

Three Fundamentals of the Introceptive Philosophy

Part 3 of 16

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November 28, 1973

Over a period of considerable time I have been impressed with the existence of certain similarities, as well as dissimilarities, between *tulku* communication and “butterfly valve” communication. In all of the important work which I have been able to produce since 1936, either in written form or in oral form, there has been present the action of what I have called the butterfly valve. This leads to a difference in functioning as compared with ordinary composition. Ordinary composition of a philosophic, scientific, mathematical, or other such forms, may be called speculative thinking. It’s where one uses the resources of the outer mind by educating it, disciplining it, training it so that it operates at will upon material given to it. Most thinking is of this sort, and we may say that the great body of our science and our philosophy, in general, is produced by this kind of thinking, though not all. One who is sensitive to the presence of another source of knowledge may detect the action of another function in consciousness in the writings of those who are more or less on the level of genius. One could detect it very easily in the writings of Plato for instance.

Now, there is a certain important difference involved here. There is an action of another function of consciousness that comes into play, and I’ve been able to detect its presence as something that could be turned on or turned off very easily by the action of something in consciousness that suggested the figure of a butterfly valve. The valve being of a nature that is handled very easily by a simple change of attitude in the outer consciousness; or, it may operate spontaneously and introduce a flow of a somewhat from another level of consciousness which involves more than the resources of the trained mind which operates on the level of speculative thinking. To distinguish between the two types of thinking, I have called that form which involves the action of the butterfly valve [or] “transcriptive thinking,” following the terminology of Sri Aurobindo.

Now, in observing the action of this function there is evident to me a certain similarity to the communication that comes from the operation of *tulku*, and here I will describe what is meant by *tulku*. In this case we are not concerned with *tulku* in the profoundest sense where there is a persistent introduction of certain principles of another and generally higher entity into the psychical organization of the objective individual, something which is said to be the case with both the *Dalai* and *Tashi* Lamas of Tibet; and in this case the introduction of these replacing principles is said to be from the level of the Great Buddha himself. Beside this more permanent form of *tulku* there is what may be called simple *tulku* communication, which involves a transitory relationship between the objective personality and the communicating entity. The communicating entity may come into the picture only occasionally and for the purpose of a communication only. This was taken up in the discussion of *tulku* which is upon another tape at some length, and it was there pointed out that the writing of the book *Isis Unveiled* was for the most part such *tulku* communication by a number of different entities; and H. P. Blavatsky in a

letter to one of her relatives describes some of the peculiarities of this kind of communication.¹ It was as though she in her own proper person stepped aside and found a consciousness within herself referring to knowledge of places and of facts foreign to her own experience; persons, for instance, that referred to areas in the world where she had never been. In this way material can be communicated through the person that is alien to the knowledge of that proper person. I have witnessed this sort of thing, and I have known in the case of the one whom I have called Senior that there were several references to purely objective fact totally alien to the person of Sherifa through whom the *tulku* functioned, as for instance a statement to the effect that in Poseidonis in its last days it was the custom for the male in the household to light a fire, that no female was permitted to initiate a burning of anything, but a flame could be established by the male and from that the females of the household could take fire for various other uses. There is here a thought that was not developed at that time, that perhaps there are functions in which only the female could initiate a process, and it might be suggested that that would apply in connection with the initiation of all flowage of water. In other words, it might conceivably be required that only the female part of humanity could establish waterworks and effect repairs in the operation of such waterworks. However, this is only a speculative thought; the important point is that the knowledge concerning this practice with respect to fire was totally alien to the knowledge of Sherifa. Specific, factual knowledge was spoken through her voice that was alien completely to her own proper experience. In the butterfly valve experience, there is a certain similarity to this extent, that one seems to have a knowledge that he never learned through his reading or reflection upon objectively derived material, and the question arises as to whether that is his own knowledge or something more than that. However, there is this peculiarity with respect to butterfly valve communication: that the knowledge seems to be intimately a part of one's own consciousness, yet more than the external consciousness that was trained in the schools.

Here, now, I shall enter into some analysis of the process, but first a remark about the nature of this kind of material. This material belongs to the field of psychology proper rather than to the field of the immediate content of a philosophy. The difference between psychology and philosophy, and indeed between any science and philosophy, is that psychology, along with any science, gives us existential judgments, as William James pointed out in his first chapter of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.² It gives judgments of fact, whereas philosophy is concerned with, primarily, with judgments of meaning or significance and of value. The two functions are essentially very different, yet confusion is often made between them. The psychologist is concerned with the circumstances surrounding a function.

