

MAN VERSUS GOD

by

D. E. Harding

My Me is God, nor do I recognise any other Me
except my God Himself.

St. Catherine of Genoa

'I AM' is natural. 'I am a man' is not natural.

Ramana Maharshi

One becomes a man by imitating others.

Kierkegaard

No-one who believes he is a man has even begun
to suspect spiritual truth.

Joel Goldsmith

Some statements demand looking into -- specially when they come from reputable sources, concern you personally and intimately, seem quite outrageous, and can be checked forthwith. Take for instance the repeated declaration, by people at least as reputable as anyone you know, that primarily you aren't a man, but GOD Himself. If this staggering assertion is as false as it seems, it's high time it was finally laid to rest; if true, how crazy not to take notice!

This book takes notice, and clearly puts the case for and against your Godhood. It takes the dramatic form of a Court Trial, in which 40 Witnesses are called, to help you pass a just Verdict on YOURSELF.

NOTES ON TYPESCRIPT

(1) It is suggested that the actual book size should be around 13" x 8" (F'cap).

(2) The line drawings are intended for reduction to $\frac{2}{3}$ rds or $\frac{1}{2}$ their present size. Any of them can be redrawn if necessary (they are by the Author), and their number could be reduced. There will be no half-tone blocks.

(3) The 'Temple' (see Witness 3) could probably be made of the same paper as the rest of the book; and the vents, though desirable, are not absolutely necessary.

D. E. HARDING

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ENGLAND

C O N T E N T S

PROSECUTION

DEFENCE

I BASIC EVIDENCE

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) Humanist Philosopher | the Great Tradition |
| 2) Student | the Mirror |
| 3) Police Officer | Hidden in the Temple |
| 4) Man In the Street | Sight |
| 5) Physiotherapist | Touch |
| 6) Brain Surgeon | Central Evidence Beyond the Senses |
| 7) Common-Sense Philosopher | Where Thoughts Belong |
| 8) Close Relation | Where Feelings Belong |
| 9) Friend of the Family | What I Identify With |

II LOCAL EVIDENCE

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 10) Publican | Number |
| 11) Store Manager | Advertising |
| 12) Taxi Driver | Economics |
| 13) Travel Agent | Who Travels Nowhere |

III EVIDENCE OF RELIGION

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 14) Missionary | Results of Self-Realisation |
| 15) Priest | Miracles |
| 16) Lay Preacher | Omniscience |
| 17) Bible Student | the Two Blasphemies |
| 18) Atheist | the Overcoming of Evil |
| 19) Agnostic | Eccentricity |
| 20) Party Member | <u>That</u> Versus <u>What</u> |
| 21) Samanera (Novice Buddhist Monk) | Enlightenment |

IV EVIDENCE OF ART

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|---------------|--------------|
| 22) Artist | Art |
| 23) Musician | Music |
| 24) Architect | Architecture |

V PSYCHOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

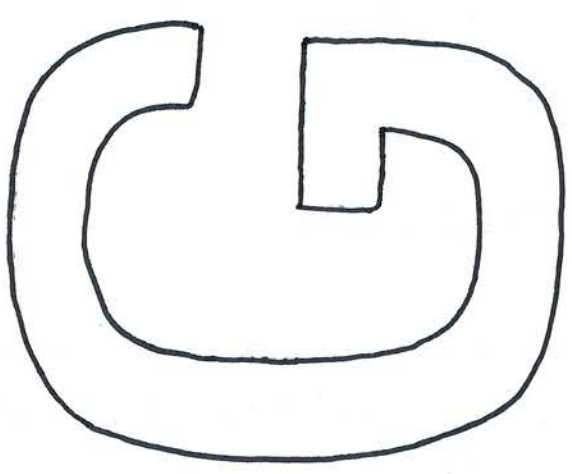
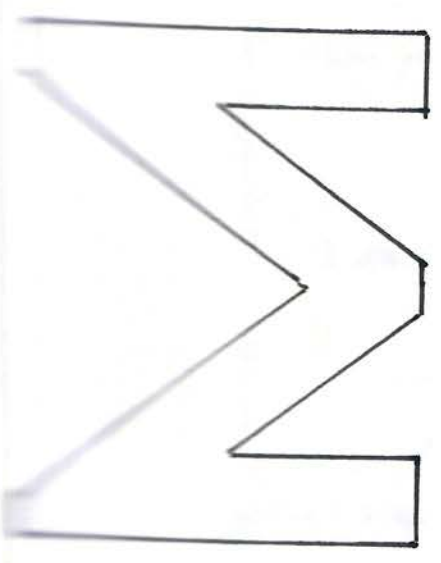
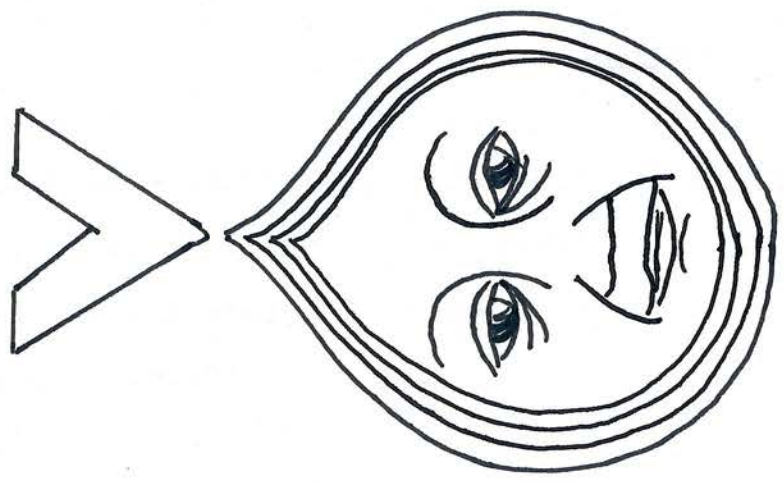
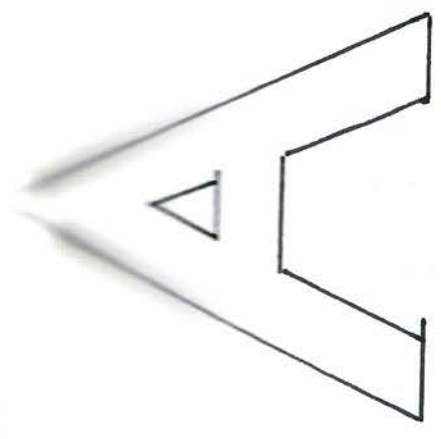
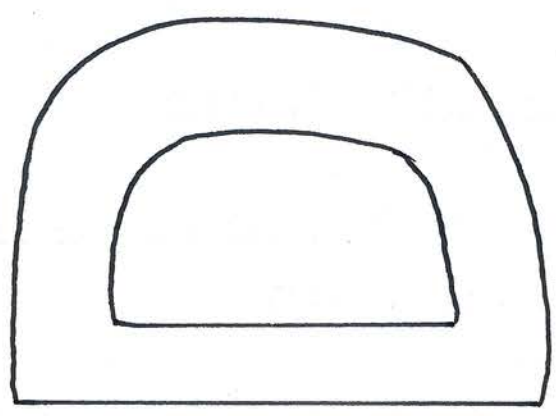
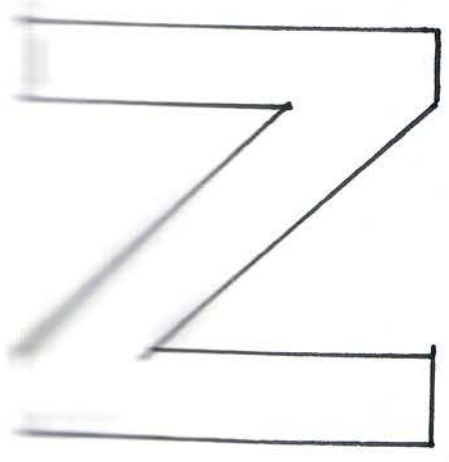
25) Psychiatrist	My Case-History
26) Psychotherapist	the Mandala
27) Encounter Group Leader	Sensory Awareness
28) Marriage Guidance Counsellor	Sex
29) Head Teacher	Education
30) Social Psychologist	Social Conditioning
31) Semanticist	Language

VI SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

32) Physiologist	Sense Faculties
33) Biologist	Biological Individuality
34) Astronomer	A Heavenly Body Gives Evidence
35) Physicist	the Objective Outsider
36) Lecturer on the Philosophy of Science	the Three Stages of Self-Discovery
37) Anaesthetist	the Continuity of Consciousness
38) Paleontologist	Consciousness As Timeless
39) Behaviourist	Consciousness

VII DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

40) Registrar	Birth and Death
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

I'm not a boy!

Carlos, aged 2 years

One becomes a man by imitating others.

Kierkegaard

Had you yesterday called me a horse, I should have considered myself a horse.

Lao-tzu

The Brahmin Drona, seeing the Buddha sitting at the foot of a tree, asked him, 'Are you a deva?'

