

My dear YogaGnani;

Many thanks for your kindness in sending the two copies of your books. Altho not as extensive a reader along these lines as I might be, I think "Re-embodiment" is the best I have ever read on the subject of reincarnation. The logic is so very convincing that it is particularly appealing to me for so very few books along these subjects ever offer any such conclusive proof. This is one reason why I find it so hard ~~am~~ to grasp the meaning of such words as "The Absolute" and countless others. My consciousness positively fails to grasp these things. It is mostly the fault of myself, I realize, for at intervals I fall into the "whats the use" state and feel that I have made no progress and will never understand. At ~~am~~ other times I display an intense enthusiasm and interest only to return to the other state after what seems a lot of hopeless pondering that leads nowhere. Is there something wrong with me that I seem to fail to get going? Other students do not seem to have these difficulties, they appear to sail along in great style, at least they say they do. Some small voice within tells me I am loafing on the job that if I really made the effort I could attain and then I get very indignant and dig up a lot of plausible alibis for myself. I guess the truth is I am still on the fence and until I jump one way or the other I will accomplish nothing. When I do it will probably be Laura that furnishes the initial impulse, she battles all the time to overcome my inertia, if anyone is more deserving, conscientious or more sincere I have yet to find them.

We are on the verge of spring here for which I am glad, the only thing I envy you Californians for is your mountains, I think if one could go high enough and be alone enough they would probably arrive at an understanding through meditation ~~much~~ far greater than one who lives in these disturbing cities, Best regards to you all, sincerely

Walt J. Zelen

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San Fernando, Calif.,  
Mar. 26, 1930.

My dear Mr. Felver:

It is with real pleasure that I received your letter today. I think that you are much more along the way than you realize and that it will take only a relatively small effort for you to overcome the obscurity that seems to restrain you at times. There is no real reason why you should not feel a great deal more confidence in yourself for your letters show unmistakably that you have got the "stuff" alright. I will see if I can make this clear to you.

Your carefulness in procedure in determining whether the philosophy is true is a very admirable quality, for when you are once convinced you will be fully convinced and know the reason why. The result will be that you will not be so much swayed when the surgings of doubt come which inevitably they do to every student. In general it is the students who are most quickly convinced respecting the teachings who are most apt to be instable under the stresses and strains of testing which in one form or another comes to all. The intuitive types have certain advantages over those of your or my types in that they can penetrate into ideas quickly and decide quickly, but they are almost always easily swayed when the negative aspect is playing. They are something like the piston of an engine which shoots out positively and strongly and then flies back in the reverse direction. Your type is more like the balance or fly-wheel which resists first the energetic push of the piston, but once having acquired momentum stabilizes the instability of the latter. So do not make the mistake of evaluating your virtues in the light of the virtues of the opposite type, for you are strong where it is weak and visa versa.

I see two reasons why you are spasmodic in your studies of the philosophy. In the first place one must digest what he eats, and this principle applies to the study of the philosophy. My own experience with the Secret Doctrine is that continuous application is impossible. I work for awhile and then something like a gorged sense comes and an inertia stops me taking on more. There is then a quiescent period, following which I am enabled to dig again. This rule applies when I am working for my own knowledge. But when I am gathering material to give out to others then I can stand protracted application which otherwise would have produced a bad state of mental indigestion. If you will reconsider and take on the class work that was suggested to you, you will have the same experience. For in that case you make of yourself a stream instead of a pool of knowledge, and a stream can flow indefinitely while the pool is limited and can only be added to as the banks are builded higher. I think you will get the point. I know it from practical experience. This need for outgiving is the second reason why your studies are spasmodic.

Now you need have no fear as to your ability to teach. Every student should regard himself as a pupil-teacher and none of us are any more than that. One may be a little farther along than

another, but where-ever he may be he is still a student, or he will cease to be any good as a teacher. Another thing to bear in mind is that it is by no means necessary that the teacher should always know more than his students in all the phases of his teaching. A certain kind of ability that will qualify him as a point of focus is desirable for class-work, and then he can simply direct the whole group, including himself, to deeper understanding of whatever field is being studied. An experience I had when in the army illustrates this point. In the early days I was an acting corporal although I had no military knowledge save such as was being gathered at the time. Most of us were in the same fix. Well a time came when we were ordered to drill our squads in the manual of arms. Much of this I did not even know. Two or three in the squad had had previous experience and I asked them to take the drill but they all refused. They told me what the operation was and then I drilled them. This I could do much more effectively than they could because I had teaching ability, but in the actual performance of the drill I was one of the least competent in the group. This is a fact about teaching which is very generally over-looked. A good teacher will have the ability to lead a student on to greater knowledge or proficiency than he himself possesses. This is the peculiar kind of self-abnegation that the real teacher has to face.

You need not be afraid of questions you cannot answer. It is excellent technique to turn questions back on the class. Make them dig, and add what you have in such a way that they are stimulated and kept within the prescribed field, but so they will not hang upon you. The most important thing in this work is the building of self-dependence on the part of each individual, while nearly every-body wants to be a clinging vine. One of the reasons why I stand aloof from students in the personal sense when not actually on the teaching platform, is to guard against the general tendency of the student to hang upon my word rather than their own judgment. I have got to watch myself very carefully or some students will be following ocuses because I say so, rather than because they are convinced of the principle. Yet at certain stages when students are still too weak one may have to let them cling for limited periods. But they must always be thrust on their feet before the end.

