

San Fernando, Calif.,  
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Chicago, Ill.

Dear Fellow Student:

Just last night we returned from Mt. Whitney and found your letter waiting here. The questions you ask are of the type which make first demand upon my attention. I do not think that there is much which would give one who is deeply interested in helping make the Dhamma-vidya (Wisdom Religion) a living fact in the lives of men and women a greater pleasure than seeing questions such as you ask become vital in the lives of students. When such questions arise the student is earnestly knocking at the door of Understanding.

Knowingly or unknowingly you have asked some of the most crucial questions which arise in the philosophy of Absolute Monism. The Vedanta, which attains its most complete rationalistic completeness in the writings of Shankarachara, and which in exoteric statements comes the nearest to the Gupta Vidya (Secret Doctrine) of any system of thought known to the exoteric scholar, leaves certain of your questions without a satisfactory answer. The reason for this is that in all questions concerning the Absolute (or more correctly absoluteness) we are dealing with a domain which transcends intellection as well as any other form of relative representation. I think that this must be apparent when the student stops to consider that all questionings and answers are necessarily in terms of relative knowledge. How then, can that which transcends all relativity be represented within the relative? The really satisfactory answer to such ultimate questions can be found only when Consciousness transcends relativity. However, something of an answer can be indicated, and as far as I am able to do so I shall undertake this task.

(1) Question:- "If all is the Absolute and the Absolute is all, and we proceed from the Absolute and our goal is union with the Absolute, why was it necessary for us to go forth as human atoms to struggle for existence and suffer?"

The question exhibits one very common error in metaphysical thinking. In the first place, while it is a common practice, found even in Hegel, to use the word "Absolute" in philosophical accuracy we should never say "The Absolute" but rather absoluteness. The word Absolute suggests particularized individuality such as the familiar extra-cosmic God of orthodox Christianity, and there is nothing absolute about that notion whatsoever. The idea is rather that absoluteness is the real nature of Being. That is, without parts or differentiation in any sense whatsoever. In other words, It is That which is without relations within nor is It related to anything without. Hence the relationship expressed by the words "proceed from" and "attaining union with" cannot properly be applied to absolute Being. We, or rather I, (for in strict philosophical thinking we must drop the plural

form) never proceeded from the Absolute. I am Absolute Being. Do you see the difference. The verb "to be" expresses identity, not a relationship. The notion of "proceeding from" implies ~~the~~ Absolute Being standing in contrast to me, in other words, as limited by such contrast and therefore not Absolute. For absoluteness is that which is without limitation in any sense. The same point applies with regard to the attainment of union with ~~the~~ Absolute Being. This is not attained nor has it ever been lost in point of Reality. We might say that Consciousness has become caught in a delusion, as in the case of a man placed in an hypnotic sleep. Such a man has not really changed himself no matter what the hypnotic operator may make him think he is. When the man awakens the hypnotic dream disappears as a mirage and simply is not. The whole universe as external is such a mirage. Realization is but the waking up of the Jiv-atman (individualized soul) to realizing the fact that it is Absolute Being, that it always was and always will be THAT. To be sure, from the relative point of view Yoga seems like a process, but in the final state it is merely being awake and is above all process whatsoever. This is, however, Jnana Yoga the only Yoga capable of leading to Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the highest Samadhi or Nirvanic Bliss.

We have never gone forth from ~~the~~ Absolute Being as obviously there is no place outside the All. Do you not see? Why, then, is the struggling and suffering necessary? The answer is that there is no struggling and suffering save for Consciousness caught in the Illusion (Maya). Ultimately this whole process is as unreal as the mirage. From the relative point of view on the relative plane it must be dealt with, but for him who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi it simply is not. Such a one is absolutely liberated and bound by no karma whatsoever just as a man waking out of a dream in the midst of seemingly the most important action is unbound from that action on the waking plane.

We have a habit of predicating purposiveness of ~~the~~ Absolute Being either directly or by implication in our questions and hence would limit absoluteness by a relationship. Purpose has to do with finite or limited Consciousness. John Smith may be actuated by the purpose of seeking something beyond what he has now. But That which is All can obviously seek nothing beyond itself and hence can have no purpose. In the absolute sense, then, the Universe is not the expression of Purpose. In this sense there is no such thing as gaining knowledge and experience as you so well see. When Consciousness is moving in relativity one may very properly see a purposive relationship between one part and another. But there can be no purpose in That which in its very Nature is beyond relationship. All that we can know about Absolute Being is that IT IS. The Universe is but a description of its reflection or Maya. The only reality is THAT.

