

# Two Supreme Virtues

## Part 2 of 2

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This tape is a continuation of the subject matter given in the preceding tape, namely, on the subject of purity and compassion. At the close of the latter tape, I spoke of a state of high purity that fell within my experience in the critical period of 1936, namely, a sense of having arisen to a point of consciousness that was so lofty that descent from it at one time seemed to be impossible. There is here involved a reference to an individual experience, and I have some thoughts on why this is of importance.

In his psychological commentary with reference to *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, Dr. Carl G. Jung makes the observation that when Oriental man has the experience that is generally classified and Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment, he comes forth with a metaphysical statement and that there is a complete absence of a discussion of both psychological and epistemological subject matter.<sup>1</sup> I cannot wholly agree with Dr. Jung with respect to this statement. First of all, in the volume known as *Buddhistic Logic* dealing with the work of Dignaga and Dharmakirti, there is material that may be regarded as having at least epistemological value;<sup>2</sup> and, secondly, it is not always true that the Orientals come forth with a metaphysical system, for in the case of the Great Buddha there was a specific avoidance of metaphysical subject matter, at least in his exoteric statements. Questions were put to the Buddha that required a metaphysical statement and he is reported as being often silent with respect to any answer in this field. On the other hand, he emphasized a method whereby the man in the world could proceed to the Awakening which is called Enlightenment and dealt with the problem of how to get well simply without dealing with a discussion of the content of the state which may be called the whole state. The conclusion has been drawn by certain readers and students that this was equivalent to the denial of a metaphysical truth, but there is at least one Buddhistic writer who has made this point, namely, that the Buddha did not avoid a metaphysical statement because of a denial of a metaphysical reality, but because of the problem involved in giving a conceptual statement concerning a subject matter that defeats the forms of cognition which are conceptual, because the content of the state of Enlightenment so defeats the forms of conception, a conceptual statement would be more or less a distortion. On the other hand, the state which when Realized is highly metaphysical, and the concern of the Buddha was to effect the attainment of this state rather than to discourse upon its content in terms that inevitably distort it in some measure or other. This is very different from a denial of a metaphysical subject matter.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954, xxix).

<sup>2</sup> Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962).

However, it is true that East Indians, such as Shankara and Aurobindo, have made statements that are essentially metaphysical and which are deficient in both epistemological and psychological content. Still, in the case of Aurobindo, if one refers to the published letters, he will find material that does fall within the range of epistemology and psychology. So I cannot wholly agree with Dr. Carl G. Jung upon this point. But, no doubt, there is a difference of emphasis, and metaphysics is the typical presentation that one derives from East Indian sources; and the emphasis of the psychological factor and the epistemological factor is more characteristic of the Occidental mind. For my part, I am highly sympathetic with this prejudice of the Oriental mind, which tends to give all value to the state of consciousness and its content—the content being the metaphysical system produced. But, nonetheless, having had a background of psychological study in my academic days, including laboratory work, I also can appreciate the Western point of view in its emphasis of the psychological and the epistemological factors, and I have tried to make a contribution to this side by giving introspective reports.

A thought has come to me as to how we can clarify the distinction between a metaphysical statement and a psychological-epistemological form of statement. Concerning a lofty state of consciousness, a state reached when one has gone through the transformation of the type reported in 1936 by me, would be something like this: for a metaphysical statement one would say it was a lofty and pure state of consciousness with its normal appropriate content; contrasting to this statement, I had a sense of a lofty and pure consciousness leading to the following interpretation. The key distinction lies in the words 'state' and 'sense'. A *sense* of a condition would be a purely objective reference in our ordinary use of language without attributing objective truth to the statement; whereas, the metaphysical statement, which is more categorical, would imply that it is in fact a truth concerning the nature of being. A psychologist or a psychiatrist upon receiving a report from some individual that he had had a sense of a state of consciousness which was lofty and very pure can grant that this was in fact a true report in the subjective or psychological sense, but then challenge it as a true statement concerning the nature of reality.

This brings us face to face with the question, how do we determine the real and the true? Common practice in this world and in the field of medical psychology is to say that is true and that is real which is in conformity with the *consensus gentium*—in other words, the general agreement of people in this world. But an individual who has had a breakthrough into that condition which is generally viewed as Illumination might retort in these terms, that once you have made this breakthrough you realize that the state of this humanity is a condition of universal insanity. The world life, as we know it, is life in a kind of general insane asylum. The *consensus gentium*, therefore, is the universal agreement of the inmates in an insane asylum. The *consensus gentium*, therefore, is the general judgment of the insane. Or we might take another figure. Take the Ptolemaic view of the universe; this implies that the sun goes around the world, and perhaps we would find a *consensus gentium* among human beings in this world to the effect that, indeed, the sun rises and the sun sets—and that is precisely the Ptolemaic point of view. But the Copernican point of view would affirm that this is indeed a false *consensus gentium*. Even though the Copernicans were few in number or only one in number, it would be truer to say that the earth goes around the sun and that the sun does not rise and set but that the earth changes its orientation to the sun. The *consensus gentium* would be false. The few or the single individual that took the latter position

would be in a correct relationship, or a more correct relationship, with respect to that which was real and true.

