

4121 South La Corta Drive  
Tempe, Arizona 85282  
September 21, 1972

"On Space"  
(Letter from Dr. Rein'1)  
11/08/71

Dear Franklin Wolff,

I am very sorry to be so long in replying to your extremely interesting tape, which deals in part with certain questions I asked concerning Space in the Proem of the S.D. I have been having a set of inconveniences, to wit: two hernias, a very enlarged prostate, and unstabilized diabetes. The latter being circulatory and metabolic is no doubt of deep karmic significance, indicating more trouble with the heart than the head, although the head is also necessarily involved. To make a long story short, we cut our motor trip to New York in half--where we were to see my wife's ailing father--cut it off at the Davenport meridian, returned to Boulder, where we had been staying with a daughter of mine and, at the advice of one of her surgeons, --they do come in packages these days--I had the prostate reduced before returning for the second summer session, which was quite a struggle. Joan Price very kindly took the first week for me, and the class was the best I have ever had. After a year and a half of very little sleep I am beginning to appreciate the nature of rest. One more operation and the mechanical difficulties ought to be sufficiently alleviated.

I find that I agree with most everything you say, and disagreements are really not very important so long as they are governed by the same aim, which surely they must be. Yes, Nagarjuna is removing conceptual obstacles to the Path. The obstacles are of course rooted in craving--a rooted root--and the dialectic keeps the mind from alighting and becoming involved in a binding way. The dialectic as a whole is an expression of the mind's freedom. Persistence <sup>in</sup> the dialectic is the work of the heart. The consequence of the compassionate mind, mind and heart mutually stabilized, is enlightenment, a vision that is really life itself, the object as an "in-itself" having slipped away. This is what I take to be your "consciousness without an object", "vision itself, pure and simple", which has something like the character of breath rather than ~~the~~ similarity to the contemplation of an object.

The "attributes" space and motion (absolute and abstract) should each symbolize to the finite intelligence <sup>and</sup> surrounding ~~them~~ there must be an aura of intimation if there is to be any symbolization at all--the <sup>ever</sup> incognizable essence." Like Spinoza's attributes, neither has priority in expressive power, yet each expresses a different side or aspect of the Absolute (distinguishable but not separable!). Then it will always be possible to say something (cryptically or symbolically) about the Absolute by using either aspect, although not about the manifested universe, for there both are needed. I think this was my only point. When H.P.B. says that space is neither a limitless void nor a conditioned fullness, but both, she adds (p.8) "on the plane of absolute <sup>the even in cognizable Determ.</sup> abstraction" as referring to the aspect "absolute abstract space", something neither identical with the Absolute nor with any n-dimensional space. However, in relation to the universe, space contributes to the concept of differentiation. There would be no subjects of properties without it. When qualities enter the picture bare subjectivity becomes materialized; at some level of matter, or filled space. <sup>(I wonder</sup>

*what was in the back of Democritus's mind!)*  
*There is an interdependence of breath & space which we should sometime discuss -- while at the same time seeing that all else --*

Curious are void. The pulsating point, expanding & contracting. There is always as much space as there needs. Even perceptual space can suggest this, for it is unlimited. So far as perception is concerned even when we are confined within a small room, there is no perceived limit. Let it shrink or expand, it is one aspect of the All, the other being the shrinking & the expanding. The point is everywhere and, excuse the pun, it is the point of there being everywhere.

I do hope that you are coming here soon & that you are enjoying health in every sense of the term.

Sincerely

Ben Rind

P.S. - I am enclosing an assignment for my Buddhist Philosophy course. I thought you might be interested in the fact that it is not necessarily confined to the academic. (Why should it be petted?!) Also there are some notes on the cinematographic model distributed to my Bergson seminar.

