

## EASTERN PANTHEISM

If someone were to ask me whether I believed in God, or saw God, or had a particular relationship with God, I would reply that I don't separate God from my world in my thinking. I feel that God is everywhere. That's why I never feel separated from God or feel that I must seek God any more than a fish in the ocean feels it must seek water. In a sense, God is the "ocean" in which we live. - Robert Fulghum

### Definitions:

The belief that God is identical with the universe. All is God and God is all. The universe taken as a whole is God. God and Nature ( the totality of all that there is) are synonymous, two words for the same thing.

*(The Harper Collins Dictionary of Philosophy, Second edition, 1992)*

The view that God is identical with everything. It may be seen as the result of two tendencies: an intense religious spirit and the belief that all reality is in some way united.

*(The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1995)*

The religious belief or philosophical theory that God and the universe are identical (implying a denial of the personality and transcendence of God); the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God.

*(The Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, 1989)*

Not all pantheists believe that the universe is a personal God. Some of them do. The majority of modern-day pantheists do not necessarily do so.

Jan Garrett in *An Introduction to Pantheism* writes:

“We can stand in awe of creative or divine nature without regarding it as a father. One can be thankful that it supports us and heals us, without attributing to it a deliberate plan to help or hinder us, without believing that it loves us as a mother or father might. Pantheists can observe and respect the divine creativity of being without engaging in wishful thinking. They tend to believe that talk of God as a father or mother who cares for us in a parental way engages in anthropomorphism.”

Paul Harrison writes,

“When we say that the cosmos is divine, we mean it with just as much conviction and emotion as believers say that their god is God. But we are not making a metaphysical statement that is beyond proof or disproof. We are making an ethical statement that means no more, and no less, than this: We should relate to the universe in the same way as believers in God relate to God. That is, with humility, awe, reverence, celebration and the search for deeper understanding.

(*"Divine Cosmos, Sacred Earth,"* from Harrison's Scientific Pantheism website; cited by Jan Garrett in An Introduction to Pantheism)

## **Pantheism and Panentheism**

Both pantheism and panentheism hold the belief that the natural universe is pervaded by divinity.

- + **Pantheism:** The word Pantheism comes from two Greek words "pan" meaning “all”, and "theos" meaning “god”. In Pantheism, "all is god."
- + Pantheism commonly rejects the idea of the divine and tends towards atheism, naturalism, and humanism.
- + The pantheist believe the universe itself is divine but deny the existence of a personal God.
  - + There is no "minded" Being who has the properties of a "person".
  - + God is not distinct from the world. They deny the transcendence of God and do not comprehend God the way Rudolf Otto did, as a “Wholly Other”.
- + Religious persuasions that are close to the spirit of pantheism include philosophical Taoism and *Advaita Vedanta*, and some sects of Buddhism.
- + **Panentheism:** The term panentheism is Greek for "all-in-God," pan-en-theos.
  - + Panentheism on the other hand, tends towards theism, polytheism, and spiritualism. They see the divine in Nature.
  - + The panentheist affirm that God has a mind. He created the universe. He is personal and cares about each of us personally.
    - + The term “panentheism” was coined by K.C.F.Krause (1781-1832). It holds the view that God is immanent in the universe.

- + The panentheist argues that God is immanent in the universe as a part of his being, and not as the whole of his being. God interpenetrates the parts and processes of nature. But nevertheless fully distinct from nature. God is part of nature, but has an independent identity. God is the universe but is also greater than the universe.
- + Recent expositions of panentheism may be seen in the writings of Charles Hartshorne, a follower of A.N. Whitehead.
- + Hartshorne makes the central tenet of panentheism quite plain. He gets us to compare God to the human person. Just as an organism exists both as a collection numerous individual cells and as an autonomous individual whose sum total is more than just a collection of cells, in the same way, God may be construed as both a collection of all the constituent parts of reality and yet, as something more than the universe itself.

## **Pantheism**

Perhaps the earliest expression of pantheism was found in the Upanishads (80-500 B.C.) and the Bhagavad-Gita (ca 300-20 B.C.)

