of itself in order that in this actuality of consciousness it may understand itself” (iii, 9.9). “Intellect is not

simple but many; it manifests a composition, of course an intelligible one, and already sees many things” (v, 4.2). It is one-everywhere, a unity in multiplicity where things are distinguishable yet inseparable (v, 3.15). In the creative process, Nous encompasses all things "as a genus does its species and a whole its parts." Its thoughts are the archetypes, the eternally rational forming principles (v, 9.6).

"Intellect as a whole is all the Forms, and each individual Form is an individual intellect" (v, 9.8).

All-Soul: The third member of the divine triad proceeds as an emanation from the Intellect, being a rational principle that thinks discursively (v, 1.7). “Activity springing from the substance of Intellect is Soul, which comes to be this while Intellect abides unchanged” (v, 2.1). Each level of existence is an image or expression on a lower level of the realm above it. All-Soul is “an image of Intellect, as its life is a reflection and likeness of it” (v, 3.8). “It contains everything and there is nothing it can change into or anything outside which could fall upon it and destroy it, then by this argument we shall grant indestructibility to the Whole and the All” (ii, 1.1). Simultaneously, the All-Soul looks upward and contemplates the divine ideas of the Nous, and downward in generating the physical universe. It is the lowest aspect of the divine realm, the connecting link between the spiritual and material worlds. As the active formative power the All-Soul creates, organizes and maintains the corporeal world. It is immanent in all entities of the sensible, world giving them life, motion and growth. All-Soul never descends into the sensible world, but illuminates it from above.¹⁷

The “All is a ‘single living being which encompasses all the

living beings that are within it; it has one soul which extends to all its parts, in so far as each individual thing is a part of it.” “This one universe is all bound together in shared experience and is like one living creature.” “Each individual part is preserved by the whole” (iv, 4.32). All-Soul is the agent through which the Forms of the Nous are actualized in space and time. Individual souls (Sk. jivatman) are indivisible in their relation to the All-Soul and divisible in their union with a body (iv, 3.19). The all comprehending and unifying All-Soul contains within itself the individual souls. Individual soul’s radiate downward from the All-Soul, similar to the suns rays extending down to the earth (iv, 3.4). These souls are consubstantial with each other. When an incorporeal individual soul descends to the sensible world, it produces an image of itself which is a lower self or ego. The lower self enters into the body and gives it form (v, 2.1). A hierarchy of the three phases of the soul are: intellectual soul which is intuitive and identical with Nous; the reasoning soul of will, imagination and memory; and the unreasoning soul of sense experience. “Since all souls derive from the same from which the soul of the Whole derives too, they have a community of feeling” (iv, 3.8). Because of the unity of souls “we do share each other’s experiences when we suffer with others from seeing their pain and feel happy and relaxed [in their company] and are naturally drawn to love them” (iv, 9.3).¹⁸

Nature (Physis): “Nature is an image of intelligence, and since it is the last and lowest part of the soul” (iv, 4.13). The physical universe is a living organic whole which is the work of the All-Soul and the best possible image of the Divine Nous. It is a spontaneous

expression of divine goodness. Nevertheless, the visible world is an imperfect reflection and copy of the Ideal Forms of the Divine Mind, which is transplanted onto matter. "All things exist in something else . . . something like an imprint and image of that other suddenly appears . . . All that is here below comes from there, and exists in greater beauty there: for here it is adulterated, but there it is pure" (v, 8.7). Nature is not basically material but is the lowest part of the All-Soul. It is the principle of order and unity that prevents the material world from being chaotic. "That which is reflected from it [Nous] into matter is nature . . . and these are the last and lowest realities of the intelligible world: for what comes after at this point is imitation" (iv, 4.13). Nature in its concrete multiplicity is the most perfect possible image and resemblance of the divine intelligible world (ii, 9.8). Consequently, life without God is a faint trace of the higher life (vi, 9.9). Human love is an image of the spiritual union with the divine.¹⁹

