

Three Fundamentals of the Introceptive Philosophy

Part 13 of 16

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I have recently been impelled to give a tape on the subject of conduct, and I shall do so introducing this as an interlude within the discussion of the last two tapes. The continuation of the discussion introduced by those tapes will be made later.

Throughout all our work there is one prime objective towards which we are oriented, and that is the rendering more accessible and more widely accepted Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment. We employ three instrumentalities towards this end: one is the philosophical development, which is aimed at achieving a favorable orientation of the mind; second, there are the technical principles that may apply to this form of yoga; and third, there is the principle of conduct. What is the appropriate conduct favorable to the attainment of the Realization? The prime emphasis has been given all along to the philosophical orientation, and, on the whole, the principle of conduct has been assumed without specific formulation of the principles that should be applied. But it has occurred to me that this subject should now be given special attention.

The principles of conduct, or the appropriate way of living or action in life, are of great practical moment. The very first principle that should be applied here by the aspirant is that of self-dedication or self-giving, or self-sacrifice—sacrifice being understood in the sense of rendering sacred. This is, in fact, the primary requirement, the most important element of all. But there are principles of moral behavior that facilitate this end, and it is to these principles that I wish now to give attention. For my part, I accept fully the principles laid down by the Blessed One, and these are seven in number. I shall list them and then discuss each one in particular. They are as follows: first, the Golden Rule, which in its original formulation appeared in this form, at least substantially. Do not unto others that which you would have others do not unto you. It has been given a positive form of statement by the Christ. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. We shall discuss the difference implied here. Second is the principle of the Middle Way. This has an initial bearing upon conduct, but as we shall see, it has a wider application than that. It also has a metaphysical bearing. These two principles, the Golden Rule and the Middle Way, we might regard as the fundamental logical principles governing conduct. The Buddha listed, in addition, five criterions of specific action in the process of life, and they are as follows, put in simplest forms: first, non-killing; second, non-lying; third, non-stealing; fourth, non-concupiscence; fifth, non-intoxication. This gives us a total of seven criteria or maxims of conduct. The Buddha applied, or gave some five additional rules for the monks which shall not particularly concern us. They cover items such as not sleeping on a soft bed. This is not primary or fundamental, although it is an application of the Middle Way principle following of a course of action that is intermediate between body indulgence on the one side, and body

flagellation on the other. It is only modestly austere and indeed has a good effect upon the aspirant.

First, consider the Golden Rule. Here I prefer the negative formulation of the Buddha rather than the positive one of the Christ for the reason that the negative formulation interferes least with the autonomy of the other fellow. It does not lead to any obnoxious imposition of one's own idea as what is good for him, whereas the positive formulation can lead to such an effect. It is a fact that we are all more or less delimited by our psychological and even physiological types. In general, that which is food for one man may be poison for another, or that which is found highly desirable by one man may be found obnoxious by another. If, then, we apply the Golden Rule in the positive sense, it's very apt to happen that a given individual will interpret the good for the other fellow in terms of that which he would like done to him; and if the other fellow is of a very different psychological type, that sort of action could be quite obnoxious to him. We find an example of this in the propagation of religion that is very characteristic of the two forms of ben-Israel religiosity known as Christianity and as Moslemism. There has been the imposition of the religion upon other peoples by the principle of violence, to treat him violently, it is said, for the good of his soul—an idea which I find most supremely obnoxious and vicious. Nonetheless, if one feels that a certain religious belief which is satisfactory to himself should be extended to others, he's apt to use methods of propaganda for extension that constitute an obnoxious interference with the freedom of the other fellow. We have many examples of that throughout the history of Christianity and even lasting down into our own day.

The positive form of the Golden Rule could be applied much more wisely than this, namely, by seeking out that which the other fellow would like to have done to himself and then doing that for him. This would resolve the difficulty. It would, however, require a very careful search, for remember, one man's food may be another man's poison, and one would have to give to the other, following this interpretation of the Golden Rule, that which to oneself might seem like poison. It's rather a difficult procedure. I might give an example: let us suppose that an radically nonviolent individual were to meet a pugilist, and knew that the pugilist valued nothing much more than that the first individual should try to hit him upon the jaw, though that could very well be an action that the first individual would find very obnoxious if it were applied to himself.

