

Belief Systems and the Search for Truth

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There has just come out a book called *Simulations of God* by Dr. John Lilly. There are certain points made in this book that have a parallelism with respect to certain statements of Dr. Jung, and I wish to take these statements and relate them to certain principles that are fundamental in the yoga of knowledge.

Dr. Lilly gives a substantial number of belief systems actually held by human beings which occupy a position equivalent to that of the belief in God by certain forms of religious people. In this connection the conception of God is to be taken in the psychological sense referred to by Dr. Jung, namely, as meaning the supreme value. God in this sense is not to be taken as a determination of a metaphysical existence, but simply as the supreme value in the actual life of the individual. Now, Dr. Lilly has shown that there are many such belief systems and hints at the fact that there may be many more.

Now, referring to the writings of Dr. Jung, he has made the point, not only in his *Memories, Dreams, [and] Reflections* but in other works, that attaining the proper myth, or recovering the proper myth, is an important factor in enabling a mental patient to become whole. Now, I find that the two notions of belief and of myth as given in these two contexts carry essentially the same meaning. It, in each case, is something believed in and has an effect upon the individual who believes in it.

Now, let us ask, what is belief? Two definitions in the dictionary are of help to us here. This is from the *Century Dictionary* and are the second and third meanings given under that word: first, "A conviction of the truth of a given proposition or an alleged fact, resting upon grounds insufficient to constitute positive knowledge;" and the third meaning, "Persuasion of the truth of a proposition, but with the consciousness that the positive evidence for it is insufficient or wanting; especially assurance of the truth of what rests chiefly or solely upon authority." Belief, therefore, like myth, is something less than positive knowledge.

Now, I think it must be admitted that for most people throughout this world the ground of a religious orientation is no more than belief or orientation to a myth. The psychological fact seems to be that if a human being does not have something of this sort, he tends to become mentally unwell. But the point that I'd like to make is that the search for Truth involves more than simply finding a body of belief or a myth that tends to render an individual whole, as the psychologist calls it, but rather to determine something that is in fact metaphysically true and certain. Belief and myth of themselves do not give such certainty.

In contrast to this, the aim of the yoga of knowledge is not merely a psychological healing in the empiric sense. That, indeed, it may achieve, but that is incidental to a much larger objective, and that is the knowledge of Truth in such a way that it is certain, that it is unequivocal, and not simply something that makes one comfortable. He who starts on

the search for *jnana*, or metaphysical Truth, must take the attitude that he seeks this regardless of the results which the attainment of certain Truth would bring to him. He must be prepared to find that that Truth would bring emotional despair, yet, nonetheless, should maintain the search fully and concentratedly. He must be prepared to find that all his preconceptions were in error. He must stand, as it were, naked before the supreme authority and accept whatever that supreme authority may dictate in his consciousness. This is part and parcel of the sacrifice, the surrender, and the acceptance of the mystic death. The goal is certainty, whatever that certainty may be, something that brings delight or brings suffering, something that brings peace or turmoil; but, whatever it may be, let everything else be sacrificed. But certain Truth alone is sought.

Now, bear in mind that the attainment of this central certainty does not of itself imply that one has then and there certain knowledge of all the details concerning this outer and inner cosmos, nor all of the details of the psychological organization of creatures. What is given is something central: an inner security; and from the base of that security one may deal with all of the vicissitudes of probable knowledge, or warranted assertibility, of uncertainties in detail. These become simply a problem, a problem that may well be of unending interest, but inward the individual is secure. He is secure beyond the transition known as death. He may not know, and indeed may not find, that the organized individual consciousness is eternal. He may, indeed, find that that which becomes also becomes not. He may not determine that any discreet individual is eternal, but he knows that the central consciousness with which he is identical is born not and dies not ever. This may indeed be just that which Western man calls God, or the transcendental modulus, or *Adi-Buddha*, but this he knows is eternal. And he knows his essential identity with that. His discreetness as a concrete, empiric individual may well be less than eternal, but in his inner core he is identical with that which is born not and therefore never dies. Thus, he is utterly secure.

As I know the yoga of knowledge, it requires the abandonment of belief and myth. It seeks only unequivocal Truth and the security which that Realization affords; however, he may deal with all of the problems presented by this cosmos without and within by means of hypotheses that are entertained but held loosely. He may make predications and explore the consequences, but these are only aids to which he may not attach himself—aids which may lead to positive insight and which may fail; and other hypotheses may be explored, and other predications. But whatever the consequence of such search may be, he himself knows that in the central core of his being he is eternal and secure.

Since I have gone the way of knowledge and realized the breakthrough on August 7, 1936, I can testify that the security and certainty then attained has remained ever since. But I cannot communicate this certainty and security. I can only build a presumption for its reality. It would seem to be true that every individual must for himself walk the way and realize for himself. He may find presumptions sufficiently strong to justify him taking this step; but the presumption is less than certainty, and ultimately he must dare possibility quite other than what he can possibly know when he starts on the way. It, therefore, is a path that requires courage. However, I found that the testimony of those who went before afforded a real aid. And I found that the attainment was far more than anything that was within my expectation beforehand, that it was far richer than anything that had been

indicated in any source with which I was familiar. The gamble cannot be eliminated, but the presumption for the fullness of the attainment can be forcefully indicated.

