

Sleepers, Bodhisattvas and Mysticians (11/9/2000)

Tat Twam Asi. How many words, how many volumes, how many libraries, how many religious cultures does it take to wrestle with that phrase? None, if we have accessed the experience; millions if we merely try to understand it; and billions if we are foolhardy enough to try to explain it to others. Yet here is one more piece of writing attempting to speak of my own encounter with it. Silly man that I am, ecstatic man that I am, I can no more hold it back than a woman in labor can defer the birth.

I have seen that even compassion is a mistake. Compassion is a partial response to a partial comprehension of an infinite truth. Compassion is predicated on the idea of service to another. And therein lies the rub. There is no other! And so compassion ultimately is in the service of the illusion of separation. Only moksha (liberation) is Real. I say that with a capital "R". Because Compassion and Service and Other are "real", but only with a little "r". The illusion is not that the physical world does not exist, the illusion is that the physical world is *all* that exists. How has this come about? The following may be the trail of its unfolding.

In order to *experience* Herself - as distinct from merely *knowing* Herself - God created. And since God can only be ALL THAT IS (Brahman in the Hindu cosmology), from the ineffable void of this cosmic womb She created a dream of the manifestation of the myriad aspects of Herself. Hence the arrival of Souls (Atman in the Hindu cosmology) - billions of them; more numerous than all of the

stars of all of the galaxies of all of the universes. Yet they were as much a unity as are the 50 trillion cells of your body. And then the dream got complicated. In order for these aspects to “talk” to each other, gifts of communication became necessary - telepathy, clairvoyance etc. (the Causal Body in the Hindu cosmology). The slide into forgetting had begun. Little “mind” (the Mental Body in the Hindu cosmology), as distinct from universal “Mind” latched upon the notion of communication among parts as evidence that, in fact, each part is totally other. By now the “souls” were believed to be ontologically discrete entities. In short order mind had invented a new cosmology, perceiving separateness as “Reality” when, in fact, it was only “reality”. Emotions (the Astral Body in the Hindu cosmology) were then invented so that we could *feel* the differences between us. And, finally, the senses (the Gross Body in the Hindu cosmology) were the ultimate proof: we could *see* that we are distinct; we could hear our differences; we could smell and taste and touch our differences. The veil, at last, was tightly drawn and fully opaque.

Now we could know what fear was - the feeling of utter isolation and total separation. This would lead to despair, despondency, depression and denial. To rescue ourselves from this pole of the nightmare, we would invent anger and violence, warfare and persecution, prejudice and chosenness. Henceforth, any newly-discovered “difference” quickly became a further proof of our separateness. And it became a midwife to the existential scream of our own cosmic abandonment.

Who will help us retrace our steps? Mysticism has drawn maps of the journey, some of which are 9,000 years old. Even modern science can help the process along. It is quite easy to demonstrate from the “hard” sciences that all of the differences are superficial, since all are ultimately a collapse of the probability wave due to observation. Each kind of observer and each type of observing causes a different collapse, resulting in a different manifestation of the underlying field (the Subtle Body in the Hindu cosmology). The “soft” sciences demonstrate that emotions and ratiocination are produced by perceptions, expectations and models of reality - thus allowing us back to the Astral and Mental Body stages of the devolution. Over 100 years of extraordinarily rigorous scientific studies by parapsychologists have shown the existence of the “gifts” of the Causal Body. We are most of the way back by now.

Can science provide, for mysticism, modern metaphors for the last two laps back to Brahma? I believe so. I call for the introduction of the Mysticians - people trained in rigorous scientific methodologies, while being steeped in the utterly empirical practices of experiential mysticism. These are the space travelers of the future - wedding the inner and the outer explorations, until the veil is finally parted, the illusion dissolved and unity recaptured.

The mysticians will be the next wave of bodhisattvas. Today, I met an old dog, with the saddest eyes on the planet. He is in renal failure and his owner is planning to put him to sleep tomorrow. She told me she had adopted him last year from a man whose new wife didn't want a decrepit mongrel in her nice new

home. I squatted in front of him and we gazed into each other's eyes. He had his tail between his legs but was attempting to wag it in that impossible position. I recognized him and he recognized me. He asked me, *"How many sleepers does it take to undo the work of a single buddha? How many Christs does it take to wake up single sleeper?"* I sidestepped his questions and, instead, pleaded, *"You're one of the lucky ones; you get to go home tomorrow. But please do not abandon us. So many cannot remember. So many of us are asleep. And each sleeper amplifies the illusion and thickens the veil. Please send us some more lovers, some more bodhisattvas. We are ready. Please send us the mysticists. Please!"*

I think he will.