Prime Matter: It is a formless indeterminate " 'substrate' and 'receptacle' of forms" (ii, 4.1). The material receptacle or substratum is like the surface of a mirror that reflects the images cast on it. Sensible entities exist as images and reflections on matter. All things are composed of matter which is their substrate and determines their form and shape (ii, 4.6). Because prime matter is below finite being, it is infinite (apeiron), formless, incorporeal, imperceptible, without any positive qualities and indestructible (i, 8.3). Heat and cold are present in matter, but they do not affect it (iii, 6.9). While "matter has not shape or size," material objects are a composite of matter and form. Prime matter remains unaltered in

this process (iii, 6.12).²⁰

While celestial matter is good and eternal, prime matter is simultaneously lowest on the ontological scale of existence and value. It is non-being which exists by negating being. A form is superimposed or reflected on matter which is an absolutely deficient principle, pure potentiality without potency. Prime matter is a privation that opposes the rational formative principle of the immaterial All-Soul, which imposes form on it (ii, 4.16). There is a resistance of matter which prevents the Intellectual principle from being perfectly manifested in the world. Matter is the source of evil and suffering in the universe, because it is opposed to and resists form (i, 8.3). Matter drags the soul down, tending to make it immoral and impotent.²¹

References

1. All quotations given in the text are taken from Plotinus, *Enneads*, tr. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988-89). For comparative ideas see: "Neo-Platonism and Vedanta" in *Brahmavadin 1895-1914* (Bangalore: Swami Vivekananda Seva Samithi, 1986), iii, pp. 27-35; J. F. Staal, *Advaita and Neoplatonism* (Madras: University of Madras, 1961); Swami Smarananda, "Plotinus and Vedanta," *Prabuddha Bharata* 67 (1962), pp. 135-145; R. Blaine Harris ed., *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought* (Norfolk, VI: International Society For Neoplatonic Studies, 1982).
2. Vergilius Ferm, *A History of Philosophical Systems* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950). p. 141.
3. N. K. Devaraja, *Hinduism and Christianity* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969), p. 90.

4. Audrey Rich, "Reincarnation in Plotinus," *Mnemosyne* 10 (1957), pp. 232-38.

5. Philippus Pistorius, *Plotinus and Neoplatonism* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1952), pp 27, 69.

6. Paul Edwards, ed., *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (8 vols.; New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), iii, p. 61; vi, p, 353. Swami Vivekananda supported the concept of eternal recurrence, though it may not be a traditional Indian idea. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1962), ii, pp. 229-31, 260-61.

7. Francisco Bazan, "Matter in Plotinus and Samkara," in Harris (1982), pp. 186-90. According to Plotinus', the reality is the Ideal Forms in the mind of the Divine Intellect (Sk. Ishvara). Maya is the reflection, image or shadow of these Forms, which is the sensible world.

8. Armstrong (1988-89), pp. 39, 41.

9. John Rist, "Plotinus on Matter and Evil," *Phronesis* 6 (1961), pp. 158-60, 162.

10. A. H. Armstrong, ed, *The Cambridge History of Late Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 224-27. Plotinus presents a highly original idea here, which supplements the Indian idea of the divinity of the Atman that is identical with Nirguna Brahman. Extending the scope of this conception, Plotinus places the locus of the soul's divinity in the Nous, which corresponds to Saguna Brahman, the Brahma Loka and the anandamaya kosha.

For a Vedantic parallel, Sri Ramakrishna mentioned that in a

spiritual vision he saw, that only part of the divine being descended and became Swami Vivekananda. While the swami lived on earth, the greater part of this great rishi remained in the transcendental realm. Swami Saradananda, Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master (Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1911-18, 1952), pp. 736-37. Christians believe in the doctrine of the undescended Logos, i. e., that the divine incarnation who descends to earth, is only an aspect of the Logos, which always remains in the transcendental realm. Athanasius of Alexandria (297-373) stressed that while the omnipresent Logos (the Word) assumed the human body of Jesus, It continued to maintain and rule the world with Its omnipotence. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444) explained that though the Logos incarnated in a physical body, It remained as the eternal immutable form of God, while the human nature of Christ was subject to change. Christ suffered in his flesh, but not in his divinity. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), pp. 284-87, 319-21, 325.

11. Armstrong (1967), pp. 224-27.

12. John Rist, "Integration and the Undescended Soul in Plotinus," *American Journal of Philology* 88 (1967), pp. 415-21.

13. Andrew Louth, *The Origin of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 39-42; A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1953), pp. -27-28.

14. Louth (1983), pp. 44-48.

15. Armstrong (1953), pp. 33-36; A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus*

(Cambridge: University Press, 1940), pp. 49-50, 80-81.