If we step down to limited Consciousness we may speak of experience leading to knowledge and individualization. But at the same time that this is relatively true there has been no process of experiencing, of acquiring knowledge or individualization. The resolution of this seeming process transcends intellection, it is found only in the realization of Self-Knowledge. Go within.

"If we were (at one time?) one with the Absolute" etc. That question mark is one of the most significant things in your letter. The past tense is wholly improper as Absoluteness is wholly above time.

Is experience necessary? Well it is until we wake up. Then finding that we are all in all then experience becomes but a dream out on the periphery. It is unwise, however, to force any body's awakening. And we need not worry for not even the humblest nor meanest of creatures is outside the Absolute Being or ever can get out.

(2) Question: "How could the Absolute separate itself and why would it send part of itself forth to struggle for existence and suffer?"

The answer is implied in the above. Separation implies relationship. Absoluteness is non-relativity. There is no separation in reality.

(3) "What are the seven principles of man, what are they made up of and what is their function and WHY?"

This is a question within relativity and it with its answer is relatively real though meaningless from an absolute state as pointed out above.

The seven principles with approximate English equivalents are as follows:

1. Atman - The SELF, pure subjectivity, pure Spirit or Purusha considered as power of being aware. It is one and indivisible, birthless, deathless and changeless. I am Atman. Atman is one with Parabrahman.
2. Buddhi - Spiritual Soul. The vehicle of Atman. It is the principle of Discrimination. Through Buddhi only are we enabled to make the determination of true and not true. Atman is pure knowledge. Buddhi is that knowledge enrobed in Discrimination. Buddhi is the feminine aspect of Atman and with Atman, from which it is inseparable, it forms the Monad or pilgrim which proceeds from eternity to eternity.
3. Manas - Higher or abstract Mind. The Human Soul or re-incarnating Ego. This is the Son or Son\*daughter as it is androgynous. Responsibility for failure or success in Life lies with Manas. It is the form of knowledge but is not knowledge. It forms the reasons pro and con but by itself cannot make the determination "So and So is true or not true". The indissoluble union of Buddhi and Manas is the birth of the Christ in the individual.
4. The above Three from the higher triad. The Trinity in the Microcosm.
4. Kama-Manas.- Mind led by Desire. Not another kind of mind than Manas but a refelction of the latter. This is the

Raja of the senses referred to in the "Voice of the Silence". The ordinary use of mind is Kama-Manas. When we think to accomplish a personal end it is Kama Manas that is working. It is this mind that must be destroyed, that is made quiescent in Yoga. It then reflects from within or above rather than from the senses below. It is the only aspect of the lower man that can be taken up into the trinity and attain conditional immortality.

5. Kama-Rupa - Desire Body. The vehicle of desires and emotions. This is the red principle. It is here that man reaches his depths, though sublimated it becomes aspiration and thus personal desire becomes Desire impersonal. This, combined with the Life principle becomes the Subtle Body (Shukma Sarira). Independently active in life only in the case of the few who have gone through the necessary training. Students of the keys will understand this.
6. Prana - The Life Principle. In one sense the reflection of Atman on the terrestrial plane. The particularized reflection of the One Life or Jiva. It is vital electricity. The noumenon of gross electricity. The leaving of the Prana is the death of the body. Control of the Prana in certain forms of Yoga training is used to lead to certain lower forms of Samadhi.
7. Linga Sarira - The Vital Body, or vehicle of Prana. As electricity must have a vehicle, as a wire, to control its directed particularized use, so there must be a vehicle of the universal Life principle in the particular living form. This does not leave the body, except for very short distances, and retaining connection, safe in death. At death it shortly disintegrates. May be seen sometimes in semitaries over graves under the right conditions.

The last four constitute the Quaternary of the Mortal, personal man.

