

The Timeless Tatoo

Stavrogin:in the Apocalypse the angel swears that there'll be no more time.

Kirillov: I know. It's quite true, it's said very clearly and exactly. When the whole of man has achieved happiness, there won't be any time, because it won't be needed. It's perfectly true.

Stavrogin: Where will they put it then?

Kirillov: They won't put it anywhere. Time isn't a thing, it's an idea. It'll die out in the mind.

- Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Possessed"

I was speaking to a friend last week and I noticed a tattoo on her ankle. I was wondering how long she had it because I never noticed it before. I do not have a tattoo and so I often wonder what it would be like according to my own ideas. I was a little nervous at first until I saw it was a tasteful image: a colorful little hummingbird. Sometimes the sight of tattoos makes me nervous as I place myself in the position of other people with tattoos and I wonder if the mental image that they project on to the body will endure as long as the tattoo? Does the art work on the body reflect enduring characteristics of the personality? Even when I see what I believe are tasteful tattoos I still enter in doubt as to whether they will always be enjoyed.

For me, the mind is a Heraclitian fire, always in flux and consuming relative images almost as quick as they arise. Anything mind born is impermanent. Only the witness of the mind, the Atman, endures. Knowing the Atman, one can accept one's relative mental self as an impermanent phenomenon yet still adjust with it and be happy in life. A connection with the Atman guides the flow of mind and mental concepts and self images transform and flow into another in a meaningful manner. Although images and self concepts endure for some time, should one try and project an image on one's skin? These, at least, are my ideas about projecting self images.

The conversation continued and I forgot about it. Today she showed me her tattoo and said that she got it yesterday. I asked her if she had part of it done last week but only had it finished yesterday because I had already seen it. She said it was started and finished yesterday. She was only thinking about it last week.

One cannot explain so many things in this universe. For such things I do not need an explanation. The Macrocosmic Consciousness of the Atman connects all of its microcosmic entities through love and knowledge, and in playful, surprising ways at times. It is only when I reflect philosophically and scientifically that there are doubts and question about specific causal mechanisms.

In tantric philosophy when a cause is not known it is called "liila." Liila also signifies "divine drama," the spiritual world in which we exist yet is so full of mysteries whose causes we cannot experience empirically. It is said that the Atman is the First Cause, the cause of all causes, but it cannot be known by the intellectual mind. Only mystical insight reveals its existence. The experience with the vision of the tattoo is fun and playful and I simply think of it as an expression of "liila," perhaps a playful cosmic trick to help me overcome my subtle bias against tattoos?

When a cause can be known and experienced it is called "kriida." "Kriida" is when we observe causes and effects in the material and psychic planes. When I think of this experience and try to analyze how it all happened, how to know the kriida, then all sorts of philosophical and scientific problems arise.

I would not have been surprised if I had dreamed that she had a tattoo before it happened. Nor would I have been surprised if I had an internal vision and saw it in my mind's eye, if I would have had an internal vision or idea of the tattoo and knew she was going to get it soon. These types of events are more common and happen more regularly. Normally, one can distinguish between what one perceives with the senses and any intuitive and internal ideas about what is being perceived. However, I believed that I saw it with my physical eyes without any special psychic vision. At the time it was just a normal perception. How did the future work its way into my perceptual field? Was it a subtle, intuitive perception in that I saw something before it happened. Or was the whole affair just a chance and random illusion because the tattoo did not (yet) exist?

Yet my heart says that bliss is extinguishing time as an idea in the mind.

Subscribe to my mailing list by sending an email to enckwilliam@protonmail.com

[All Essays And Books](#)