

Letter to Erma Pounds

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For weeks and months now I have been in a state of deep brooding, thinking and penetrating into available sources with respect to the Tri-Kaya and the three fundamental zones or states known as "Sangsara," "Nirvana" and "Paranirvana" (or "Paranishpanna"). I have been going over the source material again and again looking for keys which may appear as isolated sentences, clauses, phrases or even words. Slowly I have been attaining some rather exciting successes. As an instance, I came across a line in the *Voice of the Silence* in the section on the Seven Portals which runs this way: "Study the voidness of the seeming full and the fullness of the seeming void." I have read this many times but it never stood out before. That is precisely the preliminary Realization that I had on the banks of Eldorado Creek in 1936 that led to the formulation, "Substantiality is inversely proportional to ponderability," or "Appearance is inversely proportional to Reality." Another instance occurs in the case of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, largely to be found in the footnotes. I find that nearly everything that can be predicated of the Clear Light is also true of the High Indifference, such as "unformed," "unmade," "unsullied," "unsullible," etc., and also the positive characteristic of "Equilibrium." One apparent difference is that the Clear Light emphasizes the quality of Light, while the High Indifference has the value of twilight, since it is the synthesis of Light and Darkness as well as of all other dualities including Sangsara and Nirvana. Then the question arises as to whether the High Indifference has any relation to Paranishpanna? I know that this is a terribly presumptuous thought, but it persisted in hanging around. But if we assume it to be valid, certain exciting consequences follow that are highly heretical both from the standpoint of the Brahman and Buddhist philosophies.

To introduce this I must first refer to certain other correlations:

1. The thought occurs to me that there is a correlation between the Tri-Kaya and the three zones or states known as "Sangsara," "Nirvana" and "Paranirvana," as follows: Sangsara corresponding to Nirmanakaya; Nirvana to Sambhogha-Kaya and Paranirvana (or Paranishpanna) to Dharma-Kaya. If then any entity could be a Tri-Kaya he would or could participate in all three zones or states *at the same time*. But this is contrary to statements in *The Mystery of Buddha*, in the so-called third volume of the *Secret Doctrine*, and in the *Voice of the Silence*. In one or the other places it is affirmed to be a matter of "either or," not "both and." To enter Nirvana is to be shut away from Sangsara, with some rare exceptions, such as the Blessed One himself. Hence, to continue in the activity of redemption he who has reached to the threshold of Nirvana but must renounce it and take the Nirmanakaya Robe, a Renunciation said to be for an interminable period of time and without compensation.

Think of a million years of organized consciousness without any Nirvanic break into pure Consciousness! Could any entity endure that without exhaustion? It is not merely a question of

willingness to perform, but also of *capacity* to do so. Now, if the suggested correspondence given above is correct it would appear that the Renunciation of Nirvana is equivalent to the Renunciation of the Sambhogha-Kaya Robe rather than the Dharma-Kaya Robe, the latter being associated with Paranirvana.

2. There are other correspondences that I have made, partly in the “Aphorisms on Consciousness Without an Object” and these are: Sangsara with suffering, Nirvana with Bliss, and the “High Indifference” or, as suggested, Paranirvana, with a State that is neither Bliss or Suffering but a fusion of the two in a state that is more attractive than either, something that is quite inconceivable to a human kind of consciousness.

From the foregoing, what I am suggesting is that it is in principle possible for an entity to abide in all three zones or states at the same time, and in this case there is no renunciation or sacrifice, save in the sense of “rendering sacred,” in the labor of redemption. And there would be no problem of exhaustion in maintaining organized consciousness for an indefinite period of time. One would blend in himself the mundane and the supramundane consciousness as the microcosm. And why should not this be possible since manifestly the macrocosm does so include and blend, and it is said that the microcosm duplicates the macrocosm? No doubt such a microcosmic blending would be rare as yet, but I am speaking of what is in principle possible.

I see in the foregoing the possibility of a new dispensation in which the purification by suffering is replaced by the purification through joy, in the transcendental sense.