The above was an esoteric classification until the last quarter of the 19th century when the cycles were right for giving more occult knowledge to the world than in known history. The student of Yoga and occultism will find this classification of increasing importance. It affords a key to races, rounds, globes and cycles. Bear in mind the Microcosm is a reflection of the Macrocosm.

There is a four-fold Vedantic classification which in reality does not contradict the above. This classification is of Vehicles which may be used by the Atman independently. Thus Prana, Linga-Sarira and the Sthula-sarira (gross physical body) are all called Sthula Sarira or the gross physical vehicle since these three are inseparable as vehicles of action. Second, there is the Subtle Body (Shukma Sarira) corresponding approximately to Kama Rupa which may be used as a vehicle of action independently of the gross body. Third there is the Karana Sarira (Causal Body) corresponding to Manas which is also an instrument of action

for the Adept independent of the Subtle and Gross bodies. Finally there is the Atman corresponding to the state of consciousness of the highest Samadhi. As you may see the classification serves a different purpose and no real contradiction is involved. Further it is more exoteric and could be found in written works while the seven-fold remained esoteric.

This basic teaching has been preserved for untold ages in a central group in which it is maintained in its pristine purity. It may be found more or less elsewhere but generally has lost its purity by other elements coming in and some being dropped out as in the Kaballa. Until the student has acquired his orientation it is not well to read all books on this subject as the result is apt to be confusion. The ground sources in English are the "Secret Doctrine" and the "Mahatma Letters", but these are heavy works for beginning students. Reliable introductory statements are; W.Q. Judge's "Ocean of Theosophy", and H.P.B.'s "Key to Theosophy".

(4) Question: What is Soul? What is Ego? What is Spirit?

At first this division often confuses, but Self-analysis will show a place for all of it. First of all Spirit is that which is birthless, deathless, changeless, and indivisible. I am Spirit (Atman). Spirit is never an object of Consciousness as it is the Subject to all Consciousness. It is pure subjectivity and can never be observed as observation involves a distinct point of observation. That point is Spirit. Spirit is the SELF. It is never plural. The word "spirits" is a wholly different word. (The confusion here lies in the utter inadequacy of the English language. In the Gita, for instance, there are some seven or eight words in the Sanskrit all translated "Spirit" because there is no other word to serve in English.)

The Ego is that which says "I am I and no one else". It is the sense of separated self-identity. The personality is the personal ego, called in the "Voice of the Silence", the Non-self. This is born and dies with each body. It does not re-incarnate. The Higher Ego or Manas is the basis of individuality. It persists from incarnation to incarnation. In the "Voice of the Silence" it is called the Self, while in contrast Spirit or the ONE is written SELF. The Self incarnates and grows or degenerates. The SELF knows neither growth nor degeneration as it is in no sense subject to process. There are many Selves or Egos. There is ONE SELF, and I am THAT.

Soul is the vehicle of Spirit. Only through a vehicle does Spirit become manifest. Soul is thus the enrobing or universal feminine principle. Soul has three aspects, as Spiritual (Buddhi), Human (Higher Manas), Animal Soul (Kama Rupa). Soul also stands intermediate between gross body and Spirit. It is the Anima Mundâ, the Over-Soul of the World. Soul and Ego may be the same thing from a different aspect as Higher Manas is both Higher Ego and Human Soul. Soul carries the idea of enrobing or form in generic sense while Ego is the sense of "I" in contradistinction to the others. The SELF is I without contradistinction.

(5) Do you know of any book or dictionary which gives Sanskrit terms and what they mean with the proper pronunciation of the terms?

I am looking for something satisfactory of this kind myself. There are limited sources. The best is H.P.B.'s Glossary of Theosophical Terms, but it includes Greek, Kabalistic and other terms as well as Sanscrit. In the back of Dr. Paul Deussen's "System of the Vedanta" there is a glossary of Sanscrit terms used in the Vedanta. For the most part as terms occur in the Secret Doctrine, The Serpent Power and other works of Avalon and elsewhere they are translated in one place or another. You will find, however, just as is true of western philosophers, that the same term has a different meaning when used by different schools of thought. Except to one of scholarly training this is apt to be confusing. I should advise staying with H.P.B.'s Glossary and the Secret Doctrine.

