

More than clarifying the issues somewhat, I wish I could resolve the question of whether reality is as the mystic describes it. I take the question, and the mystics' experiences, very seriously, which some will think immediately is a great mistake. (But do they think this only because they already assume a background theory that discounts the mystics' experiences; if so, what led them to that theory?) For the purposes of philosophical explaining and understanding, we need not resolve the question; it suffices to consider, elaborate, and keep track of the hypotheses. Yet there remains the question of how to act, of what path to follow.*

that there is some secret to be found? The writer has to bury something that can be ferreted out to satisfy the unwelcome seeker, a decoy secret. This must be something the writer plausibly would want to keep secret; otherwise it will not be a successful cover. How will one know if one has found the valuable silver or the more deeply hidden gold? If only one thing has been uncovered, being the easier to find, it is not the real secret. But has any author buried a secret doctrine underneath two covers? (Or flashed the fact of contained secrets, without announcing it, by discussing esoteric devices, I mean doctrines, rambunctiously?)

What are the yoga manuals keeping hidden, which the practitioner is expected to come to himself? What does the cutting of the fraenum linguae aid? What nectar is brought upwards and drunk? What is the mouth of the well of nectar over which the tongue is placed and what ambrosia is drunk daily? (These are the terms used in the yoga manuals. See Bernard, *Hatha Yoga*, pp. 30, 65-67.)

I conjecture that one of the acts the (male) yogis perform, during their experiences of being identical with infinitude, is auto-fellatio, wherein they have an intense and ecstatic experience of self-generation, of the universe and themselves turned back upon itself in a self-creation. (Compare the mythological theme of creation from an ouroboris, a serpent with its tail in its mouth.)

Here I have only conjecture to go on, and this conjecture may well be mistaken. But it does specify something the yogis in their altered consciousness might seek and regard as a pinnacle, yet, even with their disdain for the ordinary practices and opinions of the world, also seek to keep a secret.

What tantric yoga involves, we won't conjecture.

* However, perhaps there is less urgency to the decision than we think. Siddhartha Guatama's statement notwithstanding, is the house on fire? If the theories centering on such experiences are correct, we live a sequence of lives, and so we can hope that in a later one the matter will become clearer. While if we have only this life, then these theories are incorrect and we should not follow them. So in either case, we should not follow an arduous Eastern path now. Unless, of course, the Eastern theories are correct, and the karmic consequences of acting on this argument, having come so close to realizing the truth, push one further away from it for innumerable future lifetimes.

EPISTEMOLOGY