

Three Fundamentals of the Introceptive Philosophy

Part 10 of 16

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

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Last night I heard one say that through music one could reach the metaphysical as one could not reach it through thought. This brings up a point that is of considerable practical importance. What we have here is what may be called a psychological confession, and this is something of substantial importance in the choice of a way of yoga.

We know today that not all human beings have the same psychological organization that we are to be classified into a number of different psychological types. Our knowledge of this subject is based upon the research of men such as Kretschmer, Dr. Sheldon, and most important of all, Dr. Carl G. Jung. The subject long ago impressed me very strongly, so much so that I spent ten years in the study of Jung and in the penetration into the subject of the psychological types for I saw that this had a bearing in many directions, that we could not make judgments that were valid for all men if we did not take into account psychological differences. The way in life, and the way in thought, and even the way in yoga is relative to the nature of the individual *sadhaka*, and that, in fact, the path that is the right path for one individual is not necessarily the right path for other individuals. Yet, there is a tendency in perhaps all of us to universalize the position that is normal to oneself and affirm that it is the truth or the way for all individuals, and this involves an important error. It is the part of wisdom to become acquainted with the inherent differences in human beings and to make adjustments with respect to these inherent differences. We may very rightly take the position that every human being has a right to his own psychology and the relativity that is normal to that individual psychology; but none of us have the right to impose the scheme of valuation or the perspective which is normal to ourselves as individuals and impose it upon all others. There has been in the past a good deal of this that has resulted from the ignorance of the differences due to natural, perfectly normal, differences in psychological type.

This has a bearing upon many fields in life, among others, in the field of government; and it became clear to me long ago that there could not be a governmental organization which was really just to all men if it did not take into account the differences growing out of inherent differences of psychological type. One man's food is often another man's poison. Not all men can be grouped under one system that applies to all. A just organization would recognize that the distribution of privileges and obligations should vary from type to type. This was something which was well recognized in ancient India, and until we recognize it again we cannot achieve justice in government. But the application of this principle of difference in psychological type to the field of yogic attainment is the aspect of particular interest to us, and this is what I shall speak about in connection with this statement I heard, namely, that it is through music one attains the metaphysical in a degree greater than he can through the power of conceptual thought.

As a statement in the sense of a psychological confession for an individual and for the psychological type or type group of which he is a representative, I would accept this statement as perfectly valid. But as a universal statement considered as valid for all men or as something true essentially concerning the nature of music, I would judge this statement as quite in error. This is not the way of all men, but it is the way of some, and for them I certainly grant that it is perfectly valid.

Now, let us consider what music is. It is the development of an art form based upon the sense of hearing. It has been carried to a very high degree of formation during the period from about 1700 to 1900 and since then there are signs of a substantial decline in the quality of musical creativeness. This is quite in line with Spengler's conception of the cycles through which all cultures pass. Cultures are born, according to this philosopher, they grow through a period of youth, reach on up to maturity, and express at the highest level of maturity for a period on the order of a couple of hundred years, and then is followed by a decline. There is other evidence to indicate that the culture in which this high musical development took place has passed its apogee of development. For that same period was the great period in the development of Western philosophy, and since then there has been a decline in the richness of philosophic unfoldment.

Now, let us ask, what is the essential nature of music? It is as I said before a development of an art form to a high degree of sophistication based upon the sense of hearing. There are other art forms based upon other senses, in particular the art forms that are oriented to sight such as the plastic art forms—painting, architecture, and so forth. It does not appear that in general the art forms connected with the other senses have ever been carried as far as the art forms of these two senses, although there is evidence that in the heyday of Chinese culture there was an art form developed upon the sense of taste, for it appears that with that race the fine cultivation of the sense of taste had almost the value which we would attach to supreme scientific or philosophical achievement. However, for us, at any rate, the art forms that have achieved the highest order of perfection lie in the fields of hearing and of sight. They are sensuous essentially. They depend upon a sensuous medium, and the general word for development on this level is the aesthesis. That this may be supremely important for some individuals is not questioned. But the point we wish to make is that the functions in the psychological sense which are most employed here are the functions of sensation and feeling with what we might call the aesthetic form of intuition. Thinking comes into the picture in only a subordinate degree as the servant function. It is involved in the development of technique either in music or in the plastic arts, enters into a degree in the process of evaluation, but is not the primary function. It serves a sensuous, feeling development primarily, is not the primary instrument of formulation. Shall we say that it functions somewhat like the scaffolding with respect to the construction of some building? The building is an aesthetic entity in this case; the logic, or rational, or intellectual feature is a scaffolding employed in the construction of that building, and then largely is withdrawn from the completed structure.