Now, what is the nature of this certain knowledge which gives security? First of all, it is neither sensuous nor conceptual knowledge. Sensuous knowledge by itself gives us only an awareness of an indeterminate somewhat which surrounds us and which seems external. It is something that is quite without meaning in its purity. Conceptual knowledge, on the other hand, gives only a limited or relative security. This is true when we deal with a conceptual knowledge which is concerned alone with a conceptual subject matter, and this is the knowledge which we call mathematics. But the structure of this knowledge is based upon a group of assumptions which are not themselves known unequivocally. In fact, at this very foundation of our mathematical knowledge there are elements that involve apparent contradictions or paradoxes that would suggest a basic uncertainty. Nonetheless, in the context of these assumptions we do have the experience of certain knowledge such as we may never acquire from empiric research. This, thus, gives us something of the meaning of certainty in knowledge. But when we use conceptual knowledge with respect to other than a conceptual content, we no longer have that certainty, and most of our conceptual knowledge is employed in this sense, particularly in reference to a sensual content such a bridge that may be constructed, a tall building that may be built, or the driving of a tunnel to arrive at a predetermined point underground. But in this case, we have less than certainty. We have dealt with an order of concepts that eventuates in a meaning that is not contained in the concept, and the nature of that meaning is not known with certainty; all the more when we use a conceptual medium for expressing a content which transcends the conceptual order beyond sensation in the truly transcendent. We have a limited view, a partial view, an otherwise formed view concerning a content that is of a totally different nature; and between this indicated content, or pointed to content, and the concept itself, there is a basic distortion, a profound incommensurability. We have crossed over a point of discontinuity; therefore, there is no certainty in the conceptual representation of a transcendent meaning. No, neither of these modes of knowledge give us certainty. Only that which we call "knowledge through identity," or the state in which the knower and the known are fused into one whole, do we have certainty; that certainty is lost, in lesser or greater degree, when it is transcribed into a conceptual representation. And since we use either conceptual representation or artistic representation in sensual forms for our communication, and in the very act of representation distort the original purity of the insight, it follows that the certainty is not contained in either form of representation. For this reason, every individual must himself put forth the effort to attain Fundamental Realization if he would know ultimate certainty and security in the central part of his being.

As an apparent individual self embodied in this organism looks forth upon this world and the cosmos about, no doubt he feels small and even insignificant, and therefore feel that he is the victim at the mercy of forces larger than himself which surround him. But here he is not really taking the perspective of the true Self, only that of the little ego; for if he looks again with profound insight, he realizes that he cognizes this world about and this cosmos, and also that he cognizes that organism which he has identified as himself. Thus, he may realize, if he thinks deeply into the truth of the matter, that the organism, the world about, and the cosmos are in the last analysis only his idea; and then he may know that in reality he transcends organism, world about, and the cosmos because he contains those ideas. He has projected an existence beyond his

consciousness and thinks of himself as small; whereas, in fact, that projection of an existence beyond his consciousness has no basis in his authentic knowledge. He is large enough to contain the ideas of organism, world about, and the cosmic whole. They are, in the last analysis, only contents of a containing consciousness, and whatever happens to the elements in that containing consciousness does not affect the security of the container. This is the root basis for ultimate security. All of these things are only part of my knowledge—the knowledge of the Self—and he who has awakened knows that the apparent individual self is merely a ray of the ultimate Self which is reflected in every entity. The drama involving suffering and delight, birth and death, and all other dualities is but a play within his all-encompassing consciousness, the consciousness of the one and sole Self, the *Paramatman*.

This knowledge, fundamentally and ultimately, is based upon Realization, which is the action of that which I have called the “transcendental function,” but it is possible to approach this through our thought and analysis so that we may have a confirming recognition of its truth. To do this involves the use of a principle which is always implied in any knowledge which we have but is usually not explicit. This is the principle of the base of reference, the coordinate system, or the perspective from which we view our world about or our system of cognitions. This is a matter of premiere importance, yet one which could easily be overlooked by one who is not familiar with methods that are preeminent in mathematics. In mathematical analysis we start from a base of reference, usually a coordinate system, and that system is usually known as the rectilinear form of the Cartesian coordinates. The approach to problems may be very difficult if the coordinate system is inappropriately selected for a particular problem; but, on the other hand, with the appropriate selection of a base of reference, many problems may become greatly simplified. And the classical case of this is involved in the shift from the Ptolemaic system or view of sidereal relationships to the Copernican system, which favored an enormous advance in the resolution of astronomic problems, as is well known to nearly everybody. Now, something that may not be appropriately understood is this: that if we say, for instance, that the sun goes around the earth or the earth goes around the sun, the statement is meaningless unless it is related to the appropriate base of reference or coordinate system. If we fix our coordinates with respect to the earth, then it is true with respect to those coordinates that the sun goes around the earth; but, on the other hand, if we fix the coordinates with respect to the ecliptic, namely, the path which the earth follows around the sun, then with respect to that system the earth and all of the planets go around the sun. The two statements—the sun goes around the earth or the earth goes around the sun—are true with the appropriate coordinate system. They are not true with the wrong coordinate system, and without a coordinate system at all, the statements are meaningless.

