
THE PHILOKALIC EXPERIENCE OF DEIFICATION (THEOSIS) AND THE ADVAITIC EXPERIENCE OF NON-DUALITY (BRAHMANUBHAVA) A DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE HORIZON OF THE INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

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Abstract

From the correspondence of the interaction between the Indian and the Occidental area, it has been highlighted, first of all, the difference of religious thinking between Hinduism and Christianity. Both of these religious identities propose a spiritual 'programme' in which man's vocation is mentioned. What we propose in the present study is the definition of the deification experience (theosis) and of the advaitic experience of non-duality (brahmanubhava) as a possible basis on which one could build an interreligious dialogue mentioning the undisputable function of religion in the Western society, which is experiencing the tragedy of desacralization or secularization. We find this parallel extremely useful, since many Westerners have taken over different interpretations operated by so-called gurus on Indian philosophy problems, interpretations that have altered the authentic significance of these problems.

Keywords: Advaita Vedānta, Śāṅkara, religious experience, theology, spirituality

1. Introduction

It is an obvious fact today that each religious identity is engaged in a contest of interaction with other religious identities. Favoured by the new communication techniques, by the dynamism of migration, by the mutations experienced of the whole society, the obvious presence of religious pluralism represents a reality that can go into two directions: the affirmation of one's own religious identity by a tolerant attitude regarding the alterity or a pulverization of one's own identity into a syncretistic paradigm of the neo-religious phenomenon, which will finally lead to a dilution of the importance of the religious component as an essential factor in the structure of a society. For these

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reasons, a better articulation of the ‘culture of the dialogue’ between religions, between cultures is called for, in the perspective of a good social cohabitation and of the avoidance of the ideological-religious conflicts.

2. Advaita Vedānta – the philosophy of non-dualism

First of all, we need to underline the fact that *Advaita* is the main direction of the *Vedānta* school, which is the widest spread in the Indian philosophical area. The main representative of this philosophical-religious paradigm is Śaṅkara (788–820), who systematized in an argumentative logic the references of the texts *śruti* and *smṛti* to the metaphysical principles of the Upanishadic non-dualism. These references, stating the relation between *Brahman* and the universe of our experience, with the mention that *Brahman* is *ekam-eva-advitīyam* (‘One-without-a-second’), are present both in the *Upanishads* and in *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The inclusion of these references in a coherent system, with a philosophical-religious physiognomy that stood out in the landscape of the Indian thinking belongs to Śaṅkara.

For these considerations, *Advaita Vedānta* needs to be regarded as a unitary paradigm of metaphysics and of the religious experience. The explanation of *reality* goes beyond the intellectual framework and constitutes the premise of the possibility and of the imperative of a plenary religious experience: “Philosophy, for Shankara, is not an intellectual game but a spiritual discipline culminating in the realisation of Reality”, as Chandradhar Sharma highlighted [1]. All that philosophically constructed by Śaṅkara concerns the realization of *Brahman*, the non-dual *brahmanubhava* experience or deliverance (*mokṣa*). Śaṅkara’s attention was focused exclusively on four principal coordinates: (1) *Brahman* is *ekam-eva-advitīyam* (‘One-without-a-second’), the one undifferentiated *reality*; (2) The relation of *Brahman* with the Universe, by mentioning its ontological status as relative reality superposed over *Brahman/Ātman*; (3) Ignorance (*avidyā*) as cause of the dual experience of the individual self (*jīvātman*) and circumscription of man by ignorance exclusively to the spatial-temporal framework, as references invested with value of reality and of truth; (4) The experience of non-duality (*brahmanubhava*) by the knowledge (*vidyā*) or the realization of the identity of *Brahman*.