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISTIC PHILOSOPHY

### PI 313 Section 3C

For one who makes a sharp distinction between theoretical and practical, who believes that one must first understand the plan, so to speak, and then go on to apply it-- the way a house or car is built-- it will be very difficult if not impossible to follow the thread of Buddhist thought. Of course in the West we do condemn the ivory tower. We say there must be a linkage between experience in the field and the understanding of the field. Advertising executives, for example, find it helpful to operate filling stations for a day or two. Between the drawing board and physical work there is of course interaction. However this expresses a narrow sense of practical. For certain ends, apart from the question of their value, certain means are required. Yet apart from matters of value nothing is important: this is a tautology. Apart from value no logic, no science, no life is a matter of concern. Means are not understood as valuable unless the end has value. Yet although many may be willing to accept the significance of "importance" suggested, they most likely will want to maintain that understanding has nothing to do with the value of its application. To know is to be able to explain and involves the grasp of something like a causal relationship, of means to ends in that sense. It has nothing to do with values. Knowledge may be "practical" but completely lacking in importance. This is precisely the significance of the "sharp distinction" between theoretical and practical--practical in the trivial sense. In Buddhism the relationship between theoretical and practical means that one does not know in a fundamental sense unless one participates in a life that is directed towards matters of supreme importance. Yet one cannot make the empirical scientific demand to know in advance what would verify or refute one's expectations. Both meaning and truth are to be discovered in a form of life.

Since it is essential to Buddhist thought to join intellectual comprehension with the larger or ethical sense of practical, to insist that certain things cannot be understood apart from a certain type of life, we shall try--within the limits of the academic tradition--to approximate to an initial phase of the Buddhist life. This will involve an exercise with respect to the Dhammapada to be followed by a paper.

The Dhammapada, both a philosophical and a devotional book, is in our edition divided into twenty-six chapters. It is suggested that a chapter be read attentively each day until there have been four complete readings of the work. The Dhammapada will not be discussed in class. The student is urged to take notes and to revise them constantly as his understanding progresses. The student should make the Dhammapada the focus of his attention attempting to discern how it may reflect all the other work he does in the course. After the fourth reading the student will have time to write a paper showing the relationship of the Dhammapada to all the ideas discussed in class. This will be the main paper of the course. It will tend to fuse the ethical and intellectual disciplines. Strict observance of the daily reading requirement is essential.

Pro-Seminar: Bergson's Philosophy of Religion

1. The cinematographic model:

There is the perception of motion as the film is run off. There are the immobile frames, which remain the same whether the film is in motion or at rest. The film may be shown at a variety of speeds. There are slow and fast motions, and there is that degree of slowness where there is a perception of discontinuous states.

In the use that Bergson makes of the model one must forget about the film as an object and about the motion and speeds of the projector. All that concerns him are the various perceptual states and the changes from one tempo to another. Causes as they are understood in the example are to be disregarded in the model.

A fast tempo can change into a slow one and vice versa. This is to be taken as spontaneous, not as externally directed. Thus one may say that, so far as the perceptual experiences are concerned, there is the potentiality for slowing down. One understands this by observing the slowing down. If the slowing down were comparable to a decision to do or think y as opposed to x, we should call it voluntary; for Bergson the voluntary is not limited to deliberate decision.

One must not think that the possible experience of a succession of discrete states is fundamental and that the faster ones are somehow produced by confusion. This would be to include within the model more than is intended, e.g., the projector and its various speeds and certain psycho-physical laws. The model of the real is experience itself and the tension experienced within it of the various rhythms of duration.

2. Certain theses conceived in terms of the cinematographic model:

(a) The difference between matter and mind is a difference in the rhythm and tempo of duration. The conception of the difference depends on a comparison of tempos. There seems to be no absolute tempo. The briefest sensation of light covers billions of vibrations. (This is a theoretical comparison.)

(b) The process of the slowing down of the tempo has as its limit a timeless juxtaposition of points in space, the possibility of a system of externally related elements. It is as if the camera were to show only one frame or all the frames spread out simultaneously. This is a theoretical limit to which matter never attains. But it is a limit of which thought conceives and in terms of which it generates its logical constructions and conceptual systems. This limit becomes the basis for the analysis of matter.

(c) The process opposed to slowing down is intensification. Its limit is pure undivided self-luminous activity. It is the Divine consciousness which has only to relax in order to create a world. Such a world would contain various levels of duration -- differing according to tempo and rhythm -- and various centers of energy and action. What is intermediate in tension may utilize what is below it and aspire to what is above it.

