

PART ONE

THE WORLD

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WHICH CAME FIRST,
THE CHICKEN OR THE EGGHEAD?

To the ek-bahu baba

O Arjuna! Why give way to unmanliness?

O thou who art the terror of thine enemies!

Shake off such shameful effeminacy, make ready to act!

The Bhagavadgita

Philosophy is so boring sometimes, especially Western philosophy of the last few centuries. Maybe I just don't get it, but Mill makes me ill and I can't do Kant. Philosophy is the love (*philo*) of Sophia, the goddess of intimate knowledge. It should be as much fun as making love to a goddess, but the word has come to refer to a set of beliefs used to judge the world and organise your life. For example, you may follow the Golden Rule, doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, or perhaps you are a Marxist. Very good, be what thou wilt, but too often we get lost in the definitions of what we are, and we forget the lovely Sophia. Philosophy liberates. **A** philosophy binds. **A** philosophy ultimately fails in the real world, when a sadomasochist applies his version of the Golden Rule to your nipples, or when a Marxist finds herself in a room full of Viagra-ists, obliged to give to each according to his needs, according to her means. Charles Fort could 'conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper

thing to wear, for a while.² You can wear a well-starched collar to work, and change into a racy red tank top printed with 'Believers do it for God' for the weekend. Wear what thou wilt, but give it a good sniff before you put it on.

For the most part, our philosophies are fortresses we build along the contours of a landscape shaped by our habits and desires. By way of illustration, allow me to introduce a hippy I met at Kumbha Mela, a 70 million soul Hindu extravaganza, where I spent ten days splashing about in the Ganges and filming the most hardcore ascetics on the planet. One night I was crouching by a fire awaiting the arrival of yet another bhagavan, and an Indian asked if I was married, as Indians are wont to do. I told him I was not. He asked if I had a girlfriend. I said yes, and he continued. 'Is she... as a *vife* to you?' Everyone waited politely as I thought for a moment, and when I said yes, their heads rocked from side to side to a chorus of knowing *a-cha's*. Seeing as most Indian men spend their unmarried years as virgins, I think they were wondering if I was getting my oats. When I told them she was Japanese, someone said '*chotaa naak*', which he illustrated by pressing his nose flat. This was so funny that I slipped it into conversation whenever possible from then on.

A few days later I passed a gaggle of devotees around a sadhu wearing nothing but ash. He had raised his hand aloft decades ago in devotion to Shiva, and left it to lock into place and mortify, with hideous nails curling down towards his head. I could hardly refuse a toot on his chillum, which was, after all, one of his only possessions, and as I exhaled, I noticed said hippy. We exchanged pleasantries as I coughed, and he told me he'd spent the last twenty-six years wandering around India, seeking saints and sages. At this point a nearby sadhu asked if I was married. I said no, but I had a Japanese girlfriend, and I trotted out my Hindi one-liner. The ascetics creased up, but the hippy looked blankly at me, so I told him '*chotaa naak*' and pressed my nose flat. He shrugged his shoulders mournfully. He didn't know the word for 'nose' in Hindi. He didn't know any Hindi at all. I tried to remain as non-judgemental as possible, but I was betrayed by a look of disgust on my holy-hash stoned face, and he began to justify himself. 'I have purposely not learnt any Hindi, lest the verbal interfere with my spiritual experience of the sadhus.'

Whoa there! This ignorance is deliberate? He had probably convinced himself that this philosophy was valid, but it stinks. It is crusty at the armpits and jumping with fleas. It is worthless. It is worse than worthless, because he imagines that this fetid tie-dye rag covers his nakedness. Better to go naked like the naga babas! I should have

slapped him all the way from samsara to Sirius for his rudeness, offering me bullshit when I was making polite chitchat. That might have woken him up and made his twenty-six years worthwhile, but things can get a bit too shanti amongst the sadhus, and I forgot myself. I was mashed, and I was under the impression that Hindus were pacifists.