It is very difficult to circumscribe using the common language the experience of the realization of *Brahman*. What the wise man experiences, the non-dual state, cannot be circumscribed by or adapted to the empirical understanding, which operates using distinctions for the logical meaning of the events. We shall mention that experience is of two types: empirical (*laukika*) and transcendental (*pāramartha*) [*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* III.4.2]. The realization of *Brahman* is a completely special experience, a unique experience fundamentally different from the empirical experience, the latter being impossible without the distinction between the subject who knows, the object of knowledge and the knowledge activity. The empirical experience comprises the experience accumulated in the three states, namely wakefulness,

sleep and deep sleep. *Brahmanubhava* is “the experience in which the duality *subject-object* is totally absent” [2], is the pure experience (*avagatimātra*) or the pure knowledge (*kevala jñāna*). The pure experience is the nature of *Brahman*. True knowledge (*vidyā*) is free from the duality of *Brahman* and his knowledge. Any knowledge of *Brahman* is only an indirect knowledge of *brahmanubhava*, which is nothing else but *Brahman* itself, is *Brahman* - the direct and immediate knowledge, by being *Brahman*. In *brahmanubhava* there is no distinction between *Brahman* and experiencing *Brahman*. *Brahmanubhava* is *Brahman* Itself [3].

3. Brahmadeva brahmaiva bhavati - “the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman” (Mundaka-Upanisad III.2.9)

A. Ramamurti mentions that Śaṅkara made no difference between Self-accomplishment (*ātma darśanam*, *ātmanubhava*, *ātma vabodha* sau *ātma vagati*) and *brahmanubhava* (*brahma + anubhava*, ‘*Brahman* experience’) or *brahma vagati*. *Brahmanubhava*, *Ātmānubhava* and *Mokṣa* indicate the same ultimate, non-dual experience [3, p. 35].

Brahmanubhava is not the experiencing of *Brahman*, and it does not mean that *Brahman* is experienced as an object in *brahmanubhava*. While the object of the empirical experience and such an experience are essentially different, *Brahmanubhava* is not different from *Brahman*. This fact is attested by those who attained *Brahman*, according to whom, *Brahman*, regarded as the object of the final accomplishment from the perspective of the relative truth, of non-realization, is not different from *Brahmanubhava*: “The knowers of *Brahman* *pracaṣate*, say; that absolute *jñānam*, knowledge; that is *akalpakaṁ*, devoid of all imagination (non-conceptual); and is therefore *ajam*, birthless; is *jñeyābhinnam*, non-different from the knowable, identified with *Brahman*, the absolute Reality” [*Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad & Gaudāpaḍa-Kārikā-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* III.33]. In *brahmanubhava*, the differences between the one who experiences (*labdha*), the one experienced (*labdhya*) and the experience itself (*upalabdhi*) are totally absent [4]. *Brahmanubhava* does not mean experiencing *Brahman*, the way one would experience an object and it does not mean that *Brahman* is experiencing himself, either. *Brahman* cannot be experienced, since It is the experience itself. *Brahmanubhava* is an experience without an empirical object.

What actually happens in *brahmanubhava* is that the *Self* realizes its true nature by getting rid of ignorance. When the wise man gets beyond darkness and reaches true knowledge, he realizes *Brahman* undifferentiated, free from all the superposition given by the multiplicity triggered by ignorance [4], as it is stated in *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* III.2.8: *yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre astam gacchanti nāmarūpe vihāya tathā vidvān nāmarūpāt vimuktaḥ parāt param puruṣam upaiti divyam* (“As rivers, flowing down, become indistinguishable on reaching the sea by giving up their names and forms, so also the illumined soul, having become freed from name and form, reaches the self-effulgent *Puruṣa* that is higher than the higher - *Māyā*.”) The commentary of Śaṅkara at *Muṇḍaka-*

Upaniṣad III.2.8 highlights the function of knowledge in order to obtain the true identity of the subject of knowledge: “Moreover, *yathā*, as; *nadyaḥ*, rivers - Gaṅgā and the rest; *syandamānāḥ*, flowing down; *gacehanti*, attain; *astam*, invisibility, indistinguishable identity; *samudre*, in the sea, on reaching the sea; *nama-rupe vihāya*, by giving up (their) names and forms; *tathā* similarly; *vidvān*, the illumined soul; *nāma-rūpāt vimuktaḥ*, having become freed from name and form - the creations of ignorance; *upaiti*, arrives at; the *divyam puruṣam*, self-effulgent Puruṣa, as described earlier; who is *param*, higher, *parāt*, then the higher (*Māyā*). *Objection*: Is it not well known that many obstacles beset the path to liberation? So even a knower of Brahman, when dead, may be deflected from his course and may not reach Brahman Itself, being hindered by one of the mental diseases or one of the gods or some such being. *Answer*: Not so, for by knowledge itself are removed all the hindrances. The only obstacle to emancipation is ignorance, and there is no other hindrance; for emancipation is eternal and identical with the Self.” [*Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* III.2.8]

