

A Reverse Big Bang

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Alexi: Hello, Ramji.

I am Alexi from Russia. Apologies for my language but English isn't my native tongue. I am an Advaita student for the last five years and I know all the basics and little more. I have watched many of your videos and I can say you are the only one in the internet with complete knowledge. I have been to India in the late '90s.

There is something really strange about myself. I have always had a memory, not of being in an empty space, but of being THE EMPTY SPACE THAT GOES ON FOREVER. I was alive there, with no content at all. I can't say for how long – maybe for eternity – maybe for five minutes – I really can't tell. I remember there was nothing at all but myself with no perceptions, with no thoughts, but with an orgasmic feeling caused by my infinity. And as I was there enjoying myself, without any warning, just out of the blue, I experienced an immense shrinking (I went from infinitely expansive to shrinking to the size of an atom. I would describe it as something like a reverse Big Bang that was accompanied by a violent falling. I was total panicked for the first time. I mean horror, not just fear. Then something told me (not with words; it just came in my consciousness or it was like a recognition), "DON'T BE AFRAID. NOTHING HAS CHANGED. YOU ARE STILL THE SAME."

As I "heard" this, I was looking inside me and I was seeing infinity in an atom and that I was alive and conscious – isn't that crazy? Then the fear left me. The relief from the panic is the last thing I remember. I don't remember being born, nothing at all.

This experience happened when I was a very little kid, and when I grew up at first I thought that it was about the stages before I was in my mother's womb. The Tibetans talk about a *bardo* state so I thought maybe it was that.

And then I had the crazy idea that I was the universe before the Big Bang. The experience remained unresolved until I heard about *sat-chit-ananda* – that blew my mind – it was the best description about that thing I heard ever; that's how I fell in love with Vedanta. Don't misunderstand me. I don't claim to be enlightened or something. In fact, I know I am not for sure, because suffering is still here.

I want to ask you, have you ever heard someone else having this experience? Why have I not heard about this? Am I the only one to remember this? Is that *Brahman* I remember? Do I really remember the *Brahman/atman* relationship? Please keep it between us. Thank you, Ramji, for your time. I hope you have an answer.

Ramji: Hi, Alexi.

Many people have that experience or a similar one. And you have drawn the right conclusion from it. You are what was there before the Big Bang. You are existence/consciousness. There is a verse in one of the *Upanishads* that talks about that experience. It says that you, existence/consciousness, are "bigger than the biggest and smaller than the smallest." It means that no matter how big or small you

feel, you are not big or small. Big and small feelings are objects known to you. You are never the objects that are known to you. You are always free of them. You are enlightened if you know yourself as the witness of your feelings and thoughts. By the way, *Brahman* and *atman* don't have a relationship; these are two words for the Self, existence/consciousness.

~ Love, Ramji

PS: It's too bad that you don't want me to share this email with others. It is a very important topic and many would benefit from it. How about I write it up in such a way that nobody knows who you are? It's pretty silly that you are worried that somebody might recognize you and think you are crazy - when you are the Self.

Alexi: It's okay, Ramji, you can share it. You can put Alexi from St. Petersburg also if you like. But if you see grammar mistakes, please correct them. And please say that I don't claim to be enlightened. I know, I already said that. Maybe some *karma yoga* will take the suffering away eventually. Hugs and greetings from St. Petersburg, Russia.

Ramji: Okay, Alexi. I'll write it up. What did you think of my reply?

Alexi: Greetings to you and Sundari. Thank you very much for your time and I want you to know it is my pleasure talking to you and I feel lucky to discover your teachings. Your reply took a huge weight off my shoulders. It took me courage to write this email to you because I was afraid your reply. Now that you said that it is an experience that others have too I feel relieved - sanity restored. Ha ha ha. Be honest, Ramji, even if you have to be harsh to me - truth is all that matters in our cycle, isn't it?

Ramji, if I can remember the SELF and this is a pre-born memory, it tells me two things about the nature of the *jiva*. The memory and the emotions are not monopolized by the brain; somehow the *atman* has the property of remembering - feeling emotions and having a good sense of reason. Is a mind possible to all sentient beings, even to those without a brain (i.e. plants, cells, viruses, etc.)?

Ramji: Before I answer this I want to say that this expanding-shrinking kind of epiphany is eternal. People feel expansive and exhilarated and they also feel small and contracted in one way or another all the time. Your experience was compacted and therefore it was very dramatic. It was too much for the conscious mind to assimilate so your mind thought you might be going crazy. If you try to share it with "normal" people they will think you are crazy.

The conclusions you drew are not correct, however.

First, the "brain" doesn't remember anything. It is just a big blob of material fat. It is an instrument that doesn't think. Memory (*chitta*) is part of the Intellect, the portion of the subtle body that thinks.

Second, the *atma*, awareness/consciousness, doesn't think either. It doesn't have body and mind, so it can't think, even when it appears as a human being, It doesn't think, but it looks like it does. You were fooled by *Maya* into thinking that the *atma*

thinks.