Now, here we have a problem: psychology, unlike the other sciences, is concerned preeminently with subjective material, a material that cannot be observed in the way that most of the material of science can be observed. Most of the material of science is based upon external observation of empiric fact and is submitted to various controls that are essentially simple; but psychological process depends upon internal

¹ See the audio recordings "On Tulku," parts 1 and 2.

² William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1961), 23. See also the audio recording "Existential Judgment versus Spiritual Judgment."

observation, which has been called “introspection.” Here there is one difficulty: the introspective observation is private to the individual and not at all easily correctable by any other person. The method of building up an objective value with respect to such introspective material may be accomplished by taking introspections of several different individuals and submitting them, thus, to a certain corrective control, but when the material is of a sort that it is rarely possible to find another individual who is dealing with the same kind of material it is necessary to assume both the technical competency of the introspective individual and his honesty. This renders psychological research in this sort of field less capable of objective control than the material of the more objective sciences, and it leads to a certain difficulty. Some have even gone so far as to try to deal with facts of consciousness by the observation of objective behavior. Objective behavior can be observed by several observers and we can derive definitive, objective fact. This gives a simplification of method, but at the price of drawing assumptions concerning conscious states that are highly speculative. We are not, in the employment of such methods, dealing with the immediate content of consciousness itself; and while it gives us a comfortable and easily controlled methodology, the ultimate effect is very apt to be that instead of saving the baby from the bath, one throws out the baby and keeps the bath. In this figure the baby symbolizes the actual conscious event, whereas the bath is simply the observed behavior which may be more or less irrelevant.

Now, proceeding to a direct discussion of the action of the butterfly valve, we have first to distinguish the two phases of its action: first, the phase initiated objectively by the personal determination to have the butterfly valve function, and, second, the spontaneous action of the butterfly valve. With respect to the first phase, or form of its functioning, certain conditions can be identified which are adverse to its function if not rendering it completely impossible. If in a state of affect or in a state of strong extroversion of the interest, I find that the butterfly valve cannot be activated. It, thus, implies that there must be elimination of the state of affect and a withdrawal of the consciousness inwardly or in the direction of introversion. The condition of the outer consciousness most favorable for the initiation of the butterfly valve functioning is a state of contented peace, inward withdrawal, and of interested expectation. Now, to get this condition, I wish to make certain observations. It should be based upon a life habit in which the condition of contented peacefulness is the norm of life. In my yoga there is no use whatsoever of body manipulation, the use of any chemical substance whatsoever, nor of any other external agency. If I look at the state of the body as it is while being in an inner state of contented peacefulness, it is manifestly relaxed, but there’s no approach to this state by any process which aims at producing relaxation of the body. The body is completely ignored. The inner state of contented peacefulness produces relaxation. Now, it may well be that there are valid external approaches toward this state, but they have no part in my yoga or my experience. The action is entirely between the mind and the will on one side and other states of consciousness which either belong to an inner mind or some state which is beyond the conception of mind entirely. There is no approach, let me add, by any external practice whatsoever—no imposition of diet or of physical regime in life, just a maintenance of a peaceful contentedness which has persisted most of the time since 1936. There must be a drawing inward as a contemplation of an inward subject matter, an inward probing; what is, for instance, the answer to the problem that lies in one’s mind, and a probing for that answer. There must be no state of affect or intense feeling. There must be persistent calmness in the consciousness combined with

enthusiastic interest. Now, if there are adverse conditions in the state of consciousness, I find that they can be controlled very readily by the direct—note especially the word direct—action of the will. Affect can be calmed directly without the employment of any methodology.

Now, being in this state with the attention directed to the butterfly valve, it functions; and then there are certain signs that indicate its presence. With the butterfly valve open, and if one's internal observation is sufficiently acute, he can detect something like a sense of flow which produces in his consciousness a quality of delight, accentuated sense of peace, contentment, and emphasized interest. If one attends to it purely passively, is not seeking the answer to any problem, the state continues as one of real contemplative value; but I have found that it produces effects that can be picked up by at least certain other individuals so that they too have their consciousness affected by it, and as this has been reported to me, it is preeminently a happy state of consciousness. There is implied here, then, this: that there is something like a psychological continuum involving other centers of consciousness beside myself, and that the activation of the butterfly valve produces effects in that so-called psychological continuum, and that other individuals within that continuum may consciously notice differences within the states of their consciousness. There is the possibility, and in fact the probability, that influence can be extended through this psychological continuum affecting other individual centers of consciousness without their being aware of it. This is simply a description of the state in its purity where it itself is the subject matter.