- + Eastern philosophies carry with them a bewildering variety of religious ideas. It is impossible to cover even a small portion of that vast array of ideas taught by the eastern sages, and we will explore only some of their the basic teachings.
- + The eastern mind, when it reflects on the metaphysical does not take the cognitive approach to understand reality. Rather they stress the experiential, the mystical.
  - + The goal is an experience of reality rather than a careful understanding of it.
  - + The goal is contemplation rather than comprehension.
  - + The attitude is religious not intellectual.
- + On account of this, the language of Eastern religion is considered by the Westerner to be imprecise and ambiguous; and it makes any comparison of Eastern and Western thought difficult if not virtually impossible.
- + Someone has said that nothing can be said of Hinduism that cannot also be denied.

So the challenge of Eastern religion to Christianity is less direct. But in a sense this makes the challenge more insidious, the threat cannot be easily pinpointed, but it is nevertheless a powerful one.

## All Reality is One

The underlying assumption of Eastern pantheism is that all reality belongs to a continuum.

- + All reality is ultimately one. This view is commonly called monism (although pantheism on the whole is not essentially monistic).
  - + There is one single indestructible reality - the Brahman. Everything participates in this one all-embracing Oneness.
- + The most insignificant speck of dust shares its essence with the most exalted element. One is not so much as to try to understand this as to direct one's life towards its light.

## Four Key Concepts

We are not unaware that we are here making only very broad generalizations on Indian and Buddhist thought and some schools may not be fully expressed here. There are the real distinctions between Theravada Buddhism and the Mahayana Buddhism and they may not be ignored. But for the purpose of a short course such as this, the following generalizations seem inevitable.

### 1. *The Atman - the self*

This is the reality that is immediately experienced. We begin with *atman* because self-knowledge is immediate.

- + But precisely because the individual person is seen as a self who can feel and think, we imagine that our individual self is unique and individualistic.
  - + This is a false sense of individuality. The self is really one with the sum total of reality. This self is not an actual self. It is the possible self. It is what the self ought to become, and indeed can become that is the actual self.
- + This *atman* is not that which distinguishes a person from another. It is actually the "common denominator" of all forms of life.

### 2. *The Brahman*

This awareness brings us to the second key concept, the *Brahman*, or the One.

If *atman* is the self, the *Brahman* is the non-self. If reality is one, then the *atman* is the *Brahman*. The *atman* is the *Brahman* viewed subjectively. The *Brahman* is the *atman* viewed objectively.

(Stuart C. Hackett *Oriental Philosophy*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, pp. 73, 80, 81)

- + The true self in each human being is identical with *Brahman*.
  - + When the identity is realised, the quest for salvation is over and fulfilled.
  - + The soul that has not realised that oneness is the *jivatman* or *purusha*.
- + Out of *Brahman* comes all things. To *Brahman* all things return. In himself *Brahman* is unknown and unknowable. But taking the form of human experience, he is *Sat-chit-anand*, the source and embodiment of reality, knowledge and bliss.
- + *Brahman* is sometimes described in personal terms as good. Here *Brahman* is referred to as "him".
- + But *Brahman* is also described in impersonal terms. Here *Brahman* is described in a negative way. *Brahman* is the One without qualities and indeterminate.
  - + From this point of view, the world and the self are unreal. They are mere appearance.
  - + The one supreme thing to which everyone must strive for is the insight into the unity of atman and Brahman

### **3. Maya or illusion**

This concept is referred to in Buddhism as *advaya* (ignorance)

Because the One appears to us in a number of forms or effects, we are sometimes distracted

- + We are seduced by the form and we lose the content. We are dazzled by the form we lost touch of the real essence.
  - + As Krishna told his disciple Arjuna:  
*"My mysterious cloud of appearance is hard to pass beyond; but those who in truth come to me go beyond the world of shadows"*
- + The negative result of *maya* is that one becomes attached to this world.
  - + This attachment is called desire. If we have a desire for something, we imply a separateness between the self and the desired object.
  - + We become distracted from experiencing the unity of all reality. You become a slave to appearance

#### 4. Moksha

The goal of Eastern religion is *moksha* or release. The Buddhist calls it *nirvana*.

