

Memorial for Jim Briggs

Part 2 of 2

Franklin Merrell-Wolff
September 21, 1974

I will add to the statement that you just heard from the tape, a few things that were left out inadvertently, one in connection with his professional life and one in connection with his family.

While he was the superintendent of the mine at Ajo, he made certain improvements in processes that saved cost of moving rock out of the mine by as much as two cents a ton. But when you consider that 80,000 tons were moved a day, that amounted to \$1600 a day, and it also illustrates the principle that in modern mining as in much of modern technology, the point is making small gains that amount to much in the aggregate. But one thing of a good deal more importance than that is something that happened in 1939 while Jim and Helen were still at United Verde mine in Jerome. Sherifa and I were in Jerome at that time in the spring 1939; word had come to us that there was a new arrival on the way. But this new arrival was very reluctant to enter this world—he postponed his entrance by one full month over the normal time. And then, when at last he entered, he positively refused to breathe, and was only with difficulty persuaded by the doctor, with the aid of an ancient sage, who was not invited, to undertake the monotonous task of breathing. I cannot say I blame him much for I figured that we take about five or six billion breaths in a normal life of seventy years and I do not wonder that he dreaded the drudgery of that. At the time, Jim was in the hospital also.

And I also remember when I first met Bob at the tender age of one day; he was keeping his counsel, as Doroethy had before him, and was not saying a word. And he was a very interesting person, quite the opposite of his father in those days. I remember once when Helen and Sherifa and I, with Bob, were over in Cottonwood on a shopping trip. Now Bob had an occult capacity for knowing where the storekeepers kept their candy, and I was assigned the task to keep him under control. Now that was a major operation; it called for continuous concentration without one moment's lapse, for if there was one moment's lapse, you let hold of his hand, he vanished and you'd find them where the candy was, and the chocolates were disappearing with horrific speed. So, you had to hold firmly so that he could not get away, and not so firmly as to reduce the hand to an amorphous pulp. Well that was just a glimpse out of that part of a life; there more stories I could tell.

Now there is something that is of significance to us, connected with the experience of Jim Briggs and myself, and this has to do with certain adjustments between certain psychological types. Jim and I ran parallel in typology, with the accentuation of the thinking principle, more dominantly oriented in the introverted direction, though Jim had greater capacity for extroverted function, and that is why he became a manager.

Intuition would enter into the picture rather as subordinate to the thinking function. Now his mother was predominantly an intuitive type; by test an ambivert, and her auxiliary function was most predominantly feeling, but not exclusively that. And here I might say that the auxiliary function would seem to be not so greatly committed to one attitude or to one form as is the case with the primary function. In other words, the attitude of the auxiliary function may be introverted or extroverted, or there may be a shifting to the opposed function of the same class. In other words, if it's intuition, the opposed function is sensation.

Now in the field of those who are oriented to the Wisdom Religion, which is the field in which Sherifa and I were interested primarily from 1915 on, I have found that the function of intuition is present in some degree in virtually everybody that remains interested in the field; the non-intuitive types do not remain, so the result is one gets a great experience with the function. Now in the field of thinking, we have long-established a capacity for criticism: that is shown in the development of logic, in the development of epistemology, and in psychological criticism. There is the negative side of thinking, known as sophistry, and we do have techniques for detecting it and correcting it; in other words, self-criticism is well-developed in the field of thinking. It is not so in the field of intuition, and here is where a problem arises. The intuitive function has its negative side as well as its positive side, just as thinking has its negative side as well as its positive side. When the intuitive is functioning positively, they often reach knowledge that is inaccessible by any other means and may surprise you by a knowing that you didn't think was a possible knowing. But the intuitive function has its negative side of jumping to conclusions, and this side may be positively ridiculous, and it outrages the trained thinker. And here is where there was a problem between Jim and his mother, and a problem which I also felt. It is characteristic of the intuitive to see a limited field very clearly and to tend toward categorical pronouncement. The same categorical pronouncement is made when it's functioning negatively, and statements are made that are positively ridiculous. The intuitive gets into trouble on this and it's very difficult for the thinking type to come to terms with it. Jim did have a problem with his mother. He said the affection he felt for was profound, and yet at the same time, he would be greatly irritated. I speak of this because this is a continuing problem in the whole field in which we work. What is badly needed is an effective critique of intuition just the same as we have an effective critique of reasoning.

It is characteristic for the intuitive to speak dogmatically or categorically, and it leaves no place to retreat if they're not found correct. Now all of us have our intuitions: I'm well aware of this tendency of vision to be categorical; Jung speaks of it. But I find it is possible to make your statements as postulates rather than as fiats—postulates to be entertained, not as fiats, which are commands, and it gets away from much of the difficulty in this situation. It's a continuing difficulty. I've lived since 1915 with groups that are oriented to what we may call the Wisdom Religion; they're all more or less intuitive, if they stick. And they all have more or less trouble with this function because of its having a negative side which makes mistakes. This is one of the problems that Jim and I were concerned about. Our thinking ran parallel, we most of the time thought eye-to-eye on these and other problems. I do not remember any time, on any point, that we

ever disagreed on anything essential. And I regard him as my most important masculine, personal friend, whom I have known for sixty years and I wish him well until we meet next time.

And now, there is a letter of Doroethy's, which I'll ask Joan to read to us tonight, and then we'll turn the meeting open for comment from any of you who wish to comment concerning Jim Briggs.

Joan: This was written September 21, 1974.

