

Trinity and Existence

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In this article, on the basis of an understanding of man as a subjective existence expressing itself in the form of a world, I try to come to a certain perception of the Trinitarian Mystery. I study then the relationship in which the personal universe, human intersubjectivity, the Church, stands to this Mystery.

I shall use the term *jīva* to designate man as a subjective life or a subjectivity (which is by no means the same thing as a knowing subject). The equation made between the Father and the *Ātman*, the Son and *Brahman*, the use of the sacred syllable *OM* to designate the Spirit are not motivated by a propensity to facile conciliation, they are the fruit of the study of the meaning of these terms in the context of our integral experience.¹

(1) *The Fundamental Mystery*

The New Testament describes the presence of Christ and the presence of the Spirit, the action of Christ and the action of the Spirit, as a single reality. However, there is a distinctive element. With regard to us, the Spirit is God offering himself as *the fulness of the present*: he is, so to speak, the atmosphere in which we live: our life as God's children in the people of the covenant is life in the Spirit, the Spirit dwells in us, he is our life and makes us act, he sanctifies us, unites us, works for the unity of the body of Christ. No doubt, Christ is also present: we live in Christ, Christ lives in us, sanctifies us, unites us; but he is present as *the fulness of our future*: he is the End, the Fulfilment, the Consummation of history, we wait for his coming, we grow unto him.

As a personal existence—as a *jīva*—I am all at once source, world, movement.

(1) I am first of all source, origination, beginning. I am the operation by which a world continually comes into being. Therefore, in some way, I am the whole created reality *in principle*. Whatever is in me, whatever is contained in my world, exists first of all as my *jīva* positing and unfolding itself. My *jīva* as source is life, light, freedom, being, in their fontal state.

(2) My *jīva* expresses itself in the form of a world. The world is my *jīva* as revealed, as told to itself; it is life crystallised in a great diversity of expressive forms; it is speech, word, *logos* (not a mere *verbum mentale*, but a rich, multiform living system in which my incarnate *jīva* tells the whole of itself).

¹ C. Winckelmans, 'Hinduism and the Nation Building Endeavour,' *Indian Journal of Theology*, 1972, Vol. 21, p. 9.

(3) From everywhere, my jīva-world, returning to its source, conditions, feeds, determines my jīva continuing to express itself as world. The centrifugal aspect and the centripetal aspect form a single movement. As movement, my jīva is the dynamic unity of the operation by which my jīva-source realizes itself as world and of the operation by which my jīva-world returns to its source.

My jīva-source, my jīva-world, my jīva-movement are not three different jīvas, they are a single jīva. However, my jīva as source is not identical with my jīva as world; my jīva as movement cannot be simply identified with my jīva as source or with my jīva as world. As *unfolding*, my jīva-movement is purely and simply my jīva-source; as *returning*, it is purely and simply my jīva-world; but as the fundamental unity of both, my jīva-movement is, in its integrity, distinct from both my jīva-source and my jīva-world.

My jīva-source (I exclude for the moment all consideration of my createdness and of my dependence on the other jīvas-worlds) does not originate from any other principle; my jīva-world proceeds from my jīva-source; my jīva-movement proceeds both from my jīva-source and from my jīva-world, it is my jīva-source and my jīva-world as one.

Can we specify further the nature of these 'processions'?

(1) My jīva constitutes its world as the *expression* of itself, as the living realization of its potentialities. This movement ends in other personal centres (I exclude for the moment all consideration of the fact that the other persons receive their existence from God): it is essentially a generative movement. I *give life* to the personal world which 'surrounds' me, I make it exist as the *expression* of myself. Thus the world, the other persons, exist for me, in me, as my *word*, my *logos*—not as a mere *verbum mentale*, but as a living whole which, in its very complexity and expressiveness, is nothing but my jīva told to itself.

