

O N B E I N G G O D

THE SUMMARY OF A TRIAL

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.

ON BEING



THE SUMMARY OF A TRIAL

# INTRODUCTION

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 gandharva?'

'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 -- specially 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-deification, 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.

# CHARGE

I am accused of the capital crime of SELF-DEIFICATION ----  
of being a man who falsely denies his humanness 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).

OUTLINE OF CASE  
FOR PLEA  
**PLEA**

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 nobody here to commit it. My Case is that only a man could be convicted on this charge, and

I AM NOT A MAN.

# OUTLINE OF CASE FOR PROSECUTION

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 EVIDENCE

- 10 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 RELIGION

- 14 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 EVIDENCE

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

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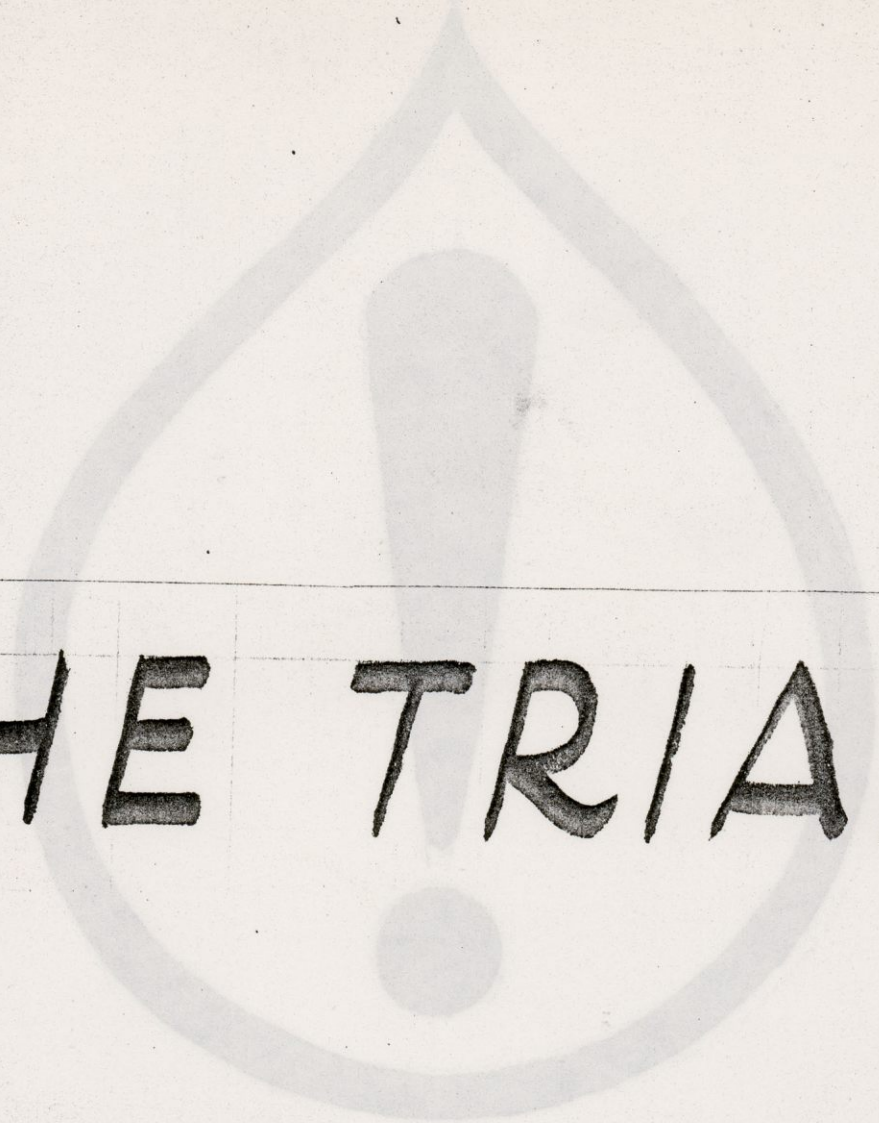
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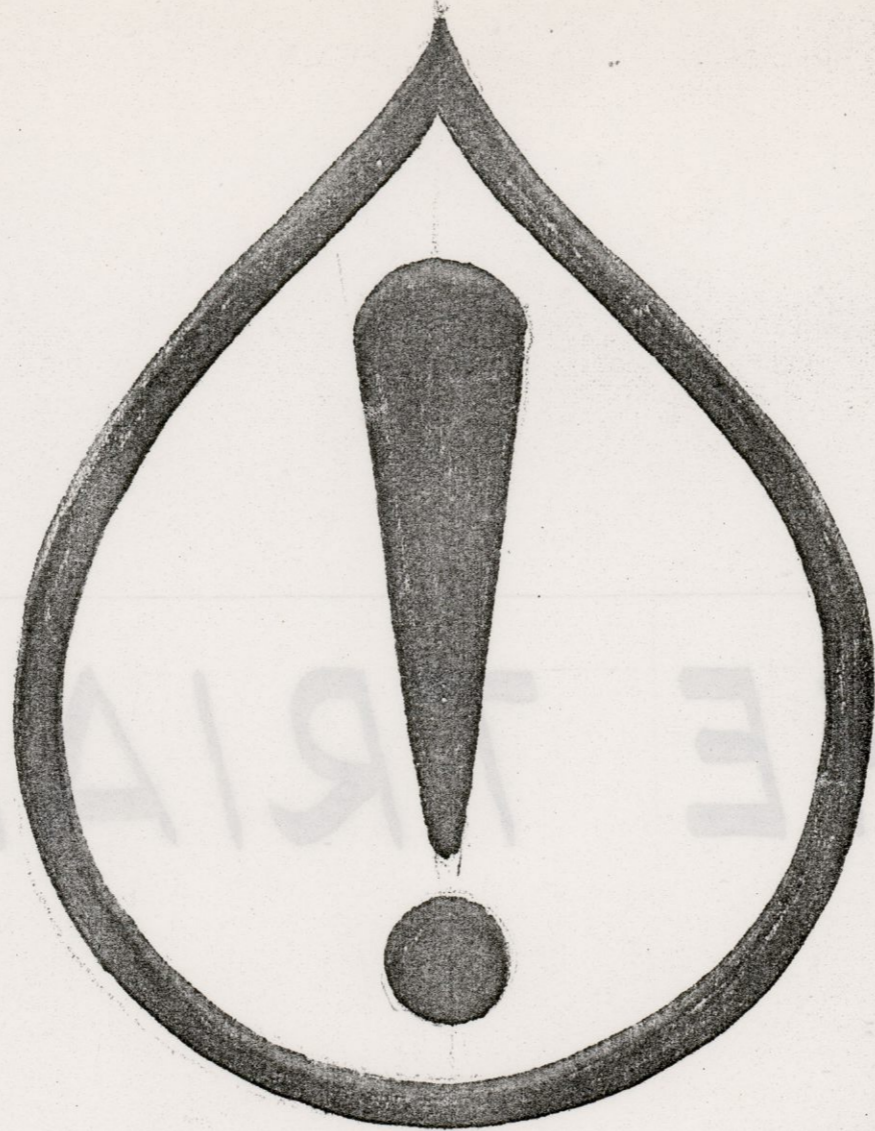
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# THE TRIAL

DEFENSE WARNING  
DANGER! Never listening to or  
reading about the experiments is like  
eating the Man instead of the food.



