God the King, the Father, the Brother, the Ghost. A Short Sermon.

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Books by Robert G. Brown

- **The Book of Lilith**
  ISBN: 978-1-4303-2245-0
  Lilith is the *first* person to be given a soul by God, and is given the job of giving all the things in the world souls by loving them, beginning with Adam. Adam is given the job of making up rules and the definitions of sin so that humans may one day live in an ethical society. Unfortunately Adam is weak, jealous, and greedy, and insists on being on *top* during sex to “be closer to God”.
  Lilith, however, refuses to be second to Adam or anyone else. *The Book of Lilith* is a funny, sad, satirical, uplifting tale of her spiritual journey through the ancient world soulgiving and judging to find at the end of that journey – herself.

- **The Fall of the Dark Brotherhood**
  A straight-up science fiction novel about an adventurer, Sam Foster, who is forced to flee from a murder he did not commit across the multiverse. He finds himself on a primitive planet and gradually becomes embroiled in a parallel struggle against the world’s pervasive slave culture and the cowled, inhuman agents of an immortal of the multiverse that support it. Captured by the resurrected clone of its wickest agent and horribly mutilated, only a pair of legendary swords and his native wit and character stand between Sam, his beautiful, mysterious partner and a bloody death!

- **Who Shall Sing, When Man is Gone**
  Original poetry, including the epic-length poem about an imagined end of the world brought about by a nuclear war that gives the collection its name. Includes many long and short works on love and life, pain and death.

  Ocean roaring, whipped by storm
  in damned defiance, hating hell
  with every wave and every swell,
  every shark and every shell
  and shoreline.
• **Hot Tea!**

More original poetry with a distinctly Zen cast to it. Works range from funny and satirical to inspiring and uplifting, with a few erotic poems thrown in.

Chop water, carry
wood. Ice all around,
fire is dying. Winter Zen?

• **Classical Electrodynamics**

A set of lecture notes intended to support the second semester of a two semester course based on J. D. Jackson’s book of the same name, although it can also stand alone as a textbook. These notes are under development (and are actively being used to teach) and are not guaranteed to be either complete or correct, but most students will nevertheless find them *useful*.

• **How to Engineer a Beowulf Cluster**

An online classic for years, this is the print version of the famous free online book on cluster engineering. It too is being actively rewritten and developed, no guarantees, but it is probably still useful in its current incarnation.

All of these books can be found on the online Lulu store here:


Both *The Book of Lilith* and *The Fall of the Dark Brotherhood* are also available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other online booksellers, and one day from a bookstore near you!

It is worth noting that this document records a small bit of the philosophy that underlies the story told in *The Book of Lilith*. If you like the one (or find yourself enraged but engaged by the one) you’ll probably like (or find yourself enraged) by the other.
Chapter 1

The Many Aspects of God

Religion is a puzzle. It is easy to see from a look at the history of the many religions that at one time or another have held or continue to hold sway within one or another of the equally diverse cultures that it has played an important, even a critical role in the “civilization” of mankind. Belief in God seems rooted in two aspects of the way our minds work that helped us evolutionarily bootstrap from animal to man, from a state of reflexive reaction to our immediate environment to reflective contemplation of our past, our present, and our future.

These two aspects (which are not cleanly separated, of course) are:

- *Causality*
- *Pattern Recognition*

It is worth saying a brief word now about each.

Nature at first glance appears chaotic and highly random. When a child is born it is as likely as not to play in the street, to fall down the stairs, to stick hairpins in electrical sockets (I myself did this last one at the age of two, getting third degree burns on all the fingers of my right hand in the process and doubtless confirming my destiny to one day become a physicist). We have no *intrinsic* knowledge of probability or the relationships between causes and effects. If you play in the street, cars will break your bones. If you do not keep your balance in high places, gravity will break your bones. If you place a thin piece of wire across two poles with 120 VAC potential difference and plenty of power-delivery capacity, that piece of wire will vaporize and in the process seriously damage the small fingers that hold it.

We can learn these relationships by abstracting the knowledge from experience and observation and instruction. Deer cannot – some twenty deer a year are killed on the highways within two miles of where I’m sitting
as I type this. In order for deer to learn not to “play in the street” we have to evolve better deer by killing off generations of the ones that were too stupid to avoid being hit. Eventually either we’ll end up with deer that instinctively shy away from black strips of rock or deer will get smart enough to flee from the mere sound of a car, but we aren’t there yet.

This process of abstraction, the linking of a spatiotemporal chain of cause and effect, (and the mental hardware that enabled it to happen) proved extremely valuable from an evolutionary point of view to early humans. Survivors were the ones that discovered patterns in the seeming chaos and inferred causal rules from the patterns that were “simple” and could be taught to offspring. “Don’t play in the street.” “Watch that you don’t fall down the stairs or jump out of trees.” And yes, “Put caps on unused electrical outlets when you have small children until you can teach them that electricity is dangerous,” (although in my case it was maybe 1958 and alas, such caps had not yet been invented).

One way of viewing the invention of the concept of God, then, is as a side-effect of the rapid development of the pattern-matching capability in our brains. Patterns become causes, and knowledge of cause is all about survival, but the patterns of causality are often subtle and the world is highly chaotic and largely unpredictable.

This was especially true in the distant past, when many of the root causes for things were still hidden within the flood of seemingly unique but similar events. Our brains demanded explanations but could not find them all as we did not yet know how to conduct a systematic search. It was natural, then, to for us to create a “super-cause” and assign it its own capricious nature, one that closely mirrored our own capricious natures and the seeming capriciousness of the many events we could not understand in terms of elementary causes. How easy, once this super-cause was imagined, to assign it as the root cause of any spurious or passing pattern observed by our ever more powerful pattern-abstraction engines.

Once nucleated in this way, religions almost immediately became major factors in the social co-evolution that was perhaps even more important than straight biological evolution in determining whose genes would live and whose would die. Humans in social groups, through cooperative enterprises, had outlived and outreproduced humans who did not since long before they were in any recognizable sense human. They already had social structure, pecking order, reproductive rights, and of course the all important transmission of discovered pattern information to their offspring without the requirement of each individual having to live through a close encounter with each possible fatal mistake to learn of them.

Sweetheart, don’t play with the saber-toothed kitty even if it does look soft and cuddlesome. Snake may well taste like chicken, but watch for the end with the eyes and the fangs. That’s the chief’s woman, and looking cross-eyed at her when he’s around will get your brains knocked out with
a club.

Social groups with a hierarchical structure are by definition a pattern, and it was and continues to be very much an evolutionary advantage to extend and generalize patterns, so what could be more natural than to subsume the pattern-explaining cause known as “God” (or more likely, Gods plural) into the pattern of social hierarchy. Large predators and small snakes can “understandably” cause you to die, but nobody can quite understand why one day you can defy the risk and eat tasty snake, and the very next your hand slips or you come on one unwares and are transformed from a living, aware being into an inert lifeless mass that quickly rots or is eaten in turn. Randomness, the truly unpredictable, frightens us and rightly so. That which we don’t know or understand can and will kill us, and so can that which we know or partly understand, leaving us hungry for the rest of the explanation so we can control it!

Causality, of course, is all about control. If we understand we can always kill the snake and arrange it so that it never kills us. We can wipe out sabertooths altogether so that they disappear as a risk to our selves and our children. We can figure out that it is a good idea to cover electrical sockets to eliminate the chance of an uncontrolled event causing a tragedy and reducing one of our beautiful, sweet children to a pile of corruption or a small vase filled with ash.

If God is a universal cause, a super-cause, the explanation for ‘why here’ and ‘why now’, then should we not seek to control this cause too? Our pattern recognition facilities are always at work, provisionally transferring successful patterns from one domain to another in the hopes that a match may be found.

Thus, when we note that our tribal chief (or any other “random” bully) is perhaps less likely to brain us when we praise him extravagantly, less likely to brain us when we regularly give him some of our possessions, more likely to reward us with similar privileges of our own when we are his strong supporters in the social hierarchy, how natural that we generalize and extend the hierarchy on to God, to seek to control God by means of praise, of sacrifice, by being good members of a religious hierarchy that (of course) is entwined with the social secular hierarchy and supports it because it works better that way from the point of view of survival.

