

Abstract of the Philosophy

Part 10 of 14

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This tape will be a continuation of the series called the “Abstract of the Philosophy.” First I shall recall to your memory the fact that this philosophy is based upon three fundamentals and that these are: one, consciousness is original, self-existent, and constitutive of all things; second, that the subject to consciousness transcends the object of consciousness; and third, that there are three faculties, functions, or organs of cognition and not only two consisting of sense perception and conceptual cognition.

I do not know how well the significance of this abstract statement penetrates into the consciousness of the non-philosophic hearer, and therefore I keep emphasizing the point there is involved here much that would appear as revolutionary or shocking to ordinary points of view, and thus there is involved something that is a radical departure from most of the positions entertained in both the philosophical and the religious worlds entertained by mankind.

Now, the first point I wish to make is that we introduce as a result of direct imperience or Realization the conception of a third organ of cognition in addition to sense perception and conceptual cognition.¹ This is introduced not simply as a speculative thesis worked out by the imagination, but because there has been a group of Realizations that lead to this formulation; and that leads to one of the most primary points underlying the whole philosophy, that there is a third way of cognition that has been operative in the consciousness of a limited proportion of our present humanity and even in the consciousness of the humanity of the past. It is not a function that is active with the vast majority of the human beings, but I am asserting it as the primary basis of this whole philosophy, that there is such a thing as Realization or Enlightenment, that this is a name for a function of consciousness other than sense perception and conceptual cognition, and that through this function of consciousness it is possible to achieve a knowledge of a transcendent or metaphysical subject matter which is not available to the two organs of sense perception and conceptual cognition as Immanuel Kant pointed out long ago. And the importance of this third organ of cognition lies in the fact that it opens the Door to knowledge of the very domain that is of primary religious significance. To begin with we may have an intuition that leads to faith and confidence that the ultimate reality behind all that is, is indeed a friend and that we can achieve answers to the questions that dog us in our life. But such a faith and confidence is not sufficient to justify any dogmatic assertion

¹ For the definition of ‘imperience’, see the audio recordings “General Discourse on the Subject of My Philosophy,” part 10, and “On My Philosophy: Extemporaneous Statement.” In speaking of introceptual 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.”

concerning the nature of ultimate reality; but it is sufficient to justify a search for that reality, a search for a knowledge that is certain and definitive.

Now, I affirm that I was led to such a search and that it resulted in a successful culmination through the breaking through of a function of consciousness other than sense perception and conceptual cognition. There was a group of five Realizations, as I have stated repeatedly before—three of them propaedeutic, two of them transcendental. That the authority of the consciousness content pouring forth from these Realizations for myself is definitive in so far as the zones of possible awareness are covered by them. They take for me the position of transcending any other authority—scientific, philosophical, scriptural, or otherwise. They are subject to correction only by the manifestation of a still more profound Realization that would modify their meaning. I assert further that I have had the experience of a subsequent Realization modifying the position of an earlier Realization, so this I know to be in principle possible. I assert that for the individual who has such Realization they transcend all other authorities, they are definitive for the area of possible cognition covered by them. This, however, does not imply the rejection of more mundane or ordinary forms of cognition operating within their own fields. Not all questions are answered in detail by means of these Realizations, therefore the information that comes from such zones as empiric science and the normative sciences are accepted as valid within their own fields or zones of validity. But these are regarded as supplementary, that they are incapable of contradicting or overthrowing the authority of Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment. They can supplement; they cannot contradict and repudiate—that their range of assurance is so limited as compared to the range of Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment that they must accept subordination to the latter.

This means, among other consequences, that the secular psychologist, the secular psychiatrist, the secular logician, and the secular philosopher are not in a position to evaluate and criticize substantively the content of an introceptual Realization, although criticism of the form or detail of formulation in its application to the mundane order does remain within their possible zones of critical evaluation. As a paradigm of this point, I note the fact that no exclusively sensuous entity, in other words an animal who is not also a conceptual being, could possibly evaluate and criticize the differential calculus developed by Sir Isaac Newton. Before he could criticize that he would have to break through to the resources of conceptual cognition. The animal could say that the calculus of Immanuel Kant—of Sir Isaac Newton fell short of satisfactory consequences because it did not provide the animal with something to eat. The fact is, the work of Sir Isaac Newton served a larger purpose, a purpose that it was not within the ken of the animal consciousness. And the same applies to the introceptual consciousness; only one who has also broken through to that introceptual consciousness in equal or superior degree would be in a position for producing a critique of the substance of any formulation that grew out of it. However, this limitation does not apply to a possible critique of the form in which the substance was expressed. The form may have its limitations, its inadequacies, and this could be criticized by one who had not broken through to the higher consciousness. This point is of prime importance. It is one that William James himself made in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, namely, that for one who has Fundamental Realization it is authority for him whether the others like it or not. However, it is not therefore authority for those who in their consciousness stand outside the introceptual content. They are not

required to accept blindly the dicta that may come from an introceptual Realization. They may decide that they would wish to enter into a similar type of imperience, but they are not obligated to do so, and this point must be recognized. We do not, therefore, categorically affirm the truth that comes from this source as something which must be accepted by everybody. We present it for what it may be worth, recommend it, but every individual is free to accept or reject in the light of his own understanding.

Out of the fount of the introceptual Realization comes the assurance that there is no death in the ultimate sense of the word, but there is also the beginning and the terminating of incidental states or modes of consciousness, that there is the beginning and the ending of phases or of processes, but in the ultimate sense there is no death. Also, there comes the assurance that the veiled or unseen heart of all that is is a friend, is something of supernal value, the reaching of which satisfies through and through. But in the introceptual Realization as I know it there is no assurance that the principle of organized entityhood or of personality is ultimate, that there may be indeed high and noble development of organized consciousness and of a divine-like personality, but this also, no doubt upon a much vaster scale, is subject to the law of becoming and becoming not. Rather the introceptual Realization reveals that the ultimate is not organized entity, but is a pure unborn and undying Consciousness. This is what I mean by Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject. In this we all abide—we and all entities whatsoever, those less evolved than we are and also those far more evolved than we are. But this is not something austere and grim that leaves the heart cold. It is warm and unutterably kind.

Let us turn our attention now to the second fundamental, namely, that one which states: the subject to consciousness transcends the object of consciousness. This implies a reversal of our ordinary view that we are here in an already preexistent external environment of essentially non-conscious things in which somehow, whether accidentally or by reason of a law, life arose and subsequently consciousness which then became aware of an environment. It means rather that the subject to consciousness precedes, in the ontological sense whether or not in the temporal sense, the manifestation of an external order. It means that manifestation is a process from within out, from the subject to an external manifestation which we call the object. No doubt, as we start in our adventure with consciousness here in this world, it appears to us first that we are surrounded by objects and that these objects make impacts upon our consciousness and that from that our knowledge grows. But this that makes impacts upon our relative consciousness is a feedback and not a message from the original source. It is a feedback from that which originally was a projection from the subject to consciousness. This parallels, I think, the meaning of Sri Aurobindo when he says that the evolution is an unfolding of that which was infolded or involuted first of all. It appears, thus, to us that consciousness develops as something which is a result of an awareness of external objects, whereas the truth, the ultimate truth, is the other way around. We are dealing here with a feedback world, and this is all that empiric science is studying. Thus empiric science is not giving us ultimate truth, but simply an incidental effect, a study of a feedback. And this is all that the apparent world about us really means. We, as the ultimate *I*, projected this world, this universe, from within and then experienced it as though it were without and was already there when we began to know, in the relative sense.