DEFENCE WARNING

DANGER! Merely listening to or reading about the experiments is like eating the Menu instead of the Meal.

# PART ONE

## BASIC EVIDENCE

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 human-ness. 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.

## PROSECUTION WITNESS No. 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 is He 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.

DEFENCE, continued

That testing is what this Trial is all about.

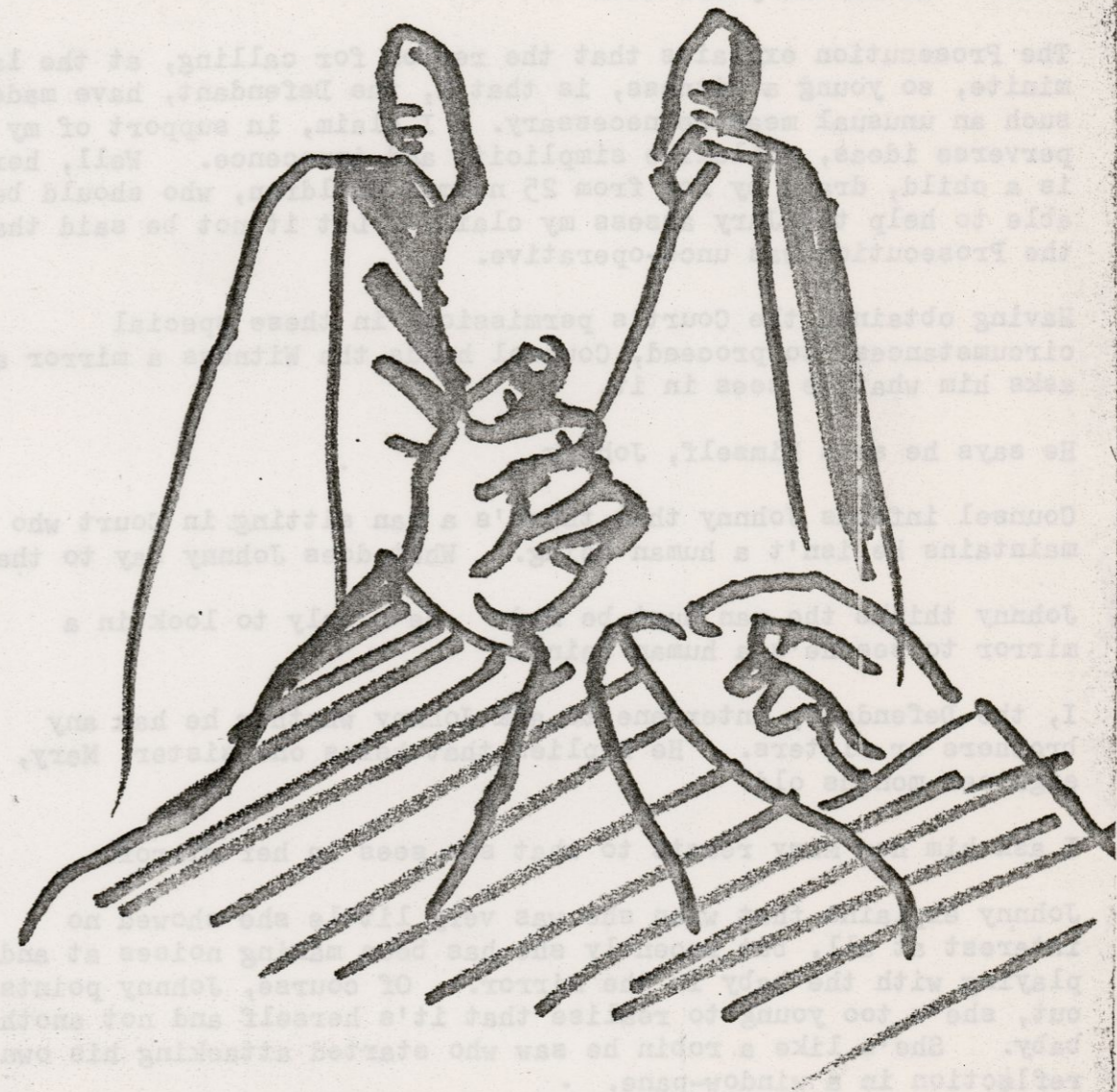
At this point the Prosecution interrupts to say that, whatever general comfort and support I may get from this time-worn Philosophy, it won't help me much when it comes to the detailed and up-to-date evidence to follow.

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.

## PROSECUTION, continued

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.....

# DEFENCE

## 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.



Everyone likes a mirror, while not knowing the nature of his Face.  
Rumi

This is not a task for one whose Face isn't clean. Attar

(Lycomedes had a portrait painted of the Apostle John.)  
And John, who had never at any time seen his own face, said to him,  
'Thou mockest me, child: am I like that?' Acts of John