(d) Although matter stands almost at the opposite pole from Divinity it bears to it a certain analogy. What is pure consciousness at one pole is suspended consciousness at the other. It is only the limits that are mutually exclusive. Matter has not attained the limit; it is thought that envisions the limit towards which matter tends. In place of a dualism in actuality there is a dualism of tendencies. In the dualism of limits the higher pole is equivalent to the inconceivable, for it possesses no limits; from the analytic standpoint it is simply the fusion of all distinctions. Matter is the system of changing images from which all perspectives and specific centers of action have been eliminated. Perceptions are selective. Bergson speaks of them as being present in matter, but only in the sense of being passed over or suspended. If one tries to attach a consciousness to matter, it is a consciousness that never comes to the surface. However, Bergson does not think that a particular level or tempo of change spontaneously changes into another. The levels are not conceived as separate entities endowed with the power of transformation. It is within one's experience that one finds an existential model for change of tempo; one moves, for example, between the scattered images of a dreamlike consciousness to the intensity of an urgent decision. However not all that is existent has the same powers of intensification and relaxation. What is called spirit contains these powers preeminently. Matter is thought of as almost disengaged from the creative process, tending simply to repeat in equivalent forms its present nature, thus having no appreciable memory or depth in duration. Spirit, a more flexible power, is spoken of as confronting matter and wresting certain things from it. Spirit can adapt itself to the rhythm of matter by gathering a succession of its states into one impression. This synthesis is the creation of a memory which is implicit in matter only in the sense that spirit retains what is otherwise cancelled out. (The continuous repetition of do re mi in which no more than two sounds are ever remembered would be a case of minimal duration or continual unrealized beginning again.) The accumulation of memories is not a power of the material rhythms themselves. It is terms of the confrontation of spirit with matter that Bergson conceives of the dualism of matter and memory. Yet the selectivity of spirit is not understood entirely in terms of its ability to adopt a different rhythm. It is selective in introducing a limit within a particular level, for example, the level of matter. Conscious perception is in part a selection from matter as a whole. It is a selection relative to a particular organism and the organism's needs. What is more, it is the basis for the differentiation of organisms, for the existence of an organism depends upon its ability to utilize its perceptions. Thus spirit selects and preserves, something that has to be understood in contrast with the field of matter.

(e) Spirit also has the power to relax and contract with respect to the memories it has accumulated, constituting in this way an individual self capable of adapting itself to the needs of actions. In moments of great decision the whole of the past is focussed. Generally, we move back and forth between the levels in a double movement of concentration or relaxation.

It is important to remember that whether we are dealing with material processes or with the more subtle and complex processes of spirit in conjunction with matter, a process is never to be understood in terms of a succession of separate states but always in terms of the experienced process, which may, however, later become the subject for a process of reflection. The products of reflection are taken to be aspects, not the roots of the process reflected upon. Instead of saying that we never get out of the web of words we should say that we never depart from the process.

### 3. Remarks on the meaning of "virtual":

There is such a thing as "virtual perception" as well as "virtual action." But in calling matter the "virtual perception of all things" it could be misleading to read virtual as potential without a careful determination of the context. The context is always a process conceived in terms of tension. Within the process there are potentialities for relaxation as well as intensification. This we have attempted to understand in relation to the cinematographic model. Virtuality is not the property of a state but of a process containing contrary tendencies. Tension is a tension of opposites. One sort of virtuality concerns differentiation and diversification, the other integration. What was diversified, or differentiated, can become reintegrated. Pure perception is what could occur in a perceptive process if it were further differentiated, involving not only a change of rhythm but a loss of perspectivity. Thus matter is virtually inconcrete perception. On the other hand, matter, in conjunction with spirit can become limited in conscious perception and conscious perception, in providing a sphere for action, opens up possibilities for choice. Conscious perception functioning in responses, is further differentiated in our attention. Memory is itself a process moving between the limits of action and dream. Within integrated memory all the levels of memory are virtually present.

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February 5, 1977

Dear Franklin Wolff,

I have missed seeing you.  
It would be good to talk again.

I am ~~sending~~ <sup>inclosing</sup> for you a copy  
of an article that appeared in  
the first issue of Horrible anon-  
ymously, as in their policy for  
living authors. It follows in its  
own way the same objective as

"Consciousness Without an Object".  
The symbolism is not intended to  
be logical but emblematic.

It is becoming clear that  
I have had so much trouble  
in my life (thought life)

because I have been trying to hold  
on to ~~the~~ intuition which operates  
as if it were rooted in Kama-  
Manas. Attempting to cut those  
(imaginary) roots produces a  
state of swoon. But it is  
just a question of recognizing  
who is master. And the  
emmer is eternal.

I am myself really has  
great potentialities. He always  
looks bright from medi-  
tation. But he is patient.