There are difficulties here which I think are largely avoided by taking the negative form of the formula. You simply do not do to the other fellow that which you would not have him do unto you, and leave him, thus, free in his own self-determinism rather than forcing upon him that which you as an individual may find desirable, but which from his point of view is not at all desirable. We may also consider the case of the soldier in connection with the application of the Golden Rule. Manifestly, any individual who does not wish to be the target of some bullet from the other fellow could not, in accordance with the Rule, make the other fellow a target for his own gun. Only he could be a soldier, in conformity with the Golden Rule, who enjoyed having himself treated as a target. In that case, he, in using the other fellow as a target, would not be violating the Golden Rule. It would limit the number of persons who could be soldiers very considerably; nonetheless, there are some natural warriors in the world who like to have applied to themselves the violence which they are seeking to apply to the other fellow. Most

certainly, those individuals, and I think they certainly would be the greater number in the world, who do not want done to themselves that which they are seeking to do to the other fellow, these individuals could not be soldiers without violating the fundamental principle of the Golden Rule.

It should be clearly evident that the wise application of the Golden Rule is a matter of considerable difficulty. Much thought is required, much careful consideration, much wisdom required; yet, it is the principle that should govern us in all our action. The very essence of evil may be found in doing those things, or saying those things, or thinking those things, which we would not have directed towards ourselves. This is exacting in the reflection of the individual; nonetheless, it is of first importance for the aspirant that he should do the very best he can in applying this principle of moral logic.

I find that I left out one principle which was formulated by the Christ that could be an eighth criterion. I shall list it now and discuss it later. It is the principle where Christ said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, but render unto God the things that are God’s.”¹ This introduces a very complicated situation when we come to its application, as we shall see later. There is in the history of man a strong tendency for the political authority to invade the authority of that which we may call the “Transcendental Modulus.”² How to determine the proper zone of political authority on one side and the zone of conscience and of the authority of the Transcendental Modulus on the other is one of very considerable complexity and may indeed require before an appropriate form is worked out a considerable martyrdom.

We shall now proceed to a consideration of the second logical principle of moral conduct. This is the maxim of the Middle Way. This arose in connection with an experience of the Buddha himself, who when he went forth in his search for the solution of the problem of suffering tried first an extended experiment in radical austerity. It is said that he lived this austere life for some six years and had brought his consumption of food, for instance, down to an intake of one grain of rice a day. But once when in a stream bathing he almost collapsed, it occurred to him that nothing had been gained by this extreme of austerity. So he abandoned it, took adequate nourishment for the body, and then took a position under the Bodhi tree saying he would not arise from that position until he had solved the problem, which he did, for on that occasion, he had the imperience known as the Great Enlightenment.³ He had determined that the extreme

¹ See *New Testament*, American Standard Version, Mark 12:17.

² For a definition of ‘Transcendental Modulus’, see the audio recording “Induction Talk”:

Now, the goal may be named differently by different ones and I’m not a stickler for what you call it. You may call it God-Realization, Self-Realization, the attainment of *Parabrahm*, the attainment of *Tao*, the reaching to the Ground—that’s spelled with a capital ‘G’—it means the support upon which all rests—or the Transcendental Modulus, which is quite impersonal, to *Alaya Vijnana*, and so on. The term that counts in your nature, like the attainment of Buddhahood, does not matter to me; but, in any case, it is the supreme value—that without which nothing else could be.

³ For the definition of ‘imperience’, see audio recordings “General Discourse on the Subject of My Philosophy,” part 10, and “On My Philosophy: Extemporaneous Statement.” In speaking of introceptual

methods of austerity which were customary, more or less, in his time and since, were not the effective means. At the same time, indulgence of the senses, of the cravings, was also a barrier to successful attainment. While the latter is obviously a barrier, it was not so obvious then that self-flagellation and general austerity was also a barrier. He formulated, then, a principle of action, of behavior, along an intermediate course that ran to neither extreme form of expression. The principle is highly rational. One may admire the fortitude and stamina of an individual capable of severe self-flagellation such as that of literal crucifixion, but one may have a poor opinion of its wisdom. The idea that comes forth in this respect from the Middle Way is to render unto each part of the total complex of our nature that which it legitimately needs for effective functioning and to apply the same principle in the social body, but to neither indulge craving nor to punish by flagellation. It is a very reasonable program and one which I should very largely recommend. To be sure, from the standpoint of the self-indulgent gourmet or the individual who loves a soft life, the Middle Way may seem to be relatively austere. It is not, however, austere in any severe sense. It is only modestly austere, and if one cannot accept this modest austerity, he is not any fit pilgrim for the way.