Of course we as a species have, fairly recently as these things go, transcended this complex social-religious pattern. Since the Enlightenment, our understanding of the physical universe has blossomed to where we now understand how everything works. Sure, there are details we are still working on, and we are still trapped in a chaotic universe where much that happens (for all of our deep understanding of how it happens) is unpredictable, but in recent years we have come to understand even that, to be able to quantify its unpredictability as it were. We can take random number generators (that are not at all random, of course) and put them to
work inside simple, ultimately entirely deterministic algorithms and pro-
duce with computers patterns that are compellingly similar to the ones we
observe in nature – snowflakes and trees, erosion patterns and fingerprints,
even the mystery of how the brain itself works is slowly yielding to the in-
exorable advance of science, as one experiment after another, one insight
after another extends our understanding to ever more subtle and complex
phenomena.

The Enlightenment also brought into being the idea of religious freedom
as it became more and more apparent that large parts of accepted religious
belief were (to put it bluntly) simply wrong. However strongly these beliefs
formed the core of a system of social and cultural rules that was our society
at the time, they just plain turned out not to be the case, to directly
contradict every observation made of the actual Universe in which we live.

In other work I explore in considerable detail both what went right
and what went wrong on this process, and how in spite of some of the
philosophical problems that were discovered during the Enlightenment we
can have a mostly rational view of the Universe with a reasonably sound
and consistent basis for what we call knowledge. The purpose of this work
is different. In it, I wish to proffer a social polemic against the surviving
negative aspects of the world’s primary religions.

Not all of aspects of religion are negative, mind you. They do great
good as well as great evil. However the parts that are negative are almost
without exception insane as well, in the sense that they are either inde-
fensible physical constructs that directly contradict what we have learned
from the defensible system of post-Enlightenment science and knowledge
or they are anthropomorphic extrapolations and projections of human so-
cial structures onto that which we call God. Some of the latter are very
good – they have provided an ethical foundation for human culture without
which civilization could never have emerged. Some of the latter are
deeply evil, and lead to strife, conflict, and much human suffering. Let us
try to understand this.

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1The book Axioms, soon to be released within my Lulu store whose URL should
appear at the beginning of this document.
Chapter 2

A Human God

One of the greatest puzzles about human religion is the way that successful religions (which generally pay at least lip service to virtues such as love, brotherhood, righteous living, spiritual enlightenment, charity, hope, and other good things) have historically managed to be the basis for some of the bloodiest and longest running conflicts in the history of mankind. These conflicts have lasted \textit{thousands of years} in some cases, and are being actively continued to this very day.

The purpose of this short article is to indicate how this puzzle can be understood in terms of the persistence of certain human \textit{metaphors} in the greater religious dialectic. To put it bluntly, we (as a species) took the templates of human culture and transformed and extrapolated them into the templates for our understanding of God, and then intertwined the templates back through the parent cultures so that they formed a single socio-memetic superorganism. These cultural superorganisms had to \textit{compete} for resources and human membership, and the successful ones spread out at the expense of the unsuccessful ones. Since “success” throughout human history has nearly always meant “successful in war”, truly pacifistic religious cultures either disappeared (sometimes without a trace) the instant they were confronted by a more powerful, \textit{non}-pacifist religious culture, or else they quickly evolved teeth and claws of their own from memetic transfer and survive.

There are again numerous examples of this, but one of the most interesting in microcosm is the early evolution of the Christian church in external competition with paganism, Judaism and other religions as well internal competition with the vast range of e.g. gnostic “heresies”\footnote{A word that means \textit{choice}, note well – choices that were eventually violently suppressed.} that sprang into being on the basis of various revelations and scriptures. Only when secular authority (Constantine) endorsed Christianity and it devel-
oped the ability and will to act violently did Christianity become the unified superorganism that literally exploded across the world, slaughtering its competition both internally (heretical sects) and externally (paganism and other religions) if they refused to convert.

Only in very recent times – really only since the Enlightenment – has religion been forced to propagate and sustain itself in open competition in heterogeneous cultures through non-violent means. For the first time in recorded history religions have been forced to convince non-adherents to join on the basis of reason, by force of argument rather than backed by a sword. This in turn has created various problems, since all religions share an essentially irrational core based on faith that is, in fact, a form of anti-reason.

It is quite possible, of course, that historical purists and defenders of various faiths are going to disagree with one or another aspect of the sweeping generalizations above. They might point out that e.g. early Christians took their religion to Rome on a non-violent basis, that Christ commanded us to love one another. I reiterate, nearly all religions share a common core of virtues to which they pay lip service, but the religions and sects that survived long enough to leave their historical mark (with one exception that is not, properly speaking, a religion) survived by the sword, not by the word.

In the specific case of Christianity, note that it failed utterly to take root at its point of origin (in the Middle East). It was deliberately taken to the center of the world, the capital of the dominant culture of the day, where it proliferated and diversified among the subservient class as a form of social rebellion against the established elitist ruling culture. The emergence of a dominant, virulent memetic variant occurred as the result of a process that is strikingly similar to the emergence of a virulent strain of bacteria within a population that acts as a biological reservoir.

The key transformation that led to the emergence of the Catholic church was without any doubt the forced alteration of Christianity from a rebel faith into one that openly embraced and intertwined with the secular authority that literally ruled the Western world of the day. Constantine realized that whether or not the Christians were right (it seems likely that he never really believed that they were), they were convenient as they promised rewards in heaven for being a good little peasant now. At least some of the church fathers were absolutely thrilled to provide reciprocation for official sanction in the form of divine right to rule, and in so doing their particular variant of Christianity achieved instant evolutionary dominance.

In exchange for this (somewhat corrupt) deal, which involved a mandated (by Constantine) purging of the (at the time) highly diverse “apostolic Christianity” of e.g. the gnostic gospels and Arianism as “subversive” heresies that had the wrong social paradigm for a divinely sanctioned Emperor, Christianity “instantly” became the state religion of a major chunk
of the world. In this Faustian process, perhaps it lost its own immortal soul as it sought to spread and perpetuate its message of “love” through the use of naked force and coercion, steel and fire, the rack and the noose, for well over a thousand years (a process that continues, barely muted, to this very day).

Islam has followed this pattern even more strongly, as we shall see below. Hinduism and Judaism were never divorced from it – these religions directly co-evolved with the prevailing tribal or feudal culture. Even not-exactly-religions such as Buddhism and Confucianism have a history that involves winning over dominant secular rulers as converts who thereafter actively promoted it in order to establish a dominant social-religious culture (although in fairness, Buddhism was so supported and promoted by Ashoka strictly by non-violent means, after he had conquered an immense empire with the sword in which he was able to peacefully promote it).

Another common “violent” factor within all the major successful religions is that they contain explicitly coercive violent dogmas. Unfortunately this is true even of semi-religions such as Buddhism, where the whole point is to be liberated from an asserted (but scientifically unsupported) cycle of rebirth into “hell” – this world of presumed suffering. It is far more evident in the case of e.g. Christianity and Islam.

It is a historical fact that both of these faiths were spread by “nonviolent” missionaries (to the extent that this ever did happen unaccompanied by conquering armies sooner or later) by communicating a message of hell-fire and damnation! Christ the gentle brother appeals to peasants, sure, but peasants didn’t actually run things at the time (and even peasants enjoy a nice pagan orgy from time to time). The conversion message, well-supported by scripture, was and is to this day very much the (paraphrased) following:

Screw the threat to your physical body while you are alive from our sword-wielding companions who are coming, never fear, for booty and land in their own good time. Either you adopt our faith (and fork over your wealth and land in our God’s name without forcing us to resort to the violence we deplore) or our God will throw you into a fiery furnace and burn you for eternity in a state where you will never die, where mere cessation from the greatest pain you can ever imagine would be a blessing and a relief! Our God is so nasty that he will go crazy on your ass like the worst human psychopath you can possibly imagine and will do so forever if you don’t get down on your knees right now and recite the following magical phrases to appease him.