16. Armstrong (1953), pp. 27-28, 33-34.

17. Armstrong (1953), p. 36. For Plotinus, Ishvara (subject) and the Ishvara Loka (object) are two aspects of the same thing.

18. Pritibhushan Chatterji, "Plotinus and Sri Aurobindo," in Harris (1982), pp. 261-62; Antonia Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Plotinus and Origen* (Roslyn Heights, NY: Libra Publishers, Inc., 1978), pp. 51-52.

19. Tripolitis (1978), pp. 54-55.

20. Armstrong (1953), pp. 26, 39; Pistorius (1952), pp. 30-31, 43; Armstrong (1940), pp. 96-97.

21. Bazan in Harris (1982), pp. 186-89; Armstrong (1988-89), pp. 208-09.

22. Pistorius (1952), pp. 117-29.

¹ All quotations given in the text are taken from Plotinus, *Enneads*, tr. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988-89). For comparative ideas see: "Neo-Platonism and Vedanta" in *Brahmavadin 1895-1914* (Bangalore: Swami Vivekananda Seva Samithi, 1986), iii, pp. 27-35; J. F. Staal, *Advaita and Neoplatonism* (Madras: University of Madras, 1961); Swami Smarananda, "Plotinus and Vedanta," *Prabuddha Bharata* 67 (1962), pp. 135-145; R. Blaine Harris ed., *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought* (Norfolk, VI: International Society For Neoplatonic Studies, 1982).

² Vergilius Ferm, *A History of Philosophical Systems* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950). p. 141.

³ N. K. Devaraja, *Hinduism and Christianity* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969), p. 90.

⁴ Philippus Pistorius, *Plotinus and Neoplatonism* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1952), pp 27, 69.

⁵ Paul Edwards, ed., *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (8 vols.; New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), iii, p. 61; vi, p, 353. Swami Vivekananda supported the concept of eternal recurrence, though it may not be a traditional Indian idea. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (9 vols.; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1962), ii, pp. 229-31, 260-61.

⁶ Francisco Bazan, "Matter in Plotinus and Samkara," in Harris (1982), pp. 186-90. According to Plotinus', the reality is the Ideal Forms in the mind of the Divine Intellect (Sk. Ishvara). Maya is the reflection, image or shadow of these Forms, which is the sensible world.

⁷ Armstrong (1988-89), pp. 39, 41.

⁸ John Rist, "Plotinus on Matter and Evil," *Phronesis* 6 (1961), pp. 158-60, 162.

⁹ A. H. Armstrong, ed, *The Cambridge History of Late Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 224-27. Plotinus presents a highly original idea here, which supplements the Indian idea of the divinity of the Atman that is identical with Nirguna Brahman. Extending the scope of this conception, Plotinus places the locus of the soul's divinity in the Nous, which

corresponds to Saguna Brahman, the Brahma Loka and the anandamaya kosha.

¹⁰ Armstrong (1967), pp. 224-27.

¹¹ John Rist, "Integration and the Undescended Soul in Plotinus," *American Journal of Philology* 88 (1967), pp. 415-21.

¹² Andrew Louth, *The Origin of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 39-42; A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1953), pp -27-28.

¹³ Louth (1983), pp. 44-48.

¹⁴ Armstrong (1953), pp. 33-36; A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge: University Press, 1940), pp. 49-50, 80-81.

¹⁵ Armstrong (1953), pp. 27-28, 33-34.

¹⁶ Armstrong (1953), p. 36. For Plotinus, Ishvara (subject) and the Ishvara Loka (object) are two aspects of the same thing.

¹⁷ Pritibhushan Chatterji, "Plotinus and Sri Aurobindo," in Harris (1982), pp. 261-62; Antonia Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Plotinus and Origen* (Roslyn Heights, NY: Libra Publishers, Inc., 1978), pp. 51-52.

¹⁸ Tripolitis (1978), pp. 54-55.

¹⁹ Armstrong (1953), pp. 26, 39; Pistorius (1952), pp. 30-31, 43; Armstrong (1940), pp. 96-97.

²⁰ Bazan in Harris (1982), pp. 186-89; Armstrong (1988-89), pp. 208-09.

²¹ Pistorius (1952), pp. 117-29.