However, this principle has a larger application than to simple conduct. The Middle Way can also be understood as following that pattern of equilibrium between the extremes of consciousness forms: thus, the Middle Way between that which is known as the *Sangsara* and the *nirvanic* Consciousness—one which is characterized by a predominance of suffering and the other by an enjoyment of an inconceivable transcendental delight. It is also a principle that is very important in connection with the mastery of subtle energies. Some qualities of consciousness may be attained only when the consciousness is in a state of undisturbed balance without any reaching out for this subtle consciousness, but simply letting it take over. In the case, for instance, of the after-death states as represented in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it is said that in order to accept and function in the Clear Light calls for a strong sense of equilibrium, of balance, no heaving of emotional tendency or of any strong action in any direction whatsoever, but just a steady calm balance. This is an application of the Middle Way which I regard as more important, more ultimately significant than its application to the principles of conduct. It thus appears that there's no principle on the path more important than this of the Middle Way. It is preeminently reasonable. It is a negation of passionateness. It is an application of due restraint in all things.

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the five principles governing specific conduct as enunciated by the Blessed One. The first in the series, as given by me, is that of non-killing. Here we have a problem of considerable difficulty. As one studies life in this world, it would appear to be a general principle that creatures of all sorts live by the death of other creatures. Members of the vegetable kingdom arise and start the beginning of a food chain in which the most elemental forms, as those that are found in the ocean, are consumed by creatures of a somewhat more highly evolved order, and the latter in turn become the food of creatures of a still higher order of development, and so on the way up to the largest creatures of all. And then we find in our own organisms that

knowledge, Wolff says, "The third function therefore gives you imperience, not experience. It is akin to sense perception in the sense of being immediate, but is not sensuous."

there is a constant battle between the leukocytes and invaders of a form that would destroy us by various diseases. The killing produced by these leukocytes is not under our control, and yet it does imply that we live by imposing of death, namely, death upon the invaders. Unless one is to eschew all existence in this world, he must come to some compromise with respect to this principle. It is because of this factor of imposing death for living that one may have a very strong *vairagya* for all existence in the *Sangsara*. I have found it so. I've found this immensely detestable. I've seen the creatures that survive by capturing other creatures and devouring them. And I've seen herbivores who must live by destroying, more or less, the vegetable entities surrounding them. There is here what may be called life by death. It is ugly. I would imagine that it should be possible to produce a world based upon some other principle of survival. So when we apply the principle of non-killing, the best we can hope for if we are to continue to exist and function in this world is an optimum application of it—a reducing of killing to the absolute minimum possible.

Once I undertook to follow a vegetarian course in diet because of this principle of taking of life in order to survive. The use of meat involves the killing of animals who on their part want to live. To be sure, in following a vegetable diet one also frustrates the entities of the vegetable kingdom. He eats grains or he eats roots or the bodies of vegetable entities and thereby either destroys the living organism as it is or destroys the potential organism that could come out of seeds. He has not avoided the principle of killing in order to live entirely. He has merely reduced the level at which such killing takes place, but he has not eliminated the principle. No doubt, a killing of a lower form of life, a less evolved form of life, is not as serious as the destroying of a higher form of life; thus, one would not feel as strongly about the killing of a fish as he would concerning the killing for food of a porpoise. And in the same way, he would not feel as strongly about the killing of a beef or a lamb as he would about the killing of a man for food. There is a greater evil involved in the destroying of higher forms of life than there is in the destroying of lower forms. But this is only a principle of more or less. It is not a complete elimination of the principle of killing. Therefore, the principle of non-killing must be carried out with the end of achieving the optimum condition of non-killing. Manifestly, killing for the fun of killing is a major evil. This applies to all fishing and all hunting for sport when it is not a matter of acquiring necessary food. That point is very important. Also, it implies preeminently that killing of all creatures, not for food but for the purpose of imposing our will upon others, is objectionable in the very highest degree. The killing in private quarrels or the killing in national quarrels stands on essentially the same level. This is not a necessity as in the case of the battle of the leukocytes with the invading disease entities. It is a failure in the moral sense of the present humanity upon this earth. Therefore this principle must be applied by the *sadhaka*, by the aspirant, to the maximum degree possible. Not to carry it so far as to cripple himself in functioning, but to apply it as far as possible to attain the maximum attitude necessary for a brotherhood among all creatures. Here, the vegetarian may feel that he has achieved a position superior to that of the meat eater, but he too involves killing, not only in the sense of destroying the vegetable entities which he eats, but also the growing of such vegetable substances must be protected by those who would destroy them—from the insects, for instance, or from other varmints. Hence, then, he who eats vegetables also implies killing on the part of the farmer who raises the food. There is no avoiding this if