To quote the Koran, 22:19-22:23:

Garments of fire have been prepared for the unbelievers. Scalding water shall be poured upon their heads, melting their skins and that which is in their bellies. They shall be lashed with
rods of iron. Whenever, in their anguish, they try to escape from Hell, back they shall be dragged, and will be told: 'Taste the torment of the Conflagration!'

Not to be outdone, Matthew 13:42:

...and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

or perhaps Mark 9:43-48:

...and if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

If that’s not spreading the faith through the direct, naked threat of violence, I don’t know what is. A mere “sword” is tame by comparison. But let us return to our muttons.

In the light of reason and free choice, passages such as these that portray God the Psychopath seem disturbing. Small wonder that religions that portray hell as a state experienced here on Earth brought about by our own choices (such as Hinduism and Buddhism) have made considerable headway, as this is something that all people experience during their lifetime and doesn’t make God out to be a flaming lunatic.

Still, our goal is not just to observe the truth of these words, but to understand why this evil came about, and just what parts of the metaphors and templates and rituals and beliefs of religion are evil in the sense of the word that is immediately and intuitively available to us, without worrying too much about all the Socratic bullshit or Aristotelian ideals on just what the good, or bad, really is.

After all, if you are reading these words and aren’t a nut-case yourself you have some idea of good and bad that we’d likely mutually agree on. We might, for example, manage to agree that hurting people for pleasure or out of some sort of twisted desire for revenge is bad, helping people learn from their mistakes and being generally nice to them is good, all things being equal. There are other places we might disagree, of course, especially if you happen to think that it is bad of me to refuse to mindlessly accept your particular view of deity and think that it is so good of you to accept that view that it somehow makes it OK for you to hurt people, or steal, or force your views on others by means of secular force if the end result is their conversion and hence salvation or just the lesser result of the continuation of your own secular social power.

These metaphors were introduced in part due to the inadequacy of the human languages common at the time when the fundamental religious doctrines of the various faiths of today where laid down in scripture to
describe *mathematical* ideas such as “domain”, and related *logical* ideas such as the analysis of causal chains and empirical reasoning where they necessarily must occur in any discussion of the *infinite* (a mathematical concept once again) and hence God. Reasoning about infinity is subtle and fraught with peril *even in modern mathematics* where at least it can be fairly carefully defined and understood and where it can be consistently manipulated according to a set of rules.

The particular metaphors in question were also, as noted above, derived from from the prevailing *social structure* of that time. Unable to wrap their human heads and words around an abstract and mathematical God, God has been presented as a construct based almost entirely and obviously on *antropomorphic projections and extrapolations* of human archetypes, of existing figures in human culture. Consequently, across nearly *all* cultures and *all* times God or the Gods, as the case may be, have been presented over and over again as:

- **The Ruler**: God the King, Lord God.

There is little doubt of the origin of this concept. Human kings aspired to the powers religion ascribed to deity (and indeed not infrequently *were* endowed with Divine Rights if not outright deity). So did religious “kings”, the leaders of the religious groups themselves. Prophets and priests, saints and sinners, all aspired (and continue to aspire) to govern others besides themselves, to *rule over a dominion*. God in this aspect is thus this most base, greedy, and cruel aspect of our own selves.

- **The Father**: God the Father (and to lesser extent in modern culture God the Mother).

This metaphor again has clear roots in sexual procreation among humans and the sense of duty and responsibility and love engendered by the process of creation. But the Father is also the ruler, the punisher. Disobey your real father and you get cast out, you get a spanking, you get time out, you get a stern talking to. Disobey God and you are cast into a fiery pit after death, or afflicted with plagues and torments in this life. But God is a stern and impersonal Father, not terribly nice, as one can easily love him and obey all His rules as best you understand them and *still* get cancer at the age of forty, *still* experience the anguish of the death of a child, *still* be vivisected in a Nazi torture chamber.

- **The Brother**: God the merely Human.

The metaphor of parenthood and the yearning of the human spirit towards power and control has not infrequently been inverted to create God the Avatar (Krishna) or God the Son (Christ) as the *objects* of the attentions of the paternal and imperial manifestations
of deity. These “human” Gods suffer as we do the ailments of the flesh, find themselves in battles for life and death, eat and excrete and have sex, and eventually die (sometimes rather horribly). God the human struggles, as we do, to do the best that they can given the rules that govern the Universe, the laws of physics as it were. Sometimes they in principle have the power to remake reality in an instant to the shape of their desire, to work miracles. However, there is no discernible logic in the way that they exercise this power. They cure this one’s blindness, that one’s lameness, but what of all the other blind and lame that they leave uncured?

If one has the power to end evil and choose not to do so, does that not make you evil, impose on you the ultimate burden for the sin? God our Brother, for whatever reason, cannot or will not do so, and if it is truly cannot, he (or she, God our Sister works equally well) indeed becomes our equal. Christ our brother was very much the message of the suppressed Gnostic gospels, but it did not mesh well with the political needs for God the Ruler to be made manifest on Earth by the Holy Roman Emperor and never stood a chance.

- The Ghost: God the Holy Spirit.

This is in many ways the least popular, the least understood, metaphor for deity. It is the one view of God that is stripped of all humanity but, perhaps, the essence of awareness itself. This is the view of God that is most abstract, the most mathematical, related to the concepts of original cause, infinity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence. The Holy Spirit cares nothing for ruling men as if they were vassals of some feudal lord, it cares nothing for parenting people as if they were sons and daughters of the flesh carrying some sort of heritable evolutionary material, it is not human at all (to the extent where we refer to it, rather than he or she). It is the ultimate abstraction of existence in comparison to non-existence. Yet human religions impart even to the Holy Spirit one gentle aspect of humanity, that of the compassionate Self. The Holy Spirit, the Atman, is that within us that serves for better or worse to generate the essential map between Self and Other, to form as a basis for ethics and knowledge. It is the ultimate answer to the question: “Who is this that is reading these words, clothed in the apparent flesh of my body, experiencing and remembering the world?”

It will be argued below that of these diverse views or metaphors of deity, only the last one, God the Holy Spirit has the required mathematical attributes that we commonly associate with God. It will also be argued below that the various churches and religions inevitably (for social reasons) inherited the wicked elements of the human-derived metaphors, and that they are directly responsible for much of the remaining evil in the world today.
Let us continue, then, with the rest of this polemic and explore each of these points in turn. In the process, perhaps we will be able to see just a bit better what God is *not* by stripping away the arrogant, egotistical anthropomorphism (generally speaking a *patriarchal*, gender biased anthropomorphism at that) that we have imposed on God.
Chapter 3

God the King

By preaching of God the King, many of the world’s religions, in particular the Judeo-Christian-Muslim (JCM) faiths, continue to propagate a vision of mundane power and glory, of kingship here on earth, as if it is good for God to rule men as a king, so it must be good for one Man to rule other men (to be like unto God). What, then, is the perpetual war in the Middle East between Jew and Christian and Muslim but men seeking to further this view of God, that it is their divine right and duty to conquer and rule this land of all lands, to impose their will and vision of all possible wills and visions, to establish their dominion as God’s dominion.

Faux! It sickens me, and it should sicken you as well. Humanity since the Enlightenment has been in the process of systematically ridding the world of Kings and good riddance to them all. It is high time we cast out God the King as a metaphor of deity, as there is no possible way that the river of human blood that has soaked into the ground in the Middle East is justified. This is a demented and ancient kind of idolatry, the perversion of the vision of God into a twisted version of our own desires and used as the merest of excuses to further them.

The view of God as a ruler or king of the Universe is an obvious extrapolation of the well-understood feudal concept of a human as the lord of a domain, who may be beholding to the king of the kingdom, who in turn may be beholding to the emperor of many kingdoms. Let us examine the “ideal” of these concepts (the ones that the ruler at any given level wishes were correct) before they get modified and corrupted by “politics”, limitations of power, and all of those random circumstances of a world dominated by evolution both memetic and genetic.