Trusting that you are  
in the best of health,  
and with all good  
wishes,

Sincerely,

Bob Kiml

From Harmon, Vol. 1, No. 1,  
January 1975

## THE TEACHING OF SHANKARA

### CONSCIOUSNESS AND RELATIONSHIP

*Whether there is or is not a One, both that One and the Others alike are and are not, and appear and do not appear to be, all manner of things in all manner of ways, with respect to themselves and to one another.*

PLATO

The basic constituents of Shankara's Advaita can be expressed in a simple story. Brahman, the Supreme Reality, is without quality and therefore beyond conceptual determination. There is also, in a dependent sense, the world as it is experienced, characterized by the duality of subject and object. The individual self, conceiving of itself as limited in its being and different in nature from the objects of its experience, is in reality one with Brahman. It fails to recognize its essential nature due to ignorance (nescience). Nescience involves the superimposition of the qualities of one thing on those of another, as in confusing a rope with a snake, or the self (Atman) with a body, subtle or gross, or the body with the self. The misconception of self, deeply rooted in an individual's character, is the cause of bondage (transmigratory existence). The overcoming of this misconception through a great spiritual and moral effort is freedom, also described in *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom* as the embodiment of "eternal bliss," "infinite compassion," and "the bringing of purity to the whole world."

The world of experience has a place in this story. There are snakes and ropes. Yet these very things are appealed to for explaining the delusion of identifying the self with the subject or agent in the world. The recognition of this error is the key to freedom. To the indolent mind the story may be satisfying, in fact so satisfying that freedom may seem at hand. However, a little reflection reveals problems. In the *Upadesasahasri* of Shankara there is an account of a subtle discussion between a teacher and his student. One of the first topics is superimposition.

How can superimposition of one fully known thing upon another fully known thing (which in some cases holds for the rope and the snake) account for the misconception of the Atman, for the Atman does not seem to be fully known in the way a person's physical nature is known, *i.e.*, by perception and other means of knowledge? This kind of objection immediately springs to the analytical mind. It appears to be a serious methodological challenge to the analogical method of exposition characteristic of many ancient philosophers. It seems to require an explanation of the unknown in terms of the unknown. The teacher proposes that in one sense Atman and the body are fully known, but in another sense not; at least not as objects of distinct notions like 'tree' or 'person.' How, then, is the confusion of snake with rope to provide for a model concerning Atman? Something other than empirical standards seems to function in determining the significance of many of the analogies used in Advaitic thought. What are these other considerations?

Advaita has three component strains: the conceptual and intellectual, the devotional and moral, and the meditative and self-disciplinary. Naturally they are interdependent. A rigorous scrutiny of ideas is essential not only to self-discipline and self-knowledge, but also to moral action, which in turn makes possible the most comprehensive development of intellect. Again, there is an obvious connection between self-discipline and moral action. This interdependence is not merely mutual aid but rather solidarity of being, a confluence of theory and practice. The development of these three strains is the dialectical process of de-mythification. This process is for the sake of destroying the illusion or myth surrounding the nature of self. Yet to talk in this way puts one in danger of mythifying de-mythification. This is a problem for which concepts cannot provide the entire basis of solution.

Shankara puts the problem of trans-empirical knowledge in a radical way. In the *Upadesasahasri* the teacher compares Atman to space. Like space, it is "by nature not composite." "Although Atman exists as connected with nothing, it does not follow that the body and other things are without Atman, just as although space is connected with nothing it does not follow that nothing has space." "The existence of the body in Atman is not cognized

by sense perception and the other means of knowledge." Absolute space is suggested as a sort of being, as it was for Democritus. Whether occupied or not it is not perceived, and it is completely indifferent to its occupation. Analogously, what is directly or intuitively known in every respect (as opposed to known by induction, deduction, testimony, etc.) is "connected with nothing," although other things are "with it." The conception of connection and its opposite is so general that one hesitates to apply *asymmetrical* to it in the ordinary sense. 'John is the father of Mary' is asymmetrical because Mary is the daughter, not the father of John. John and Mary are related, but differently. We say that space is occupied, but Shankara says that it is not connected with anything. Similarly, anything adequately and intuitively known would be unconnected. If this is what Shankara intended, it would be a very unusual and high order abstraction. It would remain indifferent to our putting it in relationships. It would be equivalent to the Thing-in-itself, if that could be intuited — and it cannot in the Kantian version. Whether or not this "out of relationship" was intended, we shall find it a useful idea. We shall call it the idea of the *relationless*, and we shall designate references to it as *relatings*, not relations. What relates to it will be conceived as having its being only in the relating. In this way, one could maintain that Brahman is "one without second." From the standpoint of relating there would be causal dependence. From the standpoint of Brahman or Atman there would be nothing *other*. Even Aristotle's God is not entertained with such severity. From the Absolute nothing can be produced or generated, yet from the relating to the Absolute everything flows, as it were, from the Absolute.