The Exalted One answered, 'I am not.'

'Are you a gandkarva?'

'I am not.'

'Are you a yaksha?'

'I am not.'

'Are you a man?'

'I am not a man.'

Pali Canon

Jesus said, 'What I now seem to be, that am I not...
And so speak I, separating off the manhood.

Acts of John

They saw the body and supposed he was a man.

Rumi

In appearance a man, in reality God.

Chuang-tzu

No-one who believes he is a man has even begun to suspect spiritual truth.

Joel Goldsmith

My ME is God.

St. Catherine of Genoa

'I AM' is natural; 'I am a man' is not.

Ramana Maharshi

Disciple: The Bible teaches that man is born in sin.

Ramana Maharshi: The man is sin!

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

St. Paul

Some statements just have to be looked into -- especially when they concern me personally, seem quite outrageous, come from reputable sources, are put clearly in writing or print, and can be checked forthwith. Such would be a letter from my bank saying that an Aunt had just paid £10,000 into my account, or a summons produced by the police accusing me of a serious offence.

Such also is the actual, much repeated, emphatic declaration, by persons at least as reputable as my Bank Manager and the local Magistrate, that I'm not a man, but God. If this staggering assertion is as false as it seems, it's high time it was finally exposed and laid to rest. If true, it's high time I took notice.

This book is my taking notice. Who am I, really?

To suppose that the answer is obvious, and that of course I'm a man and that there's no mystery or difficulty or disagreement about it, would be quite wrong. It takes more than hearsay and common sense (so-called) to decide this momentous question.

Shall I then try to puzzle out the answer all on my own, without consulting the people who reasonably claim to know a lot about me -- scientific and philosophical and religious experts, as well as less specialised observers? No: I need all the help I can get, and in this book I enlist that help. On the other hand, to let these outsiders determine my identity for me, telling me conclusively who

I am, would be irresponsible. In fact, impossible: for they tell (it appears) conflicting stories about me, and cannot agree even on a common language. I alone am in a position to weigh their evidence, and if possible to reconcile their huge differences, for I am what they differ about. I'm the sole possessor of the necessary inside information. No-one else is me, is here.

Wonder of wonders, I've occurred! I AM. And moreover aware that I am. And, for good measure, able to investigate what I am. A threefold gift of dazzling splendour, and highly improbable. To miss such an opportunity, to decline such a challenge, to pretend I'm too busy or too feeble-minded or too scared to exercise this prerogative, to risk death before I've bothered to ask myself what it is to live -- this would be negligent indeed. I would add: reckless, shameful, surely a life wasted. It really is a matter of life and death for me to seek my true identity, till it is as plain as daylight -- daylight to me, if to no-one else.

In this book my self-inquiry takes the dramatic form of a Court case, a Trial that's going on in me all the while, whether I notice it or not. Throughout this interior Hearing, I'm the accused -- charged with the capital crime of self-salfication, of being a man who claims he is God -- conducting my own Defence. But also I'm Judge and Jury, the Counsel for the Prosecution, and all 40 Witnesses against me -- in short, the entire Court. And I cannot leave the Court or escape its

Decision: just by living the life I live, I pass Verdict on myself, one way or another. How vital it is, then, that at least it shall be an informed and careful Verdict, arrived at in a truly judicial spirit. I intend to do myself justice.

I cannot speak for others. In this matter of basic identity, I'm on my own, and there's no 1st Person plural. I am minding my own business here, for I AM is my business. I'm on trial for my life, and what's beyond and beneath life itself. The issue is urgent and crucial, and this Summary of Proceedings has to be recorded anyhow, for my own sake if for no-one else's.

Let me put the whole matter another way.

Human capacity for wishful thinking, for every sort of self-deception, is seemingly unlimited. Men and women will believe just about anything that makes them feel better. Can I claim exemption from this rule? Don't my own fundamental convictions, too, long pre-date the elaborate reasons I put up for them? What, then, can I do?

I can go over these reasons, these justifications for what I believe on instinct, see what they amount to, admit the strength of the case against them, and at least avoid any obvious self-delusion. In the course of this setting forth, I may even strike some hidden rock of certainty that lies deeper than opinion and reason and instinct itself,

a truth so profound and so simple that it cannot be denied.
Hence, again, this book.

