

TEST PAPER ON PHILOSOPHY

From time to time in ancient Traditions like that of the Shankaracharyas, a test is given for those who aspire to being guides of disciplines such as the Meditation or teachers of the Systematic Knowledge based upon them. We propose to offer such a test first to selected people, and later to any who aspire to do such work for us. The reason for presenting this test to you now is connected with the current demands of all the 'Three Lines of Work'.

What test should we apply? We choose one of the most ancient and famous from the pre-historic foundations of that Tradition. It is called 'The Riddle of Narada,' and it comes down to us in the form of a story embodying seven separate conundrums, the answers to which embrace the whole of Philosophy – not just Indian philosophy. One must try to answer these out of one's own experience, in one's own words and in the current language of this time and country.

The complete answers could only come from the insight of a Self-realizing person: for neither logic nor emotional realisation nor mere erudition will be enough. As an example of the great scope of each question, the first of them is made the basis of a Summer Programme for *anyone* who wants it.

You are asked not to mention this test to anyone else and to send in your written answers before 28th September.

Once upon a time two brothers, who were exactly the same in character and mind, went to a sacred place where the river Sindhu joins the ocean. There, living in the society of dedicated men, they attained purity of heart. One day the divine Narada (the spokesman of Vishnu, the second or 'preserving' element of the Trinity), approached them and said:

1. Do you know the owner of this pleasure-ground of body? Without knowing the owner, all austerities are fruitless.
2. There is a kingdom where reigns the one and only king. There is a well whence there is no return.
3. There is a woman who assumes many forms. There is one who is the husband of the woman.
4. There is a river whose currents flow in opposite directions.
5. There is a house built of twenty-four kinds of material.
6. There is a bird which has great discrimination and twitters beautiful songs.
7. There is an element which is in perpetual motion.

When you understand what these are, you will know the Truth and attain liberation.

Hearing these puzzling words from Narada, the brothers contemplated the problems after meditation, and from within themselves came the answers. When they realized the truth contained in those words, they followed the path of the Absolute and attained their absolute freedom.

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