Now, what I submit here is that a base of reference or perspective is implied in all our statements whether we are conscious of it or not, whether we have identified that base of reference or not; and our statements have validity only if they are true statements with respect to the coordinate system or base of reference assumed; that, also, with respect to certain other bases of reference they may be all untrue; or if taken in isolation from any base of reference, they are all meaningless.

Now, this is a principle that I propose to apply in taking as our base of reference the field of consciousness itself, which contrasts with the usual practice of assuming a non-consciousness existence here in this world consisting of all the sidereal bodies and of the objects which surround us in this world. This unconscious existence is assumed typically in all of our popular and scientific thought. It is assumed, namely, that the sidereal universe and the objects about us in this world exist regardless of whether there is any consciousness aware of them or not. It appeared to me long ago in analyzing this that when we made that statement, we made one which could not be verified, for the very act of verification implied the existence of all these objects in consciousness. But we had assumed that the objects existed outside of consciousness, and that ultimately, in the course of evolution, consciousness arose. This is a bad assumption because it can never be verified for the very reason that I pointed out, that the act of verification implies their existence in consciousness, and we have not in any way proven that they ever had an existence outside of consciousness. That they had such an existence is only a belief with respect to which we are favorably prejudiced, but it has no logical authority whatsoever. Now, shift our base of reference from a supposed non-conscious universe, within which ultimately consciousness evolved, to the base of reference of consciousness itself—that which we indubitably know because it is conscious—and then from that perspective or base of reference proceed to view the problems of the world, of the universe, and of that which lies beyond the universe.

Now, a difficulty may arise in the mind of the hearer which takes this form: we see consciousness arising and growing in our infants. We see it, by inference at least, arising and growing in the behavior of the animal creatures. We do not see a behavior in trees, or vegetable kingdom generally, and especially in the mineral kingdom, that suggests a rising of consciousness. And one might then ask does this not imply that consciousness becomes? The answer to this is not difficult. It is true that there is a consciousness which arises and also ceases every time we fall asleep, but this is a particular kind of consciousness, the kind which I have called heretofore subject-object consciousness, and which elsewhere has been called *Samvriti-satya* and *shes-rig*, by the Tibetans. But contrasting to that, I have identified as a primary consciousness in which all exists which I have called Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject, which may be identified as *Paramartha-satya*, in *The Secret Doctrine*, and as *Rig-pa* in the Tibetan metaphysics. Consciousness is, thus, not all of one kind. There is a Root Consciousness in which all abides and there is a relative consciousness that arises; and there may be, as it seems to be true, many forms of this relative consciousness. Consciousness, thus, is to be taken in two senses. And that I think resolves the difficulty presented here.

A final point may be of interest to us: both Dr. Lilly and Dr. Jung are M.D.s, in other words, they were trained in the field of therapy. For the therapist the supreme good, the *summon bonum*, seems definitely to be the achievement of wholeness in the empiric living entity. This is emphasized by Dr. Jung again and again. Thus, if by the eating of poison or the believing in a demonstrably false idea leads to wholeness, then the eating of poison and the believing of the demonstrably false idea would be recommended. For myself, I am not a therapist. In a deep and profound sense, though not now in an outer sense, I am a mathematician, and that means that for me the *summon bonum* is Truth, whatever it may be and whatever the attainment of Truth may

require. If, indeed, the attainment of Truth meant the dissolution of all empiric creatures, then the attitude should be, let it so be. The attitude in orientation to Truth for its own sake implies this: that one seeks Truth without placing any limitation upon what that Truth may be beforehand. One seeks Truth even though it brings despair. One seeks Truth even though the view revealed to one is devastating. One places upon this search no extraneous restriction. It is Truth for its own sake.

Now, as I have known the consequence of this search, it brought contentment, peace, delight, and profound security; but those are features added on, implications that came but which could not be foreknown as the consequence of knowing something of Truth. The attitude in the search requires that one shall place no restriction whatsoever upon what the Truth may imply in the empiric life. It might be completely devastating to that empiric life, and yet the searcher should nonetheless seek it and seek it alone. The attitudes, thus, are quite different. It might well be that he who has found Truth becomes what the man of the world would say is disoriented—disoriented, that is, to a domain that really is a kind of insane asylum, as human life in this world today most certainly is. The sane man in an asylum, from the standpoint of the truly insane, seems insane. And this is an important point. He who attains Truth may indeed attain the power to adapt himself to the ways of a surrounding insanity, but his own convictions, his own primary orientation, is quite other than that system of valuation. To be sure, orientation to Truth for its own sake is impersonal. It does not think in terms of therapy in the empiric sense. But I have found that it is therapeutic in the profoundest sense of the word. This is the something added on which was not imposed as a condition in the search.

And now as a final word, I say to earthman, burn up, consume thy uncertainty in the fire of knowledge.