3. There is still a third set of correspondences which I made several years ago, and this is: (a) the correlation of Sangsara with the object of consciousness; (b) Nirvana with the subject to consciousness; and (c) the High Indifference (Paranirvana) with the consciousness uniting subject and object. This tended to confirm an earlier Realization in the form “I am Nirvana.”

The High Indifference was a progressive state involving four steps: (a) a state of universal satisfaction; (b) a state of Indifference; (c) a state in which the subject and object vanished and only consciousness remained; and (d) a movement into darkness, meaning Shes-rig could not make a correlation, from which I awoke in the morning with the sense of a still vaster beyond. At the level of (c), the subject was the Self; the universal object was solely Divinity with these two aspects being one and the same as in the realization “Atman is Brahman.” The effect of these two vanishing into pure Consciousness was to place me in agreement with the Buddhist doctrine of Anatman and Nasticata or Non-theism. I was transformed from an Advaita Vedantin to a Buddhist. I saw a relative validity in the Buddhist position. A radical implication of all this is, “Pure Consciousness is, before any entity became.” Entities are functions of Consciousness, rather than the other way around as we ordinarily suppose, to use a mathematical type of formulation. This I understand to be the real meaning of the Alaya Vijnana of the Buddhists.

There is verification [of the above] to be found in the writings of H.P.B.: In Section 41, “The Doctrine of Avatars” under “The Mystery of Buddha,” the question of the sense in which Lord Buddha was an Avatar is discussed. The sense in which this is asserted by the Brahmins, i.e., as a descent of the entity Vishnu, is denied; but, as Maha Vishnu or Adi-Buddha, or Primeval Wisdom or Nirvana, in short, the “Lord Buddha was an incarnation of Maha Vishnu” and hence an Avatar (elsewhere it is pointed out that He was also a Jivanmukta). But “Primeval Wisdom” is a quality of Consciousness and Nirvana a state of consciousness and this made an Avataral descent. In other words, the Avatar can be a quality or state of consciousness, rather than an entity. And this leads to questions regarding the High Indifference.

Was the High Indifference an Avataral Descent? I was not striving to realize the State, since I did not know that it existed. In the earlier Realization, I had been striving toward it since it had been so clearly formulated by Shankara, but I thought that was the end. Then thirty-three days later the High Indifference walked in on me or descended upon me out of the blue, as it were. I have not been able to exclude the possibility that it was Avataral. Then another question arises: Could it have been an Initiation of one aspiring to the Path of the Jivanmukta? In this case the presence of the Guru Initiator was not evident. This possibility also I cannot exclude, especially as I lean to the way of self-induced effort and self-devised means. Finally, could there be something of both?

Now I do not know how one leaves the state of the High Indifference. There was no compulsion in it . . . I felt perfectly free to leave it if I so chose, but this was the last thing I wanted to do. The Will seems to be all powerful. What is willed will eventuate. But there was no desire or reason to will. I knew this was the eternal home, though forgotten, not only of myself but of all creatures, down to the last electron. And there was no reality in the supposed suffering of creatures. Hence the motivation of Compassion had no force since there was no need anywhere. It was quite possible to leave the State but there was no basis for motivation to do so. And ever since I do not feel that I have ever really left it and have always abode in it though not knowing it, while now I do. It seems now to lie in the background or relative consciousness, whereas it had been for a few hours in the foreground. For the past thirty-three years it has seemed as though I dwelt in a zone, which in the beginning was knife-edged but has become broader and easier since, lying between two worlds of consciousness connected by the relationship of inversion. In one, the “self” or “I” seemed like a point contained by an environment while in the other the Self was a sphere embracing the whole universe. In the transition between those two there was a momentary blackout and, try as much as I could, I could not render that momentary blackout conscious. But is this place of the momentary blackout the place where indeed I dwell? Is it perchance the zone of the High Indifference (Paranirvana?), the three zones ranging themselves in a form of a triangle, Sangsara and Nirvana forming the base and Paranirvana the apex? This is quite different from the image I had before 1936 in which three zones lay in a vertical line. Mayhap he who dwells in the state of Nirvana, who is not also a Paranirvani, is locked in, in a way analogous to the familiar locked-in condition of the dwellers in Sangsara. Then only the Paranirvani could move at will between the two states or be

conscious at the same time in both. Is this heresy? I know that I am on dangerous ground, but so my thought has grown. For this certainly contradicts statements in the *Voice of the Silence* and in the *Mystery of the Buddha*.