(2) The whole movement by which my jīva-source expresses itself in my jīva-world—that is, in a field which, as such, is *distinct* from it—*and* continually causes this field to return to itself, the whole movement by which my jīva-world emanates from its source *and* continually throws itself back into it in order to find itself again, is myself as desire—fundamentally myself as love. My jīva-source and my jīva-world do not *generate* my jīva-movement, they unite themselves *in it* (as it), they cause it to be *themselves* as one.

The connection between the three aspects of my personal structure and the three 'dimensions' of time must be noted carefully.

My jīva-source is my present as the realization of my past, my jīva-world is my present as an anticipation of my future, my jīva-movement is my present as the dynamic unity of past and future.

The finitude of my personal existence manifests itself in various ways:

(1) In the fact that my jīva as source is never pure source, pure origin, pure self-position;

(2) In the fact that my world is never the definitive, adequate realization of my potentialities: I express myself in a field of exteriority, in spatial structures;

(3) In the fact that my jīva always goes beyond the structures in which it expresses itself, towards new forms of self-expression, towards an ultimate fulfilment which it never reaches;

(4) In the fact that, in my jīva as movement, the perfect unity of my jīva-source and my jīva-world is never achieved: my jīva is craving, unfulfilled desire, effort.

As source, world, movement, my jīva is constituted as a created participation in, as a reflection or image of, the Absolute, the Transcendent Jīvā which is all at once Father, Son, Spirit.

The Father is the Pure Jīva as Pure Source, as Absolute, Eternal Beginning, as Alpha, as Ātman; he is the Pure Jīva as pure self-position, as the Primordial, All-consuming Act.

The Ātman expresses himself eternally in a perfectly adequate definitive manner. His Logos—the Son—is Himself as perfectly, eternally told to himself, not a world, but God's own plenitude; he is the fulness of the Father as perfectly communicated, he is Omega, he is Brahman.

The Father is Person, the Son is Person. They are eminently distinct, yet there is no distance between them; they are the same Pure Jīva.

My jīva-source expresses itself as jīva-world. In its world-hood, my jīva is not only distinct but also distant from itself. Therefore my world is never the definitive, perfectly actual expression of myself: my jīva-world never exists as a person distinct from my jīva-source, yet perfectly expressive of it, perfectly one with it. Better: the self-expressing of my jīva-source—its generative operation—does end in personal centres distinct from it, but these personal centres exist as they are, not through the mere generative power of my jīva-source but, first of all, through God's creative initiative. As persons, these centres are personal jīvas distinct from, irreducible to, my jīva, they are jīvas-sources distinct from my jīva-source, to the extent that they are constituted by my jīva, to the extent that they are my world, they are not *persons* who are distinct from my jīva-source, yet substantially, actually one with it. This is again my finitude.

God is Pure Jīva, Ātman. His self-expressing, his generative operation 'ends' in a *Person* who, while being, *qua* Son, eminently distinct from him, is substantially, *actually* one with him (is the same Pure Jīva). In the created universe, distinction of persons implies distinction of jīvas: each jīva is a single person; in God, distinction of Persons 'obtains' without distinction of jīvas, it takes place within the Pure Jīva.

The Pure Jīva-Son—Brahman—as Son, is all from the pure Jīva-Father—Ātman. From all eternity, the Son, as Son, is *Amen*, Obedience, Pure Return to the Father. From all eternity, the Father, as Father, is Pure Self-Gift.

As a single Pure Jīva, God is eternally perfect Movement, pure unity of Gift and Return, all at once Gift-in-Return and Return-in-Gift, pure Love: Spirit—OM.

The Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. As Spirit-of-the-Father, he is Father; as Spirit-of-the-Son, he is Son; as, indivisibly, Spirit-of-the-Father-of-the-Son, he is purely and simply Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not craving, he is not desire; he is Pure Eternal Fulfilment: the fulness of God as Pure Love.

(2) *The Personal Universe in Relation to the Trinitarian Mystery*

The Pure Jīva is the Act by whom the Universe is created. The universe exists as a finite participation in, a reflection of, the Pure Jīva.