Dearest Dad,

I shall miss you, for I remember so much. I remember the day so long ago when the radio announced that World War II was over. For us, this meant you be would be coming home. When you at last got out of the taxi and walked to the front door, I so impressed at your being so tall and handsome. I remember sensing the magic between you and mom. Bob and I soon discovered you were a strict disciplinarian, but you were fair. A paddle was on the closet shelf, but your hand was sufficient. Your beautifully strong and large and steady hands—such visible evidence to your personality. Mom's small, delicate, fine-boned and graceful hands, so lovely, complimented yours. Yes, you and mom did argue, and your approach to the philosophy was not the same. You were a bit impatient at times, but your love was strong and deeply sensed, even though not overtly demonstrated.

Qualities I saw in you, and which I hope to assimilate are: Fairness, for you were always able to see both sides of the situation. Strength—you were able to make a decision for one side or the other, not allowing the self-indulgence of fence-straddling. Honesty, for you have said that if one cannot be truthful one cannot recognize the truth. Self-discipline, for you felt it was necessary to use the will and make the necessary effort to actualize these beautiful ideals we sense so deeply and seek for so consistently. Theosophy was deeply meaningful to you, particularly through the more disciplined and scientific expressions—you loved KH. And one of our very last discussions was about Franklin's expression. You said that after many years of careful consideration and observation and experience, you knew that Franklin most clearly expressed the teachings for you, and this is why you no longer wished to seek in any the other direction. I remember your love for the people in the group, and you said their thoughtfulness of others is expressed simply through manners.

Dad, you would be so proud of mom. For although her loss is great, for you have been close companions for over forty-two years, she has thought first of you and your wishes, next to the family's emotional needs at this time. And then of your friends, particularly those you have made in the last five years in the group. Three times she has said to you something like this: I love you, I let you go, go in peace. And you would be proud of Bob, who steadfastly and sensitively

stands that we might lean on him, if we have the need. And dear Sharon, whom we were so fortunate to have enter our family. She has held your hand, and subdued her own tender feelings that you might not worry. And it was she who was with you at the moment of your last breath on this plane. And perhaps, although you have so greatly admired Franklin, you would not have guessed how deeply he feels the loss. As he simply put it, you were his best friend. And Gertrude, whose help through service, and who did not give up hope. Goodbye dad, for a while, until next time when our bond of love and common path will again draw us together.

With love, in the spirit of Sangha,

Doroethy

I should like to add a postscript, as Doroethy has not mentioned herself. This is from Helen:

You would be very proud of her, lovely outwardly, but more important, beautiful inwardly. She too has had great courage and strength, and is a beautiful example of living what she believes—of loving and then letting go. You would have been very proud of all your children, as we have all been proud of you. I wish that all people, when the time comes to pass into the inner realms, would be able to follow your example, and go with the utter lack of fear, with calmness, beauty, and peace.

Yours in loving soul kinship, which has been continuous from olden days,

Helen

Franklin: Does anyone else have something to say?

Participant: One of the lessons of life is that of immortality. It may seem strange that we should think of death being so fair, our years so tender. Every hope and ambition is just beginning to bud and bloom in our lives. But however fair, however hopeful, we should know that death is no respecter of persons. It lays its hands upon the flower and tree; it takes the babe and mother. It regards not youth or youth's ambitions. Death, my friends, with all its solemnity, may come to you, but your soul is immortal. Even though your body may die, you shall live forever. It is well to plan and build and imagine, for these are part of your life. But in the midst of all of them, remember that whatever your plan may be, or whatever fruit it may seem to bear, the wise is one who ever remembers the last enemy is death. It was the master of life who said "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, he shall never die."

In memory of our grandfather and of the sublime truth, we leave this small memento.

Franklin: Thank you. Does someone else wish to say something concerning . . . ?

Participant: This is called “The Quest”:

To dream the impossible dream,
To fight the unbeatable foe,
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go;
To right the unrightable wrong.

To love, pure and chaste, from afar,
To try, when your arms are too weary,
To reach the unreachable star!

This is my Quest to follow that star,
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far,
To fight for the right
Without question or pause,
To be willing to march into hell
For a heavenly cause!

And I know, if I’ll only be true
To this glorious Quest,
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
When I’m laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this,
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage,
To reach the unreachable stars!

Participant: I knew Jim longer than a few of you, and not as long as some of you, and was with him frequently during his last days. And I felt that he gave us a lesson in dying. I really saw this—he didn’t have any fear whatsoever. He was conscious from time to time, and when he was conscious there was great clarity; he knew exactly what was happening, and he was working with it. He really gave a lesson in dying and it was something to see. As a friend, I knew him always to be fair; he didn’t always agree with me as a friend, that was fine, but he was always fair. And he always came directly to myself if he had something to say that was involving me.

I think that Jim was probably as good a representation of truth, as he knew it, as anyone I know—he lived it. And maybe what he lived didn’t fit what everyone else believes to be true, but he lived it as he knew it—I did see that. And I don’t feel here tonight that he is gone. I feel his presence. I miss his person, but I don’t feel him to be absent at all.

Franklin: Thank you. Someone else wish to say something tonight?

Participant: I think that I would like to say that I am very happy that Jim gave a lesson in dying; I think that's simply beautiful. And I would like to thank the family for giving us a lesson in living.

Franklin: There is one thing, I like on the, on this, so that we can amplify enough so I can hear. Anyone else? If not then, could we have something extra in music? How about that movement from the—not the *Passionata*, the other one?

Participant: From Beethoven?

Franklin: Yeah. This is on the spur of the moment, I've got to apologize. She didn't know that I was going to do that.

[Music]

Franklin: Thank you.

Participant: I would just like to say that if people would like to stay and visit with each other, they are welcome.

Franklin: Well, then we say farewell to James A. Briggs for this incarnation, and may we all be somewheres together when he comes back again.