- + This is the state of final bliss; an insight into ultimate reality. We need to be careful here that we do not import our own Christian conception of salvation into this doctrine.
- + *Moksha* is not knowledge of something, necessarily. Rather it is an experience of the *nonduality* of all things. It is a waking trance. It is a state when the self is disciplined into such an extent the world is not experienced as something “without”.
- + But all this is a type of something still higher, when a person is finally released from the cycle of births and rebirths and no longer in bondage to the laws of *karma*.
- + *Moksha* can be attained by the rigorous disciplines of *yoga*.
  - + These *yogas* provide the vehicle for the way to release
    1. *karma yoga*, the way of good works. Our good works in this life determine the mode of our future existence. It includes acting without seeking for rewards and other expressions of selfless acts.
    2. *bhakti yoga*, the way of devotion to God. This gives rise to the Hindu philosophy of *avatar*- the manifestation of God in human forms. The One may be represented in a personal form e.g. Krishna. The One may find expression in certain holy men, one of whom is Jesus Christ.
    3. *jnana yoga*, the way of knowledge. This is the way of rigorous mental discipline through its contemplation and reflection upon reality, until the person ceases to be moved by joy and sorrow, because by knowledge he has transcended such distinctions.

#### The Human Plight

Human people, because of their *maya* (illusion), find themselves in the bondage of the ever turning wheel of life, the *samsara*, the stream of existence, the realm of flux and becoming.

- + The most obvious fact of life is its transitoriness and perishability.
  - + So it is that the individual goes through a series of births and rebirths, that is called reincarnation.
- + The aim of Eastern religion is to be liberated from this bondage from *samsara* to *moksha*; from life *in time* subject to discord, to *life eternal* or *enlightenment*.

- + The opportunities will always be there for one to achieve *moksha*. Death will not be the end. There will be the promise of another rebirth, and yet another.
- + Each individual person's lot on this earth is the result of his actions and attitudes.
- + What determines whether an individual comes round again after this earthly existence, and in what form their new life will take is *the law of karma*, a kind of a principle of causality.
  - + *The law of karma* is the principle that wise choices, earnest efforts and good deeds build good character, while bad choices, inertia and evil deeds, build bad character.
  - + All people are subjected to *the law of karma*. They have no one to blame for their present existence. They alone are responsible for their present condition.
  - + The *Mahabharata* says that there is no external judge who punishes people. Our inner self is the judge.
  - + And even as we are responsible for what we are, we can make ourselves into what we shall be. We are not doomed to continue in our present condition. *Karma* is not fatalism.
- + But nevertheless it is the case that life comes around again after death when the debt of *karma* has not been fully repaid.
- + Some Buddhist scholars make a difference between the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth from the doctrine of reincarnation. They affirm that since Buddhism denies the existence of an eternal soul created by a God, there cannot be any "transmigration of a soul".
  - + Only in rare occasions will a person be sufficiently purged of these cravings and desires in his present existence. Few obtain *moksha* before the death of the body. Sidharta Gautama was one of them. For this reason he has been called the *bhudda* or "the enlightened one".
- + Such a person is in a state of living release, or what is called *jivanmukthi*.

### **Just what is *Nirvana* or *Moksha*?**

- + Indian philosophy affirms that *nirvana* is logically inexpressible. There is similarity of this thought in Buddhism.

- + "The *tao* that can be expressed is not the eternal *Tao*", and all that is said about is necessarily untrue.
- + Lao Tze said: "He who speaks doesn't know. He who knows doesn't speak".
  - + Curiously, it did not seem to matter to him that he had just spoken.
- + Sir Edwin Arnold in his book *The Light of Asia* asserts:
  - "If any teach Nirvana is to cease,*
  - Say unto such, they lie*
  - If any teach Nirvana is to live*
  - Say unto such they err..."*
- + Buddha himself did not explain the goal to which he had himself attained.
  - + The Buddhists tell us that we can only explain it in negative ways; that all positive descriptions we use only add predicates to the All, which is either absurd because it is redundant or a limitation of the All (by exclusion).
- + Nirvana is a state to be realised here and now. Buddha attained it at the beginning of his ministry. So too have innumerable *arhats*.
  - + The Buddha denied the existence of the eternal soul. He affirmed that he could find no evidence for it. He taught, rather, that a human person can be analysed into five separate yet complexly related parts which he called the five aggregates.
  - + The Buddha perceived *nirvana* as a state when all the worldly and impermanent aspects of existence disappear. *Nirvana* manifests itself on the blending of one's being with something that has no boundaries. Often this has been compared to a dewdrop returning to the sea or the dewdrop opening up to receive the sea.
    - + There is no spot where *nirvana* can be located. *Nirvana* is a permanent state. Yet it is not a state as such. The very ceasing of rebirth is permanent.
    - + *Nirvana* is not to be understood as extinction. Buddha said that to do so would be to engage in a heresy. It is not annihilation for there is nothing to annihilate but only the annihilation of attachment, ill-will, and delusion.
    - + *Nirvana* is the annihilation of the *vana* ("lusting").
    - + When these things are annihilated, the aggregate that go to make up the being do not come together, and the being ceases to be.
    - + *Nirvana* is not a state as we understand it. One teacher says the best answer is "perfect silence".

