

The following is  
an answer to a question received, asking what is  
meant by + how may one "Abstract" the subjective  
"Moment" of consciousness? San Fernando, Calif.,  
Dec. 29, 1944. 487

Dear Peter:

It is with particular pleasure that I write to you  
relative to a problem which you pose in one of your recent notes.  
There are many other interests which need discussion and analysis  
but which must wait until after the war when it will be more  
possible to deal with realities. We all look forward to the day  
when we may all be together again.

The problem you pose is in connection with the abstraction of  
the "subjective moment" from the manifold of consciousness. I do  
not find anything like a specific and detailed technique for this  
which may be applied infallibly. I have found it to be mainly  
a matter of self-analysis in which the element of original self-  
discovery is an essential part. Thus, while general principles  
may be formulated objectively and illustrative procedure  
suggested, yet the individual must do the work himself with an  
alert mind and ready to modify method as may be suggested  
intuitively.

First of all, the problem may be viewed as a search for the  
permanent in the impermanent or for the invariant element in the  
midst of change. It is analogous to the basic problem of math-  
ematical analysis wherein we first determine a fixed base of  
reference - such as the common system of Cartesian co-ordinates -  
with respect to which we analyse the movement of variables. Now,  
in the beginning, one might possibly seek for the permanent or  
invariant in the objectively given. It is, indeed, possible that  
success might be achieved by this line of approach. In a sense,  
it is the course followed by Gautama Buddha and, in the end, the  
ultimate Goal is the same as that achieved by the subjective route.  
However, it is not the method which I employed and it seems to me  
to be the more difficult way, but I am not justified in dogmatizing  
upon this point. In any case, one soon finds that no sensible  
objective content of consciousness is permanent. In the end,  
objective permanency will prove to be very subtle. But whether  
we go by the subjective road or by the objective we may well begin  
with the objective.

Now it is natural to begin at the point where the seaker is,  
in fact, there is no other place to begin. But where is it that  
I am? First, it might appear to be the particular point on, in  
or above the earth where I might happen to be - a place defined  
by latitude, longitude and altitude, the three co-ordinates of  
three-dimensioned space. But, at once, it is clear that this place  
changes. Generally, I find myself moving about so the values of  
the three co-ordinates change. It then may occur to one that the  
real base is the combination of the meridian through Greenwich,  
the equator and the mean level of the sea. But further thought  
shows this is not fixed since the earth itself is a moving body  
with respect to other stellar and planetary bodies. I think that  
you will see the regressum this leads towards. Well, then, let us  
turn about and look in the other direction. Perhaps my body is  
the permanent base. But this leads to difficulty because the

body is clearly subject to change. There is birth, growth, decay and death.

Now, here is an important point. I see that my body is subject to change. Does that mean that I am subject to change? Superficially one might say "yes", but further analysis reveals that since I can witness and know the fact of body-change I must actually have some base other than the body. That which merely changes could never know that it changes. There must be some invariant base in order to know the fact of change. But what is it? Perhaps my thought. But, again, I find myself able to perceive my thought. It flows into quite variable patterns and while it certainly does color my valuations and judgments, there is clearly much change in it and I find that I know that I am thinking so I am not the same thing as the thinking. We have not yet found the permanent.

Well, ultimately, I find that anything whatsoever, no matter how subtle, which can be a content of my consciousness is final and permanent. The course of self-analysis here involves a good deal of progressively more and more subtle discrimination but, in the end, I reach this conclusion. Sooner or later I come to the conclusion that that which I call "I" or the "Witness" is the really permanent element. At this point the seeker is getting "warm", as the saying is, but there still are difficulties.

Instinctively we seem to view the "I" as an object of our consciousness, and it may be some time before we realize that so long as the "I" seems to be an object it is being perceived by something else. Well, presently, it dawns that this something else is really "I", and not the "I" which has become a subtle object. Perhaps I may repeat the process and go after the new "I" in the same way as before, but the results are as before. There is no end to this game. I simply am never there before myself as an object however subtle. I always stand behind the viewing. Now, this that I can never reduce to an object of consciousness is the subjective moment of the manifold of consciousness of which all content is one part. Ordinarily it is only content which has concerned me, but it becomes clear that if there were no subjective moment or pole there could be no content. The subjective moment is not thought nor is it the coloring of consciousness which feeling may produce. I find that I can perceive the coloring produced by feeling. Depression and exaltation, etc., can be observed and studied. Thus, I find that I really stand apart from these qualities. Ultimately I find that I am the bare power of awareness which is quite colorless since it can differentiate the various colorings. The pure power of awareness is unaffected by pain or pleasure, good nor evil or any of the other contrasting pairs of opposites. It is always the same. But to be always the same is to be outside time, since "time" is merely another name for change. Here it dawns upon me that since I am timeless, "mortality" is a valid predication of only that which is in time and an object of consciousness, and this includes my body and all my distinguishable qualities but not I myself, in the ultimate sense. At last, I have found a true invariant.