The chief of a tribe or lord of some small domain has the power of life and death over his people, “owns” all of the land in that domain, and directs the power of the state to defend or extend that state against is neighbors. As the owner of all things (including, in some sense, both
the serfs and vassals), they control the distribution of wealth and regulate commerce with those neighbors, if any.

In the inevitable course of memetic/social evolution, as one lord or chieftan gets by luck or strategem gains power over an ever larger domain, they direct more power, converting one or more of their competing neighboring domains into their own and appointing their own vassals to hold them on their behalf. The lord becomes a king, of sorts, the ruler of many vassals who are themselves lords over vassals of their own who in turn are masters of their household and any serfs it might contain.

This forces consolidation of the neighboring domains into kingdoms, as a kingdom almost by definition is the master of any neighboring domain that does not participate in a structure of equal strength. Of course all kingdoms are not equal in strength, and in the fullness of time kings emerge that successfully conquer entire neighboring kingdoms. Again, vassal kings are appointed (often from the king’s own family) and the king becomes an emperor, the king of kings.

As before, an empire can only be opposed by other empires of roughly equal power. They quickly expand until geographic boundaries and the problems of logistic support and communication far away from the center of power limit its growth, or until its boundaries collide with the boundaries of another empire. So far in world history, no emperor has managed to extend dominion over the entire globe, to form the “last empire” as a true ruler of the Earth, although we have had a number of creditable attempts within the last hundred years, where the invention of technology created a window where in principle such an empire was possible.

The main point is that every human in this system has the evolutionary imperative to aspire to the next level of power above their own. The serf wishes to be a vassal, the vassal wishes to become a lord, the lord connives to become king, the king dreams of becoming emperor, and the emperor – what do they dream of becoming? They already rule the world as far as they can see, as far as one can travel in months or even years from the center of their power.

They wish to rule it all, to become master of their own lives and deaths, to no longer be bound by physical law but rather to gain a magical power to reorder all things. They aspire to become God. And so, of course, do all the lesser orders in the feudal structure, where even the lowliest serf at least dreams of “promoting” to emperor through luck, politics, and the taking of risks.

This is the practical, political side that has ever been matched up against humanity’s need to seek causes and to discover patterns in the disordered Universe that surrounds them. With such a powerful pattern already at

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¹Note that this is not a political or historical polemic, so we will not dwell on the instabilities of this evolutionary model that cause empires to fall, kingdoms to split, and of course new paradigms like that of democracy to emerge.
hand, is it any wonder that it was extended one more level, from emperor to God?

This did not happen uniformly, by any means. In some cultures the dominant ruler became gods themselves, and commanded ritual magic on behalf of their kingdoms or empires. In others the prevailing human politics of the many petty kingdoms, constantly warring, with family relations between the kings themselves was simply cloned into a family of gods with a chief god and many related gods, constantly themselves in conflict, so that human conflict was merely an inverted reflection, a reflection of a reflection as it were, of conflict in the heavens.

In all cases, however, a successful state integrated tightly with the prevailing religion, because gods trumped kings in the political hierarchy. If they were in conflict, it was easy to nucleate rebellion and revolution as of course the entire system from the beginning was based upon the myth that the strong can ever rule the weak, a myth that for most of human history was a self-fulfilling rule that prevented the people from quickly discovering that collectively, any group of people is stronger than any single member so that the many serfs, ultimately can rule over the strongest king and cast them down.

This revolutionary capability of religion is manifested by the phrase “with God (or the Gods) on our side”. It is also manifested as the divine right of kings. Wars were fought with the magic associated with divine intervention, which would manipulate all the random factors associated with victory so that the kingdom which really was hooked into the power of God would win each conflict. As the winners wrote the history books, this myth became very, very solidly entrenched in every human culture. The primary historical epics of the human race, the Mahabaharata, the Ramayana, the Iliad, the Nordic sagas, the myths of the Greeks and the Romans, and of course the Bible – all are religious texts as well as histories, all are testaments to the primary thesis of “Our kings won these battles with God on our side, and when we lost a battle it was because our faith was being tested or because we had failed in some ritual or in our devotion.”

God was indeed seen as the power that regulated victory in battle, and hence security in life. When your kingdom or empire won a war, greater or lesser, it profited. The life of every member of the winning community improved, as the greater wealth and security associated with victory paid its dividends, just as the loser paid the penalty in blood and loss of status. God is the primary cause of all things, and hence is the primary cause of our victory in battle, and defeat is prima facie evidence that one is worshipping the wrong God, a notion that was only challenged, rather weakly, by groups that had a long enough history of rising from defeat.

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\[^2\]Probably not, but the exceptions are so few and rare as to be ignorable. Besides, it is almost mathematical. The ultimate winners in every conflict were obviously the ones with God on their side, if everything that happens is the will of God. Our ancestors won, therefore their Gods were the true Gods. Evolution in action, even here...
something that of course was mediated and brought about by God for those faithful enough to persevere in their belief and following of the rituals through the tribulations in between) that they could sustain their religious and cultural identity as serfs in those kingdoms where it was permitted at all.

In many it was not, and rather sensibly. As noted above, dissident religions are always a potential source of revolutionary instability. It is no accident that Spain housed the Inquisition and purged all religions competing with the prevailing Catholicism internally in blood and fire, then purged all religions so competing in the territories they conquered, and that those territories are overwhelmingly Catholic still today. Nor is it an accident that India’s repartition occurred because its Muslim conquerors failed to purge it of Hinduism however hard they tried, that America’s and France’s revolutions occurred because their people no longer accepted their emperors as divine.

The world’s most successful religions, with a single exception, are fundamentally based on the myth or anthropomorphic projection of God the King. In Hinduism, the most successful kings of the ages were Gods. Krishna and Rama are both kings and God incarnate. When Hinduism was faced with “competition” of a sort from Buddhism (which does not make this assertion and indeed is the one religion that does not discuss an anthropomorphic “God” at all) they simply swallowed it whole by making the Buddha an incarnation of Vishnu as well. The Hindu pantheon forms a court, and within that court the usual games of intrigue and conflict occur, with demons and devils playing the role of the “outsider” human culture that opposes the prevailing empire and limits its absolute power.

In the JCM tradition, we begin with an abstract creator but quickly learn that he created mankind in his own image. Never mind what that really meant in the original language or whether there is a more enlightened view of things reserved for the spiritually advanced Elect (as there is in Hinduism as well, for that matter) – it has for thousands of years been the message preached to the people that this is a male God, King over the kings of the earth, who created a male messiah to rule over the earthly dominion as He ruled over Adam and Adam’s seed. Eve was never more than a possession, created of Adam’s own flesh, the original serf.

In due time, when overrun by other empires, to sustain its culture the Jewish kingdom brought forth the legend of a male messiah, with that divine blood of Kings in his veins, who would come and set them free and recreate their kingdom, and indeed be their king once again. During the hardest of times a candidate arose and attracted a large revolutionary following. This candidate was promoted as a King of Kings, a Lord of Lords, and over the course of time was identified as a royal avatar of God incarnate, much as Krishna and Rama were in another place and time.

This human God-King might have gone unremarked throughout human
history, for he left no discernible historical trace in his own country, but
his followers cleverly took his story and sayings overseas to the very heart
of the empire that ruled his land, where they (as a revolutionary creed,
after all) proved very popular among that land’s slaves and working class,
the large and mostly disenfranchised hewers of wood and carriers of water
that made the empire work. When Christianity first showed up in Rome,
Rome had a thousand-year-old tradition of religious tolerance, one that
was viewed as essential for the empire’s survival.