(1) My jīva as the operation by which my jīva-source expresses itself in the form of a world while tending towards its ultimate realization is a created participation in the Supreme Ātman: in the Operation by which the Father expresses himself as Logos, as Son, as Brahman. As such it is jīvātman. In other words, to the extent that I am a jīva source expressing itself, the Father is my Creative Act.

(2) My jīva as the returning of my jīva-world to its source (*within* the operation by which my jīva-source continues to express itself as world while tending towards its supreme realization) is created as a participation in the Eternal Returning of the Son to the Father (*within* the Operation by which the Father 'continues' to express himself as Son). In other words, to the extent that I am a jīva-world returning to its source (within a jīva-source expressing itself as world), the Son—Brahman—(as proceeding from the Father—Ātman) is my Creative Act.

In this connection the following point must be noted:

It is essential that, while expressing itself in the form of a world, my jīva-source should be continually conditioned' by itself-already-expressed; that is, by my jīva-world continually returning to its source. Therefore it is not enough to say that the operation formed by my jīva-world returning to its source implies the operation formed by my jīva-source expressing itself as world, it must be said that the operation formed by my jīva-source expressing itself as world implies the operation formed by my jīva-world returning to its source. My jīva-source, however, is the *principle* of the whole system: my jīva-source expressing itself as world *causes* my jīva-world to return to its source, therefore it causes itself to be conditioned, alimented, by my jīva-world returning to its source (whereas my jīva-world returning to its source does not *cause* my jīva-source to give existence to it).

It is also 'essential' that, while expressing himself eternally as Son, the Father should be 'filled' by the Son eternally returning to his Source. Therefore it is not enough to say that the Operation formed by the Son returning to the Father implies 'That formed by the Father expressing himself as Son', it must be said also that the Operation formed by the Father expressing himself as Son implies 'That formed

by the Son returning to the Father'. The Father, however, is the *Principle* of the whole 'System'. The Father expressing himself as Son *causes* the Son to return to his Source, therefore he causes himself to be 'filled' by the Son returning to his Source (whereas the Son returning to the Father does not *cause* the Father to generate him).

These facts imply that the Act by whom I am created as jīva-source expressing itself as world, while being the Father, 'contains' also the Son; and that the Act by whom I am created as jīva-world returning to its source, while being the Son 'contains' also the Father. However, the Father is the Creative Principle in so far as he *causes* the Son to be Creative Act while he causes him to return to his source.

(3) My jīva as movement (as desire, as love) is created as participation in the Spirit—that is, in the Pure Jīva as Pure Movement, as the perfect unity of Gift and Return, of Pure Self-Communication and Pure Thankoffering, as Pure Love.

My jīva as movement implies both the operation formed by my jīva-source expressing itself as world and that formed by my jīva-world returning to its source; it is the unity of these two operations.

The Pure Jīva as Spirit 'contains' both the Operation formed by the Father expressing himself as Son and that formed by the Son returning to the Father, it is the pure unity of these two Operations.

The Act by whom I am created as jīva-movement, while being the Spirit—*OM*—'contains' also the Father and the Son.

On the other hand:

- (A) (1) My jīva as jīva-source, while implying my jīva-world, implies also my jīva-movement;
- (2) My jīva as jīva-world, while implying my jīva-source, implies also my jīva-movement.
- (B) (1) The Father, while 'containing' the Son, 'contains' the Spirit;
- (2) The Son, while 'containing' the Father, 'contains' the Spirit.
- (C) (1) The Act by which I am created as jīva-source expressing itself as world, while being the Father, 'contains' the Spirit;
- (2) The Act by which I am created as jīva-world returning to its source, while being the Son, 'contains' the Father *and* the Spirit.

The Father is the Principle of the whole Trinitarian 'System': he causes the Son to be one with him in the Spirit (as Spirit) while he causes him to return to him.

However, with regard to the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son are one Principle: the Son caused by the Father to be one with him in the Spirit (as Spirit) is the Son making himself one with the Father in the Spirit (as Spirit) while returning to the Father.