What has been suggested may well sound sophistical. Its oddity stems from the general perplexity, both ancient and modern, around the form of the intellect and the nature of the objects it seeks to know. A minimum requirement is that the object be conceivable. Concepts, the instruments of conception, have the roles of distinguishing and relating. They must be distinguishable within a field of relations. An element is distinguished by having a unique set of properties, such that every element must exclude as well as include properties. Relations hold between distinguishable elements; thus a *relationship*, that whole consisting

of elements in relation, is not a distinguishable conceptual element unless all the elements among which the relation is conceived to hold are themselves distinguishable. This demand puts a strain on intuitive claims to knowledge. For Shankara it has no ultimate significance. But then, to intellect, it seems that there should be a way of making sense of the statement in which the claim is made.

Any presentation of conceivability, including the one just given, can contain elements of myth, a plausibility that depends more on usage than inspection. Even the vaunted principle of contradiction, and its companions consistency and necessity, the modal trinity, are not equivalent in all minds to stability itself. The link between inconceivability and contradiction reminds one of what Socrates proposed to Euthyphro: Is the holy what is loved by the gods or is it loved by them because it is holy? Is contradiction inconceivable because it boggles or does it boggle because it is inconceivable? Perhaps the principle of contradiction functions in the manner of Plato's GOOD, bringing intelligibility to all conceptions although itself transcending the intelligible. Yet if it transcends both derivation and postulation we are back to the problem of the last paragraph. The *claim* to transcend what is ordinarily regarded as the intelligible should be itself in some sense intelligible. This will require an amplification of the meaning of intelligibility.

For this purpose we shall return to the *relationless* and *relating*, indicating as simply and forcibly as possible the distinction between them and the ordinary concept or relationship. We shall symbolize their structures: (1)  $(\rightarrow) B$ , (2)  $Rab$ . In (1) the parentheses are to remind us of the peculiarity of the "asymmetrical" character of "relating to," as  $B$  is not involved in the relating. (2) represents the structure of a dyadic relation.  $B$  could be interpreted as anything from Brahman to the minutest speck. A finite interpretation of  $B$  will permit us to think of  $(\rightarrow)$  in (1) as having an object, for the interpretation of  $B$  will be distinguishable within a field. We shall also want to think of the possibility of  $(\rightarrow)$  *appropriating* its object; for this purpose we shall use (3)  $(\rightarrow B)$ , it being understood that  $(\rightarrow) B$  is not negated. This is the peculiar function presented in the metaphor of superimposition. It has an ontological as well as conceptual side. One could say that the relating has objectified itself —

perhaps *appropriating* will have to be a primitive term. There may be a relating to the objectified relating, (4)  $(\longrightarrow) (\longrightarrow B)$ . Again, it is to be understood that  $(\longrightarrow) B$  is not negated. We shall also want an expression to indicate the identity (indistinguishability) of *relating to the relationless* and the *relationless*. It should also be possible to consider  $(\longrightarrow)$  in abstraction from  $(\longrightarrow) B$ , for when  $B$  is finite we want to be able to ask the question whether the relating to it is also finite. If we have a choice in this respect, we want to be able to consider the alternatives. If  $(\longrightarrow)$  is undivided with respect to all series of experiences, its limit is simply itself,  $(\longrightarrow)$ , which we might express as an identity in the conventional way  $(\longrightarrow) = (\longrightarrow)$ . Then we could also express the identity of this to the relationless. Both *relation* and *relating to* can be undefined, but have meaning through their use as governed by the above considerations. If *asymmetry* is applied to *relating to*, it will have to be used in a new sense, since *relating to* is not a relation. This may be a lot for even an intellect devoted to systems to swallow. We shall consider applications and try to steer a course between inconsistency and vacuity.

