

"What gets your attention gets you," I bore my friends with saying. Here, I'm pointing to this as the primary clue for understanding cultures and religions and occupations and hobbies and relationships-- in short, just about everything.

1. A scientist is curious about problems in the interest of advancing knowledge. A saint is curious about the divine in the interest of advancing devotion. The lover is curious about the beloved in the interest of experiencing love more and more. The philosopher is curious about ideas in the interest of deepening and widening understanding--in the case of the philosopher of religion, in the interest of increasing understanding of the numinous/human relationship-in-world. The focus of the Vedantist is not on the world or on self-in-world or on humanity or on gods, but on consciousness.

2. Since consciousness is agglutinative, integrative, the Vedantist, (1) concludes that reality is One, religiously "the One," and (2) assumes this to be the primary datum for religion-philosophy-science-statecraft. ("Vedanta" is the peak of philosophical-Upanishadic Hinduism. See Ernest Wood's excellent VEDANTA DICTIONARY, Phil.Library/64.) But here there's what you might call high/middle/broad church. Three schools: (1) Shankara's *a-dvaita*, non-dualism, i.e. monism: reality is one-and-only one; (2) Ramanuja's *vishishtha advaita*, qualified monism: Brahman is three realities in one: the personal God, and his body as humans and world-- union with God not through knowledge (as the gnostic Shankara) but devotion (*bhakti*, on which see my #1668) through faith and love; and (3) Madhva's *dvaita*, dualism: God, human selves, and world are all permanent --God being present to selves and world by association and as ruler, the human goal not being union with God but unbroken adoration. Understandably, the first school considers the other two heretical and not ultimately satisfying of the Self; but the first school is heretical vis-a-vis biblical religion, whereas the other two are accommodable.

3. The reason the first school is the most alien from biblical religion is that the latter is curious not about "reality" (i.e., ontology) but about "morality" (i.e., the day-to-day struggle of human beings who must choose between "good" and "evil" and use whatever sanctions-weapons they can find-create in the battle to support the former and defeat the latter. West of India, Zoroaster ontologized this struggle; and his religion and its descendants (Manicheism, of which Augustine till he converted to Christianity; Zubin Mehta's Parseeism; etc.) have had more infl. on Judaism and Christianity than have the various versions of Hinduism.

4. "How many is reality?" (My #424; see also #605, #742, #1009). Mind, our connection-making power, of course says one: its operation supposes infinite connectionability. But the leap of inference from this working presupposition to metaphysics is a leap not of logic but of faith, the faith both earliest and most profoundly intellectualized as Vedanta. This faith arrogates itself as *jnana-gnosis* (empirical esoteric "knowledge" that reality is One, and the experience of manyness is consequently *maya* (illusion). Modern secular forms include spiritualisms (e.g., Jungianism & anthroposophy) and materialisms (e.g., the nothing-but chemo-eletrical explanation of brain+mind, and Marxism).

5. Proto-Vedanta hit the nascent Western religions* roughly as follows: (1) GREEK, as Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism; (2) Hellenistic and then rabbinic JUDAISM, as Kabbala-Zohar-Hasidism; (3) CHRISTIANITY, as monasticism (based on the pious fraud Pseudo-Dionysius), mysticisms, various Christian versions of gnosticism; (4) ISLAM, as Sufism.

	MORAL	METAPHYSICAL
DUALISM	Zoroastrianisms	Greek
	Bible	
MONISM	Sufism	Vedanta

*Schweitzer called Western religions' versions of Vedanta "God-mysticisms."

OVER

PRIVATISTIC mysticism is the world-neglecting disease whose world-dominating opposite disease is
POLITICAL mysticism: Nazism came to power the year after R. Otto's MYSTICISM EAST AND WEST.

6. But English doesn't limit "mysticism" to the Indic-gnostic type of intellection and spirituality. It isn't what a charismatic Christian friend of mine means in a letter I got yesterday (the letter being one of the two impulses toward my writing this thinksheet, the other occurring the same day: a Sufi asked me for a credit course contexting Sufism): "You remarked that you had not had much interest in the areas of what might be called (rightly understood) mysticism. It is my meat and drink. I am sad about that for you. 'O could I tell, ye surely would believe it,/O could I say what I have seen!" His qualification "(rightly understood)" rejects Vedantic mysticism and Western offshoots: he's an orthodox Christian (almost an Orthodox Christian: he's strongly attracted to Greek and Eastern spirituality: that branch of Christianity is the one most affected by Vedanta and Buddhism, yet is "orthodox" Orthodox).

7. At 1 a.m. this morning (4Feb83) I went on Medicare: today is the first day I'm officially old, though I've been old for years--old being a better fit for my soul than was young (and "I am sad about" olds for whom young was a better fit). By now I should know what's "my meat and drink," and it doesn't include (though I want to be open to) intenser mysticals such as those of Corinthian Christians for whom Paul advised (1Cor.12.31) "a more excellent way," viz. *agapé*. As entropy sinks me toward the good earth, I'm less and less impressed by special energies, power-infusions: on the ecstatic/stoic continuum, I'm tilting toward stoic responses, which require less energy (though my body and mind are in high vigor). BUT....a very big but: Biblical religion (my religion) has an ecstatic origin in history and (as conversion, no matter the energy level) in the individual, and its spirituality includes the ritual and spontaneous inner/outer "practice of the Presence"--so in all these senses I am a mystic both in being ("Christ lives in me") and in process ("Christ is being formed in us"). But to this God-mysticism (THEOcentric), soul-mysticism (PSYCHOcentric) is idolatrous and blasphemous: history-long war between "India" and "Israel." (Traitors within our gates: another friend got interested in Jung, then in Jung's pupil Progoff, and is now a Sufi--an entirely natural progression away from biblical religion.)