The Father is the Creative Principle in so far as he *causes* the Son to be Creative Act while he causes him to return to his Source, and in so far

as he *causes* the Spirit to be Creative Act while he causes the Son to be one with him in the Spirit (as Spirit).

However, with regard to the Spirit as Creative Act, the Father *and* the Son are Creative Principle in so far as the Operation by which the Father causes the Son to be one with him in the Spirit (as Spirit) *is* the Operation by which the Son makes himself one with the Father in the Spirit (as Spirit).

The movement of my life is from the past towards the future. My *jiva* constitutes the world in the movement by which it tends towards its ultimate realization. The world offers itself to me as an anticipation of my future, as a field of possibilities to be realized, a task to be fulfilled, as a *call*, an attraction. There is a particular 'kinship' between the world considered in this way and the Logos, Brahman: my way towards the Son, Plenitude of my future, goes through the world (though the others), my progress towards him *is* a world-building, a community-building, activity; it is through the world, through the others, that the Logos speaks to me, attracts me.

My *jiva* as *jiva*-source is myself as constituted, as having already reached a certain type and degree of self-realization, myself as history, as experience. There is a special 'kinship' between myself considered in this way and the Father: through my experience—through my individuality as already constituted—I undergo the Creative 'Thrust' of the Father (which throws me into the world, drives me towards the Son).

On the basis of my experience, I build my world: under the Father's impulse, I progress towards my End, the Son.

I build my future by projecting my past ahead of myself: I am created as a finite participation in the Operation formed by the Father eternally communicating and expressing himself as Son.

In the operation by which I project my past ahead of myself in the form of a particular activity, of a particular work, of a particular achievement (of a particular world, a particular anticipation of my future), I am conditioned, determined, by my own work (at this very moment, while it expresses itself in written words, my act of thinking is conditioned by the written words existing as its own expression); my past no sooner 'futurizes' itself than it returns to itself: I am created as a participation in the Operation formed by the Son eternally returning to his Source.

While I am conditioned by my own creation, I continue to move forward towards new achievements, beyond all particular realization: I am created as a finite participation in the Operation formed by the Father eternally 'continuing' to generate the Son while being 'filled' by the Son returning to his Source.

The unity of the movement by which I project my past ahead of myself in the form of a particular future and of the movement by which my future-anticipated continually accretes to my past, the unity of my past and future constitutes my present (my present as possession, as fulfilment, as consummated love, as bond): in my present, I am created as a finite participation in the Spirit, the Person

who, in his own reality, is the eternal consummation in One of the Father and the Son, Eternal Bliss—OM—(my finitude expresses itself in the fact that my present is never pure possession, pure fulfilment, pure consummation: my jiva always goes beyond the present, it craves for a more fulfilling, an eternally fulfilling, present; all earthly fulfilment leaves me unsatisfied: I seek You, I desire You).

All these considerations show that our existence as a time-process can be understood only in reference to the Triune God, the God of Revelation. It is only in the light of Revelation that the structure and meaning of our existence can be fully grasped. These considerations show also the way in which Revelation perfects our rational knowledge of God. Reflection in the light of Revelation makes us see, so to speak, the content and dimensions—I speak in a human way—of the divine facts of which our philosophical intuition gives us an elementary perception.

(3) *Intersubjectivity in Relation to the Trinitarian Mystery*

We must now study our link to the Trinitarian Mystery in the context of our interpersonal relations. I am created as a jiva-world vitally related to other jivas-worlds. The movement by which my jiva, unfolding itself from its centre, constitutes my world 'ends' in other personal centres. These personal centres, in so far as they are constituted by the self-unfolding movement of my jiva, are *my world*. As such, these persons are created *through me* by the Father (in the Operation by which he generates the Son: the operation formed by my jiva-source expressing itself as world is a finite participation in the Operation formed by the Father generating the Son). As such, these persons are meaningful entities which I fashion as anticipations of my future, as landmarks on my way towards my end, as refigurations of my end.