Let us consider applications of  $B$  and  $(\longrightarrow)$ . Let  $(\longrightarrow)$  stand for *consciousness of* in an empirical context. We place ourselves within the empirical world, but make no ultimate ontological commitments concerning it. A phenomenological suspension of metaphysical claims is intended — for example, “Electrons are the ultimate constituents of reality” — along with the attitudes which underlie such claims. Although prudent habits need not be neglected, the so-called *sense of reality* may well be diminished in a more serious way than may be intended by the elimination of an assertion sign. Thus meditation may come to the aid of phenomenological reduction. We introduce *consciousness of* as an interpretation of  $(\longrightarrow)$ . This does not exclude its relating to objects of ordinary experience so long as these objects do not constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions of its meaning. However, it differs from the introduction of such a term as ‘point,’ say, in relation to a series of concentric spheres, by not committing us to the conception of *theoretical entity*, which is a sort of ontological apology. Thus the possibility remains open that what is so introduced may be of more basic ontological significance than the circumstances of its introduction.

There is no appeal to a subject of consciousness, a thinker of thoughts. We know that we use expressions of the form *I see x* and that we do not identify the seeing with *x*, nor even with a physical transaction between *x* and particular organs of sense. There seems to be more of a need than a convenience for the use of *I*. In our present position, theoretical convenience together with the whole matter of elegance does not move us. Some who think about intentionality assume that it must be a relationship between one kind of thing and another, for example, mental states and physical objects. All we require is a looking, not a looker, plus the non-identification of the looking with any object or any relation of objects. This we take to be the primary meaning of intentionality as disclosed within the empirical world.

We are interested in the conception of ego. We take *consciousness of* as a basic constituent. Next, consider ego as involving a series of conscious states. *Consciousness of* is not a particular quality, not an object; it simply marks the intended difference between seeing a chair and a chair. A collection of objects perceived at a certain time can mark a particular conscious state. Two states, or any number of states, can be so marked by contrasting sets. Since the sets are limited by the things that can be mentioned, the states as conceived by means of them have equally determinate boundaries. Does it make sense to say that *consciousness of* has such boundaries? Shall we allow the appropriation of  $B, (\overline{B})$ , to negate the original, although undefined sense of *relating to* as expressed by  $(\longrightarrow) B$ ? We think not, even though there is a strong temptation to claim that it does.

The *ofness* of consciousness, as opposed to what can signify its state, does not appear to have any individuating determination. There is simply consciousness of this, that and the other. There is, however, what one might call a temporal or existential limitation. One's consciousness at any time is limited in its object. But this is not to say that consciousness of is bounded, an object or a relationship of objects. To attempt to describe it is to resort to negative terms, although this move does not seem inappropriate. As a technique, but not as a conception, this has its parallel in Plato's recognition of the form Equality in the failure to find equality among perceptual objects. In our case it is the failure to find any awareness among the objects. In both cases there is no

postulated restriction of thought to objects of perception. The door has been opened to something other than relationships as expressed in judgments. The question is whether *consciousness of* is a plausible interpretation of the proposed quasi-relation. To argue against the interpretation because it denies a restriction to relationships is simply to refuse to consider the question. To argue that we may be ignorant of an individuating characteristic of *consciousness of*, even if this makes sense of *ofness*, would not contribute to the discussion. The appropriate reply to a Cartesian demon would be, "You cannot make me into an object so long as I am conscious of it."

If we refrain from conceiving consciousness as interrupted, we should do likewise with respect to its non-interruption if non-interruption is thought of in terms of an unchanging object within a context of change. Such objects are not long perceived. When we consider the inappropriateness of conceiving *consciousness of* as interrupted without allowing it to be absorbed into its particular discrete objects, and likewise the inappropriateness of considering it as a continuous object, then we are free to take it either as discontinuous in its empirical sense or as continuous in some non-empirical sense. In refusing to objectify *consciousness of* we treat it non-empirically although we do not dissociate it from experience. Both meditation and great moral efforts that move in the direction of sharing ideals and principles incline us to the notion of unlimited consciousness, which is strengthened by constant practice. Natural inclination, however, moves us in the direction of particular objectives. If we take the interpretation of limited consciousness freely, that is, while recognizing the possibility of the other interpretation, our consciousness does not retain its natural innocence. Whatever freedom we have in this situation is aided by our refusal to confine ourselves within the framework of relationships. So long as hospitality towards *relating to* persists, we do not have to classify immediately all spiritual and moral concerns as lacking any cognitive direction towards what is either sound or real. We are rather in a position that allows conception of the real to develop. This emphasizes the importance of intellect to de-mythification.