The “mind” that you are talking about is called the macrocosmic subtle body (*hiranyagarbha*). It is subtle matter that reflects consciousness and creates life, i.e. conscious, sentient beings. It has four basic functions: emoting, discriminating, acting and remembering.

Viruses sit on the border between matter and mind. They behave in certain ways that make it seem as if they are conscious, but they don't actually think and feel and remember like humans do. Plants have rudimentary subtle bodies that allow them to respond to their environments, but they don't think either. They have basic “feelings,” attractions and aversions. Animals are a bit more complex, but they don't have intellects, so they can't reason like humans, although you see rudimentary types of logic operating in the higher primates, sometimes even in chickens. You reasoned, i.e. inferred, incorrectly that the *atma* inferred. The intellect made the inference with the help of consciousness.

Alexi: When I am thinking forward to the day of my death, I can assume that I will return back to the same state. Infinite emptiness/nothingness with the only three things I always had and always will have for eternity (including the present moment – existence/consciousness, limitlessness (*sat-chit-ananda*). Isn't it then that this life and the entire universe will seem like a dream (at least from the absolute point of view) like Vedanta and the sages are teaching us?

Ramji: Yes and no. In the first place, you – the *atma* – don't die. The body dies. Second, you are “infinite awareness” (you must have been reading Buddhism if you think that the *atma* is emptiness/nothingness) when you are alive. It isn't empty. If you want a word, it is fullness, completeness. It is not nothing. There is no such thing as nothing, because to know nothing consciousness has to be present. It is existence, which is consciousness. The *atma* is infinite awareness (*chit*) that observed the growing-shrinking experience. It doesn't grow or shrink. And it doesn't have three things. *Sat, chit* and *ananda* is the nature of the *atma*, three statements about it. It exists (*sat*). It is consciousness (*chit*) and it is limitless, or infinite (*ananda*).

Furthermore, the universe is a dream right now. You don't have to wait to die to discover that. The *atma* is the absolute point of view, and you are only the *atma*, the “I.” You include the body and mind with the “I” so you think it is born and it dies; this is the mistake. If you subtract the body and mind, you will see that you are the *atma* right now and that the world is a dream. You can't physically separate the *atma* from the body and mind, only with the intellect. It is called discrimination and is known as liberation (*moksa*).

However, if your body dies and the intellect knows that it is the *atma* with such conviction that the knowledge renders the *vasanas* non-binding, then Alexi's subtle body will dissolve, and the *jivatma*, which is always non-separate from *Paramatma*, will “merge,” which is like water merging into water, which is to say it is not a merger. If you pour a glass of water into a pitcher of water, has there been any change in the water?

Alexi: The ancient *rishis* could not have the knowledge of today's science, which

knows that the universe will end far in the future. How did the *rishis* know it? The call it the Night of *Brahman*, and their numbers are consistent with modern cosmology. Figuring out who you really are isn't an easy task – but figuring out the nature of material universe is really unbelievable level of understanding!!!

What your thoughts, Ramji?

Ramji: If you accept the *Vedas*, i.e. Vedanta, as a means of Self-knowledge, it is very easy, Alexi. Your epiphany told you what the *Upanishad* says, which is that you are *sat-chit-ananda*. If you try to figure it out on your own, you will keep seeking forever. If you let a Vedanta teacher teach you, you will understand it. When you understand what Vedanta is, you stop seeking. The jury is not out on the topic of the Self.

Anyway, about the universe: today's material scientists are in the dark about the *atma*. They know there is something but they don't know what it is. Basically they are arrogant and can't even trust common sense to come to the right conclusion. But they know about the universe, which is matter and which is created and destroyed. They use direct experience and inference to figure out the Big Bang.

The day and night of *Brahman* is just a metaphorical way of saying the universe begins and ends. But it doesn't actually end when *Brahman* "sleeps," because *Brahman* doesn't sleep. It could only sleep if it was awake. But it isn't awake. To say that it sleeps depends on it being awake, which would make it a big *Jiva*. It is the awareness of the creation and destruction of the universe. It is unborn and eternal. So where does the universe go when it sleeps? It goes unmanifest, into a potential state and it "re-bangs" again after billions of aeons. How do the *rishis* know about it without all science's fancy instruments? *Brahman*, with the help of *Maya*, revealed it to them.

Anyway, Alexi doesn't need to worry about it, because he will not be here when the universe goes to sleep or when it wakes up. He needs to start thinking he is the *atma* so his fears go away. If you are the *atma*, you needn't worry about going crazy or about dying. You are unborn, so you can't die. So the basic problem is that you confuse yourself with your body and mind. You need to transfer your identity to the *atma* so that when you say "Alexi" you mean limitless, ever-free, ever-present, unborn existence/awareness.

Alexi: It was a great *satsang* indeed. It's perfect, you can post it and let me know when so I can see it. I finally got the answer after all these years – something I thought will never happen. PEACE TO US ALL!!!