The idea that the realization of the Self comes when ignorance is eliminated through right knowledge is mentioned by Śaṅkara in the comment on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* I.4.7: “The knowledge of the Self is Its attainment. The attainment of the Self cannot be, as in the case of things other than It, the obtaining of something not obtained before, for here there is no difference between the person attaining and the object attained. Where the Self has to attain something other than Itself, the Self is the attainer and the non-Self is the object attained. This, not being already attained, is separated by acts such as producing, and is to be attained by the initiation of a particular action with the help of particular auxiliaries. And that attainment of something new is transitory, being due to desire and action that are themselves the product of a false notion, like the birth of a son etc. in a dream. But this Self is the very opposite of that. By the very facts of Its being the Self, It is not separated by acts such as producing. But although It is always attained, It is separated by ignorance only. Just as when a mother-of-pearl appears through mistake as a piece of silver, the non-apprehension of the former, although it is being perceived all the while, is merely due to the obstruction of the false impression, and its (subsequent) apprehension is but knowledge, for this is what removes the obstruction of false impression, similarly here also the non-attainment of the Self is merely due to the obstruction of ignorance. Therefore the attainment of It is simply the removal of that obstruction by knowledge; in no other sense it is consistent. Hence we shall explain how for the realization of the Self every other means but knowledge is useless.” [*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* I.4.7]

In *brahmanubhava* the individual self experiences the unity with the universal Self. The particular self is identified with the universal *Self*, like the spark and the fire, the water in a vase and the water of the ocean; once united, they become one, which is called *brahmātmaikyam* [2]. In other words, in *brahmanubhava* the identity *Ātman-Brahman* (*ātmaikatva darśana*) and the identity of the *whole* with *Brahman* (*sarvātmaikatva darśana*) is one and the

same thing. According to *Vedānta*, the light of the being-consciousness highlights the human reality as *being-with-others-in-It*. The integrated individual realizes his essential identity with the *Being (Sat)*, his essential unity with others and the fact that everybody is rooted in the unity of *It (Brahman/Ātman)* [5], as is stated in *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* III.2.5: *samprāpya enam ṛṣayaḥ jñānatṛptāḥ kṛtātmānaḥ vītarāgāḥ praśāntāḥ te sarvagam sarvataḥ prāpya dhīrāḥ yuktātmānaḥ sarvam eva āviśanti* (“Having attained this, the seers become contented with their knowledge, established in the Self, freed from attachment, and composed. Having realized the all-pervasive One everywhere, these discriminating people, ever merged in contemplation, enter into the All.”). In his commentary of this upanishadic text, Śaṅkara points out that state of identity with All (*Brahman*) is the consequence of disposal, by knowledge, the phenomenal elements of ignorance: “*Samprāpya*, having attained, having fully realised; *enam*, this, the Self; the *ṛṣayaḥ*, seers; become *jñānatṛptāḥ*, satisfied with that very knowledge, and not with any external object that gratifies and leads to physical nourishment; *kṛtātmānaḥ*, established in identity with the supreme Self; *vītarāgāḥ*, free from such drawbacks as attachment; *praśāntāḥ*, composed, with the senses withdrawn. *Te*, those people, who become so; *prāpya*, having realised; *sarvagam*, the all-pervasive (*Brahman*), comparable to space; *sarvataḥ*, everywhere - and not partially, as circumscribed by the limiting adjuncts. What follows then? Having realised as their own Self that very *Brahman* that is without a second; *dhīrāḥ*, the absolutely discriminating people; who are by nature *yuktātmānaḥ*, ever merged in deep contemplation; *āviśanti*, enter; *sarvam eva*, into the All, even at the time of the falling of the body. They give up the limitations of the adjuncts created by ignorance, like space confined within a pot on the breaking of the pot. Thus the knowers of *Brahman* enter into the abode that is *Brahman*.” [*Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* III.2.5]