- + The word *nirvana* literally means "going out", as a fire dies out for want of fuel. It is the cessation of becoming, the stopping of the wheel. It is the end of separateness, when the last desire extinguishes.
- + It is therefore not right to say that the dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea. It is nearer the truth to speak of the Shining Sea invading the dewdrop. There is here no sense of loss but there is a sense of infinite expansion. No human mind can comprehend it. It can only be experienced.
- + Perhaps the first and last word about nirvana was said by Nagasena.  
"Nirvana is".

Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism*, Penguin (Non-Classics), 1951 p.127)

### What remains after *Nirvana*?

Early Buddhism is silent here. To understand nirvana technically we use the analogy of the flame which the Buddhists themselves used.

Gautama says: "*The whole world is in flames  
By what fire is it kindled ?  
By the fire of lust (raga) resentment (dosa)  
of glamour (moha)  
By the fire of birth, old age, death, pain  
lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair  
it is kindled"*

The salvation of the *arhat* is the dying down (*nirvana*) of the flames of lust, hate and glamour and of the will to life.

### Does the *arhat* exist after death?

The Buddha refuses to answer this question. He condemns all speculation as unedifying. This was what he said:

"I have not revealed that the Arahat exists after death,  
I have not revealed that he does not exist;  
I have not revealed that he once exists  
and does not exist after death  
nor that he neither exists  
nor does not exist after death  
And why have I not revealed these things  
Because they are not edifying"

(Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, New York: Putnam, 1916.pp.120-21)

- + What maintains the life of a person who has achieved *nirvana* while still living, the *jivanmukthi*?
  - + The answer they give is that the momentum of antecedent *karma*, suffices to carry on the individual life, even after the "will to life" has ceased. The simile used is that of the potter's wheel. Just as a potter's wheel keeps turning for a while after the potter has taken his foot off the pedal, so upon attaining *moksha*, the *jivanmukthi* lives on for a period of time.
  - + But the release does not emancipate him from mortality. The Buddha himself, having long since attained Enlightenment is recorded to have suffered from severe illness and indeed to have been aware of it
    - + So a further distinction is made between *nibbana*, a "dying-out" and *parinibanna*, a "complete or final dying out", coincident with physical death.
- + While having attained nirvana, the enlightened one may indeed pass in and out from the highest rapture (at will). So a continuous realization of salvation is only thinkable after death.

## A CRITIQUE OF EASTERN PANTHEISM

We need to affirm that this critique is not intended in any way an expression of disrespect of the Buddhist and Indian philosophy. These are significant schools of thought and practice which reaches back a long way into human civilization and preceded Christianity by many centuries. We are also aware of very fine Hindus and Buddhists people whose lives are marked by gentleness and compassion.

But as a worldview, these philosophies need to be subjected to a rational critique. Right at the beginning of this short exposition of pantheism, we made the point that the language of Eastern religion is considered by the Westerner to be imprecise and ambiguous; and it makes any comparison of Eastern and Western thought difficult if not virtually impossible.

That noted, some serious points can and need to be made with regards to these philosophies as worldviews.

### Pantheism is unaffirmable

It is immediately apparent that many of the preceding doctrines and teachings are rationally unaffirmable.