Our discussion so far has brought us face to face with a very great question, perhaps the greatest question of all, namely, how do we determine truth? As we look over the history of mankind, we find that there are many parts to the answer with respect to this question. One is that connected with the discipline which we call empiric science—a discipline that started with the determinations made by Galileo. In this we start with certain observations of events in the environment about us. We'll call these events *A, B, C, D*, and so forth. Then we note other events which we will call *A', E, F, G, H*, and so forth. Then in a series of observations we note that given a complex which differs from the *A, B, C*, and *D*, that if we have *A*, but lack *B, C*, or *D*, or even all of them, nonetheless, there is an *A'* even though the *E, G, F*, and so forth may be different. Over a series of observations, if it is determined that when there is an event *A*, there always follows an event *A'*, we conclude that *A* stands in causal relationship to *A'*. There may be something added to this in the light of knowledge developed in depth psychology, the relationship between *A* and *A'* may be a matter of synchronicity, but we will not complicate our procedure by dealing with more than that of the causal relationship at present. With a large number of observations, we tend to determine that if there is an *A* there then is an *A'*.

We next tackle the question of what relationship exists between *A* and *A'*. An hypothesis is invented which may be merely a guess among many other guesses, or it may be an inspiration of a genius, but the explanation offered may enable us to extend our conception of the relationship between *A* and *A'*. By controlling *A* we can predict what will happen in the state *A'*. If, over a period of time, we find this prediction always follows and that our control is developed, then we conceive that we have discovered a law in nature, and we regard this as a truth. This is a simple statement of the inductive process by which our empiric science grows. The statement of the relationship we regard as a truth. It must be noted, however, that a relationship of this sort may be established for a considerable time, but that then in the light of subtler observation, more detailed observation, we find that our first interpreting statement of a law was inadequate and may have to be modified, as in the shift from the Newtonian conception of the cosmos to the Einsteinian conception of the cosmos. But this is roughly the way in empiric science we determine what is truth. But this is only phenomenal truth. There is the deeper science of the truth of relationship *per se*, and this falls in the domain of the normative sciences such as logic and mathematics where one makes certain preliminary assumptions then deduces by logical means the consequences which follow from them, and then later in applied mathematics, unites this kind of thinking with the empiric observation and gains a vaster view of nature processes. There may be many errors in the process before finally some statement is achieved which works with high reliability.

As a note in passing we make this observation, that man has not always taken this scientific attitude towards nature. In the story of the ancients in the Mediterranean history, which is most pertinent to our history because of an organic connection with it, there was a time when the view of nature was more irrational than rational, that nature was under the operation of entities which were called gods, and these gods were impulsive in their nature, very much as man is. If one sought, therefore, to derive a

control of environmental circumstance, he sacrificed to the gods rather than approaching the problem in the scientific spirit which is so characteristic of our times. There would be unexpected storms on the sea. There would be the outbreak of volcanoes and of devastating earthquakes. These were not viewed so much in terms of an expression of law, but rather as the arbitrary action of conscious entities who were regarded as gods, and since these phenomena were of a sort that was too massive for man to handle, he sought to propitiate the gods, usually by sacrifices and various ritualistic practices. At one time the practice involved bloody sacrifices, not only of animals but of human beings, and this was a rather dark chapter in the history of our ancestors. But this brings out an important point. There is a side of life that is quite irrational, arbitrary, in fact, emotional, willful, as it appears to us. At least this is true of human nature; and man in viewing outer nature has always tended to project himself into it and sees there an action similar to his own. The irrational side has been known as the Dionysian side; the rational, as the Apollonian. And in the history of the ancients in our own cultural ancestry, there was a time when the irrational component seemed to be the predominant one; hence, the processes of life were governed, supposedly, by an orientation to the gods predominantly through bloody sacrifices. We today see these processes as the expression of law in nature, and we aim to achieve a relationship to nature by coming to an understanding of this law in nature and adjusting our actions in accordance with it in such a way as to reduce the hazards of life to a minimum. It tends to produce a godless world or rather a conception of a godless, unconscious world behaving blindly in accordance to the imposition of the natural law.