In *brahmanubhava*, one experiences the non-dual state, the authentic mode of existence, the initiated becomes identical or identified with *Brahman*. There are no longer two, but *One - Reality: iha ced aveḍīt atha satyam asti na ced iha aveḍīt mahatī vinaṣṭis bhūteṣu bhūteṣu vi-citya dhīrās praitya asmād lokād amṛtās bhavanti* (“If one has realized here, than there is truth; if he has not realized here, than there is great destruction. The wise once, having realized (*Brahman*) in all beings, and having turned away from this world, become immortal.”) [*Kena-Upaniṣad* II.5]

Brahmānubhava is immediate and direct [*Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* III.5.1]. Being non-dual, we cannot put the equal sign between *Brahmanubhava* and the *mystical union*, which supposes a dualist ontology, in which real distinctions exist. A *mystical union* requires a duality between the initiated and the divine *Reality* [6]. We can neither postulate some *closeness* between the two. F. M. Müller makes a note of precaution in this sense and states that the fatal mistake that both the Indian and the European interpreters of the philosophy of *Vedānta* have made was to represent this absorption or recovery (*samradhanam*, realization) as an *appropriation* of the individual soul by God. There can be no such closeness where there is identity, there can only be a

recovery or restitution, a return, a becoming of the soul towards what it has always been, a rebirth of its true nature. *Advaita Vedānta* consists in completely giving up on all that we are and all that we know. It mainly relies on the *tremendous* synthesis of the subject and object, on the identification of the cause and of the effect, of I and It. This is the unique character of Vedānta, its uniqueness by comparison to any other philosophy [7]. On the other hand, described as knowledge, the advaitic mysticism is “a method of knowing what *should be!* As long as someone *is* (existentially), he cannot *understand* his own true being. He will *understand* only ‘when he has come out of himself’”. [8]

A note of clarifying importance comes from the researchers regarding what is currently understood by the expression “the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*” or “the self becomes identical with *Brahman*”. A. Ramamurti points out that in all the upanishadic statements affirming that the Self *fuses* or *enters Brahman*, the words ‘enters’ (*praveśa*), ‘fuses’ (*apti*) and ‘attains’ (*labdha*) are used figuratively and denotatively [3, p. 104]. According to the advaitic perspective, *being* and *becoming* are contrary, since *becoming* involves change [9]. The declaration *Brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati* - “the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*” – does not mean a change or a realization in the being. The verbal root *bhū*, from which *bhavati* (‘to become’) is derived, means both *being* and *becoming*. In the present context it refers to *being*. Or, the *being* in *Advaita* is unchangeable, uncontradicted, untouched by the temporal dimensions. Man is what he has always been. In order to realize the unrealized one needs action. Yet to realize the already realized does not require action. The knowledge of the truth *as-it-is* will chase away the darkness of ignorance which is covering the truth [10]. According to the terms of Swami Tyagananda, “we have ‘become’ mortal, imperfect and circumscribed by the forgetfulness of our own nature, *ātman*. In order to recover our apparent memory, one needs to finish the process of ‘becoming’ and start the process of «being» what we have always been: immortal, perfect and free.” [11]

Equally, by *identity* and *realization* we need not understand a real transformation in the *being*: by knowing *Brahman*, man does not become anything else. *Brahmanubhava* is not a new state acquired, but the realization of one’s own authentic, original nature. In this sense, the texts of initiation offer different examples: the final realization is figuratively described as a melting in *Brahman*, just as a drop of dew becomes one with the sea or the close space inside a recipient becomes one with the all-pervasive space around it once the vase has been broken. The empirical frameworks of the *names-and-shapes* conjugating the individual selves are reduced to nothing in *brahmanubhava*, just as the *names-and-shapes* of the rivers are lost by their fusion in the sea [*Brahma-Sūtra-Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya* IV.2.16]. The unreality of individuality from the perspective of the supreme truth (*parāmarthika*) is an essential postulate of *Advaita* and, consequently, the vision of the Truth involves a complete annulment of the *ego* and of individuality: “If the individuality of the self were real, then it could not be destroyed and the unity with the supreme Self is not possible” [12]. This does not mean that the delivered self becomes non-existent;

although it ceases to exist in the ordinary sense of the world, its pure substance, *Ātman*, never ceases to be.