The analysis so far has carried us to a valid intellectual recognition that is sound. But, so far, it is not yet the mystical "break through". This involves more, part of which is not under the control of the candidate. The mystical awakening may be thought of as the arousal to activity of a new organ or function. Such has been recognized and variously named by the mystics down through history. In Sanskrit it is called the "Samadhindriya". But this is not to be regarded as a new sensuous organ. We might call it the "transcendental organ" which is both super-sensuous and super-conceptual. It gives a consciousness which differs from conceptual consciousness in a manner somewhat analagous to the way in which the latter differs from sensual consciousness. The concept may mean the super-conceptual value, but is not identical with it. The difference may be illustrated by an event in the history of astronomy. You may remember that the planet Neptune was predetermined both as to its actuality and location by mathematical calculation from the perturbations of other planets. Subsequently, by telescopic observation in the pre-determined part of the sky the planet was seen and the calculation verified. Now, the calculation is like the conceptual knowledge and, as far as it could go, was perfectly correct. But the perception of the planet through the telescope gave a different kind of knowledge of the planet. The telescope corresponds to the Samadhindriya, save that it was built objectively, whereas the organ is built subjectively. A large part of the life-discipline of the Way is related to the building of this organ. It may, indeed, be the fruit of several incarnations of effort. But when it is ready and the mind is prepared its functioning is sometime started in a way which is quite spontaneous so far as the candidate is concerned. Actually, it is very likely that the Master has had a very definite hand in this, though in a way not known to the candidate.

It is the arousal of the so-called organ that is equivalent to the "New Birth". Self-identity is established upon a new base of reference. The one really valid religious end is achieved. The conceptual preparation is valuable in two respects. (a) It helps to achieve a proper alignment for the objective or personal consciousness, and, (b) it renders possible collaboration between the new consciousness and the intellect. It is this combination that distinguishes mastery from simple mysticism.

The transcendental organ gives certain knowledge, but this certainty and even omniscient quality applies to the pure knowledge, not to the intellectual interpretation. The latter is subject to being more or less correct and must be prepared to face criticism. In one sense, the Awakening is extremely simple. The Awakened One is at once more at home in the new world than he was in the old, and everything is perfectly obvious until he tries to talk about it. Then he finds he has a very complex problem upon his hands. Metapsychology and transcendental philosophy takes the best that one has of intellectual resource. Even in the ordinary sense, an infant can see, but it would require a very able scientist and philosopher to understand what 'seeing' means. But understanding seeing is not much use unless one can see, so there is a sense in which the most infantile mystic has an advantage over the greatest intellectual who is only an

intellectual. So the combination is necessary for command. All paths merge at the final intuition for

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philosophy and of - one.

only an intellectual. But the combination is necessary for command.

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Much have I been concerned in the total present set-up with humanity. I would not say that the avoidance of a new dark age, much worse than the last and perhaps final, is wholly impossible. But the problem is so enormously complicated, the wisdom of those who have power and the general morality so low that I see no ground for optimism. If the Orientals were right - and I think they were - in viewing the last world war as the mark of the spiritual bankruptcy of the West, the present set-up reveals the spiritual bankruptcy of well-nigh the whole world. Of course there are some Keepers of the Light, but They are far too few to deal with such massive darkness. The moral failure of the church and school is as bad a sign as any. As I see it, the worst will come after the war. In fact, it will be merely a state of war continued on another level. Indeed, I do not see how our bill of rights can withstand the new collectivism, the shadow of which is already over the land. Withdrawal to a sort of western Shangrila on the part of the spiritual warriors is the one possibility I now see.

I am not speaking words of false comfort to one who like you has a strong mind. You may well have to assume the duties of another kind of Officer in the days ahead. Everyone who can thus function, certainly will be needed.

Of late I have been drawing to a conclusion the companion book to "Pathways through to Space". This I had had in mind even while writing the latter, since in this many points were covered only sketchily. Many problems were left unfinished and I was well aware of several points where the conceptions and interpretations were open to psychological and philosophical criticism. As a matter of fact, I welcome all such criticism as an aid in the perfecting of interpretation both in the transcendental and objective senses. At any rate, the companion work devotes much space to the critical problem and naturally will not be as easy reading. One of the conceptions has actually involved the use of the calculus to ~~the~~ build the pattern. I shall be interested in your reaction when you have had a chance to study it. I believe that it renders more clear the common ground between the Atmavidya of Shankara and the doctrine of anatama of Buddha.

Here is one problem for you to think about if you wish. What is the connection between, "Substantiality is inversely proportional to ponderability" and  $x^2y^2 = a^2$ ?

May your Vision remain undimmed in the present darkness, and may all good abide with you.

Yours in the Great Work,

Dear Gogi:

Mar 5, 1945

Thank you kindly for your explanation of the "Subjective moment". I followed the analytical reasoning well - and who couldn't - what with the clear way in which you express yourself. But, I'm sorry that I seem unable to grasp the ultimate as pertains the mystical phase. You also made that point clear as to why people without the necessary qualifications might not grasp it. Here's hoping that some day that qualification may be attained by yours truly.