If you take the teaching work you can always fall back on me for any help I can give. But I advise you to work on a problem before turning to me with a question. You may get the answer by yourself, and that is best, but in any case you will have prepared the ground in which the answer will sprout most readily.

My idea with the book on Yoga is that it may serve as a nucleus for study. There is much elaboration to be done, but the best way that can happen is through class-work. I am planning the preparation of certain questions for each chapter which are to be answered out of the chapter material not out of general knowledge or other sources at first. Most students need this training in precision. After that follows personal research with any chosen material.

Now we will say something about the problem of the "Absolute" and "Realization". I am very glad to hear you say that you find it very hard to grasp the meaning of the "Absolute". For as a matter of fact nobody can. Your saying this shows that you are not "kidding" yourself and are really careful in your thinking.

This term involves a considerable philosophical subtlety and there are very few who use it at all correctly. In the first place, in strict philosophical reasoning we should never use the form "The Absolute" but rather "Absoluteness". "The Absolute" implies an entity which through the use of the definite article stands as distinct as an individual in contrast to other entities. As so used it is contradictory as an entity which stands in contrast with other entities is necessarily relative to them and therefore is not absolute. Yet many students speak in this way simply substituting "The Absolute" for "God" and imagine that they have thus gotten away from the "personal God" idea, whereas the fact is this concept has merely reappeared under a new name. Absoluteness is that which is non-relative. It cannot therefore be an object of knowledge, for in that case it would stand in the "knowing" relationship to the knower. We cannot know Absoluteness but we can know that It is. How this is may be indicated in the following manner. Any relationship that we know in life is always by reference to something which stands in contrast to the thing studied. Thus we know the rate of motion of a train by reference to the earth which is taken as stationary. But, in turn, the earth moves in relation to the sun or the fixed stars, etc., etc. Now, consider the domain of relative knowledge as such. This includes all knowledge that can be in any way whatsoever expressed. How is the relative world known? Simply by reason of the fact that it as relative stands in contrast to Absoluteness. Thus Absoluteness is the real basis of all our knowing. But though all knowledge inheres in Absoluteness, the latter cannot itself be the object of knowledge. It is inconceivable and unspeakable. // But I am Absoluteness, and so is the object of knowledge and the knowledge itself. (These are the three Logoi). This is the significance of the Brahmin's assertion, "I am Parabrahman". In the metaphysical sense Absoluteness is the only Reality, in contrast with which the whole relative world is a Maya or Illusion. It is Illusion because no relative form can really represent the non-relative. Thus the greatest metaphysical wisdom is expressed in Silence.

Read in this connection the discussion of the First Fundamental which is given in the "Proem" of the "Secret Doctrine".

The difficulty regarding "Realization" is analagous to the foregoing. Metaphysical knowledge in the strict sense is not by cognition but by identification of the Knower with the Known. Such knowledge, therefore, is not known or "grasped", but realized by a process of unfoldment. It is not something which could ever by any possibility be learned. It simply is, and in reality I am one with that knowledge. Veils surrounding the "Eye" of inner perception simply hide this fact from me in the relative sense temporarily. The whole significance of Yoga-technique is that it affords a means of removing these veils. When they are removed, then I am Knower.

Enough of metaphysics.

I wish you could be out here and get into our mountains and desert. They do afford real values. Last week I was out alone for a short four-day trip on the desert. A wonderful spring is opening up there. If you have never seen desert wild-flowers then you have never seen what wild-flowers can be. Also it is

a domain which offers endless possibilities in prospecting. There is mineral there; it is simply a question of finding it. The old timers simply took the more obvious ore. In a few hours prospecting I found one contact vein between a lava-tuffa and another igneous or metamorphic formation with which I am not familiar. It seems to be a non-crystalline, compact quartz, made opaque in a brown color with a heavy admixture of iron, probably in the form of hematite. I have not yet had the opportunity of an assay but I suspect it will carry at least some gold and silver. But the problem is whether the quantity will be sufficient to justify drifting or sinking a shaft for further tests. The mass of the ledge is quite good. Of course, in this prospecting most of the time one does not find material sufficiently good to justify putting time upon it, but there is always the chance of a good find, and I know no better sport or country into which it takes you.

In about five hours from here one can be out in country where he can spend days without ~~max~~ seeing a soul and thus sort of have everything from horizon to horizon as a private possession, with a few million stars thrown in for extra measure. Also there is the satisfaction of knowing that somewhere around in that country there is a mint of gold waiting for the man who will find it.

I ran onto one old "desert-rat". a man who makes his living out of the desert and scorns to work for wages. He had made his rich finds alright, but fortunately for him some-one else got the money. You know it is fatal for a desert rat to have so much money that he loses his job. In that case he curls up and dies, probably going the whiskey route. There life is in the fun of the game. This man lived in the most "God-forsaken" place I have ever seen (my friends say I ought to be a good judge of that kind of place). I thought it was supposed to be a town. Well it had had such aspirations but got discouraged. It once was a thoroughly wet place having had ten saloons in a community that numbered at present about 15 or 20 places mostly ruins. It is a place where little coal is consumed since temperatures reach around 125 to 128 in the shade. It is an excellent place for a pessimist; he will have to develop enthusiasm in self-defence. But it is not far from gold that is still in the ground. They disregard stuff that runs less than \$100.00 per ton. One outfit there is sending out 60 to 80 ounces a week.

Well this is a little side-picture of California and the West in general.

Good luck to you.