The initiated and *Brahman* do not *become* one. It is the *and* that disappears. What remains is just *One* - the *One Reality* [13]. Authentically, there is *identity* between self and *Brahman*, and the awareness of this *identity* lies in the elimination of ignorance (*avidyā*): “The moment of the realization of the Self, is just the identification of the Self with Brahman. It cannot be partial, but only the perfect state of unity or oneness of the Self with Brahman and the issue of a complete or partial identification is out of question. Therefore, the identification of the Self with Brahman is nothing else but the one of the unity or the oneness.” [14]

To conclude, regarding what has been stated concerning the expression “the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*”, through the realization of the *Self*, *jīva* is *Brahman* [*Brahma-Sūtra-Saṅkara-Bhāṣya* I.3.24], but *Brahman* is not *jīva*: *I am Brahman*, and not *Brahman is I* [15]. The experience of this *non-dual unity* transcends the distinction between *I* and *non-I* [16]. Man’s real *self* is identical with *Brahman*, the ultimate principle, the Absolute, which is his *raison d’être* [17]. “To be *Brahman* is not an extinction of the individual, but the expansion of individuality in the infinity of *Brahman*; *jīva* is always *Brahman*, during the samsaric existence, the *upādhis* conceal this *Reality*; in the state of freedom, there comes to light as *Brahman*, what was and is always so; nothing new is revealed.” [18] *Brahman* is realized by the knowledge of the absolute identity of *jīva* and *Brahman*; the dictum *Tat Tvam Asi* (‘You are It’) [*Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* VI.8.7] reveals this identity [19]. There can be but one and unique *Ātman*, since we see as multiplicity its physical reflections that depend on the limitations of *avidya*. In other words, there is just one *Consciousness* appearing as divided because of ignorance. The final ceasing of all the forms of psychical activity (and not just in this incarnation, but also in the whole chain of transmigrations) is possible only after having obtained or attained the supreme knowledge (*vidyā*), a knowledge that should not be understood as reducing the *Consciousness* to a mechanic conglomerate of functions of the sensory organs [20].

Brahmanubhava is the experience in which the duality subject-object is completely absent; it is pure experience (*avagatimātra*) or pure knowledge (*kevala jñāna*). By the terms *identity* and *realization*, which are used to suggest this ultimate state, we need not understand a real transformation in the being of the individual self, since by knowing *Brahman*, man does not become anything else. *Brahmanubhava* is not a new, acquired state, but the realization of one’s own authentic nature, yet shrouded in limitative strata of *avidyā*. The final accomplishment is figuratively described as a melting in *Brahman*, just like a drop of dew becoming one with the sea or like the close space in a recipient becoming one with the space around it once the vase has been broken. The empirical frameworks of the *names-and-shapes* of the individual selves are abolished in *brahmanubhava*, just as the *names-and-shapes* of the rivers get lost by their joining the sea. The delimitation of the particular existence is abolished.

Man and Brahman *do not become* one, the *and* disappears from this equation. There remains but *one*: the *One Reality*, namely *Brahman* [13]. Authentically, there is *identity* between self and *Brahman*, and the awareness of this *identity* lies in the elimination of ignorance: *being Brahman* is extinguishing the frameworks in which the alterity of the individual is conjugated. *Jīvātman* is always *Brahman*, yet, during the time of the sām̄saric existence, the *upādhis* shroud this reality, while in the state of freedom there comes to light as *Brahman* what was and always is; nothing new appears.

4. The significance of Christian deification (theosis)

The Christian spirituality focuses on the mystic accomplishment of man's deification, the vocation of "being partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1.4). Deification is the maximum union with God, man's impression with the fullness of God, without his melting into Him. For man to have the possibility of deification, as ultimate goal of his life, man has been given God's image in him, allowing him to aspire towards his absolute model. And it is in this aspiration that the image finds its accomplishment, as maximal likeness with God. The image implies as a divine commandment man's tension towards deification, as Saint Maximus the Confessor states: "Since we are in the image of God, let us become of our own and of God, or better said only of God and become gods, receiving from God an existence of gods" [*Capita Quinquies Centena*, P.G. 90, I.28, col. 1189C].