But these persons are not mere expressive modifications of my jiva unfolding itself, they are not mere realizations of my potentialities; they are first of all autonomous, self-determined beings distinct from me. In other words, the Father creates them not simply through me, in me, for me, but primarily in themselves, for themselves.

Therefore:

(1) On my way towards my end, I meet the other persons in their very otherness; I cannot tend towards my end without passing through them; while driving me towards the Son, the Father drives me towards them; through them, the Son calls me, draws me towards him. The Father creates us as *interdependent* finite participations in the Operation by which he generates the Son.

The acknowledgement of the other persons in their very otherness is an essential element of our authentic personal progress towards the Son. If I consider the others as mere modalities of my own existence, as tools, I betray the Creative Intention, I actuate myself and build the world in a twisted manner. Authentic self-realization implies respect for, service of, the others; it implies a certain attitude of submission to them. It is only by listening to the call which the Son

addresses to me through them that I shall hear and understand the call which he addresses to me directly, the call which I am. The Son wants to unite me to him directly, but this union cannot be achieved without union with the other persons: through them, the Son calls me to union with him. Our end is union with the Son *in the eschatological community of love*.

(2) All the other persons who surround me are jivas constituting their worlds from expressive centres distinct from my expressive centre. As such, they are all created as finite participations in the Operation formed by the Father generating the Son. These unfolded jivas continually return to their sources and, in this process, condition themselves continuing to unfold themselves. As such, they are created as finite participations in the Operation formed by the Son returning to the Father.

The operation formed by my jiva unfolding itself (participation in the Father's Operation), to the extent that it influences, conditions, moves the other jivas, identifies itself *in them* (as them) to the regressive movement of these jivas—that is, to the operation formed by these jivas returning to their sources (participation in the Son's Operation).

The operations formed by the other jivas unfolding themselves (participations in the Father's Operation), to the extent that they influence, condition, move my jiva, identify themselves *in me* to the regressive movement of my jiva—that is, to the operation formed by my act returning to its source (participation in the Son's Operation).

These facts make us see how, through the very operations by which we influence, help, serve each other (while tending towards our end), all at once the Father leads us towards, unites us with, the Son, and the Son leads us towards, unites us with, the Father. Our end, while being union with the Son in the eschatological community of love, is also filial union with the Father.

(3) By the same fact, it is union with the Spirit. While tending towards my end, I influence John, I work for his good, I serve him, unite myself with him. By this fact, I cause John to influence me, to perfect me, to be united with me. Together we tend towards our end. Our union—the unity of the two movements—is love, fulfilment, consummation. My jiva as love, as actual fulfilment, is a finite participation in the Spirit.

We grasp here the nature of authentic fulfilling love, the love which unites us to the Spirit—to the Father and the Son. I want the perfection of John. I do not try to suppress his otherness, to reduce him entirely to a modification of my own existence; I want him for himself, in himself. This is authentic fulfilment, love in the Spirit, union with the Trinity.

I may consider John simply as a tool, a thing to be enjoyed. In my dealings with him, I experience a certain sense of fulfilment, a certain satisfaction. This 'love' assuredly is a certain participation in the Spirit. However, it is a deformed image. It does not unite me with John, it perfects in an authentic manner neither John nor

myself. This love is not love in the Spirit, it does not *unite* me to the Trinity.

(4) *The Church in Relation to the Trinitarian Mystery*

God creates for himself in Christ a people of believers: a people who, freely, puts itself in Christ at the service of the Kingdom, a messianic people.

The faith of this people is the existence of the believers as movement towards the fulness of Christ. This faith is a created participation in the Operation constituted by the Father expressing himself in the Logos. In its *faith*, the people comes from the Father and goes to the Son, it is led by the Father to the Son. 'He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty . . . Every-one whom my Father gives me will come to me (that is, will believe in me) . . . No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him to me. . . .' (Jn. 6:35, 37, 44).