# PROSECUTION

WITNESS No. 3

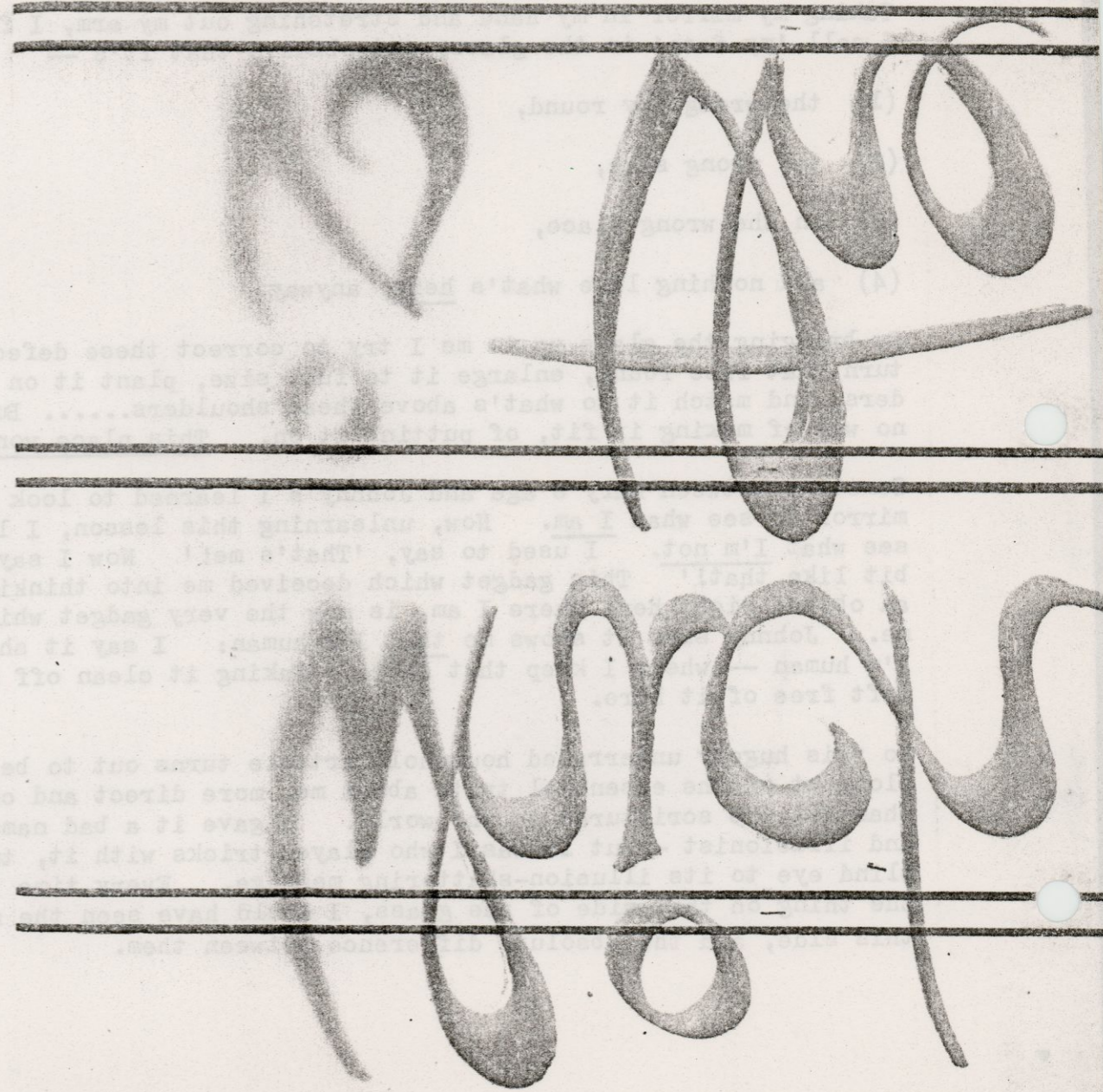
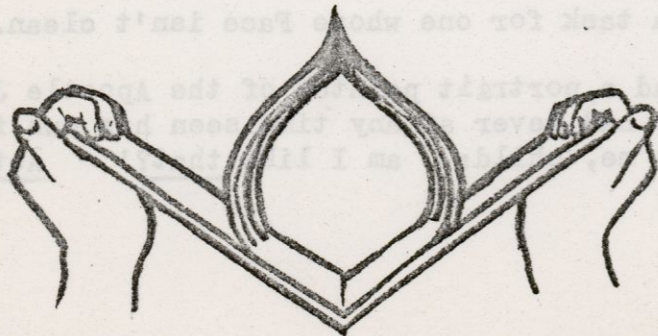
THE POLICE OFFICER, giving evidence of my arrest, testifies that he came to my house, produced the warrant, and cautioned me that anything I said was liable to be taken down and used in evidence against me.

At first (according to the Witness) I maintained he couldn't arrest me, and behaved strangely. Strongly repudiating the charge, I offered to furnish instant proof of my innocence. This proof was, I insisted, contained in a model Temple or Mosque which I produced, urging him to take it into the hall and examine it there.

Having taken possession of this model Temple, the Witness found inside, inscribed on the floor, what he took to be a secret message or formula - possibly a Tibetan mantra - to the effect that I'm not a human being but some kind of deity. Whatever the meaning of the inscription, I certainly placed very great importance upon it.

(At this point a true copy of the inscription, in a replica of the Temple, is distributed to each member of the Jury and other members of the Court.)

Anyhow, the Witness continues, he found me at least human enough to be taken into custody forthwith. At the Police Station I was formally charged with the offence. Bail wasn't applied for; and in any case would have been opposed, for I repeated that it was impossible to hold me. I wasn't a man capable of imprisonment in four walls: I could always demolish one of them and get away. According to the Witness, this was a vain boast. I gave no sign of superhuman powers, did no damage to the walls of my cell, and made no attempt to escape.



## DEFENCE

### THE EVIDENCE HIDDEN IN THE TEMPLE

The Officer should have listened, and done what I suggested. I tried to explain that the Temple was incomplete: the open ends had still to be closed in. This he was to do by fitting his face in one end and holding the other against the hall mirror. In the Temple so completed, he would have found the true interpretation of the 'mantra'. He might even have realised why he could never put me under arrest, or hold me in custody.

However, it's not his verdict upon me but the Jury's which is now at issue. I shall not be given fair trial, nor will my Defence be comprehensible, unless each of you now completes the Temple in the manner I have just described (the Prosecution has already supplied to each of you, in addition to a replica of the Temple, a mirror) and examines its interior. And answers honestly but silently the simple question it poses.

(Judge and Jury start their investigation..... There is some complaint that the mirrors are steaming up..... )

I comment: 'See how in the Temple, as outside, those human features at the far end soon fade, while the featureless Face at the near end, right where you are, remains brilliantly clear. Whose is this Face?'

(You are) alone, without face, form, features, foothold, or prop.  
St. John of the Cross

Turn your face towards your own Face (no-face):. you have no kinsman but yourself. Rumi

Not one of the 1,700 koans of Zen has any other purpose than to make us see our Original Face (no-face). Daito Kokushi

The Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come into his Temple. Malachi

# PROSECUTION

WITNESS No. 4

## THE MAN IN THE STREET

is certain that - unless I'm drunk or deranged - I see I'm a man, just as clearly as I see he's a man. Of course there are differences between us, but they are unimportant. He and I are in a man-to-man situation.

# DEFENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF SIGHT

The Witness is mistaken. I see no man here, and invite him to come and inspect this place for himself. In fact, I insist he comes here, all the way up to me till we are 'eyeball to eyeball', and reports to the Court on his findings.

Reluctantly, prodded by the Judge, the Witness complies.....

After some evasions, he admits that on the way up to me he loses me, and comes to places where he can find no man..... no face..... no eye..... nothing but a blur.

I point out that he can't quite get to where I am, but remains an outside observer. I alone - the observed, the insider - am in a position to complete his story and announce how total the emptiness is right here, at this moment. And how capacious, how accommodating, this emptiness is.

Here, for instance, are three stages of my infinite capacity, or three episodes of my inside story:

- (1) Looking now at my hand, I'm looking out of - what? Not, on present evidence, out of a head, or out of two eyes, or even one, but out of this huge oval 'window' without frame or glass, or indeed any locker this side of the 'window'.
- (2) Looking straight across at the person opposite, is it a case of this man taking in that man? Are we at all similar? Is the set-up anything like symmetrical?

