

Abstract of the Philosophy

Part 14 of 14

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This tape is a continuation in the series of the “Abstract of the Philosophy” and particularly referred to the subject of “Communication” which was last considered in the reel dated January 15, 1975.¹

In the preceding tape we arrived at a more comprehensive picture of the structure of our cognitions and developed a more exact terminology for it. We arrived at the conclusion that there are three fundamental types of cognition, which we designated as *empiric conceptual*, second, *conceptual qua conceptual*, and third, *noetic conceptual*. There remains for us to consider is the way of consciousness when we deal with the empiric order alone and the introceptual order alone. We can view the pure empiric order as sensuous *qua* sensuous knowledge and the introceptual order as nuclear core knowledge. In this case, these two forms of knowledge are taken in abstraction from any conceptual representation. This implies, then, that in addition to the conceptual way of thinking, which is generally regarded as a directed kind of thinking, there are two other kinds of thinking not involving the conceptual function. One of these is that related to the sensuous images, on one hand, and to the nuclear core, on the other. We shall now consider this kind of thinking in greater particularity.

In his book entitled *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, Dr. Carl G. Jung in his first chapter deals with two kinds of thinking, one of which is autonomous and thinks itself, the other is directed and may be more or less laborious.² The autonomous kind of thinking is that which is illustrated by the dreaming process during nighttime or during sleep, and also during waking dreaming states or passive fantasy, or even directed fantasy. In this there is a process that does not employ concepts, but rather images of actual events in their sensuous immediacy. This everyone knows from the study of his dreams and also during his daytime or waking fantasies where he does not actually think in concepts, but rather in images. We may suppose that in this kind of thought process, man overlaps the animal world, but in contrast to the animal, man has other functions of consciousness, the familiar one being the conceptual form, which we may suppose is the most distinguishing differentiation between an animal and a man. But man overlaps the animal in that he has an animal organism here in this world, and he has a cognitive process in that organism which we may very reasonably suppose is continuous with the cognitive process of the animal. In this kind of thinking, we have an autonomous presentation of events in their sensuous immediacy. A person moves in a dream with the appearance of a sensuous environment. Rarely, if ever, does he move in terms of a

¹ This is a reference to a tape reel date. Actually, this is a continuation of the subject last considered in the audio recording dated April 7, 1975.

² See the audio recording, “Two Kinds of Thought.”

conceptual content in the dream. He is not thinking in terms of abstractions, at least typically, but in terms of a concrete particularity. And it's entirely possible that it is in such terms of concrete sensuous particularity that the animal world has developed what system of communication it has, a system which seems to be exclusively utilitarian, such a certain behavior of an animal seen indicating the presence of an enemy or perhaps the presence of something that is consumable. Now, this is autonomous in the sense that it happens of itself. If we think, as in the processes of seeking a solution of a mathematical problem, we move consciously and with conscious effort. The process is fatiguing. At the level of a very high concentration it may be extremely fatiguing. In fact, at the utmost limit of mathematical thinking we have perhaps the most fatiguing activity that man has experienced; but the thought in term of actual sensuous dream images happens of itself and is not fatiguing. This is within the familiar field of study and is discussed at some length in that first chapter that I mentioned written by Dr. Jung. What I am adding here is something that does not fall within the category of these two forms of thought, but implies, actually, a third form of thought.

In this third or nuclear form of thought, I have isolated four distinctive characteristics: first, it is highly compacted; second, it has a flowing quality, a sense of streaming; third, it is non-verbal, non-imageable, without signs, and without symbols; and fourth, it is autonomous. We shall now examine in more detail each of these headings, first considering the highly compacted character.