To the extent that the existence of the people is a messianic existence—priestly, prophetic, royal—the people is taken up by Christ, the Logos incarnate, and becomes Revelation of his Eternal *Fiat*. To the extent that it is thus taken up by Christ, the people exists as a participation in the Operation constituted by the Son returning to the Father, its faith becomes an epiphany of the sacrificial act of the Saviour, an anticipation of the Parousia: it becomes hope.

The faith of the people and its hope are a single act. To the extent that these two aspects form a unique operation, this operation, as charity, exists as a participation in the Spirit, that is in the Pure Jiva considered as realizing the perfect and eternal identity of Self-communication and Return. It is in the Spirit that the Church believes, that, in her faith and hope, she manifests the power of Christ and, thereby, offers herself as a sign of the coming of the Lord which truly realizes what it prefigures.

These considerations help us to grasp Christian existence in the unity of its act and the 'trinity' of its aspects.

(1) As a self-transcending-movement—personal tension towards an end, freedom—my existence is adhesion to God in Christ (in the people of believers), it is identification of my will to the Creative Will, it is the very movement by which my jiva tends, beyond itself-already-realized, towards its fulfilment in Christ. As such, my existence is *faith*; it is rooted in the Operation constituted by the Father expressing his own fulness in the Son.

(2) In its relation to the Logos incarnate, my existence takes on a messianic character: it becomes prefiguration, sign, proclamation and manifestation of the eschatological Kingdom, gospel and sacrament. It is *hope*, constituted by the presence of the Lord, carried and pervaded by the filial *Eukharistia*. 'We who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope that is placed before us. We have this hope as an anchor for our hearts. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary. Jesus has gone in there before us' (Heb. 6:18-20). 'You

love him, although you have not seen him; and so you rejoice with a great and glorious joy, which words cannot express, because you are obtaining the purpose of your faith, the salvation of your souls' (1 Peter 1:8-9).

(3) Charity is the exercise of faith and hope. When my jīva, under the Father's motion, within the Operation by which the Father generates the Son, by its own dynamism (freedom, *faith*), unites itself to its End and leads towards it the whole created reality; when my jīva, seized by its End, the incarnate Logos, attaching itself to him and waiting for him at every moment (*hope*), letting itself be pervaded by the eternal *Eukharistia* of the Son, manifests the Lord and offers itself as sacrament for the salvation of all; it communes with the One who, as hope, is the eternal and perfect fusion of the Gift-of-the-Father and of the Return-of-the-Son: realizing in itself the unity of faith and hope, it embraces the whole family in the Spirit (*charity*), it endeavours to rise and to raise the human family above the ambiguities of earthly existence. On the basis of my faith, in the perspective of my hope, through love, I unite myself actively in the Spirit to those with whom I live. As authentic love, my jīva does not only desire that the other human jīvas should attain in Christ the fulness of their personal being, it already now achieves in the Spirit of Christ and of the Father the eschatological agape, it achieves an anticipation of the eschatological joy: 'If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made perfect within us. This is how we are sure that we live in God and he lives in us: he has given us his Spirit. This is the purpose of love being made perfect in us: it is that we may be full of courage on Judgement Day, because our life in this world is the same as Christ's' (1 John 4:12-13, 17).

Through love, I lose myself in the other persons and find myself again with them in the Spirit. The realization of this communion requires from all a personal response. On the one hand, love makes me grasp the others in their integral reality and makes me desire a union with them which, without rejecting a single aspect of their personality, directs the particular structures of their incarnate existence towards a higher integration, a re-creation of their individuality in the fulness of the Spirit; on the other hand, the realization of this eschatological communion supposes on their part the same will; but this effort can reach its end only if they let themselves be moved by the Spirit.

Therefore, faith, hope and love are not three different *acts*, but three manners in which my jīva relates itself to the Trinitarian Mystery. To the extent that it is the whole of my jīva, my faith is concretely identical with my hope in my love; however, my jīva as faith (my jīva-source) cannot be identified to my jīva as hope (my jīva-world), to my jīva as love (my jīva-movement). To the extent that this distinction exists, I can describe the dynamic aspect of my jīva, its messianic aspect, its unitive aspect, as *three different aspects*.