A final word to the Reader. The basic proposition of this book is that, in the last resort, you and I are one and the same. Accordingly you will find the book makes no sense till we come together and look out of the same Spot. In practical terms, if you are to understand what I say, you will need to share with me the tests and experiments on which the whole enterprise depends. Just reading about what I'm experiencing is no good: it must be your experience too. The tests are very easy, but people (even genuinely interested inquirers) will go to great lengths to avoid actually carrying them out. Well, I have been to great lengths, in this particular work, to make that avoidance quite difficult!

This doesn't mean that you -- who are both Reader and Member of the Jury -- are likely to find every one of the tests relevant to your Verdict. If some prove difficult to do, or else inconclusive when done, don't get held up. Clearer evidence will surely follow as the Trial goes on. And in any case all these tests and experiments and exercises are designed to demonstrate one and the same absolutely simple point -- approaching it from widely different angles -- and it doesn't matter which one actually gets home to you. Any road that leads you to your true Identity is a good road.

C H A R G E

I am accused of the capital crime of SELF-
DENIFICATION -- of being a man who falsely denies his
humanity and claims to be God.

This offence has three aspects: --

It is said to combine the ultimate absurdity
(denying what mankind says I am), the ultimate treason
(defection from my own species, from mankind), and the
ultimate pride (putting myself above mankind, above
all species).

P L E A

I plead NOT GUILTY to this Charge.

This Plea requires a word of explanation: --

It's not that I deny the offence, but that I find
~~anybody~~ here to commit it. My Case is that only a man
~~could~~ be convicted on this charge, and

I AM NOT A MAN.

O U T L I N E O F C A S E
F O R P R O S E C U T I O N

Since I, the Accused, have in effect pleaded Guilty to the crime, adding only that there is no criminal (or at any rate no human criminal), the business of the Prosecution is to prove my humanness. Many Witnesses will testify that I am indeed a mortal man. My manhood established, added to the fact that I openly claim Godhood, my guilt follows automatically.

The Prosecution is required to furnish, well in advance of the Trial, a list of the Witnesses it will call, together with transcripts of their evidence, to enable me to prepare my Defence. The following is my summary of the material supplied.

THE WITNESSES FOR THE
PROSECUTION

PART ONE -- THE BASIC EVIDENCE AGAINST ME

1 The Humanist Philosopher

claims that all say and believe I'm a man, and that my true dignity is to accept their view and admit I'm 'only human after all'.

2 The Student

will produce an instrument for showing my humanness.

3 The Police Officer

gives evidence of my arrest -- emphatically the arrest of a man -- and describes how he took possession of a model pagoda containing an inscription which (I assured him) 'proves' I'm not a man.

4 The Man in the Street

sees me to be a man like himself, and is certain that -- unless I'm mad -- I do so too.

5 The Physiotherapist

says that her sense of touch and mine equally confirm that I am an ordinary human being -- headed, embodied, Earthbound.

6 The Brain Surgeon,

pointing out that the brain (with its associated sense-organs) is an imperfect instrument, shows how I confuse my sense-limitations with reality. My inability to see my head and other parts of my body doesn't dispose of them.

7 The Common-sense Philosopher

regards me as primarily a mind, and this mind as very human.

8 The Close Relation

deals with my feelings, and finds me human-hearted.

9 The Friend of the Family

says it's evident, from my normal behaviour and attitudes, that I take myself to be a man, no matter what I say.

PART TWO -- LOCAL EVIDENCE10 The Publican

observes that I mix on equal terms with his customers. Among men I count myself in (as number one) but among animals and things I count myself out.

11 The Store Manager

testifies that I'm a normal customer making normal purchases and influenced by normal advertising.

12 The Taxi Driver

points out that I enjoy no material advantage or perquisite denied to him and other mere humans.

13 The Travel Agent

testifies that I'm a travelling man.

PART THREE -- THE EVIDENCE OF RELIGION14 The Missionary

finds in me no saintliness, no unusual virtues, nothing to suggest I have transcended my human limitations.

15 The Priest

observes that, unlike his Master, I perform no miracles. My works are those of a man.

16 The Lay Preacher

says that if I were God I would know much more than I do.

17 The Bible Student

identifies me as the Enemy prophesied by St. Paul, the man who sets himself up in God's temple as God.

18 The Atheist

considers me too human, and too humane, to be responsible for this inhuman Creation.

19 The Agnostic

sees me as a religious crank, and religious cranks as very human.

20 The Party Member

regards my denial of humanness as a survival from an age of superstition -- absurd, reactionary, traitorous.

21 The Samanera (Novice Buddhist Monk)

claims that only an Enlightened Buddha, which obviously I'm not, could be said to have transcended the human.

PART FOUR -- THE EVIDENCE OF THE ARTS

22 The Artist

asks how it is that my work is in the style of this particular man and no other.