The image of the nuclear sun in which we have stripped atoms and compacted nuclei where the mass of a sun like our sun may be contained within the limits of a sphere only twelve miles in diameter or even less yet the mass remains the same—here one has a sense of compactness that is extreme in the highest degree. The compactness of the nuclear thought is akin to this in its effect upon one. It is a thought in which the essential meaningful substance of enormous libraries are contained within the experience of a very brief passage of time. However, it is not an explicit kind of knowledge, as is a conceptual knowledge. One in the conceptual sense could not say what is being thought, yet the value of it, the fullness of it, is evident to him. If it were to be rendered manifest and communicable in conceptual terms, an enormous and protracted labor is required. But, as contrasted to a conceptual body of knowledge, the content of a single nuclear kernel, as it were, could involve the expansion into a whole library of knowledge, yet one contains this as value or meaning stripped of all form. One could not say, offhand, what it is that he is thinking in a way that another individual who is outside the circle of this *imperience* could understand except by a long process of bringing it into formation. This is a formless kind of knowledge, but imperienced as something of supreme value.

It also has the character of flowage, that is, as being like a stream flowing in the consciousness. This means that its elements or components are not separable into discrete units. It does not produce a manifold complex, but rather a continuum of flow. If one were to take a cross-section of this flowage at any instant in time and were to reflect it into a concept in a form that is analogous to a picture taken of a process in the sensuous world which would fix for one moment a certain complex configuration, it's in that sense that these nuclear thoughts would be represented in a conceptual form. Just as the picture would be true only of the moment when it was taken, so the conceptual configuration of a nuclear thought would be valid only as of that moment, but would cease to be completely

valid with respect to any following moment. Thought on this level, thus, is not to be regarded as forming a structure that is fixed and remains forever the same, but is fluidic. This point is extremely important and has a bearing upon the validity of the literature variously known as *sutras*, *shastras*, and scriptures. Since this literature, at its best at any rate, is dealing with a transcendental subject matter, it is nuclear in its origin. When it is fixed into a system of ideas, like a group of dogmas, at best, those dogmas are valid only for the moment of fixation. They cease to be valid subsequently, or at least are not completely valid subsequently, and progressively cease to be valid as time passes. Hence, we would have to say that there is no scripture, no *sutra*, and no *shastra* which is eternally valid, the latter being given in conceptual forms. To know the eternally valid knowledge is to know a knowledge that is flowing, that is becoming other than what it was all the time.

Third, this nuclear knowledge, which remember thinks itself, is non-verbal. It does not use verbal concepts; it is not in terms of images, images being sensuous forms as seen in the mind; and it is without signs, signs being a more sophisticated way of representing concepts, as in mathematics; and is without symbols. But in its inherent pure form is indescribable in any terms known to our outer consciousness.

And fourth, like the dream consciousness or the dream thought, it is autonomous, as I know it. It happens of itself. One does not direct the thinking here, it just flows in the mind and there is precipitated into the relative consciousness the sense of satisfaction and the value from it, but no easy means exists for representation of that. Only by labor does one give something of a representation of it. However, a representation when produced, say in conceptual forms, carries value that no speculative concepts do carry. Speculative concepts therefore, we may say, are empty and at best have only a pointer value to a sensuous subject matter; whereas, the impregnated concept which has a nuclear core carries value which goes beyond the conceptual order and includes the values expressed by *redemption* and a coming into rapport, or fusion even, with the heart of all that is.

In his *Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo has presented a conception or figure which is very useful for our present purposes. This figure occurs in the chapter entitled “The Methods of the Vedanta.”³ Simply stated it is presented this way. Relative to our normal consciousness, this which we call the relative consciousness or which we may identify with our conceptual consciousness in the figures which we are employing, there is on either side of it, states of being and awareness classified in one case as below the relative consciousness and called the subconscious or subconscient, and then on the other side there is that consciousness which is above the relative consciousness, which is called the superconscient or the superconsciousness. He gives as the keyword connected with the subconscient as being “Life,” and the keyword connected with the superconscient is “Light.” Now, there is in addition to this conception another conception represented by Sri Aurobindo, namely, that the All has two statuses, one in the subconscient which may be called the subconscient All, and the other in the superconscient which may be called the superconscient All. Now, in yoga the goal is to come into at-one-ness in

³ Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine*, vol. 18 of the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centennial Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1970), 65. The chapter is actually titled “The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge.”

consciousness with the All, as it were. And here we have indicated two possible ways in which that may be achieved, that there could be a movement from our relative consciousness toward the subconscious, or that form of the All which has the keyword Life; or there could be a movement from the relative consciousness, namely, our ordinary consciousness, towards the superconscious All which has the keyword Light.