Christianity came into Rome as a chaotic mish-mosh, carried by many
people. The view that there was just one “true” version of Christianity
is the result of a process of careful purging on the part of the eventual
winner (Catholicism) of all the losers. To put it bluntly, the losers had
their churches burned, all of their texts and “gospels” burned, and if they
were particularly unlucky were burned themselves, perhaps after being
extensively tortured. There were many distinct Christian heresies that
showed up, where it is important to note that whatever you may have
been taught by its use in context, the word “heresy” means choice. Some
of these were variants that might well have found a way of co-existing with
the similar hodge-podge of pagan faiths that represented the empire at
that point, in particular the gnostic and mystic variants that didn’t push
the vision of hellfire and damnation inherited from the Jewish culture.

However, evolution doesn’t work that way. Only the fittest survives,
where (as is so often true in nature) the term “fittest” refers to the ones
willing to kill and eat their competitors for breakfast. The struggle for sur-
vival occurred on many planes. Christianity, as expounded by the apostles
who made their way to Rome, wasn’t about coexisting, it was about ruling.
The faith initially appealed to the relatively poor and downtrodden
of Rome, and was from the outset extremely intolerant of any heresy. Ad-
herents were to have no choice whatsoever, and all other existing religions
and variants of Christianity were considered anathema.

At first the Roman empire pretty much ignored Christians, but Chris-
tians wouldn’t be ignored and insisted on attacking the established Gods at
every turn instead of simply moving in beside them. Since it was initially
popular among the slaves and lower classes upon which Rome depended,
it appeared to be a subversive and potentially revolutionary instrument,
and Roman emperors took actions of one sort or another suppressing it.
The worst of these, however, were none too severe and succeeded only
in driving it underground for a time where only the strongest and most
dogmatic variants survived.

Then they got lucky. A Roman emperor early in the fourth century
issued a decree of tolerance of the Christians, who had been heavily perse-
cuted in the third as their power and their attacks on the established order
grew. The deal was that they’d come back into the fold of Rome and not
make trouble or attack other religions, and that they’d then be tolerated
themselves. Then along came Constantine. Initially a pagan, Constantine converted to Christianity. Since Christianity was all about *not tolerating any choice* – choice is heresy, recall – he prepared to make his faith the de facto state religion and suppress with means both violent and economic all contending choices, including the Christian ones.

By this point, two or three prime contenders for becoming “the” state religion of Christianity had emerged, and differed only in particular abstract tenets of their faith. Wars were fought and rivers of blood shed over whether Christians who recanted during the worst of the persecutions were damned. Excommunications (in both directions) abounded over whether or not Jesus was begotten (and hence appeared in time’s stream as a subordinate of God the Father) or instead a trinity where Jesus was neither created nor made but existed for all time. Constantine didn’t want to see any of it – he insisted that Christians get together and figure out exactly what it was that they believed, and, as long as those beliefs supported him in his office as emperor he’d then push them as the official state party line.

The result was the Council of Nicea. The majority of the council wrote down the bulk of Christian dogma as we now recognize it, excommunicated and in some cases ultimately (via Constantine) executed the losers, and burned all of their writings. Thus perished most of the Gnostic Christian texts and the Gospel of Thomas, which may well have been one of the original gospels but which did not support the system of top-down control, the picture of God the King and the divine right of kings and emperors. Constantine gave the Catholic Christians a grip on the Roman empire that persists to this day by inextricably linking the state to the church. Rivers of blood, much of it Jewish or (later) Muslim blood, were shed directly by the Church or by the secular hand of the church, the state, with its encouragement or direction. Freedom of thought was extinguished for over a thousand years.

Islam, from its birth on, fared little differently. To come into existence at all in a world dominated by the Holy Roman Empire it had to be a warrior faith from the very beginning. Its memes were basically inherited from both Judaism and Christianity, including the threat of violence in the form of eternal hellfire and damnation, including a coming apocalypse where the righteous would ultimately triumph over nonbelievers. It rejected the notion of God as a Trinity (which of course never made much sense in the first place, even to a lot of early Christians) but made God very much into King and Father combined, a being in detailed and intricate control of the threads of our lives who blesses or curses according to how correctly one lives according to the *precise* rules laid down by Mohammed.

It too, spread by converting first a small band of adherents, who in turn took over political power and started an empire of their own. It was in many cases more tolerant of other religions, in particular Christianity and Judaism (which it regarded as heresies more in the sense of misguided
choice than as true blasphemy) but it did provide non-Muslim’s living among the Muslim’s with a constant economic pressure to convert in the form of a differential tax structure. It also controlled the courts both of law and of government, and hence was more or less unassailable internally. Only when its empire ran into other empires with their own state religions was it limited. Although for a time its tolerance caused a flowering of culture and science, in the end stagnation and intolerance won out, as it always does, and the Enlightenment did not arise from Islam.

It is remarkable that the early beginnings of these faiths in many ways resembled the rise of Hitler and Nazism. There were many competing variants, and acts of appalling violence between them. The strongest (most vicious) cults emerged, were driven into the shadows by prosecutions conducted by a prevailing state that wished merely to keep the peace and generally tolerated them until driven to do otherwise. They eventually succeeded by coming out of the shadows during a time of tolerance and convincing critical members of the ruling establishment to join forces, whereupon in a matter of years they became the state.

Once in power they were equally ruthless about destroying all opposition as quickly as they could manage it, stealing the property of their competitors (in the name of the state), killing or converting the top leadership of those competitors, destroying all trace of the competing world views by burning the books and suppressing the teachers that taught it. They all without exception bashed on the Jews, the Christians for a variety of reasons, Hitler because the Christians had set the precedent for some 1600 years.

The success of the Christians and Moslems and Hitler were all accompanied by thought control – the rewriting of all history that was inconvenient to the victor, the control of all histories that were written from that point on. In the case of the Christians, it was followed by a thousand years of darkness with only intermittent bursts of light. In the case of Islam, it was a similar mix of darkness and light. Who can doubt that the success of Hitler would have been followed by anything less?

Given this philosophical and historical similarity, is it any surprise that Hitler’s rise to power was met with the approval of the Pope, at least until he demonstrated that he was not going to be any more tolerant of Catholics than anyone else? Only the united opposition of men of good will from the protestant world, the world created by the Enlightenment that rejected the divine right of kings, succeeded in preventing the establishment of a true world totalitarian state, one that doubtless would have elevated Hitler to the status of deity when the rewriting of history was finally done.

The image of God the King is a dark one, steeped in all the blood spilled by the greedy, warring, jealous kings of the world “in God’s name”. It is God seen as the being that mere men, thinking with their reptile brains, wish that they themselves could become. Ruling over all things, in
absolute control, jealous of every prerogative, demanding of worship. Does this sound like an omnipotent omnipresent omniscient deity to you? To me, it sounds like the kind of worship demanded by the worst sort of human bully fighting with other bullies, the kingship of a gang leader constantly being threatened by other members of his own gang. A leadership that is in truth deeply insecure as even in heaven the head that wears the crown is in the JCM myth uneasy – Satan himself is the personification of the eternal usurper, the unfaithful servant who covets the crown, the deadly heresy required by evolution in order that things change.

God the King, God that leaves us with no choice, is an Evil view of God, one that generates much evil here on Earth. Evolution and the growth of scientific knowledge is a process of growth, and growth involves change. Change in turn occurs because of choices, because of (quite literally) heresies. A fish’s fins grow into legs, its gills become lungs, and where before there was a fish there is an amphibian, then a reptile, then a mammal, and eventually a human, all heresies, abominations, mutations of that which went before it but which turned out to be far better and more fit to survive.

Humans constantly choose, and constantly change, and with freedom of choice those choices average out for the better, not the worse. God the King is presented as a certainty, the King’s law, a complete lack of choice, and hence eternal stagnation. Indeed, without the dynamics of growth and change stagnation itself is a downhill path, one leading to eventual extinction.