As a personal confession I would say that if I were to orient to any particular art form, it would be to the form of music rather than to the forms that are oriented to the sense of sight, the sense of taste, the sense of smell, and the other senses. But I would also have to say that none of these elements that belong to the aesthetic component of our

consciousness would occupy the premiere position; that premier position in my case would lie in the logocic side. But looking at this from the perspective of one not primarily oriented to any one art form, or to art as such, but as one grounded in the logocic component, I would have to consider the position of those who are oriented to other than the sense of hearing. There may well be those who would find in the art form oriented to sight, a way of penetrating into depth value superior to any other. I would have to acknowledge their equal right to make this claim as compared to the right of those oriented to the sense of hearing. This is a matter of relativity. I don't at all pretend to understand an orientation, say, to the sense of smell or the sense of taste. But a point I wish to make is that with respect to all of these art forms, the logocic or rational element enters into the picture as an inferior or servant function, and that it is entirely possible that anyone who is most developed in the aesthetic dimension would find that the logos with which he deals is incapable of rising as high as the aesthetic factor with which he works and to which his consciousness is primarily oriented. But this is a point that is of a major importance: what may be true of the logocic or rational element when it is only manifested in that inferior form of the servant function is not at all true when the logos function is the primary one. Here there is a different kind of development, a different kind of capacity. And for one who only knows logos in its more inferior manifestation as servant to aesthetic development, cannot make a proper judgment as to what is the capacity of logos when it is the primary function in an individual. That is a different matter all together. And the warning should be taken that universalization based upon our own private psychology is almost inevitably false. We can universalize only with respect to our own types; going beyond that involves a much deeper penetration into consciousness.

As I have indicated earlier, I would not attempt to adjudicate differences of opinion as the hierarchy of the senses. I think it would be true to say that for us of the West, at any rate, the two senses that stand in the position of superior development are the senses of hearing and the sense of sight. And as to which of these two should have the prior position in an abstract sense, I would not attempt to say. It is clear at any rate that for some individuals the sense of hearing and the arts connected with it take priority over the sense of sight and the arts connected with that. But others would take the reverse point of view, and, so far as I can see, each has a right to his position.

There is, however, the larger question, and that is as to the relative status of the whole of this thesis on one side and the logocic principle on the other. These two I have identified throughout my own writings and discourses as connected with the two principle forms of familiar cognition, namely, those of sense perception and conceptual cognition. Which of these two has a general priority? The question here is by no means a simple one, and it is entirely probable that no one answer would satisfy everybody.

This consideration is one that may be of some importance. The whole of the sensory apparatus is something which man holds in common with the animals; and so far as we can determine, the conceptuality of man is something not shared by the animals. It is a cognitive power, apparently, that has been added in the human being that in reality differentiates him from the kingdoms which lie lower in the evolutionary scale, namely, the animals, the vegetables, and the mineral kingdoms. Man has something of all of these kingdoms within his own makeup. He carries with him the remnant of the mineral