Now, in my discussion of the two primary orientations in yoga which I called the *aesthetic* yoga in one case and the *noetic* yoga in the other,⁴ in the case of the aesthetic yoga, there was a radical denigration of the conceptual processes as such and an orientation to aesthetic processes, which means processes of a sensuous nature either in the sense of *jnanendriya*, or the knowledge senses, or in terms of *karmendriya* as the performance of an act involving the body and so forth. In the case of the noetic yoga, the heavy instrument used in the process was the conceptual power, but used as a movement towards a consciousness transcending the concept, thus a movement towards the superconscious. Now, combining this with Aurobindo's conception that the All is figured in both forms, the goal could be regarded in either of these two ways, but one would be a movement towards the subconscious, the other towards the superconscious. Now, when we say subconscious we do not mean that literally it is a state of non-consciousness, but only that it is conscious in terms different from that of ordinary consciousness, and from the perspective of ordinary consciousness seems unconscious, but is not so in reality. So that a movement into the subconscious is not a movement into darkness or the state of complete non-consciousness, but a movement into a kind of consciousness more associated with the principle of Life, whereas the movement in the opposite direction to the superconscious All, involving the yoga which I call noetic yoga, in that it employs means that are totally non-aesthetic, would lead to an identification with the All in its superconscious figuring, or manifestation, or state. Now, this movement into the subconscious would suggest that the yogic goal is a return to something like a Root Consciousness, a source simply; whereas, the movement towards the superconscious is a returning to the All in the sense of its fruition or ultimate culmination in the process of evolution. I think it makes a difference as to which way one goes, even though redemption is achieved by either path, the path to the fruit is the one that appeals to me as the most desirable path. It would imply that the evolution is not meaningless, something merely to be negated by a return to the root, but something to be accepted and leading to a yoga which is an attainment of the fruit.

There is another line of thought connected with the history of Western philosophy which is of interest here. This is in connection with the *universals* of Plato and the *innate ideas* of the Rationalistic philosophers of the modern period. It will be remembered that Plato proclaimed a doctrine that the universals or concepts were a sort of divine knowledge which contrasted to sensuous knowledge as being of a dark or mundane character, and also that the Rationalists, consisting of the four names known as Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, and Wolff, asserted the reality of innate ideas which could form the basis of a philosophic development not related to experience but developed in the same way as mathematics is developed. The analysis of the empiric school which developed as a counter movement in the British Isles, and with which the names of John Locke,

⁴ See audio recording, "Tantra & Zen," part 6.