The people of the world would should reject God the King in all scripture and in their tenets of faith. They should open their minds instead of closing them. They should use their own common sense and not the words of scripture to determine what is and is not true. God may be many things, but God the King engaged in some sort of battle with the legions of Satan, a King that demands that we not think too hard or deeply about the truth or sense of scripture but accept it “on faith”, a God that will punish us more horribly than the most demented madman could ever manage (although madmen working for the church-state in centuries past certainly gave it a try) for failing to accept seven silly things before breakfast – that is not a true vision of God.
Chapter 4

God the Father

By preaching of *God the Father* the religions of the world today (again predominantly the JCM religions although they by no means have a monopoly on this) propagate a vision of *patriarchal dominance*. Once again, we reap on Earth the evils thus sown: the subjugation of women, the abuse of children, the concept of *punishment* as a response to *crime* itself. This is all about a wish to control God by means of our actions on Earth. These churches without exception push a view of *ritual magic* – if we *please* God by being good Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus – the God will *reward* us. If we anger Him, God will *punish* us. The message communicated is that these rewards and punishments will come *in this life* as God wills, but of course the inevitable *random* exceptions leave an *infinity* of rewards and punishments to the eternal *afterlife*.

How can I begin to communicate the evil, the human pain, that this wickedness creates here on Earth? Perhaps a story. My sister-in-law died recently of breast cancer. She was a young woman, in her forties, with two small children. She was a well-educated woman, a psychiatrist, successful in her field. She was a basically *good* person – no doubt she “sinned” in one way or another from time to time, but no more than anybody else. She got the cancer originally, it was resected (apparently successfully) and then it came back. When it came back she slowly, inexorably, died in my very arms, in spite of the very best the excellent medical community here could do for her.

She constantly looked for a miracle. It was her true belief that if she just believed *hard* enough, and *deeply* enough, that if she repented her petty little sins *sincerely* enough, that she would get her miracle, the cancer would go into remission, and she would live to see her children grow up. She had been raised in a world where being good was rewarded, being bad was punished. Her punishment was for being bad, her salvation would come from being good. This was hard for us to deal with, and
ultimately was hard on her children who had been told repeatedly that if they believed hard enough Tinkerbell wouldn’t die, and who felt quite betrayed and guilty when, at the very, very end, they were at last told that their mother was dying and that’s all there was to it.

God the Father is all about guilt, and I got furiously angry at those wicked people who gave my sister-in-law rituals and totems that were supposed to make her well, who then blamed her when they didn’t work. She was obviously not believing hard enough. Perfect faith can heal, so if you fail to heal it is a logical conclusion that you lack perfect faith, that it is your fault that you are dying. Her children have had to deal with their own irrational sense of guilt, that if they had been better, done something differently, their mother would still be alive.

We wish to control God the Father by means of our obedience, but apostatic ex-Christian sinners like myself survive and even thrive as chance and the world dictate while True Believers suffer and die, with only a promise with no foundation in evidence that it will all get balanced out afterwards for comfort. Emulating this capricious and cruel God, we reward and punish our wives, our husbands, our own children, our neighbors, whenever their behavior displeases us or fails to agree with our particular vision of Law. And yes, sometimes we too do bad things to good people for no apparent reason at all.

Note well that I’m not bitching about this state of affairs. To quote my sister-in-law, the world “is what it is”. Bad stuff happens, good stuff happens. Maybe there is a master plan, maybe God does indeed intervene in the affairs of the world but if so it isn’t according to the logic of God the Father, punishing and rewarding according to the degree of one’s faith or compliance with religious or civil law. It is something more subtle, something that preserves the rule of God’s law (physics) and the equality and equity of the entire process, something linked, perhaps to the notion of compassion and growth, although this can seem trite in the face of the amazing pain our bodies can experience, the depths of human misery the world inflicts on us or we inflict on each other. The religions of the world need to abandon God the Father, and let go of guilt and blame. They especially need to let go of the notion that by performing religious magical rituals they are in any sense controlling God.

They do not control God by means of prayer or ritual. What a silly idea! How capricious! If anything, God, especially an omnipresent omnipotent God, controls them, from their first burp to their last fart. They would do well to think about this, because there is only one place that this sort of control could be accomplished, and it is the last place most people ever look for God – at the very center of their own beings.

I do not wish to assert that prayer has no purpose. That I cannot say. At the very least prayer can provide a sense of comfort and can give humans the strength to endure the many pains and travails of life on Earth and
their own inevitable death, because prayer is a way of meditating upon and
communing with the infinite and eternal, the *something* that we *know* exists
because of our continuing Cartesian experience of life itself. Nothing does
not exist, therefore something does, of this we can be absolutely certain,
and existence even for an instant is eternal.

I would not even assert that prayer has no influence on outside events
- God is a storyteller and in *one* sense this must certainly be false as
God exists outside of time and our concept of “influence” is one bound to
entropy and time in a way that God could truly never be. *Inside* time’s
stream, however, God may well be fragmented and bound to time, and
telling a story of sorts that is made up as it goes along.

Maybe, perhaps, possibly are all the operative words here. We cannot
be certain that prayer is a waste of time. It almost certainly is useful from
a human point of view. It *may* have effects beyond that. However, we
certainly cannot *control* God by prayer, beyond the prayer of an electric
light switch, an antibiotic injection, or any of the myriad other inventions
of mankind to improve and control the world. And even these mundane
“prayers” are subject to failures as Murphy’s Law (also known as the
second law of thermodynamics) ensures that things that can go wrong
sooner or later do go wrong.

Those prayers are not to God the Father, though. Fathers are human,
and this is a metaphor at best, and not the reality. It isn’t a terribly
*good* metaphor, either, especially for a human species that specializes in
rebelling, sooner or later, against their real father as a natural step in
the process of separating and going out into the world to make one’s own
way. Or could it be that God is waiting, patiently, for us to do just this?
Perhaps to finally achieve redemption, we have to begin by rejecting the
false, and God the Father is a false and dangerous tenet.

Let me end with another little parable. I have been blessed with three
sons. As anyone who has raised sons in numbers knows, it is an innate part
of Sonly Nature for them to boss one another, to imitate (I suppose) me
as I attempt to teach them how to go through life not pissing off everyone
around you, how to pick up your own laundry, wash dishes, mow grass,
and do your own share of the work necessary to support life itself. The
older ones, especially, pick on the younger ones, and if I’m chewing the
youngest one out because he (say) hasn’t done the dishes yet and it’s the
third time I’m asking – a near mortal sin in our household – then it is
nearly inevitable that an older brother will chime in telling the younger
one even more vehemently than *I* has what his sins and shortcomings are
as a human being and threatening to do him grave evil if he doesn’t clean
the dishes!

I have to constantly stop and shut up the older one with a “*You* are
not his father, let *me* handle this...” and then return to chewing out the
youngest one myself. Often to no avail.
If you think about this, does this not remind one in so many ways of the stance of religion on God? Are we not always in the position of the youngest brother, being told by people that are in some sense our equals what to do, often so loudly that it drowns out any message we might be getting outside of that? Do we not tolerate it until one day we are old enough ourselves to go out into the world and make our own choices, stilling at last the voices of father and brother, until all too soon we find ourselves stuck with being the father and having to enforce some sort of law and order on a set of urchins who are, whatever you might otherwise believe, born as perfect anarchists without a smidgen of moral sense?

As a human myth, it is necessary but is also generally resented to be ruled by your parents, for at least a time. It is forever bitter medicine to be schooled by your brothers or sisters – they are your equals and have no more of a line on the One Truth than you do or anybody else does, for all that you will sometimes listen to your parents because experience has taught you that not to leads to pains other than just being punished. Sometimes ignoring your parents causes you to really get hurt, but your brothers (you also learn) are as likely to get you into trouble as out of it, and their attempts at control rankle like nothing else.