The becoming familiar with Sanscrit terms is good practice as they carry a mantram value which English does not and you will find also a difference in meaning which is not carried in the English equivalents but which will grow in your consciousness as you use the terms. Remember, Sanscrit is the Devanagari or the language of the gods. In other words, it is the language given by those who are guiding the evolution of humanity. It goes back, even, of the Indo-European group to which we belong as it came to us from the Fourth Root Race, the Atlanteans.

It is hardly worth while trying for accurate spelling as scholars are not agreed on phonetic equivalents. Thus Shankara is sometimes spelt with an "S", sometimes a "C" and sometimes "Sh". Correct pronunciation is not possible for the average western throat, but it is possible to choose between fair and outrageous pronunciation. If I come across a satisfactory lexicon I shall let you know of it.

(6) Question: "If we are all One WHY the difference in us, WHY are some good and some Bad? Why if we are all one in essence and the thing we are working for is to realize union with all, why the necessity of physical bodies since they are the thing which separates us from this unity or rather from the realization of this unity? If we are already one in essence why all this fight, struggle, pain and unhappiness which we go through in physical bodies?"

The realization of how the ONE is also the many without having sacrificed its oneness is one of the basic keys to the understanding ~~mean~~ of occultism. As indicated above this problem can never be fully resolved within a concept as it involves transcendence of relative representation. Bear in mind that the whole Universe is simply the Maya or reflection projected by the SELF or the One Reality. Consciousness caught in the Maya takes relationship and multiplicity as real. So long as Consciousness takes this as real he must deal with it accordingly and perform his Dharma (duty) in life. Liberation means the realization that I produced this Universe just as my dreams are the production of my own thought. Good and bad are only relative. The Brahman realized man looks alike upon both just as when we see a play we do not condemn the actor who plays the part of a villain nor do we praise the hero for his great virtue. We see actors in both. So also the SELF-realized man sees simply the SELF or Brahman in all who play a part on the screen of Life. It is all wrong to think of our lives

as due to an external constraint. We have produced all our conditions and in our inner consciousness, in Self Knowledge we will find the solution of the problem. Meditate on these problems and you will find the answer growing in consciousness. You will find that part of it can never be written or spoken and you will also find that the part which can be written and spoken is to be found in many places.

(7) Question:- "Who was the greatest, Buddha or Christ?"

The followers of every religion tend to regard some one of the Great Teachers as the greatest of all and that one is looked to especially in their own chosen religion. It is well to not lay too much stress upon this point, for any Self-realized man is a mountain peak for those who have not climbed that high. It is better to put the time in climbing rather than waste it upon controversy as to which peak is the highest. When one gets up toward the top then he can see. Often the nearer and smaller peaks hide the larger more distant ones. That is a matter of perspective. Any peak reaches above the plane of common animal consciousness, so it is well for each one to climb the peak to which he is attracted. The important point is to climb and let the other fellow climb as he chooses.

As to a more specific answer of this question I will place the problem before you. Study the portion of the Mahatma Letters dealing with the Buddha and put together what is hinted there as well as said explicitly. Also study the Voice of the Silence especially the edition gotten out by the Chinese Buddhist Research Society (1927). (We sold several copies of this while in Chicago) I refer you especially to the editorial notes and comments in the back. One thing to bear in mind is that we know Gautama was also Shankara and Tsou-kha-pa and also had other forms. He cherished especially the Path of the Secret Heart and outlined the discipline for that. Use your intuition.

You are right in regarding the words "Christ" and "Buddha" as not merely personal. One is from a Greek word "Christos" and the other Sanscrit. There is no important difference in their meaning. Those who have attained Christhood or Buddhahood are called Christs and Buddhas. Those who have attained full realization of the SELF may be called Christs or Buddhas.

(8) Faith in relation to the keys.

It is not necessary that one should cultivate a blind faith in the working of the keys. As I have emphasized over and over again, perform the technique as given then note the results. Then the student is in a position to give intelligent confidence. Intelligent skepticism is better than blind faith. This is not a matter of New Thought psychologising though some interpret it that way. There is no more important part of the technique than the building of detachment for the thing desired. Use the key then renounce it, leaving all to the Law. It is not the assertion of a separated personal demand, but action from the impersonal level of the OM.

May every good attend your wonderful efforts,