The problem you appended to your letter interested me - as you no doubt realized it would. Converting the statement into mathematical form ( $x$  = ponderability and  $y$  = substantiality), I obtained the following sequence.  $y \propto \frac{1}{x}$  or  $y = \frac{k}{x}$  or  $xy = k$  which is the formula for a hyperbola, the asymptotes of which are the principle axis, especially if  $k = \frac{a^2}{2}$  in which  $a$  is the distance between closest points of the two curves.  $x^2 - y^2 = 2$  is also a hyperbola in which the distance between the two curves is  $\sqrt{2}$ . Now if  $a = \sqrt{2}$  in the first equation,  $xy = \frac{(\sqrt{2})^2}{2} = 1$  or unity. The curves therefore are the same in both instances except

that they are related to each other as  $45^\circ$  between the symmetrical axis of each curve. The mystical significance of  $xy = \text{unity}$  or the fact that the statement is a hyperbolic function eludes me. Certainly I can visualize the relationships between substantiality and ponderability as only being one of direct or inverse proportion. It does not seem possible for me to visualize substantiality or ponderability being raised to any power or any "root" taken of them such as  $(\text{substantiality})^3$  or  $\sqrt[5]{\text{ponderability}}$ . I can only visualize either as being more or less - doubled or tripled etc but nothing else - altho I admit that theoretically such more or lessness could be converted into complex ratios and proportions. Now - if it is <sup>only</sup> either a direct or inverse proportion, I am struck with the question "Why did he choose the inverse proportion?" This involves examining the straight line,  $x = ky$ , if the proportion is direct and not inverse. Had the statement been made thus: What is the relationship between substantiality is directly proportional to ponderability and  $x = 2y$ . The same analysis could have been made as was done with inverse ratio and hyperbolic functions. If  $k = \text{unity}$ , then the two lines are related to each other as the angle they form intersecting at the origin of the coordinates. No solution at to mystical significance is present for me. Perhaps the meanings attached to the words are significant. Substantiality means, however, only one thing to me - degree of permanence or finiteness, truth or invariableness. all of these are related without discord.

Ponderability can mean "thinkability" or degree of weight. I eliminate weight considerations as attached to ponderability since it does not seem to me possible that any relationship exists between gravity and electricity or truth, both of which have certain degrees of substantiality without being subject to the law of gravity (insofar as I know). So I attach to "ponderability" the meaning which involves thinking, perception etc. Now if the two curves are interpreted in the light of the meanings of the words as just stated we should have a series of statements obtained which should be true insofar as the curve itself is concerned. If then we examine all these statements and find one to be untrue in the light of our everyday living, then the curve from which that statement was obtained cannot be considered as basically sound, and the other curve is the true one. This of course brings up the method to be used in determining truth of statement - difficult since what may be true for one individual may be reverse truth for another. This I can see will lead to numerous complexities and discussions but here goes:

Hyperbolic:

(1)

- (1) Ponderability is zero when substantiality is  $\infty$
- (2) Substantiality is zero when ponderability is  $\infty$
- (3) The more it is possible to think about something, the less substantial it is.
- (4) ~~The less substantial something~~  
The more substantial anything is, the less is it possible to think about it.

Straight line:

- (1) The more it is possible to think about something the more substantial it becomes.
- (2) When ponderability is zero, substantiality is zero.
- (3) When ponderability is  $\infty$ , substantiality is  $\infty$ .

I am now lost in the maze of my own mental fabrications! All of these statements have degrees of truth in them dependent upon the viewpoint. It does seem however that the "straight line" is more representative of materialistic viewpoint, while the hyperbola is not. Also I am struck with possible significance of straight line (2) which positively asserts the existence of nothingness, which is of course abhorrent to a thinking person. Then, I note the statements Hyperbolic (1) & (2) should not be so positive as to values. I should say "Ponderability approaches zero when substantiality approaches  $\infty$ . zero is never attained, nor is  $\infty$ , if the equation  $xy = 1$  must obtain. Thus, technically "nothingness" is never positive in the hyperbolic statement. I feel that the true answer to it all eludes me — for the present.



Have read your letter several times and think  
-continually of what you said in it. I certainly  
am in full accord with a Western Shangri-la  
and hope that not too many months or years  
elapse before I may retire to one I am  
particularly fond of. The ranch, too, seems to  
be doing particularly well judging from the  
last report by Sherifa. I know it will some  
day serve a fine purpose and hope that all  
who have shares in it are not concerned with  
monetary profits.

Not so long ago I flew to Marseilles for a  
few days. The people there have suffered less I  
think than have the Italians. But in all I  
still haven't changed my original thoughts regarding  
Europe. I have no interest in the continent and  
shall feel relieved when I no longer have any  
contact with it. Regarding the cards Sherifa  
would like - haven't seen any I can recall over  
here but will keep my weather eye "peeled".  
Please extend my love to all. Thanks again for  
your time in writing the fine letter.  
Peace be with you Peter