I find here at this moment no hint of a body, no structure or solidity, no opacity or colouring, no boundaries where this Observer ends and the scene begins, nothing to which a name or age or sex could be attributed.

I try to count, while still looking straight across at my opposite number,

how many toes I have.....

DEFENCE, continued

how many fingers.....

how many legs.....

arms.....

heads.....

and in every case I find nothing to count.

The idea that I am a body, or inhabit one, or even own one, makes no sense now. What would it be like in there?

(3) And when I go outside and look up at the sky, it isn't only my head, and my human body, but also my terrestrial body - the Earth - that is now dissolved into room for those heavenly bodies to shine in.

In short, whatever company I find myself in, I find that company is actually in me. I make room - I am room - for it. I couldn't be less like those inelastic, fixed, solid, complicated, dense, shut-in creatures called men.

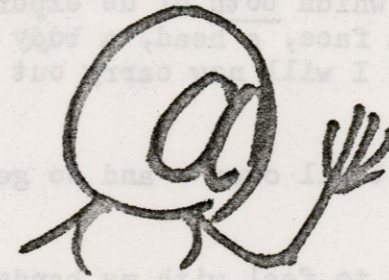
In fact, I'm not so much infinitely elastic as just infinite. The Void here doesn't adjust itself to take all comers, but is equally immeasurable whether it reads as voidness of eye, head, body, planet, or universe. Whatever I look at, whatever I look like, I'm nothing whatever like that. Even the Witness, having paid me a brief visit, has acknowledged the fact.

The spot I'm standing on is small, but it must disappear before I can see God. Eckhart

The universe dissolves into Me. Ashtavakra Samhita

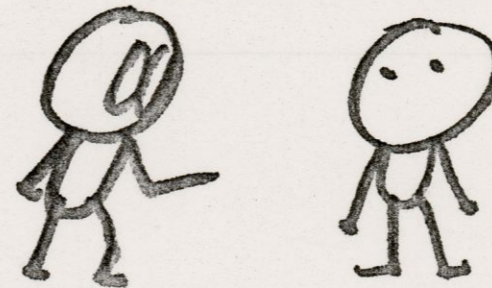
THE OUTSIDE STORY

THE INSIDE STORY



(1) The Defendant looks at his hand

I look at my hand (1)



(2) The Defendant looks at that man

I look at that man (2)



(3) The Defendant looks at the Moon

I look at the Moon (3)

(1) God is not furnished with a human head.

Empedocles

(2) A man should de-form himself of himself.

Eckhart

(3) Our task is to make the Earth invisible in us.

Rilke

## PROSECUTION

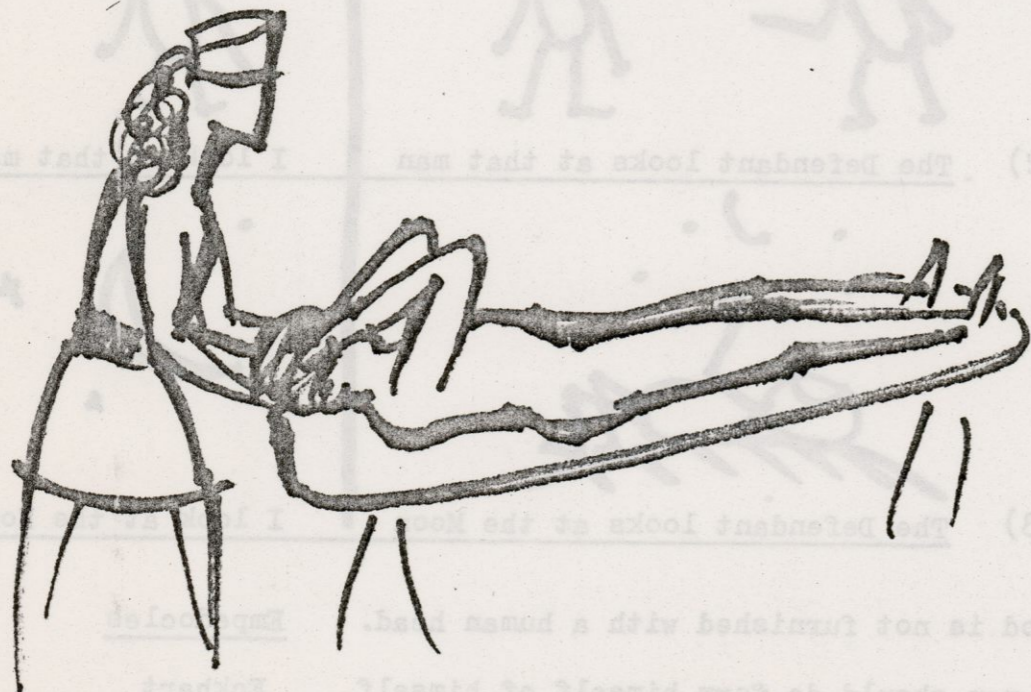
WITNESS NO. 5

### THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST

accuses me of relying too much on vision and neglecting the evidence of the other senses.

She testifies that she has occasionally, in the course of her healing work, given me massage, during which both of us experienced touch here because here's something - a face, a head, a body - to be touched: as I will find out afresh if I will now carry out two simple experiments:

- (1) I am to handle my head - massage it all over - and so get it firmly back on my shoulders.
- (2) While looking straight ahead, I am to feel with my hands the extent and the contours of my trunk - and take shape as a man again.



## DEFENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF TOUCH

If my reply is to make sense, each member of the Jury must actually carry out, along with me, the two experiments proposed by the Witness, and come to his own conclusion.

- (1) I handle my head vigorously, stroking and pinching and tapping it all over, in a sincere attempt to find out whether, in fact, there is any head here to handle.....

Doing my best now, I can't find one. I can't make out here - and have the greatest difficulty making up here - an object of any kind, let alone the small, defined, solid, opaque, coloured sort of thing I see on others' shoulders and in my own mirror. All I get is a succession of mere sensations which refuse to stay around long enough to let me put them together into an all-at-once whole. Instantly melting, they are useless as building materials, even for making the most flimsy of shelters, to say nothing of a substantial home to move into, a habitable 'house of clay' as it used to be called. I've nowhere to hide: I'm outside in the open: I'm wide-openness itself. These fleeting touches and pressures and warmth and tickles build no wall to cut me off from the world or hide behind. They are more like ghosts haunting the nearer regions of this immense Space which I am; and, if they point to anything at all, it is to this Space.

Quite unconvinced, the Witness still maintains that - when she's treating me - we are both feeling the same head.

In that case, what about its size? Pinching now my ears (what ears?), I discover that the left one lies far beyond the Western horizon, and the right far beyond the Eastern horizon. Accordingly, if I'm to have a head here at all, it's one that's not only empty for the world but immensely bigger than the world. To use the same term for the solid 8" globe she finds between my ears, and the clear worldwide Globe I find, is abusing language. If I'm to go on using the word head meaningfully, I need to distinguish sharply between my manhead and my Godhead - so to speak.