"In his non-pantheistic phase, Coleridge claimed that "everything God, and no God, are identical positions".

(McFarland, Thomas. *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969: 228 cited in Pantheism, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, First published Tue Jun 4, 1996; substantive revision Thu May 17, 2007)

+ Such an assertion is surely mentionable but unaffirmable. The basic tenets of pantheism express a contradictory state of affairs.

+ Speaking of Zen Buddhism, D.T. Suzuki states:

"Zen is decidedly not a system founded upon logic and analysis. If anything, it is the antipode to logic, by which I mean the dualistic mode of thinking."

(Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Introduction to Zen Buddhism, Including A Manual of Zen Buddhism*, Causeway Books 1974, p.38)

It is precisely assertions like this, which makes the pantheistic position incoherent.

William Craig makes the point clear.

"Now under the influence of Eastern mysticism, many people would deny that systematic consistency is a test for truth. They affirm that reality is ultimately illogical or that logical contradictions correspond to reality.... I am inclined to say frankly that such positions are crazy and unintelligible. To say that God is both good and not good in the same sense or that God neither exists nor does not exist is just incomprehensible to me. In our politically correct age, there is a tendency to vilify all that is western and to exalt eastern modes of thinking as at least equal valid if not superior to western modes of thought. To assert that eastern thought is seriously deficient in making such claims is to be a sort of epistemological bigot, blinkered by the constraints of the logic-chopping western mind."

(Craig, William L. *Politically Incorrect Salvation, Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*. Ed. by Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press 1995. pp. 78-81)

Ronald Nash adds,

"The denial of the law of non-contradiction leads to absurdity. It is impossible meaningfully to deny the laws of logic. If the law of non-contradiction is applied, then nothing has meaning. If the laws of logic do not first mean what they say, nothing else can have meaning, including the denial of the laws".

(Ronald H. Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1982, p. 105.)

## **The Problem of the Finitude of God**

R. Totten, in his article *The Worldview of Panentheism* makes the point that the panentheistic God being temporal, changing, perishable, limited, contingent and dependent will need another

Being who is unchanging, imperishable and non-contingent to ground its own existence. For if the panentheistic God is contingent it is not a necessary being.

- + Totten also makes the point that in the light of the Big Bang cosmology in which the universe exploded into being creating time and space and matter from a "singularity" of an infinite density, then, the panentheistic God, being a temporal, changing, perishable, limited, contingent and dependent being, did not exist before the Big Bang. Such a god "is not eternal in either direction, past or future."
- + In helping us to see God in everything, pantheism purports to highlight the wisdom and power of God. But in reality, it waters down the attributes which are God's alone.
- + The pantheist does not look at God as the intelligent Creator; a personal Being who both designed and governs it in His wisdom sovereignly.
- + In looking at God as one who attains to self-consciousness only through a process of evolution (Hegel), pantheism promotes a God who is not eternal. Instead, he is one who is constantly changing, and gaining perfection from one degree to another. In fact we cannot evidentially say that he is progressing or advancing from and becoming more perfect. All we can really say is that he is constantly passing on into other forms of being.
- + But if he (or "it") is not personal, but mutable and finite, would it not be easier to say the he is not God? For the moment you remove the divine personality from a being, it is meaningless to speak of such a being as in any way transcendent, holy, just or even moral.
- + It is hard to see how an impersonal being may with any warrant demand our worship. The pantheistic God is an infinite, impersonal, self-evolving energy substance. Such a being, if we can call it a being, may put fear in our faces but it cannot draw and inspire worship, faith, gratitude or devotion. In fact how could one pray to such a being?

### **The problem of the doctrine of *maya***

If both human personality and existence are mere illusions, how could human people be called to account for their actions. And if human actions are causally determined, freedom would seem to be a misnomer. Again, it can be questioned how one derives an "ought" from an "it".

- + The doctrine that all is illusory is problematic.
- + For it would be impossible to tell the true from the false. Rejecting pantheism makes one no less wrong than accepting it.

- + In the end, a person is merely articulating a thought of the Absolute, in whose generous forbearance all contradictions are acquiesced.

