



THE DIVINE STRUGGLE FOR “I” AND “THOU” II:

Origin

BEFORE THERE WAS any time or space, matter or energy, anything or anyone else, there was the One-and-Only God, who had no other “It” or “Thou.” He was utterly alone. However, God knew himself as *YHWH* (“I AM”), whose Hebraic root is *hayah* (Exodus 3:14). Strangely, *hayah* is not a noun used for names but a verb signifying action — “to be,” “to become,” “to effect.”¹ And action can only occur with respect to something or someone “other” than the immediate self.

God’s Ultimate Purpose

Since God was confined to himself without the external relationality required for accountable or observable action, he must have only been able to meditate, reflect, design and conduct mental experiments.

God’s purpose was to achieve ultimate “otherness.”

While this may have been frustrating, yet out of loving design (Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9) God decided to create a universe that ultimately included life forms which led to humanity.

Since God’s purpose was to achieve ultimate “otherness,” it should be clear that he did not intend the universe to be himself or for himself to be the universe (pantheism). Nor did he propose that he would be confined within the universe or that the universe would be confined in himself (panentheism). Furthermore, to accomplish external relationships, God did not expect to be imprisoned in the universe (Gnosticism). Finally, he did not plan to create the universe in order to abandon it (deism).

Out of self-emptying love (Philippians 2:6-8) God longed for a universe with which and with whom he could relationally be *to*, *with* and *for* — and a universe that would reciprocally be *to*, *with* and *for* him and each other.

Furthermore, God’s ultimate purpose was to achieve the egalitarian relationship of himself — “I” — with the other — “Thou.”²

Endnotes

1. See Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1960), pp. 38-49.
2. See Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (A New Translation with a Prologue, "I and You," and Notes), tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970).

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