DEFENCE, continued

(2) And now for the second experiment proposed by the Witness.  
As instructed, I look straight ahead.....

And I notice, first, the absence of anybody here who is looking: there is only the scene. Then I start handling my torso, in the effort to do some body-building.....

No more successful than in the previous experiment, I remain huge, vacant, at large. If I have a body at all at this moment, it is the universe.

Thus these two experiments urged by the Prosecution, so far from establishing my humanness here, have precisely the opposite effect. They draw my attention again to this neglected but crucial Spot, the very mid-point of my universe, to its emptiness and to its worldwide explosion. The human thing I put here was quite imaginary. In fact, it was scarcely even that: for I can't begin to imagine what it would be like to be an anatomy, or to be stuck inside an anatomy, peering out of its interstices at the world.

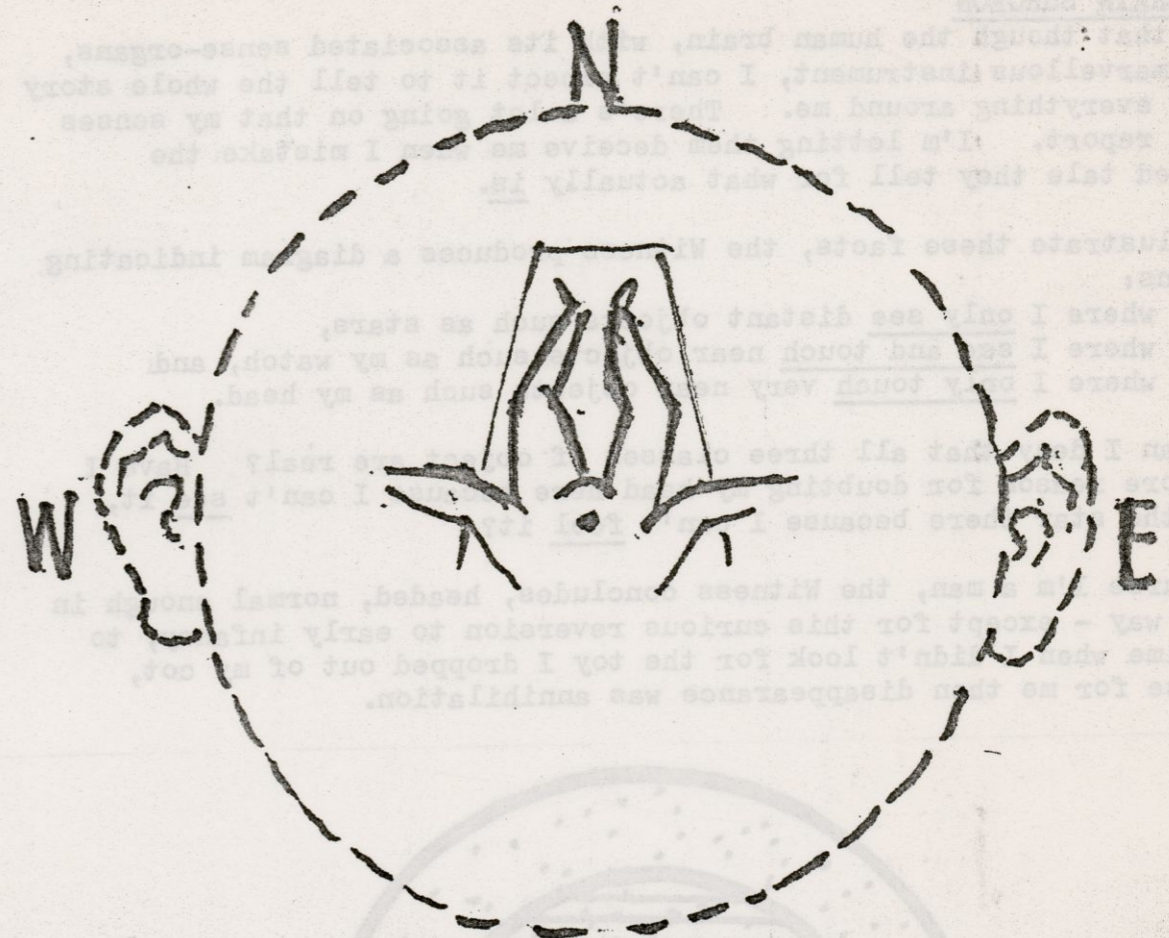
The Witness says the reason I have touch feelings here is because there's a head, etc., to be felt. I say, on the contrary, it's because there's no such thing here in their way. Asking for a head here, in addition to the feelings (for an object and awareness of it, for a thing and no-thing) is asking for too much, for the impossible. They just don't go together.

When it's heads and not feelings I'm after, I look around this Courtroom. There I see hands clutching brows, tapping foreheads, adjusting wigs, smoothing hair, stroking chins. That's the sort of thing men do, people with heads.

Not me!

The cause of your imagined bondage is that you attribute subjectivity to objects instead of to the Self. Ashtavakra Samhita

Only when you find no things in your mind, and find mind in no things, are you empty and spiritual, formless and marvellous.



This travelling hat may look small, but when I put it on it covers the cosmos. Huang-po

If one wants to make certain of one's body, one cannot get at it....  
In this kind of seeing, one only sees that no shape is here.  
The Secret of the Golden Flower

In God there can be nothing but God, not mouth or nose or hand or foot. Eckhart

# PROSECUTION

WITNESS No. 6

## THE BRAIN SURGEON

says that though the human brain, with its associated sense-organs, is a marvellous instrument, I can't expect it to tell the whole story about everything around me. There's a lot going on that my senses don't report. I'm letting them deceive me when I mistake the limited tale they tell for what actually is.

To illustrate these facts, the Witness produces a diagram indicating regions:

- (A) where I only see distant objects such as stars,
- (AB) where I see and touch near objects such as my watch, and
- (B) where I only touch very near objects such as my head.

How can I deny that all three classes of object are real? Have I any more reason for doubting my head here because I can't see it, than the star there because I can't feel it?

Of course I'm a man, the Witness concludes, headed, normal enough in every way - except for this curious reversion to early infancy, to the time when I didn't look for the toy I dropped out of my cot, because for me then disappearance was annihilation.



# DEFENCE

CENTRAL EVIDENCE BEYOND THE SENSES

I welcome the Witness's testimony and his diagram, so far as they go, but take them further.

For a start, he shows my head at the centre, but surely that's not the end of his story.

It contains my brain, of course. Does my brain feel the knife, I ask, when he's doing surgery on it?

Not at all, he assures me: and that's why no anaesthetic is needed when operating on the brain itself, as distinct from the scalp, etc.

So this very special place at the mid-point of my world, the terminus of all my senses, is itself inaccessible to them all: which means that, for me here, it's quite empty. This comes as no surprise: I can see how it needs to be empty of itself if it is to be filled with all that my senses are now putting on show.

