

1674 High St.  
Benwood, W. Va.,  
Oct. 17, 1960

Friend Puljan,

It is possible that I have too strong an aversion to the use of the word "God". From my early youth I built up a sort of anger with the pretender, who mouthed it too easily. I felt that the ignorance of hungry students was often perpetuated by wind-bags with a facility for getting into the act. My father-in-law is a minister who is ~~an~~ personal friend of "God's". He has learned to distinguish God's voice from the devil's. They talk together like two chums in a pub. And I know another guy who claims he is Jesus Christ. Not too long ago he wrote me a letter saying now that he was not sure if he were God the son or God the father. So there is an "open season" on God by petty squakers and confidence men who would avoid gross sales tax or the postal regulations.

I have a deep respect for those who do not try to label. As the Jews perhaps with IHVH. I think if I actually did experience what I consider from this angle to be the sum total I would devise another symbol.....and while losing a little mantra-magic gain in meaning by differentiation from the God of the minister's vest-pocket, and the phallic gods of old.

You used a word which to a English speaking person (Christian origin) implies personality by omniscience; and omnipresence. And the essence of this entity (in reality the personalized total ignorance of mankind to date) has been vaingloriously blue-printed by the summa theologica of Aquinas. And it still means nothing to me.....except an answer created by heat and hunger.

We have an added difficulty in our correspondence. I would have been more insistent upon definition at the early outset, but I had heard that Zen is full of shocks and gimmicks, and I waited a while to see if you were doing something for effect.

Many would run to you when you use the word God, because it is a great door-opener....especially when they claim to know all about God. But these fundamentalists are all madly chopping at each other with the sword that Christ left behind. On the other hand I think a genuinely honest man would be inclined to avoid you when you make your first claim. And of course your sifting may be the aim...but what does it leave you.

Your letter is still evasive to a degree (although I am deeply grateful for the volume and labor on your part. You speak of me not being fit to know of life after death until I know all about life. It is impossible to know life until one knows about death. And I think you know that. Still bicameral and polar.