Berkeley, and Hume are associated submitted this idea to analysis and came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as innate ideas, and then by extension this would imply that there were none of the fundamental universals of Plato, so this philosophy is not only anti-Rationalistic, it is also anti-Platonic. This school asserted that the only source of knowledge was sensation itself. We derived all of our knowledge from experience. But the consequence of this was carried out in the analysis of David Hume and led to the conclusion that the only certainty that we had was the immediate experience at this given point in space and this given moment in time, that on this basis we could not know anything of a continuation in duration or of a general law connecting phenomena, that we are thus cut off from the possibility of syntactical relationships such as the material handled in mathematics. Indeed as Kant pointed out in his "Introduction" to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the analysis of Hume would render, if true, pure mathematics as impossible. But, of course, as Kant himself pointed out, pure mathematics is an established fact and so there is something lacking in the analysis of the Empiricists. But Immanuel Kant in his turn criticized the Rationalists on the ground that the development in the philosophic sense by a method analogous to that of a mathematics, and which was very successful in mathematics, is not in fact the same thing as the mathematical process since the philosophic process was based upon analytic judgments, namely, a getting of meaning and deductions only by an analysis of the supposed innate ideas, whereas, mathematics was synthetic; it put together ideas and thus led to a positive advance. And historically it is said that Kant here gave the deathblow to the school of Rationalism. He then opened the door to possible advance by introducing the notion that there are forms brought by the cognizing subject which are not themselves derived from experience, but condition the forms of our possible experience—some of them being aesthetic, namely, space and time, and some of them the categories of the understanding; that these were not derived from experience but existed in the cognizing subject. Although not known before experience, they were not derived from experience, but merely were aroused into consciousness by the impact of experience. This opened the door to further philosophic development known as that of the Idealistic school of thought, largely developed in Germany but also in England and in the United States.

There is a footnote that may be made here that may be of technical interest. Kant derived geometry from the transcendental aesthetic form, namely, space, which would seem reasonable enough if we consider the Euclidean geometry; but he derived arithmetic from time, and this was far from convincing and has been severely analyzed and criticized by Bertrand Russell as inadequate, which it seems to be. However, geometry is synthetic by reason of introducing the intuition of space, which does not appear as a defined concept. It is thus not a purely conceptual element. And it is true that by putting together—this kind of mathematics that involves the intuition of space is truly synthetic. But in our day there has been a development of a formalistic kind of mathematics belonging to the school founded by Bertrand Russell and by Hilbert in which the intuition of space and on the other intuitions are exorcized or eliminated, and the development is in terms of concepts only, in which case it would appear that this kind of mathematics is analytic in the sense in which Kant spoke, and really could not give new knowledge, being based upon analytic judgments alone. And furthermore, we know today that not the whole of mathematics is to be divided into geometry and arithmetic, but that there are other forms, such as the theory of groups and the algebra of logic, that are of a totally

different dimension; and, in fact, Bertrand Russell said that Boole's contribution of the algebra of logic was the beginning of pure mathematics, pure in the sense that it is wholly conceptual and makes no use of an intuited material. It would appear then that Kant's critique of Rationalistic philosophy would apply to this formalistic and logistic type of mathematics, and that only the something like the interpretation of mathematics that comes from the intuitive school would be saved from the destructive criticism of Immanuel Kant. This is only a footnote in passing.

Continuing with the main text, the pertinence of the reference to the universals of Plato and the innate ideas of the Rationalists is this: that if analysis of cognitive content is not carried sufficiently far it is very easy to make an identification of the concept with its nuclear core if it has such a core, and it may very readily seem that the knowledge which comes from the nuclear core is really a knowledge that comes from the concept. This is something that would give to the Platonic statement and the statement of the Rationalists a significant meaning. They simply gave to the concept a power or a value which was not native to the pure concept itself, but was a core fused with that concept. This core, nuclear core as I call it, is the true noetic or divine knowledge, not the concept which carries it. Therefore, it would follow that the Rationalists and Plato had discovered a real truth, but made a mistaken identification of that truth with the character of the concept *per se*, where in point of fact it is something contained within at least certain concepts and is a truly divine knowledge or a saving knowledge—a knowledge that gives real security when it is present. There is, as my experience or imperience would tend to confirm, a natural affinity between the concept and this nuclear core, and it is very easy to think of them as one entity where in fact it is the fusion or union of two cognitive entities.

For the person who has not had Fundamental Realization of the noetic type, and wishes to have some glimmer of understanding with respect to what I am saying here, I would suggest that this figure or image. Imagine that the noetic core is like unto sensitized paper or the film on which photographs are taken, but with no image upon it, that when Fundamental Realization breaks forth, the inner Light activates the sensitized paper and a content in consciousness is produced which is neither like a sensible image nor like a formal conceptual idea, but of another order of cognition. Focusing this way could provide a kind of meditative technique for this noetic yoga. At any rate, for the interim before such Realization comes, the thinker may view it as an unknown x which is unknown only for his current state of consciousness, but which is knowable in principle.