The perceptual consciousness of an object always suggests an

individual perspective; the sharing of knowledge does not. The perfect similarity of two separately localized cognitive processes would not pass for common knowledge, nor does enclosure within the same building constitute communion. One is reminded of the perplexities with respect to the Platonic Forms. Yet if it is possible to *construct* states in terms of the sets of objects for which consciousness is claimed, it ought equally to be possible to construct a whole personality or ego in such a way that one ego would be conceptually distinct from another. The tolerance of uninterrupted consciousness cannot contemplate the expansion of one ego into another, that is, if egos are conceived in terms of distinct sets. The immortality of separate egos is more closely associated with the identification of consciousness with objects than with its irreducibility. Having noted what we claimed to be the plausibility of uninterruptedness, we pass from the application of *consciousness of* primarily to perceptual objects to an unlimited object, unlimited because the bounds of the ego are disregarded together with its roots in the perspectivity of experience. The possible sharing of unqualified knowledge can suggest the transcendence of the ego, as can moral ideals such as universal love or compassion.

Shankara gives poetic expression to these ideals in the following passage from *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom*:

Though without riches, yet ever content; though without  
a helper, yet of mighty power; though bereft, yet ever  
rejoicing; though afflicted, full of joy.

Acting, though not himself the actor; reaping the reward,  
though not seeking enjoyment; possessing a body, though  
beyond the body; though hemmed in, yet going everywhere.

The facts are found in actual practice, in a life such as Gandhi's. One must get used to thinking of one's conduct as a more or less clear interpretation of an ideal rather than the concept of the conduct as the interpretation. One can lose more or less of the sense of possessiveness or sense of ego. This is the interpretation. Where there is no grasping the grasper disappears. For Shankara this ideal can be fully realized. In this case personal consciousness

would have no more substantiality than a passing conscious state.

We shall touch briefly on the interpretation of the *B* symbol. This we think of first as the relationless and then look for an interpretation of the relationless. We find two such interpretations. The first we might call the *thing-in-itself*, the second *consciousness*.

The *thing-in-itself*, ultimate reality, may be taken as the object of the ideal of unqualified knowing. Kant recognized such an ideal but found no basis for its realization in the understanding, that is, no way to put it within the framework of judgment. Kant has no place for intellectual intuition. All intuition, pure or sensuous, concerns space and time. The *I think* does not designate an intuition, whereas *consciousness of* purports to have this function; *consciousness of consciousness as an object* is not taken as a requirement. The thing-in-itself is what could be known if knowing were able to dispense with all instruments. If it is known completely, then it is known in its completeness. A relation to an external knower could not be sustained. Have we here something that might be called the opposite of consciousness?

What cannot be conceived in relation to anything, even in relation to its conception — the conceiving being a *relating to* — may be called relationless. Intrinsically it is not an object. The relationless does not exclude, any more than it includes, *relating to*. As said in the *Upanishads*, Brahman has neither inside nor outside. But consciousness of, considered as appropriating particular objects, may appear as a series of discrete states. However, when we consider *consciousness of* as neither interrupted nor reducible to its objects we have also something relationless. It takes a thing to have relations. Thus we cannot conceive of consciousness as affecting or being affected. How, then, can we conceive of it as having objects capable of constituting knowledge? In relating consciousness to Brahman there is no way of distinguishing it from Brahman. In this case consciousness has no object: Atman and Brahman are one. This means that when holding both symbols before the mind, we feel constrained to give them identity of reference, although we consider the references as relating. To consider aspects of Brahman and Atman is to consider them as objects, and their aspects may not coincide.

This curious situation, so full of paradoxical suggestions,

plunges us directly into what in Christian theology might be called the problem of creation. Why the phenomenal world? Why empirical consciousness? The only explanation capable of adjusting the claims of Advaita seems to be that as a first departure from identity, consciousness *looks to* Brahman, and that the *looking to* is reflected upon. At the apex is complete absorption, then potential duality, then awareness of duality, then further stages in which there is both a temporal and spatial division of conscious states. There is no empirical causal explanation of the sequence of levels called by Advaitists *coverings* or *sheaths*. All that one can say for *relating* is that consciousness looks to Brahman, and similarly for all stages in the sequence. Intellect, one of the stages, reflects the others and orders them into relationships. This order, however, with Brahman-Atman at the apex, provides an *image* of Brahman, yet the image is no more a *production* of Brahman than the first relating. Even with the infinite complexity of the phenomenal world, Brahman is still one and secondless. That there can be an image which is in no sense a production is the ultimate mystery for those who demand an explanation in terms of phenomena. But that it is not a production in the phenomenal sense permits one to say that consciousness is not influenced. The phenomenal consciousness, equally mysterious, in its emergence, is limited, and being limited is subject to an endless variety of affections. In every emergence there is a symbolizing of that to which there is a relating, and a tendency to identify the symbol with its *object*. This process is basic to the understanding of superimposition.