one is to continue to live in this world. Therefore, the only thing that is possible is to reduce killing to the minimum degree possible.

Before ending the discussion of the subject of non-killing, there's one form of killing which needs some special attention: that is the form of self-killing, killing of one's own body, or what we commonly call suicide. This form of killing involves an especially grave responsibility. It would seem to be a sin against life and a sin against one's *karmic* responsibility, a refusal to face the consequences of one's own *karma*. In this connection, I would like to refer to some material that purports, at least, to come from Tibetan sources. This is to be found in the so-called, but not authentic, third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, which is part of the third edition. In that there is a collection of material among which is to be found a section called "The Mystery of [the] Buddha." This material was composed by H. P. Blavatsky, and much of it was taken from Tibetan material with which she was acquainted. Among the statements put down here, there is this: that the *karmic* penalty for taking one's own life is to have his life taken from him violently at the same age in a subsequent incarnation when he did not wish to die. This is a serious consequence and it would imply that the *karmic* responsibility of taking one's own life was very high indeed. Nothing is gained by this method. The individual has no assurance whatever that he will be after death in a position of less difficulty than the one which he is facing in outer life. It may actually be a condition of much more difficulty. This certainly should be taken into account. I would like to lay down as a very emphatic application of non-killing: never kill oneself merely because the way of life has apparently become too difficult. There is always a resolution of problems possible.

Let us consider next the second principle of practical conduct, namely, that of non-lying. This principle is so important that I have been disposed at times to give it the first place rather than the principle of non-killing, for lying is truth murder, and that is of the highest importance as a fault for him whose search is for truth. This rule has its simple and obvious application, as do all of the rules. It interdicts obvious, conscious lying of course, but that is not the thing upon which we will dwell. A person who has not reached the point where he dispenses with conscious and deliberate lying is nowhere near being ready to become a *sadhaka*, or an aspirant for Fundamental Realization.

But there are forms of misrepresentation of truth that are of a subtle nature which concern us more particularly, it being assumed that all obvious misrepresentation is interdicted. We can even unconsciously misrepresent, and if we study ourselves we will find this is going on all the time. For instance, if we study the use of language we'll find that there are two contrasted forms: one is the use of language in its logical and therefore its *truth sense*, and there is the use of language as a *psychological influence*. I know that in one sense the rational side of man is considered a part of psychology when psychology is viewed as a science governing all of the aspects of our consciousness or our functioning as mental beings, but there's a more restricted sense in which we can contrast the rational use of language with a psychological use, a use that operates more through an appeal to feeling or by the principle of suggestion. This is a very powerful factor in the operation of individual with respect to individual and of those who would seek to govern men or influence them in their activities. Typically in the use of the word of the politician, the popular advertising man, or the salesman, or the promoter, or, in fact, the revivalist in the field of popular religion, the word is used as a psychological force or

implement that operates through suggestion and by a power that is entirely independent of the truth value of the word. If one is seeking to get votes when he's running for office, he uses the word in this sense preeminently as one will note if he watches the operation of all politicians. He does not operate as a logician, or if he wants to seem logical he produces a kind of false logic, the kind of thing that was done in Greek history shortly before the time of Socrates when language was used in a sophistical sense producing all sorts of irrational effects. The one good thing that came out of this was the development of a logic whereby one could differentiate between the truth value of the word and its influence value in an irrational sense.