Now, there is the action of it spontaneously. This, I would say, typically happens in connection with a question in my mind—a question of the sort that calls for a philosophic integration, a contribution to a philosophic problem. The process seems to be this: that if there comes before me a question which cannot be answered by my normal, externally organized resources, I project it inward or upward and in time, sometimes a short time, sometimes quite a long time, there will come a moment when an answer to that problem or question precipitates into my mind. It does so with a quality of authority that I have never found in purely external speculative thinking. It brings forth a kind of knowledge which has a high order of assurance, and along with this there is in the consciousness a feeling of enthusiasm, and of delight, and of great interest.

Instead of calling this function the butterfly valve function, which seems a bit crude, the thought has come to me that we might call it the “transcendental function.” Now, as I have experienced the action of this function, it is not effective in the answering of all possible questions. It does not give me answers with respect to questions of empiric fact currently or connected with the past—the kind of answer that might be given through a clairvoyant function which was highly developed—nor does it give answers to questions that are essentially of a personal sort, features that are connected with personal psychology. As I know it, then, it is limited in its action. What it does give rather effectively is answers to questions that lead to a more or less complete philosophic resolution. It tends toward an integration in one's system of thought; it ever leads to greater and greater logical completeness in that thought, but it seems to be detached from the empiric field. It does not, therefore, cover every possibility.

And here a remark may be introduced that may have an important bearing here. One time I was talking to Senior and he made the statement to me, “You do not have

what is ordinarily known as clairvoyance involving the direct action of the senses, but you do have another function which,” he said, “I might call mental clairvoyance.” And that statement clicked. To identify what was meant by mental clairvoyance, I should bring out this point. It is as though it were a function capable of direct apprehension of universals, not a direct apprehension of particulars, in the sense of sensible particulars. Now, this leads us to a certain chapter in *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo entitled “The Methods of the Vedanta.”³ In that chapter there is an elucidation of two functions. One is called the direct action of the sense-mind, there identified as the *manas*; and the direct action of the pure reason, there identified as the *Buddhi*. It was pointed out that in the direct action of the sense-mind, many forms of sensuous-like cognitions can be manifested which do not involve the action of the senses properly; thus, the performance of the senses independent of the sense-organs, the capacity to be aware in sense-like terms of events in the past and perhaps to some extent in the future, to be aware of events on other planes of being; but all of this material essentially of the form which we ordinarily would call concrete. On the other hand, in the case of the direct action of the pure reason, or the *Buddhi* in Aurobindo’s terms, there is the immediate apprehension of universals; and this has a bearing on a very important aspect of the philosophy of Plato. Plato asserted that there were two forms of knowledge: one dealing with the sensuous order which he regarded as inferior—and I quite agree with him there—and the other dealing with the apprehension of universal principles. Now, ordinarily, in philosophic and scientific thinking we approach universals as a speculative derivation from particular events or apprehensions. They are, thus, viewed as constructs which we have invented essentially. The difference involved when we consider the action of this transcendental function is that the apprehension of the universal is immediate, not a construction derived from particulars; and that brings in a different way of viewing philosophy as a whole. In fact, we might call it the Platonic approach—one with which I have the most profound sympathy.

At this point in the form of a sort of footnote, we might consider the two distinct uses of the words ‘concrete’ and ‘universal’, which occur both in common usage and in philosophy. Most commonly we think of the concrete particular which is given through immediate experience as being concrete; whereas, the derivation of characteristics which a particular has in connection with other particulars is viewed as a process of abstraction which may ultimately eventuate in universal statements in the form of empirically derived laws. But there is another usage of the word concrete which we’ll find in Hegel in which the universal is viewed as concrete and any particular, as for instance a sensuous particular, would be viewed as an abstraction. The universal is that which is given; the particular is that which is derived. I lean to this philosophic point of view, and the action of this transcendental function which we have been considering tends in that direction, that somehow these universals preexist all particulars, while in the field of our common experience we have a reversal; we contact the concrete particular first and seem to derive the universals by a process of abstraction. The higher truth, from my point of view, is that the universal preexists the particular and that the so-called concrete particular of sensuous experience is really a derivation. There is, thus, a radical divergence and even a clash

³ Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine* vol. 18 of the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centennial Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1970), 60-70. The chapter is actually titled “The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge.”

between my philosophic position and that which is presented by the Buddhist logicians Dignaga and Dharmakirti.