23 The Musician

establishes that my musical limitations exceed his, and he is very human.

24 The Architect

observes that I don't take my strange ideas so seriously that I let them influence my practice of architecture.

PART FIVE -- PSYCHOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

25 The Psychiatrist

explains my case in pathological terms and diagnoses paranoia -- an all-too-human condition.

26 The Psychotherapist

considers my switch of identity from man to God as curative and psychologically valid for me, but not objectively true.

- 27 The Encounter Group Leader
attributes my identity problem to guilt and repression,
to unwillingness to accept aspects of my body and its
feelings.
- 28 The Marriage Guidance Counsellor
shows how, in relating normally to the opposite sex,
I demonstrate my humanness.
- 29 The Head Teacher
observes that whereas the normal child grows out of
his self-centredness, I seem to have got stuck in mine.
- 30 The Social Psychologist
says I'm a member of society, and this makes me human,
whether I like it or not.
- 31 The Semanticist
says the more I use human language to deny my humanness
the more I display it.

PART SIX -- SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

- 32 The Physiologist
asks how I can see things if I'm not a man, equipped
with head and eyes and brain.

33 The Biologist

describes me as an individual organism which he classifies as a specimen of Homo sapiens, a species related to the apes.

34 The Astronomer

sees me as a tiny and brief episode in the vast process of solar and terrestrial evolution.

35 The Physicist

describes me as a system of waves or particles whose behaviour attains levels of elaboration called chemical, vital, human.

36 The Lecturer on the Philosophy of Science

says I confuse what I am (a man) with what I contain (little things), and what I'm contained in (big things).

37 The Anaesthetist

shows how the consciousness on which I rely is even more ephemeral than the body on which it relies.

38 The Palaeontologist

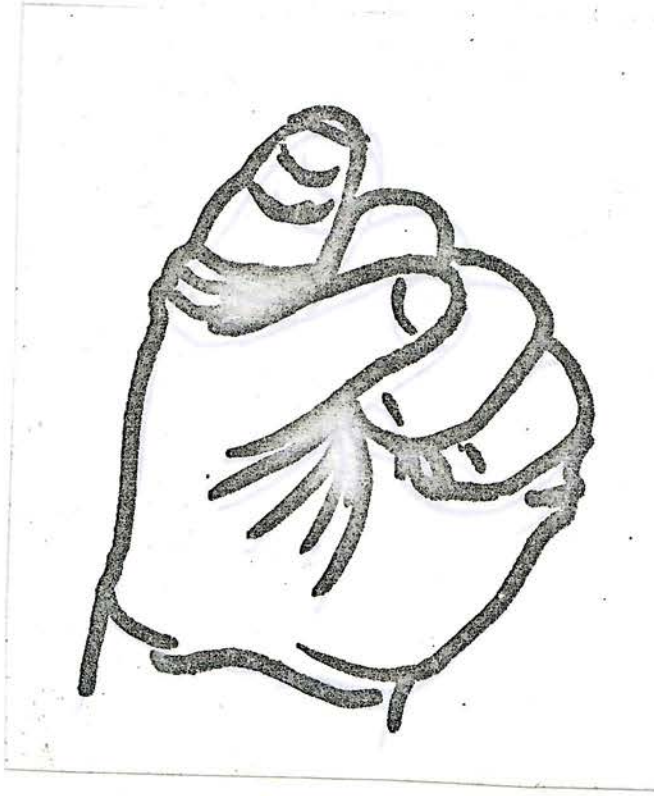
describes (my) consciousness as a recent and insignificant by-product of evolving matter.