All of these philosophical elaborations are nothing apart from the other lines of development, morality and meditative discipline. Meditation provides insight into the relationship of levels. Only if we can move up and down the scale of levels with uninterrupted consciousness — up and down the scale of dialectic — is it possible to understand what are considered to be the corresponding levels of nature. Only if one engages in the moral discipline of selfless action is it possible to test one's aim in the discipline of the transcendence of the ego. The transcendence of the ego is the ultimate de-mythification.



P.O. Drawer F  
Lone Pine, Ca. 93545  
March 31, 1977

Dear Dr. Rein'l:

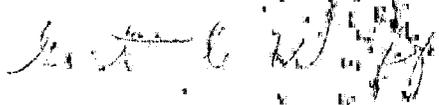
A belated thank you for your welcome letter and the Hermes article. Dr. Wolff detects a similarity in the writing to your own fine literary style and scholarship, and feels it must be from your pen. It is fitting that you should send this to him, knowing his admiration for Shankara.

This article is profound and needs to be studied deeply. I do not understand the arrows and have trouble conveying the material to Dr. Wolff, whose eyes no longer permit him to read.

Yes, we agree that Jim Mugridge has great potentialities, and he is one of our favorites.

Recently we met one on business here who, it turned out, is a friend of yours and a Theosophist, and perhaps you have heard from him by now. He is Ron Harkey of Santa Barbara, and he wants to bring you here and we hope he will. Perhaps you would take a meal or two with us. Just let us know whether you are vegetarian or other, so I will know how to cook, and let us know ahead if possible, so we will be home and can plan.

Yours in the Dharma,

  
Gertrude Wolff

ROBERT REIN'L  
4121 SOUTH LA CORTA DRIVE  
TEMPE, ARIZONA 85282

April 9, 1979

Dear Franklin,

Jim Mugridge said that you had been in town. I very sorry that you were so near and I did not see you.

Since I have retired I teach only one course. This semester it is Buddhism. It is all summed up in the Diamond Sutra, the one you referred to as the Sutra of Self-Reference. I have become most dissatisfied with my old truism, that there is a difference between the practical and talk about the practical. One can so easily stop right there, turning the distinction into an echo, each attempt to climb out of the cave of words succumbing to its own expression. Somehow the energy summoned for the climb must envelop its own display, as the soul of the world contains the world.

The Sutra spans the stream. As with the Gita it gathers into unity "wisdom itself, the object of wisdom, and that which is to be obtained by wisdom." These are compressed in the virtue of giving, Dana. One starts with the many things-- material objects, feelings, notions--and gives forr the sake of merit. But wisdom is incommensurable with finite merit. The universe is vast indeed, but incomparably more vast in its worth is making clear the Path; every place where this occurs becomes luminous and sacred. The great teacher is incomparable in his wisdom. So is the aim of the pupil. All things converge, not in the Vague but in what is void of separateness. Distinctions are not antagonistic to unity, but belief in absolute separateness, as in the ideal of isolable systems, strains even the clarity of distinctions. One begins with 'marks', -dharmassof separation--features of personality and exclusive possession, and moves on through incalculable degrees to the transmutation of dharmas, not their annihilation.

Choice is the whole journey inwards, the movement from plane to plane which forgets not the beginning and loses not compassion in inner freedom. It is the continuity of aspiration, which has its flowering in the Bodhisattva and the Buddha.

Paradox is the inevitable consequence of dividing the Path into segments. Then it seems that the marks of the Buddha are his credentials, that there are special dharmas according to which the Dharma is taught, that pupils are not also teachers. These illusions must be seen through. In this progressive development of Wisdom encompassing all creatures particular causes of suffering melt away, but the truth of suffering, its cause, and its cure remain. The unity of the Path is the actuality of Wisdom.

In Kshanti's essence!

With respect and affection,

Robert Reinl