O Nemu! O though who art the terror of thine enemies!

Shake off such shameful effeminacy, make ready to act!

He deserved a good slap, but we all deserve a slap sometimes; he was just a particularly shocking example of a general trend. We often claim to live by some kind of philosophy, but are in fact philosophising by some kind of life. We create philosophies to hide behind. We are too chicken to face up to our naked personalities, and the egghead follows naturally. At his shirt was covering nothing more sinister than laziness. A Mafioso sees a dog-eat-dog world because he wants to eat other dogs. Perhaps Chinese nutritionists consider dog the perfect meat because they want to eat dogs too.³ Nazi theorists reasoned that the Sudetenland was theirs because they wanted it. This has nothing to do with love, nor Sophia; it is sophism, not philosophy.

Generally, the more complicated the philosophy, the more twisted it becomes, until some weirdo writes a scholarly article about piss drinking and cottaging in interwar Paris, analysing 'the gay poet's Marxist critique of Freudian autoerotic tendencies'.⁴ A highbrow critique of piss drinking is so much more distasteful than piss drinking itself. Do what thou wilt, man, but don't drag the lovely Sophia into the urinal with you.

As we move through life, our personalities grow and tear through our shirts. Even the most devout Catholic will covet when pushed by his starving belly and pulled by his neighbour's pie, and sooner or later he will steal, and to hell with eternal damnation. Only a terminally pious man will allow himself to starve, and he is the biggest egotist of all, whose self-image nudges his skinny ass out of existence.

If it was just wandering stoners who hid behind their theories, the world would be a happy place, but this philosophical Onanism goes right through society, and through history. Our beliefs in science are much the same, a laundry bag of second hand rags cut to resemble lab coats, washed in the distillate of our prejudices. Scientists, along with lawmakers, set the limits of acceptable belief and behaviour, and most people think and act within those limits. Those who refuse are often labelled stupid, insane, or criminal, destined for jail or the psychiatrist's couch, but many are visionaries who see through clouds of noisome philosophy, and push against the resistance of reactionaries. O Nemu, take this unholy bag of shirts to the cleaners!

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGGHEAD?

The sticky threads of belief wind back to Babylonia, through Jerusalem, through Christendom, and into our modern scientific world. We are trapped in a web of thought, but we can think our way out. With the wisdom of fools and the secrets of magicians, we can untie the strings of language and law, and push blades through the rusty armour of rationalism into the belly of the spider. Once our hands are free of the web, we will get comfortable with some prehistoric goddesses, crack open some fizzy spider poison, and never worry about getting stuck again.

The apocalypse is central to our sermon, and for those who can't wait to find out why, take a peek at *Neuro-apocalypse 3*, about mental limits and the genius of a mind unconstrained by them, or *Jürgen's World*, describing the world which emerged from the flames and famines of medieval Europe. Periods of cathartic transformation have shaped our minds and our world throughout history. The crisis in first century Jerusalem brought a Jewish tale to the pagan world, and much of Western history is the story of copying, manipulating, and distributing this book. Sublime truth and pack of lies, tool of meditation and instrument of control, something to live for, to die for, and to kill for, *The Bible* has been all sorts to all sorts, but it has never been irrelevant, even today as it is being forgotten. We will tickle the book until she squeals and gives up her secrets. If, God forbid, you are without one, pull up a pew near you and open up the Blue Letter Bible online.

For now, however, these stories can wait. Virgins in paradise can wait. Lies and linguistics can wait. Devilish dichotomies and anarchistic angels can wait. The end of the world is a world away, and battle begins with the whirl and wrath of Nemu's razor.

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1 *The Bhagavad Gita* - (Shri Purohit Swami trans), verse 2.03

2 *Wild Talents* - Charles Fort, chap. 22.

3 *Tao, Sex and Longevity* - Daniel Reed (Simon & Schuster, 2007).

4 Sadly I have lost the reference for this article. You aren't missing much.