The Faustian nature of modern Western man is illustrated very well by the current effort to come to a capacity to predict and possibly even control earthquakes along the San Andreas Fault. At our present stage of knowledge it appears that a fault such as the San Andreas Fault in California is produced by the rubbing together of two massive plates which underlie the continents and the oceans. These plates are conceived as subject to a small movement with respect to each other; that as they move together they are held, often by friction, until a tremendous pressure is built up which suddenly releases and tends to produce a devastating earthquake. Studies are being made now with the thought of becoming able to predict the time when such a release of pent up energy may take place, and even the further thought has been entertained that we might so lubricate the fault that the release of energy would take place more continuously and thus in small amounts that are not seriously disruptive. This is like playing god; at least this would no doubt be the attitude of the ancients around the Mediterranean area. That which they conceived of as under the control of the gods that had to be propitiated, man now seeks to do in this very field of very massive forces, namely, the earthquakes produced by the frictional movement between two massive plates. The real meaning of the Faustian principle is the sacrifice to the demon in order to gain controlling knowledge and is the reason why Spengler designed our culture as Faustian.<sup>3</sup> We are, in a certain sense, thus, presuming to take the place of what the ancients would have called the gods and to rule by reason.

But let us return now from our diversion into this sideline. We have considered two parts of the process of truth determination, namely, the determination of fact in the

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<sup>3</sup> Wolff probably meant to say, “. . . reason why Spengler designated our culture as Faustian.”

sense of empiric science, and the determination of logical relationship as in the normative sciences. Concerning both of these, this point stands out: they constitute an orientation to the object in consciousness—an orientation to the world about, in the case of empiric science, namely, the world that is evident to us through our senses, and then determination in the sense of logical relationship which belongs to the zone our conceptual consciousness. But this is only part of the total process. Nature, in the last analysis, exists for us as an experience in consciousness, and the big fact, the matrix fact is that the consciousness is a precondition of an existence of nature for man, and may well be a precondition for the existence of nature in the ontological sense. This means that we have another approach to truth, namely, that of the organization of consciousness; and in the study of this we find that consciousness is not simply a series of events that are cognized, but it is a relationship of such a series of events to a cognizer, and that we have as our most fundamental triad the grouping: the cognizer, the cognized, and the relationship between the two which is often called knowledge.

Now, how do we determine truth in this domain? Here it is no longer possible to set up a laboratory and deal with a number of objects and the manipulation of those objects under controlled conditions, or simply to observe the universe about us, because we are observing what takes place in the cognitive function itself. This is a strictly subjective exercise. Truth is no longer determined by the methods of empiric science or by the mathematical proof, but by another principle; and here we are dependant upon either a penetration into this field by ourselves or upon the reports of those who make such a penetration. It is not here possible for one who has made such a penetration into this domain to say here is a material which you can critically examine to determine whether the reports are accurate. Truth as here determined is not demonstrable to other individuals. One who has made a determination in this domain may report it, may exemplify something in his own person, but he cannot prove it to anyone else. He can only build a presumption that a way of consciousness exists, and others, if they wish also to attain knowledge in this field, must dare to go forth and strive for the awakening of the power of cognition in this domain. I see no way that a degree of gamble or uncertainty can be avoided. One must dare on evidence, on testimony, but cannot move on the basis of certainty until he too has made a breakthrough into this other domain of possible knowledge. There is a gamble here that calls for real daring. Failure could mean the loss of life or the loss of sanity, but success could mean that one knows directly the authority from which a Buddha or a Christ speaks. Truth here is not a matter of correct empiric determination of fact, nor is it a matter of a correct exercise of the reason in relationship, but rather, truth is that with which the self becomes identical.

Now let us return to the consideration of the high and pure state of Consciousness from which return was difficult. I have already noted the fact that in this state one feels that he has returned home, that it is the realm to which he normally belongs, and that he has found that through the years of his life he has been dwelling in an alien land in which he fulfilled an exile. Why this sense of returning home? Here I will bring back to your memory a portion of the story that is told in *The Secret Doctrine* called the descent of the *Manasaputra*, since here we may find the explanation for that strong sense of having returned home.