8. Another entirely natural progression: as a religion develops, its leaders tend to move from ecstasies to scribists to rationalists to mystics who synthesize (as did al Ghazali for Islam) the former stages into a comprehensive system. While this is going on at the administrative level, at the popular level a warmer (*bhakti*) form of the religion is bringing love-grace-light-life to the people (e.g., Sufism in Islam, Amida in Buddhism, Franciscanism in Medieval Western Christianity, Hasidism in Judaism). This pop-mysticism (which as Evangelicalism won me in 1934) may have intellectualistic leadership (e.g., Fundamentalism), but it itself is non- or even anti-intellectual: its passion is for immediacy, the experience of Presence as affirmative ("God loves even me") and redemptive ("Jesus, the Lord over sin and death, is my Lord"). Its mystical experience is (to use the title of Montague's great book) a "way of knowing" without metaphysical concern about the identity or discreteness of knowing and being (the East/West divide).

9. Why does Indic mysticism focus on atma/Brahman (identity of the soul and God) instead of on history-revelation (as does biblical mysticism)? Because the West's high valuation of history-revelation has no parallel in the roots and fruits of Indic civilization, and this absence is intellectualized into the doctrine of *maya* (time-space-history as illusion). Where else, then, to focus but "consciousness"? When the Indus-Ganges flows West, as it often does, history and thus also revelation are weakened in the Western mind: "the soul/Soul, self/Self" and the biblical God are enemies even though various Western mysticisms (Pistis Sophia, monasticism, Jungianism) declare them friends.

infl. of Ps.-Dion. (or at least neo-Pl.) on Islam. Neo-Pl. (began, 4th c.) not fr. Pl., but fr. Ind., via Ammonius Saccas & Plotinus; Aug. attracted to it when he wearied of Manicheism, then left it for Xny. Neo-Pl., based on Upan. Hinduism, unXn: 3 main tenets of all mysticism: (1) advaita; (2) evil is illusory; (3) time is unreal. Pseudo-Dion. (meaning Paul's disciple Dion. the Areopagite), a pious fraud by a Xn who versioned Proclus (d.485), became a monastic textbook (infl. Eckhart, Julian of Norwich, Tauler, Henry Suso, Catherine of Genoa). (Eckhart, condemned for pantheism, recanted.) 291, Bouquet, COMP.REL.: "human nature revolvd fr the severity of Mohammed's proclamations, and this led to the dev without the bounds of Islam itself of a rich variety of mystics, esp Persian, who are gpd tog under the term 'Sufi.'" (wd. fr. Suf, white woolen garment; or SOPHIA, for affinities with the PISTIS SOPHIA). So al Ghasali aimed to attain absorption into the Divine. Sufi doc is a version of the 3 above: (1) G alone exists; (2) all tgs are emanations, unreal apart fr G; (3) All rels are indiff., except as leading to realities --and Islam is best, of w Supism is the true phil; (4) no distinction bet good/evil, for G is autor of both and all; (5) G determines our will: we are, in our actions, not free; (6) the soul preexists the body, w. as a cage confines it (cf. R. Steiner's anthroposophy, as in Own Barfield's WORLDS APART); (7) so d is desirable, as return to G; 7) sp union poss only by grace, but obtainable by fervent prayer; (9) the Sufi's principal duty is med on the unity of G, the remembrance of the divine names, and progressive advancement in the TARIQAT (life journey to attain union with G). But mys is foreign to both Xny and Islam. But a revolt against hypertranscendence. But mys penetrated also (Jud): KABBALA (trad.), book of ZOHAR (brightness); numerology; infls. fr. Gn., Neo-Pl., and Alexandrianism; into Buber's revival of Chassidism (Eastern Europe, 17thc.-). The West. rels.' mys was called by Schweitzer "god-mysticism." But another (non-Ind.) use of MYSTICISM: immediacy in relig exper, = Bergsonian "intuition," in distinctin fr rat or intennectual apprehension of Deity. Not all immediacy is mys in the Ind sense. Diffusionist or naturalist explan for Ind-type mys? Diffusionist! In Islam development, asceticism and quietism are increaigly informed by speculation (pantheistic). Sufi adds. to Islam: incantatroy praise, and med. WEE: As Buddh. Pure Land suppl. Hind., so Sufism sppl. Islam (the bhakti tendency!). Warm end of the thermometer. Higher temp., fluid: latitudinarian; allegor. interp. of rels.' dogmas (e.g., of afterlife: Heaven, Paradise, Hell). Poetic end of spectrum (right-bran). Satisfy sp hunger of those who find QORAN's prophetism and legalism insuff. nourishing. Sufi sp exercises in community or in world, ascetic or married (cf. the Franciscan tertiary, and Qumran!). Journey outward/INWARD, objectivity and subjectivity. Sp exercises aim at interpenetration of the soul and G: immanentism. Dpccgctmxy HX Sp. formation: character shapng, values-reshaping. As Buddh. is prot. Hind., Suf. is prot. Islam. Sufi 4 or 7 stages to self-annihil. (contrast J. "self-denial"). MUSIC: Bouquet, 310 (chant as challenge, call, judgment, joy). Darvish, Dervish (=poor). Tolerance: the Sufi is not to "take offence" (says a Sufi poem) "if a devotee fall down before the fhe stones of an idol-temple." FANA (negation of individuality) = Nirvana.

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 30 July
 2001
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When rel. hardness function follows form ("the glory has departed"), expect a revival of MYS.
 Nobody has immediate perception (cf. Pietri fixed dogmas).