Through the action of the transcendental function there is a strong sense of inner communion with something which we will call at the present moment the “Other.” This communion is very precious. It has all of the possible values which attach to what the mystic commonly calls as a communion with the Divine, but there is not here any clear sense of communion with a “being.” And this brings up a point that is of considerable philosophic importance. Does the sense of communion inherently or necessarily imply a being contacting another being? The evidence that I have to offer would give a negative answer to this: that while, no doubt, there may well be communion, as it were, between a being and another being that is more interior—and I know of experiences of that sort—yet, it is not necessarily so. This brings up the point that was made by Buddha when he discussed the nature of fire. He said that there is no substance necessary or even existent which was the support or the source of the qualities which constitute fire. These qualities are light and heat; and those qualities constitute the whole of fire. Fire is not a substance of which the qualities are manifestations. If we view entities such as is implied in all references to a divine being as the container of qualities of inner experience, then these entities fulfill the same office that the concept of substance does in the conception of fire which Buddha considered. There is no reason consistent with the view that Buddha put forth that would require us to say that the sense of communion necessarily implies communion with an *entity*. It could be communion with a *quality* and be just as rich as any possible communion with an entity. The experience, or rather imperiences, which I know tend to confirm the position enunciated by the Buddha, that there is a rich communion with qualities, that one can know the richness of beauty, of loveliness, of affection in the profound sense of the words which we use, namely, love, benevolence, compassion, human man-to-man-ness or brotherhood. These qualities can be imperienced without the need of the conception of entity. Their richness does not depend upon the conception of entity. They are facts of immediate imperience and need nothing more to make them completely real.

These facts of inner imperience have a direct bearing upon the requirements essential to the form of yoga known as *bhakti*. Ordinarily *bhakti* seems to imply the necessity of a transcendental person to which affective relationship can be established, a sense of reaching out towards that person and of that person reaching out to the *bhactor*. But there is indicated here a possibility of quite a different approach to *bhakti* yoga, namely, that of an interrelationship involving *qualities* rather than the notion of *entity*, that the relationship can be with the Pure Consciousness itself conceived as field Consciousness, as self-existent, and preexistent before all entities become. The richness of the relationship is a fact of imperience that is not a speculative position. It is a fact. The deduction that there is entity in a relationship to entity is not essential. I am not denying that there may well be levels of consciousness in which there is a relationship of the *bhakti* to an entity of a higher level of consciousness, but all that I’m saying is that it is not necessary in order that a *bhakti* yogi could be that the ultimate reality should be viewed as entity; it could be viewed as quality. This opens out, then, another way of viewing *bhakti* yoga.

The statement that Consciousness is original, self-existent, and constitutive of all things implies that the qualities inherent in Consciousness are also self-existent,

original, and constitutive of all essences. Love, beauty, sweetness, and so forth are such qualities which may be immediately imperienced without implying entityhood at all. In that case, for this yoga the concept of PERSONALITY, spelt with uppercase letters, is not necessary. I am not asserting that it is nonexistent or has no place. I am leaving that question open. But the imperience which I know does not imply that that conception is necessary. The principles of immediate experiences, or imperiences, do not become less, are not in any sense cheapened, by reason of the abandonment of the notion of ultimate personality.

We have implied here an inversion of the point of view or relationships that seem to be most commonly characteristic of the philosophies and religions of the world. The common view seems to be that entity or substance is original and that qualities are derived from this. The inverted point of view would be that quality or essence is original and that entityhood is acquired. This has very important consequences: among others, the rather shocking and possibly frightening conclusion that no conception of eternity can be predicated of any entity, but only of the essence or qualities. The essence is. The entities become. Thus, entityhood is the result of the aggregation of qualities, and in the normal course of nature the aggregation tends to dissolve, following the law that everything which becomes is subject to becoming not. Eternity attaches to the qualities, not to entityhood.

Now we come to a point of a great deal of importance. What is the function of the fundamental qualities which we call love and hate? It may be asserted more or less aphoristically in this way: by love man creates his gods and God, and by his devotion to these gods he maintains their continued existence; by hate he produces the destroyers, and by hating he continues their existence. We command through these qualities. By our love we maintain the continued existence of the entity known as the beloved. There is, thus, a sense in which we may speak of a relative immortality, an achieved immortality, as distinct from the innate and original immortality of the essence, which in this philosophy is called Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject. This relative immortality is achieved through the power of love, which serves as an integrating glue which holds together qualities in the form of entityhood. This gives, then, to the Kwan-Yin vow a meaning far greater than that with which we usually view it, namely, that there is not here merely a redemption from sin, or evil, or illusion, but through the love that underlies the will to take the Kwan-Yin vow, entities achieve a relative immortality. And likewise by the functioning of the polar opposite, namely, hate and anger, we accentuate the disintegration of entityhood. Entityhood is, thus, the great achievement. Let me correct it and say persistent entityhood is the great achievement to be brought about in the process of conscious evolution. It is not the root from which all springs. That root is essence, including the existence of the qualities.