kingdom in his bones, a remnant of the vegetable kingdom in his hair, and a substantial portion of the characteristics of the animal kingdom, including all of his sensory capacities, his dependence upon material food, his metabolism, and in general, his fleshy structure nourished by an elaborate blood system. But so far, he would be merely defined as a higher kind of animal, perhaps the last in the animal level of evolution. But he has added something more, namely, a power of conceptual thought which renders verbal and symbolic communication possible. The communication on the level of the animal seems to be more in the nature of sound or visual impressions that are seen and interpreted practically without the use of concepts. At any rate, highly developed communication depends upon the verbal capacity and the capacity to use other symbols. But conceptuality does not give only an increased capacity for communication; it gives even to the individual who stood alone, where there was no need for communication with other entities, something which makes him stand apart from the animal world. It gives to him the capacity to think in terms that transcend the particular needs of a living organism and which can enter into problems concerning the nature of being, the significance of life, and all of the vast fields covered by philosophy and the sciences of man. These are concerns which would be valuable for the individual even standing alone entirely apart from the capacity to communicate to other individuals of his own kind. It opens up, thus, a dimension of consciousness not opened by the sensorium consisting of all of the various senses. It reaches into domains that transcend the needs of survival in a world or the vital concerns of life. This brings to us a different dimension of consciousness, and a dimension which I say transcends and even far transcends all that which belongs to the makeup of the animal consciousness.

Now a question arises, is the door to the transcendent, to the truly metaphysical, to be found primarily in those features which we hold in common with the kingdoms below us, or in that feature which is unique to man. Different people might give different answers in this connection, and there is some reason to believe that there are important and well evolved races in the world that give primacy to the sensorium. For instance, take the work of Northrop on the meeting of the East and West. His study has indicated to him that the Far East orients itself to the aesthetic component in things primarily and gives to the theoretical or logoc component a subordinate place; and this does seem to be borne out by some of the yogas of the East, for instance Zen and Chan yoga. In this form of yoga there is a substantial disparagement of the whole conceptual line of development, a regarding of it as incomplete, that it abstracts from the rich fullness of the concrete reality which is given through sense perception, and that the way of Realization, of Liberation, or of Enlightenment is through a disparagement of the conceptual order and an enhanced valuation of the perceptual or aesthetic order or continuum. Northrop may be in error in attributing this valuation to all the peoples of the Far East, but it would seem to be true that so far as the Mongolian races are concerned this is in substantial degree true.

Now, not only is the Zen supporting this, but there is a whole field of yogas connected with the Tantra which would seem to support this line of emphasis, for in the Tantra great use is made of the tangible organism, in the manipulation of the body, in the use of breath, in the use of *mantra*, which is an element that appeals to the sense of hearing, in the use of visual art. And while I cannot report from my own experience as to the quality of consciousness which may be acquired by this route, nonetheless, the evidence, which is quite substantial, would seem to confirm the view that this is a way of

yoga that leads to at least some kind of Enlightenment; and in this way of yoga, no doubt, the sensory being, the animal nature of man, plays an important part.

But in contrast to all this, the yogic practice with which I am personally familiar employed none of these methods. There are five Realizations which I have imperienced, and these have been reported in *Pathways*, in the *Philosophy*, and at different points upon these tapes—the five culminating in that Realization which I called the High Indifference. Now, as to the status of these Realizations, they will have to be judged by my description of them. But the point I wish to make is that the animal organism or the sensory side of man was not an instrument in the attainment of these Realizations, but simply a conceptual process of thought, and the power of self-analysis, along with certain ethical disciplines.

Now, the question here is which is the prime road for man? To go through that which he holds in common with the animal kingdom or through that which differentiates him from the animal kingdom? I lean to the latter view. But I realize that other positions may be argued. I simply point out that the use of the sensory organism is not an essential and, so far as I can see, does not play a part in the yoga of knowledge. I do not see that it necessarily plays a part in the yoga of devotion or the yoga of action, although, I would not be dogmatic upon this point.

There are other considerations derived from *The Voice of the Silence* which may be pertinent here. I would direct your attention to the very first page of a reproduction of the original edition of *The Voice of the Silence*. The first “Fragment” starts this way:

These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower IDDHI.

He who would hear the voice of *Nada*, the “Soundless Sound,” and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dharana*.

Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the *rajah* of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.

The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.

Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.¹

Now, the impression one derives from this, taking the sentences in their direct connotation as they would appear to a Western mind, it suggests that the way of yoga implies that you render all the senses unconscious and that the man should become a complete idiot; but, if so, then he could not possibly understand the balance of the text, or the footnotes associated with it, or commentaries upon the text. So obviously that is not the meaning intended. But it is a use of language with which I do not have much sympathy, for I seek to make meaning clear and not confuse by obscurity. But we must remember that these words are taken from ancient texts and have a different cognitive background and that therefore the meaning which they conveyed to those of the day when it was composed could have been very different. In connection with this, there is a

¹ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (Covina, Calif.: The Theosophical University Press, 1946), 1-2.

commentary by a B.T. Chang, who wrote a description in Chinese of the four noble truths as given by the Tashi Lama. I shall quote from this:

Having appended a Chinese note to the end of this book, I am further requested by the editors to write a few lines in English. I deem it an honor and a privilege to do so, and offer herewith a recapitulation of what I [have] set forth in Chinese.

Since its translation into English from the Tibetan by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, in 1889, this little book, the gem of Buddhist teachings, has enjoyed a wide circulation among Europeans and Americans interested in Buddhism. There is, therefore, little need for me to recommend it to foreign readers, except to point out that what is embodied in it comprises a part of the teachings of the Esoteric School.

Now, this is the important part:

What strikes me most in the opening chapter is the sentence: “The mind”—i.e., the Lower Mind—“is the Great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.” These are the words that sound the keynote of the Buddha’s teachings. Time and again the Buddha commands his disciples to suppress the activities of the Lower Mind for the benefit of the Higher Self, because anything and everything in the exterior Universe consists of nothing but sense-impressions created by one’s Lower Mind, which is apt to lead the aspirant astray. The disciple should not seek truth elsewhere, but should try to find it within himself. He will then be able to hear the Voice of the Silence or, in the language of the Chinese Buddhists, the “Divine Voice of the Self”. Tradition says that Avalokiteshwara attained the state of a Bodhisattwa after hearing the Divine Voice of the Self. This doctrine is greatly revered by the Chinese, who got it from the Sanskrit.²

And that is the close of the quotation. It will be noted here that the point is made that the mind referred to in the text is interpreted that this is the “Lower Mind” and not mind as a whole. And it would seem to be mind in the sense that Aurobindo called it sense mind, that which coordinates the senses, as it were, or directs their action, and is not the pure reason. In his chapter on the “Methods of the Vedanta,” he discusses this point at some length.³ He identifies the sense mind, which would seem to be the same as the “*rajah* of the senses” here, with the *manas*, and the pure reason with the *Buddhi*. I would infer, therefore, that the text is not here referring to the pure reason or *Buddhi*, but simply to the *rajah* of the senses alone. Although there is a certain ambiguity

² H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (Peking: The Chinese Buddhist Research Society, 1927). 120-121.

³ Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine*, vol. 18 of the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centennial Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1970), 63. The chapter is actually titled “The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge.”

involved in the statement the “Thought-Producer,” and this I find needs some clarification, which I am unable to give it. The thought producer in my own thinking would be definitely a reference to the pure reason rather than to the *rajah* of the senses, and therefore I think clarification here is indicated.

Now, this whole point made by an Oriental, and at that a Mongolian Oriental, namely, a Chinese, seems to run counter to the thesis of Northrop in speaking of an exclusive orientation to the aesthetic continuum upon the part of the Eastern mind, for here is a critique of that very aesthetic component. At any rate, there is implied here not so much a literal elimination of a capacity to use the senses, as would be suggested by a direct interpretation of the text as it appeals to one who reads it, but rather a subordination of the whole sensual field, that we are dealing here with a factor that causes the great illusion, and that we should therefore step away from sensuality. I bring out this point for what it may be worth. I will not insist upon it. I simply bring it out as statements that need our consideration.