In the story of evolution as given in *The Secret Doctrine* it is stated that at a certain time millions of years in the past a certain class of monads had passed through the animal

kingdom and had achieved a position that might be called nascent man, but they were not yet truly human. They are even spoken of as ape-like creatures, although not the same as the creatures which we call apes today. At this point a certain additional factor was brought into the evolutionary process. It is there stated that there was a certain class of ex-men belonging to an earlier evolution, namely, entities that we would call *Dhyan Chohans*, had been guilty of some important error. It is said that the error or fault was of such a nature that we would not appreciate its character. This is quite understandable, for certainly there are processes that take place in man's consciousness, such as a mathematical kind of thinking, which would be quite beyond the capacity of any animal to understand it, and that there should be a process in entities beyond man that are beyond man's comprehension is thus quite comprehensible. This error involved a *karmic* penalty in the form of an obligation to descend again down in the path of evolution, not to the very beginning but to the point reached by the ape-like creatures. The *karmic* dictum was that they should fuse with, or enter into these creatures and guide their further evolution. It is reported that this was evidently in a move with respect to which these ex-men felt a strong resistance. We can appreciate this. How would it seem if we as human beings were required to enter into creatures like hogs or other animals? Would we not feel a considerable repulsion at the idea? Some obeyed the *karmic* dictum fully, so it is said, and entered into their appropriate individual ape-like creature, others projected a ray from themselves into these creatures, and still others merely overshadowed the entities into which they were supposed to enter in. In the case of those who entered into these ape-like creatures and fused with them, it is said it is as though two rays of light had become one ray, one type of consciousness, a result of the fusion of two entities. In the case of those who only projected a portion, a ray, as it were, of themselves, this would not be a complete fusion, and even less would it be a fusion in the case of those who merely overshadowed. It is said that not all of the nascent human beings received either the entering in, or the overshadowing, or projection of a ray into the consciousness of the entities in the case of all races of men. Two such exceptions are listed in the story, namely, the Bushmen of Australia and the Bushmen of Africa, with an implication that there may be others who did not receive this overshadowing, or projection of a ray, or full entering in.

This would account for a difference in the development of cultural capacity among the different races of mankind, and is a factor to be kept in mind in our evaluation of the degree of development in the case of different races. In any case, those entities who received the full entering in of the *Manasaputra* would be a form that was a compound of two elements that became one element—one ray of consciousness. Here an individual could either identify himself with the ape-like creature and think of the fallen *Dhyan Chohan* as being borne upon his back, or he could identify with the fallen *Dhyan Chohan* and conceive of himself as riding on the back of an ape-like creature. Those who took the latter position would tend to have a certain distaste for the physical entity which he occupied. Thus, it is said that Plotinus was ashamed of the fact that he had a physical body, and Shankara has spoken of the physical body in highly pejorative terms. The association with the physical entity could become very obnoxious.

Now, suppose such a one attained to the breakthrough which is called Illumination. He would find that here he was reaching back to the consciousness that had been normal to him before he had suffered the penalty of a fallen state, and that that lofty

Consciousness was actually the consciousness that was normal to him. Entering into that Consciousness, then, would give this sense of returning home.

For the purpose of our continuing thesis, let us assume that this story from *The Secret Doctrine* is indeed historic fact; then we have an explanation of how man, as we know him, differs essentially from the animal. It would imply that man is not simply the product of a simple evolution, in the sense of the animal, until he became the highest of the animal, but it will imply that something further has become a part of the human constitution which is entirely alien to the animal nature no matter how highly it may be developed. This we can tie in with two types of function: the sensuous entity, that which is correlated with *manas*, in Sanskrit, or the sense-mind, and the conceptual entity, or that which is correlated with the conceptual man. Conceptuality can hardly be conceived as a product of pure straight-line evolution of animality. There is clearly a discontinuity between sensuality and conceptuality, for the sensuous or perceptual side is concerned alone with the concrete particular, whereas conceptuality is oriented to universals. This is illustrated in the distinction Plato made between the sensual and the universal. The sensual knowledge he regarded as definitely inferior, as even potentially evil in its nature, whereas the conceptual was essentially divine. This now makes clear sense. Conceptuality is definitively different from sensuality. It is abstract and universal. The sensual is concrete and particular—two different types of organization of cognition. Here for the first time, then, man becomes truly human. Man is more than merely the last or latest term in the evolution of an animal. He is an entity apart from the animal that has been fused with the animal. Sensuality is identical with animality. Not of course necessarily in a derogatory sense; it may be in a pure, highly evolved, aesthetic sense, but still that is a sensual and less than the truly human. It is in so far as man is a conceptual being that he is a truly human being. This means that we have two orders that are in discrete relation between the sensual, perceptive, or aesthetic, on one side, and the conceptual or noetic, on the other side.

I have here some speculative thoughts that are not authenticated by anything that I have found in the literature, and this is that the lowest aspect of the fallen *Dhyan Chohans*, or *Manasaputra*, or Sons of Mind, have as the lowest part of their nature the conceptual function and that from this they reach up into the higher zones of consciousness. They, thus, can meet man on the conceptual level but not on the sensational level. At the highest pitch of our conceptuality, we can reach into their consciousness and there is a certain overlapping, but they reach beyond this into zones which transcend our normal understanding. As we make the breakthrough to the higher reaches of consciousness, we become participants in the true movement of consciousness of these higher entities.