Let us reject God the Father, as an abstraction of human experience playing out the evolution game and go on to ask: Are we our brother’s keeper? If so, should we let him out of the loony bin for occasional weekends at home? Or should we not permit ourselves to go through life being babysat and commanded by (or commanding!) our brothers and sisters, older or younger, and be, instead, just the boss of ourselves.
Chapter 5

God the Brother

By preaching of God the Brother, the religions of the world create a vision of God that has all of our frailties and weaknesses, an imperfect God. Such a God initially attracts us as He is less intimidating than God the King or God the Father (both of whom we actively fear to a greater or lesser degree, just as we fear our rulers and fear our parents, however much we might also love them). This is a God bound to time, a God with a beginning. Of course this makes no sense and was rejected as the Arian heresy in Christianity back in the early 300’s, although it took another century or two to go away altogether. Not all religions have a view of God who is just one of us, and Christianity is at best a partial exception. Surprising, given that many religions do portray God on Earth as an avatar of the Godhead. Mortal or immortal, with beginnings or eternal, Gods are often bound to time for a time in human form in religion and myth.

However, the view of God as another human, as our brother or sister then comes to repel us as we (as humans) come to disagree with one or more of our brother’s supposed pronouncements in scripture, especially those dealing with hellfire and damnation, with rule and obedience. My youngest hates it when his older brother’s tell him what to do. From me he will tolerate it, (less and less, of course, as he approaches dread adolescence and dissociation and rebellion against me as well). From them he rejects it utterly. So they, too, threaten him with all sorts of infinite and eternal pains, and sometimes go so far as to try to administer one (forcing me, sigh, to administer an even bigger one from On High-er).

God the brother in Christianity, in at least some scriptures, could have been one of my sons, trying to get his brothers to do exactly what he wants. The quotes a couple of chapters back are from the New Testament, note well, from the synoptic Gospels themselves. God may have died on the cross as our Brother, but ultimately he is the son of his father and our emperor and will come to smite the wicked and cast them into a lake
of fire. Turn the other cheek not because of the virtue of meekness, not because of the wisdom of charity, but because you can afford to smile – the one who smites you will be burned alive for eternity and all you have to do is endure a few seconds of Earthly pain. Haven’t we heard all this before from our brothers?

Mom and Dad left me in charge, you have to do as I say. They said I could hit you if you don’t. I’m gonna hit you if you don’t. I’m going to hit you.

God the Brother is thus a dubious object from the beginning. If you hit me I’ll hit you back is all that those rules make you want to say, but God the Brother is a big brother, and being hit can last for eternity. How many times have I come home and found the youngest one crying because his older brother hit him because he “wouldn’t help out in the kitchen”? And yet, God the Brother is one form of God that perhaps we can love, just as my sons all, truly, love one another.

God our Brother is a form of ourselves. God bound to time is subject to temptation, to pleasure, to pain. Perhaps he has sex, certainly he eats and enjoys good food and wine, the pleasure of a sunny crisp day, the delight of a small child’s hand thrust trustingly into his own as an uncle, if not a father. How then can our Brother end up casting us into a fiery pit? How can those poor unbaptized children get cast there along with us? And yet, if he doesn’t do this, if in fact he really is just like us, then can we not aspire to be just like him? Are we not, in fact, all the children of God, representative of Godhead on Earth in equal measure, and in some sense beyond sin?

Don’t we all get to grow up and one day be on our own, to continue the human anthropomorphic metaphor, however silly it might truly be?

Here it is hard to say. God our Brother was cut out of the early Christian church like a tumor, and replaced by the bizarre notion of a Trinity. Jesus is at once the Son of the Father, the Father Himself incarnate, and the Eternal King. Any attempt to view him as ourselves however much he suffered on the cross like so many of us have suffered is prohibited by religious tenet – he is God, we are just sinful humans. No matter how good we are, no matter how we try, we cannot be perfect like he was and if we were it wouldn’t matter, he is God and we’re not.

Again, how much this sounds like the silly patriarchal bullshit from the Bible, filled with favored sons, bloodlines, and sons good, bad, and ugly fighting like my own sons fight but with real swords and for kingdoms and Earthly rewards. Christ may be many things, but our Brother he is not permitted to be because we are the equals of our brothers and are always subjugated to Christ the King and transmortal Father within.

God our Brother exists, perhaps, in other religions. Buddha never ever asserted that he was a God (at least, no more so than everybody else, which
is not to say that he wasn’t God but if he was, so are you and I). Truthfully, if he’d been asked by a follower if he was a God, he probably would have laughed out loud and then given some sort of perfectly parabolic answer that worked out to “who knows?” (which is, after all, the perfect truth and no God bound to time could say it better).

Krishna and Rama had brothers indeed, but in Hinduism they get to be Gods too, just not avatars of the Mahavishnu. In the deepest understanding of Hinduism they are indeed brothers, and are even brothers of you and me, and we too can awake to find the Atman within, but there tends to be a bit of that same they are Gods and we are mere men thing that distances them from and elevates them over most of humanity.

He might have existed for a few hundred years in Christianity as the Gnostic Jesus (not the Christ, mind you), the Jesus of Thomas. Alas, the Jesus that spoke of enlightenment like he was the Buddha, the Jesus that spoke in riddles designed to make you think for yourself instead of be frightened of hellfire and damnation if you dare to, the Zen Jesus was not sufficiently revolutionary or violent to win in the game of high-stakes sociomemetic co-evolution that ultimately joined Constantine to the Catholic church with a mandate to purge it.

They were right to reject it, of course, from the evolutionary point of view. It was totally unsuitable as a court-mandated religion of Emperors. Still, a small echo of God our Brother survives in Christianity in the form of the more humble and human of the Saints, perhaps in its portrayal of Mary. Similarly so some of the Bhoddisatvas or rishis or sufis speak as our brothers of a vision of God that they have attained that is not our father or our king, but merely Light.

Yet Jesus is our brother—man born of woman—and the entire structure of the church is one big complex establishment for telling us what to do with threat of hell itself if we fail. We are bullied precisely as my youngest son is bullied by his older brothers, forced to do as they say even when it makes no sense or we’d rather not, even with in conflicts with what we think the Father really said because we heard it a bit differently from the way they did.

The church of Jesus our brother never completely loses the love. If there is a single redeeming feature that in all justice must be given to it in this polemic it is that while the official governance of the church and all of its protestant and more esoteric offshoots has been militant and political and self-serving and selfish—behaving like the worst of men, the vilest of dictators as often as not—the people of the church are, in the end, just us. There really are saints, if you want to call a good person a saint, both in the church and out. And as one might expect, they are usually the ones that least want to tell you what to do, that are the slowest to judge, that do not threaten you with a beating if you fail to wash the dishes but instead roll up their own sleeves and start washing, making the very act
of the sacrifice fun enough that we sometimes find ourselves rolling up our own sleeves and helping out, because, well, the dishes are dirty and they won’t clean themselves...

We reap the consequences of this vision in our own treatment of our brothers and sisters on this earth, as we act in self-righteousness to rule or punish them “for their own good”, as we judge humanity not from the point of view of brotherly or sisterly compassion, a relationship between loving equals, but as members of a hierarchy, one where status and power are achieved by compliance with the rules of the brotherhood, as we strive towards a “first among equals” position of control and power.

In the end, it is even less savory to be ruled or punished by a brother, our equal, than it is by a parent or a king, where at least we understand clearly the social ranking implicit in the metaphor. Our brother should know better the human condition and how we are more often the moved than the mover, where even our gravest sins often as not have their roots in things that are not completely within our ability to control. Our brother should know about mental illness, about the lifelong consequences of child abuse, about the unintentional consequences of the “sin” of water filled with lead and estrogens peed into the lakes and rivers on developing fetuses.

We have far less free will than we’d like to think, and if the religions of the world wanted to do us all a favor, they’d work on altering the metaphor of God our Brother to help people develop their free will, freed from the baggage of the accidents of their life and birth. They might use this image to teach people to use their heads and their hearts and compassion to guide their actions, not follow a set of forcibly memorized rules out of a sense of guilt, or fear, or a wish to control the uncontrollable. Sometimes the right action is just that – the right action, and we can choose it without being browbeaten. Finally, perhaps they might try to throw out altogether the image of God the Brother who would rule us and judge us, and go back to the Gnostic, the Buddhist, the Deist vision of a God who does not sit in dominion or judgement but rather is an active participant who is equally bound to the rules of the game, where one has the element of choice (heresy or not) unconstrained by any particular scripture.
Chapter 6

God the Holy Spirit

At last we get to the meat of the matter. Human metaphors for God, as we have seen, inevitably fail. Perhaps, if you like, they are too “sinful” from having been translated as projective metaphors from our human understanding onto something that requires mathematics and deep meditation to understand in even a small part. The mathematics is that of the infinite, that which we might imagine is a Cosmos in which our experience of space-time is but the tiniest of imbeddings.