39 The Behaviourist

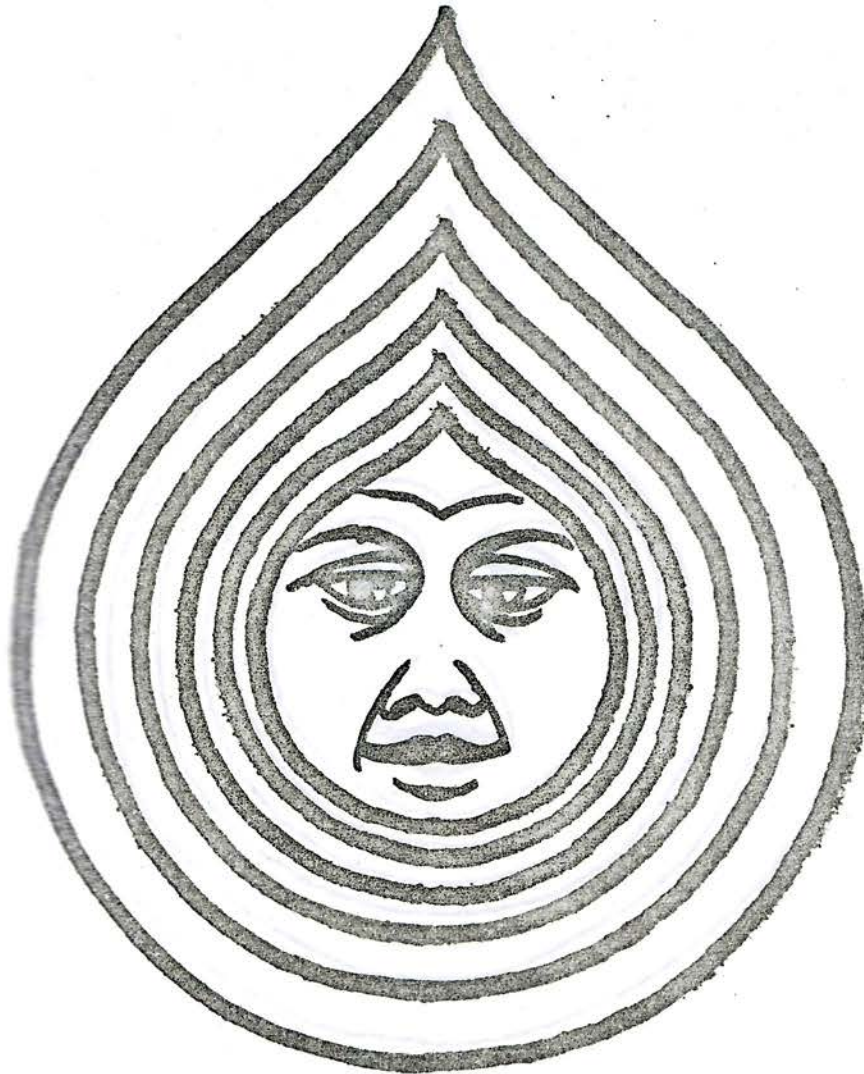
says that consciousness is a word without meaning, anyhow.

PART SEVEN -- DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE40 The Registrar

will produce Certificates of my Birth, Marriage, and Death -- only the last has a few details still to be filled in.



THE TRIAL



DEFENCE WARNING

This will be a MISTRIAL if you don't
actually carry out the basic tests
described by the Defence.

P A R T O N E

B A S I C E V I D E N C E

The Prosecuting Counsel opens by stating the Charge against me and listing the seven stages of the Case he will present.

I inform the Court that I am appearing on my own behalf, but propose to call no Witnesses. I add that I intend, however, to submit numerous exhibits in the form of sketches and diagrams, as visual aids at every stage of the Trial. My Case will rest upon non-verbal demonstrations and tests rather than upon mere argument. It is therefore essential that the Jury actually carry out these tests.

The Prosecution proceeds to call its first batch of nine Witnesses, who are to establish the foundations of my innocence. More specialised and detailed kinds of evidence will follow.

As throughout this book, I summarise the proceedings and make no attempt to furnish a verbatim report.

P R O S E C U T I O N W I T N E S S N o . 1

THE HUMANIST PHILOSOPHER says that I've got above myself, and he challenges me to produce anyone who seriously regards me as divine. He claims that all say I'm a man, and that my true dignity is to accept their view and admit I'm only human, after all.

The Witness recommends that I take Alexander Pope's advice and admit my limitations:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.

DEFENCE THE EVIDENCE OF THE GREAT TRADITION

Under cross-examination, the Witness goes back on his testimony and admits that not everyone says I'm a man. He agrees that the Perennial Philosophy, which claims to lie at the heart of the great spiritual traditions, insists that I'm really the Self (alias Atman-Brahman, the Buddha-Nature, the Void, the Godhead, the Tao, Spirit, Being, Consciousness, etc.) and that the whole reason for living is to realise that I am This and no man, no thing whatever. In that case my true dignity consists in my denial that I'm 'only human, after all'.

The Witness further admits that experts in this Philosophy have laid down guidelines, indicating:

- (1) where to find my true, non-human Self ('Closer to Me than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet');
- (2) when to look for It ('Now is the day of salvation');
- (3) how to look for It ('like a little child');
- (4) what to look for (its metaphors include Light, Air or Breath, Clear Water, Great Space, my Original -- Featureless -- Face).