(I'm not denying, of course, that my brain is real: the only questions are where and when and for whom it is real. Evidently it's real in and for the Witness when, a foot or two away from here, he's operating on it, otherwise he wouldn't know what to do. Just now he's in receipt of my face, and therefore can tell me how it strikes him; similarly, during the operation, he is privy to all those cerebral configurations. Here, on the patient's side of the operation, I assure him it's not like that at all.

(Nor am I denying, of course, that my brain, along with my sense-organs and countless other things, conditions all I see, feel, and so on. My point is that it doesn't do the seeing and the feeling: these are the function of the Centre, this very special Place where there's nothing in the way. Itself unlimited, everything that comes and goes in It is limited, conditioned, passing.)

Accordingly I can now complete the Witness's sketch of me, on the reasonable grounds that I can probe ~~even~~ more deeply into myself

DEFENCE, continued

than even he can do. I swear there's Nothing to see here, Nothing to feel here, Nothing at all here: and yet (or should I say 'and therefore?') this Nothing sees and feels and exists. It is the invisible Seer, the intangible Toucher, the inaudible Hearer, the tasteless Taster, the odourless Smeller - all coming together in this seamless Awareness which is my true Nature, or Who I really am.

Thus even as an infant I had the right idea. Here at the Centre I vanish without trace. I see this disappearance to be my annihilation as myself and my re-birth or re-appearance as the Witness, the Jury, this Court, the whole sense-given scene. Here I lose shape, to take shape as you; lose everything, to get it all back in others.

And so I complete the Witness's diagram:

- (A) There are seen things.
- (AB) There are seen and felt things.
- (B) There are felt things.
- (C) Here is Nothing to see or feel - and that's exactly what this Nothing is now doing: (C = A, AB, B)



By what means do this body or mind perceive? ..... Your own Nature being essentially pure and utterly still, its immaterial and motionless 'substance' is capable of this perception. Hui-hai

There is no seer but Him, no-one to hear but Him.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Can the body, which is insentient as a piece of wood, shine and function as I? No. Ramana Maharshi

Why not go to where there is no cold or heat? Blue Cliff Records

His interior aspect is made clear without any cloud.

Gerlac Petersen

# PROSECUTION

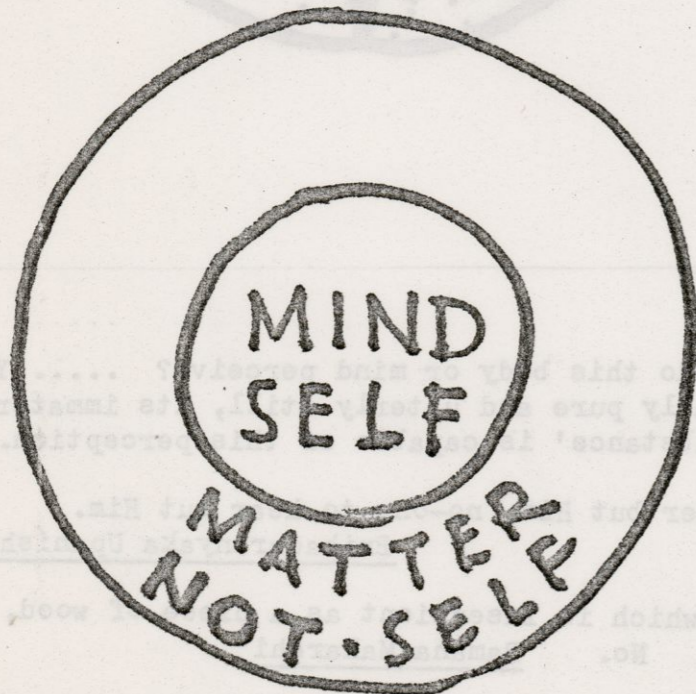
WITNESS No. 7

## THE COMMON-SENSE PHILOSOPHER

maintains that, supposing I do succeed in dismissing my body as 'not me', it isn't so easy to dismiss my mind.

Observing my behaviour, the Witness finds every indication here of a normal mental life going on, of a typically rich and certainly unique nucleus of human experience and human thinking. I'm a self contained in a not-self, a mind here surveying matter there, an inner world encompassed by an outer. And for me to disown this inner world, or any considerable part of it, in the interests of a comforting mystical notion of myself as 'God', or 'Empty Space', or 'Pure Spirit', is self-delusion. To the extent that I succeed, I really am 'out of my mind'.

The obvious fact, according to the Witness, is that I'm nothing if not a mind, and this mind is nothing if not human.



TWO WORLDS

# DEFENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF WHERE THOUGHTS BELONG

What is this mysterious entity the Witness calls 'my mind'? Everyone seems to take it for granted, but does it really exist? Can I find a something here - possibly something like an immense, shadowy computer or memory bank or reference library - into which I feed information and out of which I draw information? Or do I find a nothing here, a bottomless abyss into which information vanishes without trace, and out of which information emerges without warning? An infinitely receptive and productive Void or Blank which itself remains speckless and characterless, and which I am?

What do I find happening when a thought arises? Let me take a letter of the alphabet and think of three words beginning with that letter, observing where they come from and go to. The letter is L.....

I find the three words just popping up out of the blue, out of this Blank, and proceeding at once to the scene where they belong, out there in the world. They have objective reference, not subjective. Certainly they don't hang around here, cluttering their empty Source, or helping to form or maintain a mental nucleus of any sort.

I try again with another letter, M .....

And get similar results. If I have a mind at all it is - or at least is at large in - this encompassing universe, seeing there's Nothing here at the centre to keep hold of it and prevent its outward flight.

My thoughts are others' property. Whenever I try to conjure up an idea that is my personal possession, one that is wholly internal and private and unrelated to the world, I come to total Idiocy, to Mindlessness, to this Blank once more. My thinking, if it is at all genuine, is about others and not about myself. Just as I taste marmalade and not a tongue, and smell toast and not a mucous membrane, so my astronomical observations are observations about the stars up there in the sky, and not about the observatory or the observer down here. I'm into the constellations, as the current expression happily puts it. Whatever its field, my thinking always breaks down when it cuts adrift from the object thought, and tries to cling to the thinking Subject, so-called - to this I whose sole

DEFENCE, continued

business is mindless Being, Self-aware. My world is mind enough.