A few months ago it dawned upon me that the year beginning either on the 7th of August, 1968, or September 9, 1968 was the thirty-third since the same dates in 1936. After the event of [August 7,] 1936, I was warned to watch for a cycle involving the number thirty-three. After thirty-three days the High Indifference walked in. But may the cycle of thirty-three years have significance? On the hypothesis (the better way to write of it, I think) that a former pseudopodal projection of the entity of which this person is now a pseudopodal projection was the junior partner in a tulku combination of which the Blessed One was the Senior Partner, certain consequences follow. That junior partner, it is said, committed suicide by act of will at the time of the dissolution of the combination, thereby invoking the karma of violent death against his will at the same age, which was thirty-three years. This hypothesis asserts that this did occur in a subsequent pseudopodal projection when there was another tulku combination with the same Senior Partner, also at the age of thirty-three years. There seems to be a law that two events of the same kind call for a third to complete the series. The thought comes that the thirty-three years since the August and September dates possibly have important significance and probably having something to do with the transition. If not actual death then, perchance, an initiatory equivalent. In any case important thoughts are coming into my mind in this thirty-third year.

The statement with respect to the Triple Crown, which I showed to you when last in Phoenix, has a premier causal place in the line of thought that is here developed.

Early in the first volume of the *Secret Doctrine* there is a statement which runs as follows: "He who enters Paranishpanna without Paramarthasatya is in a state of extinction for seven centuries." This I read as being in a state of absolute unconsciousness. Paramarthasatya is defined as the self-analyzing consciousness and so has a certain similarity to Introception, which was defined spontaneously as "the power whereby the Light of Consciousness turns upon itself towards its source." Questioning the meaning of this it dawned upon me that the "Light of Consciousness" was the cognitive aspect of consciousness, in contrast to which the Pure Consciousness is the substance of which all things are composed and could, therefore, be called Substantive Consciousness. Correlate this, then, with something I found recently in the footnotes on pp. 96 and 97 of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. It says there: "Rig-pa, meaning 'consciousness', is distinct from the knowing faculty by which it cognizes or knows itself to be." The cognizing faculty is called Shes-rig. Ordinarily Shes-rig is the power that cognizes phenomena, but when turned upon itself I can see that it becomes what was meant by the definition of "Introception." I have long been aware of this Consciousness of Consciousness. In footnote 3, p. 96 above, we find the following: "From the union of the two states of mind of 'consciousness', implied by the two terms Rig-pa and Shes-rig and symbolized by the All-Good Father and the All-Good Mother is born the state of the

Dharma-Kaya, the state of Perfect Enlightenment, Buddhahood.” This I found simply dumbfounding! From all the foregoing, it would appear that the Absolute Unconsciousness (which it is not in reality) becomes realized as Absolute Consciousness when the Light of Consciousness turns upon itself toward its source, or when Shes-rig is united to Rig-pa.

For the first time in this thirty-third year I have found a number of confirmations. But why, it may be asked, is confirmation necessary, for the assurance of Realization is unequivocal with respect to the ground covered by it? The answer seems to be that the assurance is valid so long as there is no interpretation or transcription even to one’s own mental consciousness. But when there is transcription, so that one may understand or communicate, error can enter. The *Secret Doctrine* states that confirmation is fundamental to Occult Science. These confirmations give me an increased assurance. But further criticism is not only welcome but is solicited from whatever source is competent to do so. As I see it, all this is not only important to me but has a general importance since, if the above thought is valid, then a line has been established in the Western psyche or Collective Unconscious that leads to Enlightenment. You are at liberty to make use of this statement if you find it worthy of use, or let others see it who might profit or be capable of understanding criticism.

The very best attend you at all times.