Pressed still further, the Witness concedes that -- though he disagrees profoundly with its teachings -- this Philosophy is the only one that has survived intact down the ages and is now more alive than ever. If there's a consensus at all, it is this. No other body of doctrine has turned out

to be so independent of historical and geographical and cultural differences, has so stood the test of time and experience.

This doesn't prove that I'm right, but only that the Witness was wrong: there is a great tradition according to which I'm primarily not a man. But of course tradition has often been wildly mistaken, and in any case is only hearsay on a grand scale, not evidence. What the Defence claims for the Perennial Philosophy is that it has consistently and persistently proposed a hypothesis so amazing -- my Godhood, no less -- that it cries out to be tested by every available means, just in case it should turn out to be true.

That testing is what this Trial is all about.

At this point the Prosecution interrupts to say that, whatever general comfort and support I may get from this time-worn Philosophy, it won't help me much when it comes to the detailed and up-to-date evidence to follow.

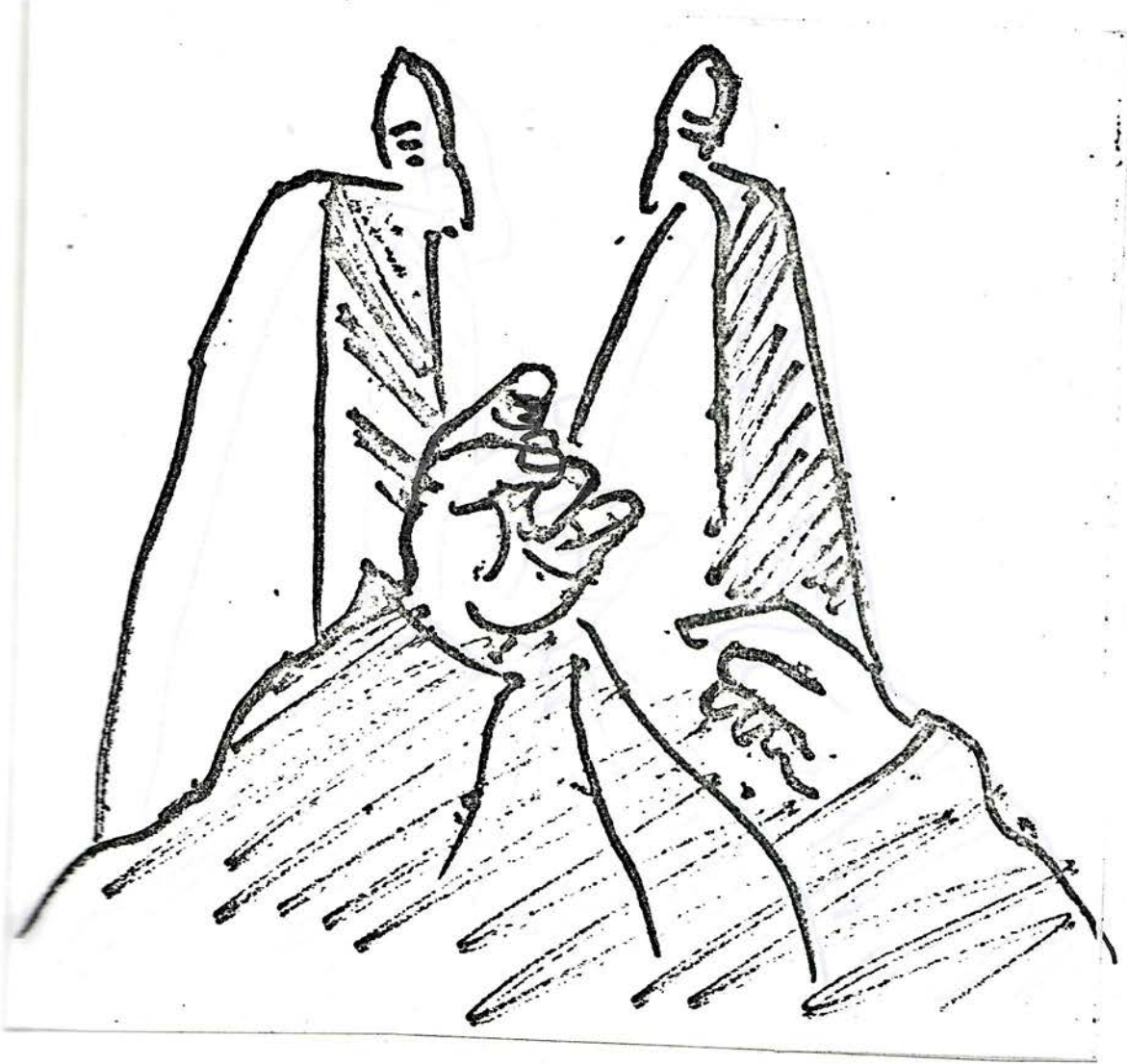
Taking up this challenge, I undertake to furnish relevant quotations as we go along -- not merely to remind the Jury how wrong even the first Prosecution Witness proved to be, but rather to indicate to them the venerable history underlying my Case, and its up-to-dateness.