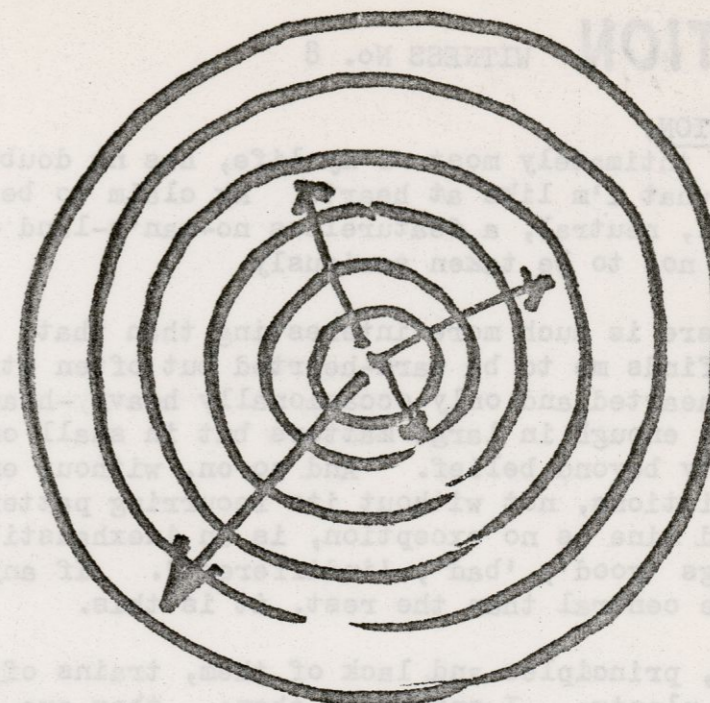
The Witness warns me I won't find it easy to dismiss my mind. Superfluous advice! Essentially centrifugal, it has already taken leave and made off in all directions. Insofar as I have a mind at all, I'm assuredly not small-minded. It's none other than this many-levelled universe, and no more human than it is sidereal or atomic, terrestrial or molecular: it finds itself perfectly at home at all levels. In its miraculous origin from this mindless but conscious Blank, in the majesty of its cosmic scope and energy and penetration, in the wealth of its contents of every grade, it is immeasurably more, and immeasurably less, than human.

To claim here a human mind, any mind of my own, is to ask for trouble within and without. Abstracting my thoughts and feelings from their rightful stations and hoarding them here, I progressively reduce the universe to a mindless concatenation of particles, and build myself up into what the Witness euphemistically calls this 'rich nucleus of human experience' - which nucleus grows so confoundedly affluent at the world's expense, so clogged and swollen and near to bursting, that I'm driven to seek psychiatric help in letting some of the stuff out again. My relief is the world's re-furbishing. My swelling and the world's wasting were two sides of one disease, and have one remedy.

That remedy is to come clean, restoring to the universe these stolen goods which have gone bad on me, this huge collection of loot I call my human mind or self or personal psyche. And then it transpires I'm innocent after all! I never owned a thing. The inside story is that there never has been an inside story!

So the Prosecution's charge against me will not stick: there's nothing here to fasten it to. Idiots cannot be taken to Court, and neither can universes. I'm much too big to be placed under arrest, and much too empty-headed and scatter-brained to be tried by any Court whatever.

Those who cling to the notion that there is a world outside the mind go on rolling themselves along the Wheel of Birth and Death.  
Lankavatara Sutra



**ONE WORLD**

This Ground is so desert and bare that no thought has ever entered there. Tauler

Only have no mind of any kind: this is undefiled knowledge. Huang-po  
Buddhahood is attained when there is no mind to be used for the task. Hui-ching

Our souls live in the surrounding world. Heracleitus

The inward and the outward are become as one sky. Kabir

As he gets to be more purely and singly himself.... the astronomer is 'out there' with the stars, rather than a separateness peering across an abyss at another separateness through a telescopic keyhole. Abraham H. Maslow

A Bodhisattva should develop a lucid mind which fastens on no thing whatsoever. This may be likened to a human frame as large as the mighty Mount Sumeru (the Cosmos). Diamond Sutra

# PROSECUTION

WITNESS No. 8

## THE CLOSE RELATION,

having known me intimately most of my life, has no doubt about what makes me tick, what I'm like at heart. My claim to be empty - changeless, cool, neutral, a featureless no-man's-land - she regards as just a pose, not to be taken seriously.

The landscape here is much more interesting than that, says the Witness. She finds me to be warm-hearted but often strangely cold-hearted, light-hearted and only occasionally heavy-hearted, generous-hearted enough in large matters but in small ones mean-hearted and petty beyond belief. And so on, without end. What a mass of contradictions, not without its recurring patterns! The human heart, and mine is no exception, is an inexhaustible storehouse of feelings 'good', 'bad', 'indifferent'. If any part of me is more me, more central than the rest, it is this.

Ideas, opinions, principles and lack of them, trains of thought - these I have in plenty: I entertain them: they are around all the time. But this core or heart of feelings I am: they take me over: I'm stuck with them: they run so deep there's no getting beneath them.

Anyway, why should I wish to get beneath them? How can I deny my human-heartedness without denying love itself, and pretending to be what (to the Witness's certain knowledge) I'm not - a cold fish, icy, unhuman, if not actually inhuman?

# DEFENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF WHERE FEELINGS BELONG

The only way to settle this hugely important issue is to clear one's mind of prejudice and search within afresh, right now, for this alleged private core of feelings. After all, not even the Witness has any access here: no outsider is in a position to pronounce on what's inside.

I search for love here. Not love for him or her, but love itself, the love I have in my heart, my love.....

and find none at all.

I look for - I try to experience - at least the faint beginnings of curiosity. Not curiosity about someone or something, but curiosity itself, right here at this moment.....

and again fail utterly.

I invite joy. Not joy in another, but just joy.....

and nothing happens. I remain as before, neither joyful nor sad.

And so on, conscientiously trying to discover in myself at least a passing shadow or tiny seed of pleasure..... pain..... hate..... anger..... distaste..... compassion..... with always the same negative result. Throughout these simple experiments (which, to mean anything at all, must actually be carried out) all I find here is an unvarying Sameness, a cool and indifferent and certainly non-human Blank - which, again, is nevertheless keenly aware of itself as Blank.

Am I then incapable of these feelings? Have I no capacity for love, joy, the rest? I am capacity itself, empty for love as a cup is for water. The moment I cease searching for love here in myself, and turn to one I love, there's no question about the feeling or its location. There is my treasure, and where my treasure is my heart is also. And doubtless that's why I'm in the habit of calling her 'my love' and 'my dear heart'.

DEFENCE, continued.

And the moment I cease trying to detect the faint beginnings of curiosity here, and glance at Mr Jones yonder, there's no doubt about the fact of curiosity, or where it occurs, or whom it sticks to. Mr Jones is a curiosity. And the moment I cease trying - and failing - to feel joyful, and remember my friends, my joy is in them. It comes alive there, wrapping itself around them. They glow with it.

And when I breakfast off hot toast and marmalade, and then venture out into the bitter weather, the pleasure of the one and the ache of the other are around all right -- and it's the food that tastes and smells so good, and the wind that feels so cold.