### **The incongruity of the doctrine of Illusionism**

- + If ultimately, everything is illusory, how may we know that the pantheist's assertion that everything is illusory is itself not illusory?
- + It would be a case of *special pleading* if the pantheist asserts that the only thing that is not illusory is his view that everything is illusory.

### **The philosophical difficulties concerning reincarnation**

1. Most reincarnationists believe that the human soul is eternal and that it was never created. It never had a first life. To explain the problems of birth defects, physical handicaps, poverty etc. they point to another past life.

- + The clear philosophical difficulty with such a teaching is that it spawns the absurdity of an infinite regression of past lives. Not only is an actual infinite regression of past lives an absurdity, but given enough time, every soul will ultimately achieved release. It is difficult to see why, given an infinite series of past lives (and therefore, chances), this release has not already been achieved by all. If an infinite amount of time has lapsed, there would have been enough time for all souls to have achieved release. But the existing world of lives is proof that this has not yet happened.

- + It is not surprising therefore that Sankara dismisses these problems with the supposition that the whole notion of rebirth is a part of a grand illusion. But that thesis has difficulties of its own.

2. Further if you postulate that there was a first life how did this first life come to be. For every life that has been given birth to enters the *samsara*. And this entrance is the result only of a prior lustful desire.

- + If you postulate that there was a first life this life would have no *karmic* debt. From whence came the evil and suffering that the first life experienced? So neither an endless regression nor a first life can demonstrate the validity of *karmic* reincarnation.

3. Either the same individual is reborn or not. If it is the same individual who is reborn then in what sense is that person said to undergo a multiplicity of lives?

- + Reincarnation teaches that the same individual continues on in another life without the continuation of the body not even the same sex, not even the same life form. Only the memory and intellectual awareness of a person is left to account for the continuation of the individual.
- + But few have past-life recall. Even in cases which claims this it is doubtful. If this is the persuasive and all-inclusive pattern of the meaning of life, how does the pantheist account for the rarity of the phenomenon of past-life recall? If everyone of us regardless, have a past life, or a series of past-lives, how come the phenomenon of a nostalgic reminiscences is so rare. Most people have no memory whatever of having lived previously, not to mention specific details of the previous lives. Ninian Smart ventures to propose that "Death is a traumatic experience (so is birth), likely to cause amnesia". [*Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Vol 7, pg 123.*]
- + Further, how are we to make sense of the notion of a continuation? Further how am I supposed to do a better job this time round if the slate of my past weaknesses appears to have been wiped clean?
- + But if that individual takes the form of plant life how is the question of morality to bear out in this amoral plant life.?
- + In the light of all this in what sense can it be said that it is the same individual who is reborn. If on the other hand it is not the same individual who is reborn (Buddhism) then why should someone pay for the karmic debt left by someone else? If this is what is meant to be *anatta* (no-self) then there appears to be no justice.

#### 4. The law of karma tend to make persons passive towards social and personal evil and injustice.

- + MacGregor says "it is part of the mental furniture of the whole subcontinent" (of India).

(Geddes MacGregor , *Reincarnation in Christianity: A New Vision of the Role of Rebirth in Christian Thought*, 1989 Quest Books Series)

- + Fatalism may result from such a doctrine. If one were to attempt to alleviate the burden of the sufferer then the sufferer must endure greater hardship in the next life as he did not "pay off" his prescribed karmic debt.
- + Also this interference with karmic law is wrong, and the helper himself would accumulate more karmic debt. Hence reincarnationists, as a rule, generally do not actively seek to alleviate human suffering.

5. Where birth defects are marshalled to explain reincarnation, evidences seem to be working against it.

+ Recent studies in the area of genetics in India is gradually undermining the *karmic* explanation of birth defects.

+ As mothers learn the importance of prenatal care and hygiene, birth defects are decreasing.

6. Contradictory findings by researchers do not auger well for the reincarnation doctrine.

Form of Lives:

Indian thought - man can be reborn as animals, even plants, gods and spirits

African thought - this is not possible

Dr Helen Wambach asserts that races are intermingled from life to life.

Ian Stevenson asserts that subjects are reborn in their same ethnic grouping.

Time Span between Incarnations

For Dr. Helen Wambach it takes 51 years.

The *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, affirms the transition period (bards) to be 49 days between death and rebirth

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