In Christianity we talk about a 'progress of the person' or 'of the becoming in the likeness of God', a mystical experience including three stages, called in the Orthodox theology (1) the stage of *purification from sinful passions*, (2) *contemplation* and (3) *mystical theology*. Evagrius of Pontus highlights two stages, namely *the practical stage* (the deliverance from sinful passions and the regaining of the true human stature in virtues) and *the contemplative stage* (exclusive focus on God). Dionysius the Areopagite calls these stages *purification*, *illumination* and *perfection*, and Saint Maximus the Confessor - *action*, *natural contemplation* and *mystical theology* [21]. As a final point of the divine exercise, but as a beginning of the living at an optimal level in the divine light, deification is man's accomplishment by his full saturation of God. In a broad sense, deification means man's advancement to the highest level of his natural powers or to his complete accomplishment, since, throughout this time, the divine power of grace has also been active in him. In a restrained sense, deification comprises man's progress beyond the limit of his natural powers, beyond the margins of his nature, in the divine plan which is beyond nature [22]. Dionysius the Areopagite defines deification as follows: "Deification is likeness and union, in as much as possible, with God [...] it is the contemplation and the science of the divine truth, the participation, in as much as possible, to the divine unifying accomplishment, to the One Himself." [*De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, I.3, P.G. 3, col. 376A]

We need to emphasize the fact that a human being on his way to this union is never diminished in his quality of person, but, giving up all that is characteristic of him by nature, the human person becomes fully accomplished and deified by the divine grace. For this reason, the union to which we are called is neither hypostatic, as it happens in the case of the human nature of Jesus Christ, nor of being, as it happens in the case of the three Divine Persons, but is the union with God by His energies or the union by grace, which makes us partakers of the divine nature without getting our nature to become God's nature. In deification we have, by grace, namely by the divine energies, all that God has by nature, except for the identity of being with God.

The fact that the fully deified man remains still a man maximized in his authentic value is what differentiates deification from *brahmanubhava*. In deification there is no non-duality, but duality: man's nature is not transformed in the divine being, as Saint Maximus the Confessor points: "While remaining – both body and soul – fully man by nature, he becomes – both body and soul – fully god by grace, through the divine brilliance of the blessed glory which is totally given to him" [*Ambiguorum Liber*, P.G. 91, col. 1088C].

5. Conclusions

A comparison between the *brahmanubhava* experience – with all the components of the mystical experience – and the Christian deification highlights the difference between the advaitic perspective and the Christian perception concerning realization and perfection. *Brahmanubhava* is realized exclusively by knowledge, yet this knowledge becomes an intuition, in the sense that it goes beyond the ordinary framework of the dual knowledge, which involves *subject* and *object*, knower-knowledge-known. The individual *self* through discrimination between *Ātman* and non-*Ātman*, through a denial of all that is overlapped (*adhyāsa*) because of ignorance (*avidyā*) over the *ultimate Reality* attains the authentic identity with *Brahman*: *tat tvam asi* ('You are It'), there are no more two, but *One*. Unlike this paradigm of the mystical experience, the Christian deification is a work engaging man as a person in a dynamics of deliverance from sinful passions and collaboration with the divine grace. Deified, man still remains a person, a *different* man in a perfect union, yet not identity, with the Personal God.

Synthetically, the difference of accent and sense of spirituality between the two traditions has been excellently delineated by Father Dumitru Stăniloae: "The Christian spirituality, having as a target man's deification and union with God, without confounding himself with Him, relies on the conviction that there is a personal God, who is the supreme source of irradiating love and Who, considering man valuable, does not want him to be cofounded with Himself, but wants to maintain and lift him into an eternal dialogue of love. Such a spirituality cannot occur where there is stated a progress of man in connection to a divinity conceived as impersonal essence. This progress cannot have any other result but the loss of man in the impersonal divinity. But the personal God,

therefore the supreme source of love, cannot be conceived as a singular person, but as a community of Persons in perfect unity.” [21, p. 37]

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