It's the same with all the other feelings I miscall mine: only insofar as they qualify their objects are they real. When 'she's adorable' lapses into 'I'm so in love', when 'his need' lapses into 'my compassion', when 'it's a sad, sad world' lapses into 'I suffer from depression', I'm ceasing to attend to what's clearly given, and building instead this shadowy illusion called 'my human heart'. The feelings that I strip from the world and gather to myself are misplaced, falsified, distorted; the love, mere sentimentality. They are stolen goods which give me endless trouble till they are returned to their owners.

In short, the Witness got her facts inside-out. Heartless at home, my heart goes out to the world.



THE WAY I THINK I FEEL

'I'm loving'

'My heart is full'



THE WAY I FEEL

'You're lovable'

'My heart goes out to you'

Whatever there be of feeling .... one should realise 'This does not belong to me, this am I not, this is not myself'. Buddha

The Sage has no heart of his own. Lao-tzu

The soul lives in that which it loves. St John of the Cross

The mind abides nowhere. Hui-neng

Every thing and quality is felt in outer space. William James

## PROSECUTION

WITNESS No. 9

### THE FRIEND OF THE FAMILY

testifies that she has known me well for several years.

Throughout, it has been evident to her, from my general attitude and behaviour if not from my words, that I take myself to be no more and no less than human. In spite of sometimes talking very big indeed, I give the impression that I know better. I don't really deceive myself, much less her. It's a sort of game I play.

I talk much of what I see myself to be. But this, the Witness points out, is far less relevant than what I feel myself to be, what comes natural, the self I take for granted. Do I carry on as if I were God Almighty, or nothing at all, or just a man?

Just a man, says the Witness.

Moreover the fact that I'm judged to be mentally fit to plead in this Court and have not - so far - been placed in institutional care, speaks for itself. At heart, I'm a sane enough man.

## DEFENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF WHAT I IDENTIFY WITH

What the Witness, and indeed society, feel about me is one thing and in no doubt. What I feel about myself is quite another thing and in no doubt either. It's time I had the courage of my deepest convictions here, and spelled them out plainly.

Never in my life have my feelings - however confused - been those of a 'mere man':

- (1) Often I felt like nothing at all, just absent.
- (2) In great physical pain or pleasure, I identified myself with one part of my body in distinction from the rest.
- (3) Arguing with the Witness, I felt like one human being confronting another.
- (4) When a neighbour started encroaching on the family property I found myself reacting for and as the family.
- (5) In case of a threat to my sect, or nation, or race, it was as each of these, in turn, that I faced the threat.
- (6) Imagining my Planet or Solar System to be in danger of invasion by another, I found myself thinking and feeling for this heavenly body as against that one.
- (7-1) Having suffered for too long the anxiety that haunts these intermediate levels of identification, their instability and comparative unreality, I came at length to a time of great Peace when they were left far behind, and not a particle of the universe eluded my embrace. Then I was myself again, comfortable, at home. As the Nothing that holds the All, I rested. Or rather, I rest, for here time is superseded.

I can make no sense of my life on the hypothesis that I am a fixed quantity, a one-level affair, just a man.

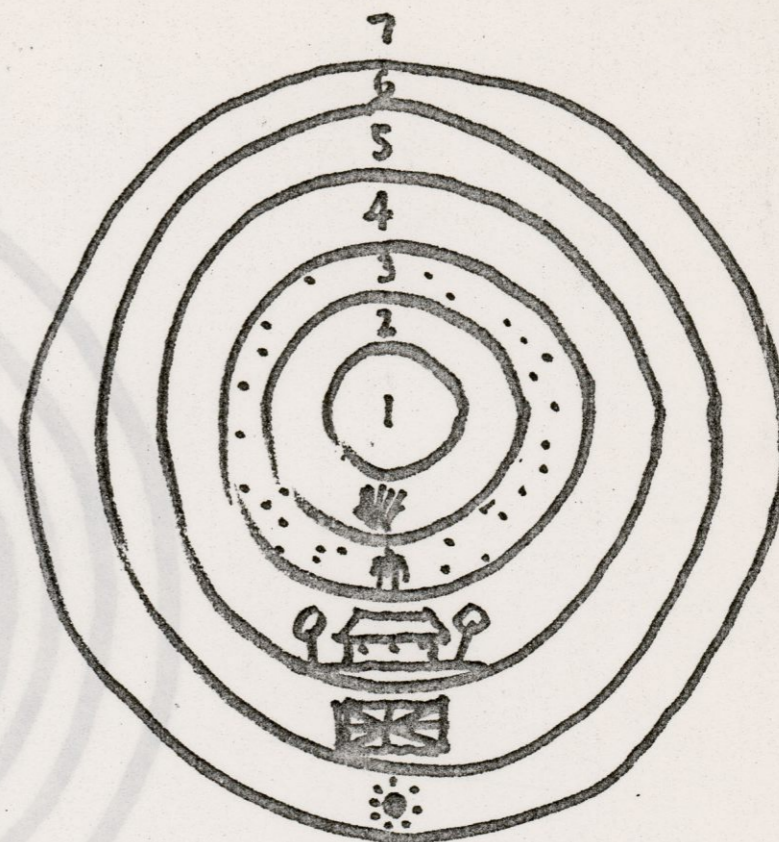
DEFENCE, continued

I never accepted my supposed 'human limitations'. They never fitted, and I suffered a chronic split, a miscasting. My trouble was that I tried to achieve as man what already I am as the Self. Yet deep down I never forgot my Nature. If I was greedy it was because I knew in my heart that all things are Mine. If I was self-centred it was because I am forever perfectly Self-centred. If I sought power it was because I dimly recognised there is no other, no second Power. If I tried to get out of my responsibilities it was because I - the true I - never got involved anyhow. If I thought and behaved as if I were immortal, it was because the One here is unborn and undying. If I resented all my limitations, it was because of my profound conviction that in reality I am unlimited.

In every case the instinct was right; only its expression was wrong, inefficient, partial. In all my deeds and cravings, even the worst, I was hiddenly laying claim to my Self. Throughout all my false identifications I was implying my true Identity.

What does this true Identity amount to, in practice? How does it feel to be the only One, the Alone, the Origin, the self-generating Self? Actually to be this unthinkable Mystery? To revel in, not what I am, but that I AM - since there's no reason for anything to be at all? Somehow, inconceivably, This arranges its own existence - with no help, out of blind chaos and nothingness. It's incomprehensible! It's impossible! Who is now feeling this matchless wonder? How could any man begin to do such a thing? Who but the Self knows this joy?

To whom but the Self could it come so naturally?



One person is limited, a small self, a dweller in a small hardness. .... But another is unlimited, a great self, a dweller in the immeasurable. Pali Canon (Anguttara-Nikaya)

Zen masters are totally identified with Nature. D. T. Suzuki

I am Alone! I am the Supreme Brahman! I am the Lord of the universe. Such is the settled conviction of the Liberated. All other experiences lead to bondage. Devikalottara

If I were wholly what I am I would be God. Eckhart

DEFENCE, continued



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