The position presented here is to be clearly differentiated from that presented by the Buddhistic logicians Dignaga and Dharmakirti. Dignaga asserted as an aphorism that there are two and only two organs, functions, or faculties of cognition, namely, sense perception and conceptual cognition, [and] that the action of the conceptual side was essentially creative and reacted upon pure sensuality by creating constructs out of the sensual impresses. The ultimate reality as it is in itself, that which is called *Paramartha-satya* was identified as a point-instant sensation which aroused no meaning in itself, but however was effective. It could effectuate. How this was derived, I do not know. It looks like a speculative construct. It should be, if authentic, a direct imperience, but I have no knowledge of how such a direct imperience of a sensational datum could be derived. At any rate, it is there viewed as the base for the knowing of fundamental Reality.

I take the counter view that fundamental Reality is given in the pure introcept, or nuclear core of the concept, and that the sensational element is by far the most external element of all. Thus, fundamental Reality is here viewed as quite different in its source and generation. There was a comment by Dharmakirti in which he introduced the notion of an exception to this rule, namely, the intuition of the Saint, but indicated that this could not be brought into the analysis as it was not a part of the common knowledge which could be submitted to analysis. I would suggest, in my turn, that under this notion of the intuition of the Saint, there really lies the core of fundamental Reality and that which I mean by the introceptive Realization or the noetic core underlying the conceptions. I see conceptions as—conceptual order of being as intermediate between the sensational on one side, which constitutes the most external consciousness, and introception on the inside, which includes in its depths at least the ultimate of inner knowledge, the knowledge which is known only by identity between the knower and the known, and thus transcends all relativity.

Since 1936 I have spoken many times of something that was precipitated into the innermost consciousness which in the beginning I called the “Current which is Bliss,” but later have called the “transcendental function.” This has remained with me during the whole period of time since 1936 as something that was available either actively functioning, or available to be invoked, or which of itself precipitated itself into the consciousness. It is the critical factor in all of this philosophic presentation. It is not the source of the verbal or other concepts used in the presentation, that is drawn from the mass of extant literature—philosophical, scientific, mathematical, or other—insofar as the material of that sort is in the mind of the thinker. But, it is the guiding force in putting together the concepts and the inner core, as it were, or what I have now called the nuclear core. But as it appears directly in the imperience of it, it has no apparent relationship to a conceptual manifold. Actually the nature is fluidic, whereas the conceptual presentation is a manifold structure which is essentially static, in that there is a tendency in the structure to use concepts that are definitive and mean just what they are defined to mean and no more. We have here the problem that is presented by the famous one in religious and philosophic history symbolized by the squaring of the circle. Circularity or curvilinear form when reduced to a square of equal area involves a transformation from that which is not definable to that which is definitive and thinkable. We’re not, however, here concerned with that problem as it existed in geometry, but with the problem of which it was a symbol, which may be put in this terms: how to present in concepts that which originally is radically non-conceptual, but nonetheless a kind of cognition. Now, as I have been able to trace the action, the transcendental function acts upon the conceptual mind something like a force of insemination, a something that impregnates the conceptual mind to produce a form which is in harmony with the unrevealed meaning of the introceptual consciousness that lies in privation of form in some higher zone of the mind. Just as is true in the case of biological impregnation, there is no similarity in appearance between the germ and the sperm cells, which uniting produce ultimately a living organism, and the appearance of that organism, so there is no similarity between the transcendental function in consciousness and the conceptual framework which it has enabled to come into form. This figure seems to fit very well and may explain the reason why the word conceive and conceiving have the two-fold meanings—one in the field of intellection, the other in the field of biology.