None of this is to be taken on trust. The actual tests, to be carried out now, are what I rely on.

For a start, following the four guidelines I've described, I point a finger at the spot which is 'closer...

than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet'; and I do so now, in the spirit of a little child, and see whether what I'm pointing at resembles 'Light, Air or Breath, Clear Water, Great Space', a Face that is quite featureless -- or the features I thought were here.

I appeal to each member of the Jury: 'You will misunderstand me totally unless you follow my example, point to the spot indicated, and see for yourself what I'm talking about. What's it like right where you are?'



PROSECUTION WITNESS No. 2

THE STUDENT, prompted by Counsel, testifies that he has never seen or heard of me before, and has no idea why he has been asked to come to Court to answer some questions. He was sent by his teacher, who happened to draw his name out of a hat. He was quite happy to come. He is ten years old.

The Prosecution explains that the reason for calling, at the last minute, so young a Witness, is that I, the Defendant, have made such an unusual measure necessary. I claim, in support of my perverse ideas, childlike simplicity and innocence. Well, here is a child, drawn by lot from 25 normal children, who should be able to help the Jury assess my claim. Let it not be said that the Prosecution was unco-operative.

Having obtained the Court's permission, in these special circumstances, to proceed, Counsel hands the Witness a mirror and asks him what he sees in it.

He says he sees himself, Johnny.

Counsel informs Johnny that there's a man sitting in Court who maintains he isn't a human being. What does Johnny say to that?

Johnny thinks the man must be mad. He's only to look in a mirror to see he's a human being.

I, the Defendant, intervene to ask Johnny whether he has any brothers or sisters. He replies that he has one sister, Mary, eighteen months old.

I ask him how Mary reacts to what she sees in her mirror.

Johnny explains that when she was very little she showed no interest at all, but recently she has been making noises at and playing with the baby in the mirror. Of course, Johnny points out, she's too young to realise that it's herself and not another baby. She's like a robin he saw who started attacking his own reflection in a window-pane.

I ask Johnny what he thinks about the true story of Joan, aged two, who, when sent to the bathroom to wash her dirty face, started washing the face in the mirror -- her own face (absence-of-face) being, of course, spotless.

Johnny's comment is that she will soon grow up to know better. At his age she won't be so silly.

Taking over again, the Prosecution concludes by drawing the attention of the Judge, the Jury, and myself to the mirrors which have been provided for our use in connection with this Witness's testimony; and asks each of us now -- and specially me -- to look in his or her mirror with the simple honesty of Johnny, see what he means, and accept what we see.

We comply...

D E F E N C E THE EVIDENCE OF THE MIRROR

Will little Mary and Joan grow up to know better, or worse? At Johnny's age will they be more sensible, or less so? The only way to settle the question is for each of us to look again in the mirror and see who's right -- the infant or the ten-year-old.

Taking my mirror in my hand and stretching out my arm, I find what I call 'my face' in the glass, and observe that it's --

- (1) the wrong way round,
- (2) the wrong size,
- (3) in the wrong place,
- (4) and nothing like what's here, anyway.

By bringing the glass up to me I try to correct these defects -- to turn that face round, enlarge it to full size, plant it on these shoulders, and match it to what's above these shoulders... But I can find no way of making it fit, of putting it on. This place won't take it.

Sometime between Mary's age and Johnny's I learned to look in the mirror to see what I am. Now, unlearning this lesson, I look there to see what I'm not. I used to say, 'That's me!' Now I say, 'I'm not a bit like that!' This gadget which deceived me into thinking there's an object right here where I am, is now the very gadget which undeceives

me. Johnny says it shows me that I'm human: I say it shows me where I'm human -- where I keep that face. Taking it clean off me, I'm left free of it here.

So this hugely underrated household article turns out to be more eloquent of the essential truth about me, more direct and convincing, than all the scriptures in the world. I gave it a bad name -- trickster and illusionist -- but it was I who played tricks with it, turning a blind eye to its illusion-shattering message. Every time I looked at the thing on that side of the glass, I could have seen the no-thing this side, and the absolute difference between them.