The point I wish to make is that using the word in the latter sense is a form of lying and cannot be employed by him who would seek truth for its own sake, and the *sadhaka* before all else is seeking such truth. He cannot use the psychological method of deception. He cannot use the typical methods of the popular salesman, of the popular advertising man, and of the popular politician. And, in fact, this use of the word extends beyond these groups and is a very common part of our social life. This form of lying must be destroyed by the *sadhaka*, but it is not easy because of the fact that he is surrounded by this usage, he himself will find himself using it in this psychological, deceptive manner. It is using the word in a way that is in a degree hypnotic in its effect. He is seeking to put the rational, truth-seeking man to sleep in order to influence his will. This is enormously improper and immoral. For that reason, government in this world as yet is founded upon a fundamental immorality—the immorality that was elucidated by Machiavelli.

But this principle of psychological lying is not confined to the three domains of politics, salesmanship, and popular advertising; it goes all through the social life. In all acting, other than that of the professional actor who we know is acting, in all acting in life, there is a principle of lying involved. We play a part. We try to appear different from what we really are. We present what is called a “front” before the world which distorts what we really are. This lying is subtle and it saturates our life here. Nonetheless, this must be eradicated as far as possible in the case of the *sadhaka*. It calls for eternal vigilance, the seeking to be completely honest; and one will find that he probably never can reach the point where he is wholly clean. In fact that is true in the application of all of the five rules. One penetrates into them and finds ever greater and greater subtleties of application. He never can reach the point where he can say, “I am wholly clean.” All he can do is to strive to become cleaner and cleaner until the purifying bath of the Great Illumination takes him over.

There is another form of falsification that is essentially technical in its nature. This might be called falsification by inadequate weighting of his state of knowledge. By weighting I mean weighing the balance of evidence one way or another, by weighing the probability of his discernment in the accuracy of its functioning. This is a problem with which the scientist is familiar, the mathematician, and the philosopher, and, in general, the well informed logician, and beyond that, the psychologist. How well do we apprehend? Well, there are many sources of error. There are sources of error in the field of perception, in the use of the senses. The perspectives may be wrong. The images may be misinterpreted by the autonomous processes of sensuous functioning. There is, for instance, the distinction between the mirage and what we ordinarily call a real existence. And beside the errors that arise through inaccurate sensuous functioning, there are the

errors of judgment, the errors that belong to the conceptual order of cognition. We may not properly evaluate material that comes before us. In general, then, there are factors which we may call logical, epistemological, and psychological that bear upon the validity of our truth determination. And while I say this is well known in the fields of science, logic, and philosophy, it is not so well known in the field of general practice, and I will take up an instance where false impressions and false statements can be introduced without there being an intent to produce falsity.

Since so much of our knowledge is not categorical, but probable, or perhaps no more than warranted assertibility, since it involves elements of uncertainty, it often is totally impossible to say that the truth is either *a* or *b*, either *yes* or *no* with respect to a given situation, but that when properly weighted one might say it is more probably *yes* than *no*, but by no means certainly *yes*. Now, it is a practice, for instance, in our judicial functions to employ a device which may be called the *yes-no* dichotomy where an individual witness is required by an examining attorney to give an answer either *yes* or *no* to a specific question. Now, it is most likely that the individual does not have such categorically clear knowledge, and therefore if he gives to it a categorical quality of either a complete *yes* or a complete *no* he is in effect lying. Thus, when an attorney or a judge requires of a witness that he give either a *yes* or a *no* answer, the requirement may well be that he should violate his oath to tell the truth. Improper weighting of one's state of knowledge is a form of lying. It is subtler, but it is a fact of life, and in this way an injustice of the gravest sort may be imposed upon such a witness. One might even say, and I lean to this position as a result of my study of the subject, that in the conceptual field there is no such thing as a categorical certainty, that all of our knowledge is probable or warranted assertibility, but not unquestionable certainty. I'll not go into this subject further because it is a large subject in itself. I merely want to point out that when a state of cognition is given too categorical a presentation, a categoricalism that is not justified by one's state of knowledge, it is a form of lying, and this is a thing to be resisted by the *sadhaka* as well as by all other human beings.

In a subsequent tape, we shall consider the three remaining rules, namely, non-stealing, non-concupiscence, and non-intoxication; and finally, also, the formula, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but render unto God the things that are God's."⁴ This will be enough for today.

⁴ See the audio recording, "Principles of Moral Behavior," part 2.