This is projection the other way. Rather than imagining God seen through the filter of being a sort of demented or extended super-human, let us view all of creation as being a projection of God from a (why not?) infinite dimensional space to the space and time we exist in. To even begin to envision God, we have to think of ourselves as perhaps being the metaphorical two-dimensional creatures in the lovely book Flatland as they discover the Third Dimension. There are limits on what we can see of it, but no limits on our ability to imagine it with mathematics. And we have to accept the fact that our vision will always be finite, and we will never perceive the whole without becoming the whole – the mathematics of information theory more or less guarantees it.

This is God the Holy Spirit, and is a true mystery. Understanding God as Spirit is religion’s purpose (if it has a purpose) on Earth, where I’m going to be quite vague about just what a “spirit” is. Well, no I’m not. It is Self. However, you probably won’t understand what that means, because observing it is like trying to catch your own shadow or grasp your own reflection. It flits away as you reach for it, yet it is always right there at hand.

The truly enlightened figures of every faith (and all faiths have had individuals who were so enlightened) have had a relatively clear and uniform vision of the Holy Spirit. You will find the Holy Spirit clearly described in the Upanishads of Hinduism, in some of the recorded words of Christ,
in the poetry of the Torah and Old Testament, in the better parts of the
Koran. Mystics of all faiths see the same Light, and do not seek to name
it or constrain it or rule it by ritual and magic, but rather to open them-

selves to it and discover it within themselves. It is the Dharma that exists
outside of all religious teachings (which after all, are bound to time and
have a start and one day will have an end).

Humans have a tremendous difficulty grasping this vision of God, be-
cause it is utterly inhuman. It has no body, for a body is other, and it is
One. It has no place, no time (or if you like it is in all places, all times). It
is in once sense changeless, even as it embraces all that changes. It would
be easy to reject it as a silly concept, as in one sense there is and can
never be any external evidence for its existence, except that it is at the
core of our internal experience of everything – it is the one thing that dif-
ferentiates our existence from the dark eternity of nonexistence. It is that
which watches the watcher, watching the world, in the self-aware core of
our being. It is that which is the difference between our bodies and minds
as pure biomachines as mechanical in their own way as the markings on a
DVD that encode a movie about love and passion and sex and greed, and
the experience of love and passion and sex and greed.

It is, as I said, Self

Alas, in many if not most cases these visionaries fail to communicate
it this vision effectively as it is rather difficult to put into words – as the
difference between experience of meaning and the encoding of the meaning
in symbols, it is almost an oxymoron to try to encode it in symbols as I am
doing here. Some entire religious traditions, e.g. that of Zen Buddhism,
argue that it is foolish and counterproductive to even try.

I disagree, of course, or I wouldn’t be trying. One point of trying is one
can cut away many of the things that do not look like an elephant, think
of many things that are not the word “rhinoceros” (if those two metaphors
are familiar to you), by plain exposition as I did above with my whacking
at anthropomorphic, scripture based visions of God laced with evil and
wickedness inherited from the anthropic projection of utterly discredited
human institutions onto the higher dimensional Godhead. Cut away a bit
of the distracting cruft of old religions, and it might make it easier for
many to arrive at the correct existential crisis and discover themselves at
the heart of it.

Also, in the past one can see that in many cases the attempts failed
to propagate because the original words of said Saints and rishis were not
originally recorded. They were merely remembered and rewritten, decades
or centuries later, in human metaphorical terms by ordinary humans who
often missed the point altogether or who were trying to seduce a King and

1There is a lovely little pamphlet I came upon by random chance called The Im-
personal Self that might as well have been written by Buddha. And was, I am sure,
written by a Buddha. It is a nominally at least a Christian work. Check it out.
ended up being seduced themselves into corrupting a pure truth.

To see just one tiny bit of this corruption, note the following passage in the text of the Gospel of Thomas, discovered in near original form in the desert in 1945 and thought by many to date back to within decades of the death of Jesus. This is one of the texts rejected by the Council of Nicea as part of the deal to make Christianity the official state religion of an empire. It cuts straight to the heart of the matter and supports all of the general conclusions above in Jesus’s own words:

Jesus said, ”Whoever blasphemes against the Father will be forgiven, and whoever blasphemes against the Son will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either on earth or in heaven.”

What a phrase, redolent of the many paradoxes inherent in the Christian church. God the Father is thus a false vision. How could it be otherwise, if to blaspheme against it is forgivable? God the Son is, too, a false vision. Jesus is aware that he is, after all, as human as you and I and must fear death and pain while bound to mortal flesh. Jesus is apparently honest about this. Once again, how could it be forgivable to blaspheme against the Son if he were a true vision of God? Jesus is rejecting here the Deity of the anthropomorphic God-King-Father, and his own Deity as well. Even if I’m completely wrong in this entire polemic and Jesus was the Son of God (whatever that means) I can be forgiven that, as long as I remain true to the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, I suspect and Thomas openly states, is letting us in on the deepest secrets of the faith. That is that these secrets are not absolute truth. They may well be helpful metaphors to guide people to lead better lives than they might otherwise have led, but they are not, in fact, true or inevitable visions of God and certainly aren’t commandments backed by threats, God as Our Brother the Bully, speaking with God the Father’s tongue. Thomas’s Jesus wants us to think, to listen, but doesn’t want to compel our attention. This is a Jesus that maybe, just maybe, I could talk to, as long as he listens to me as much as I listen to him, because I’ve figured a bit of this all out too and maybe he could learn as well as teach.

Ultimately, the only possible interpretation I can make of this saying of Jesus (if indeed it is such, but it is actually more reliable as a near-original historical source than any of the other books of the New Testament, not less) as saying that God the Holy Spirit is the one true vision, the one the brings enlightenment.

Even so Thomas, in writing the words of Jesus as best he remembers them (or not), distorts the Holy Spirit as echoed by Jesus by inserting God the King, the Father, and the Brother combined to give the words authority. Jesus is the Son to Thomas. He speaks for the Father. And clearly, the Jesus of Thomas is no Bhoddisatva, no true brother, for does
he not say that one will not be forgiven (by whom, one is forced to ask, as he avoids stating that he will not forgive him) if we fail to understand, fail to obey, fail to be vassals before the Holy Lord, and somehow “blaspheme” against the Holy Spirit? He holds out the choice, the heresy, but wraps it up in a threat even so.

Yet this is puzzling. How can one blaspheme against this particular vision of God? There is remarkably little scripture on it, in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran. Most of what there is is either oblique (e.g. the references in the New Testament) or blatantly incorrect (e.g. the references in Genesis, the one book in the Bible that is absolutely refuted almost in its entirety by scientific evidence and reasoning, leaving us either Manichaeans or rejecting the whole ball of wax that is religion).

Perhaps this is all to the good. Perhaps we all share an intuitive concept of the Holy Spirit as the one basis for all religion. It is God the Abstraction, God that is Love, God that is Light, God the Atman, God the Everything. It is eternal, uncaring, pure – infinitely compassionate, infinitely knowing, beyond our metaphorical comprehension. As such, we can no more blaspheme against it with mere words or deeds than the Part can blaspheme the Whole, the Effect can blaspheme the Cause, the Atman can blaspheme against its Self.

Perhaps in an oblique way, and not at all the way Thomas doubtless intended with the ominous tone, we can take comfort from this quote of Jesus. All of us, no matter what our “sins” and “blasphemies” and above all our “heresies” – our choices – will ultimately be forgiven for we cannot blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, the one true vision of God.

It is what we are.
Appendix A

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