

# Impromptu Statement of My Present Condition

Franklin Merrell-Wolff  
August 1978

. . . for tonight, one of my last tapes. It was a discussion of a rereading of William James' [*The*] *Varieties of Religious Experience* and the reading of a small book on Eastern and Western psychology by Swami Ajaya.<sup>1</sup> But I notice in my production that there is a certain quality in it that suggests that it has run its course.

I first went on the platform in a substantial way in 1928 when I was appearing on the platform about eight times a week and the work that was then done was carried to a number of different cities. In addition to the platform work, there was certain writing. In 1929 Sherifa and I were up at Hunter's Flat, not then accessible except by trail, but now known as the Whitney Portal accessible by road and the beginning of the trail that goes to Mt. Whitney. We were seeking a place for the building of an ashram and that naturally was our first choice, as it was closest to the highest mountain in the United States at that time and there was a certain basis for viewing the highest mountain in any country as the spiritual center of that country and that gave Mt. Whitney that distinction for this country, our own United States. Of course, since then Alaska has become a part of the United States and that might very well mean that Mt. McKinley has become the spiritual center; and that is a truly major mountain, 20,320 feet high, comparable to the heights in the Himalayas. While we were camped at Hunter's Flat, I began the writing of the small book which was called *Yoga*, and finished it later.<sup>2</sup> It's since been out of print, although Dr. Merchant said that she would use it in her class if it were reprinted. I wrote a few other small things, like the small book on *Re-embodiment*<sup>3</sup> and one on the Elixir of Life which was never published.

In 1936 the breakthrough took place on August 7 and that led to the report in *Pathways*. I remember that one called Senior suggested to me that it would be well to write it up. I was enjoying the glow of the experience for about ten days. So I started to do that, at first rather bored with the process, but becoming interested. And I gave the record of what was happening. Very often I'd wake up in the morning with a charge that was in the nature of an *ananda* with an inspiration in it, and I'd write it down, the charge would be exhausted by evening. I'd be emptied. And the next morning there would come another charge; it was put down in the book. And the result is that many persons get inductions out of the reading of that book. And we've had much correspondence from people who have received value from it, often reassurance because they've had experiences of their own which they did not understand and sometimes they feel that they

---

<sup>1</sup> Swami Ajaya, ed., *Foundations of Eastern and Western Psychology* (Glenview, Ill.: Himalayan Institute Press, 1977). See the audio recording "Psychology: East and West."

<sup>2</sup> Yogagnani, *Yoga: Its Problems, Its Philosophy, Its Technique* (Los Angeles: Merrell-Wolff Publishing, 1930).

<sup>3</sup> Yogagnani, *Re-embodiment or Human Incarnations* (Los Angeles: Merrell-Wolff Publishing, 1930).

may be going off the deep end; and this reading of the book often gives them the reassurance they need. I know one wrote, "Thank God that you are alive," or "that you wrote that book." Then later that was followed by *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*. Subsequently, after the passing of Sherifa, along with the technological development, I used the medium of the recorder, and I would say the total production is close to a million words all together.

Now, that began fifty years ago, and as I look at my latest production, there is evidence that it is a cycle that has completed itself. And to say what I further have to say, I will give a restricted meaning to two words that ordinarily are regarded as synonyms. These are the words 'embodiment' and 're-embodiment' and the word 'incarnation' or 'reincarnation'. Let us consider the word 'embodiment' as representing the span of the whole physical life of an individual from the time he is born as an infant until that body finally falls in the process which we commonly call death. Ordinarily, an incarnation is coterminous with the embodiment, but not always so. It is possible for one to pass through an incarnation and enter into another while continuing in the same embodiment, and that is the reason why I wish to give this special meaning to these two terms.

In the conception of incarnation we have to introduce the notion of the Monad as being our real empiric identity, I say empiric because I want to differentiate it from the spiritual identity which is none other than *Brahman*, but as being the special identity which we individually are. On the basis of the teachings which many of us know, the Monad is not ever objective, but that an incarnation is an outward presentation of a certain portion of the total entity which is the Monad. Not ever is the whole of the Monad represented by the portion that is incarnated. We might say that a certain portion, a certain key-note, marks the character of any particular incarnation of an individual. This goes through a process of development in that life developing the potentialities in it and ordinarily occupies the vehicle throughout that entire life. But, it is possible that an incarnation may be completed in part of an embodiment and the embodiment continues, in which case there may be a second incarnation, or even more, in that single embodiment. That would mean that in the case of such a given individual there would be more than one incarnation in a given embodied lifetime.

Now, what happens? Let us take the case of Shankara. Shankara was an outstanding Indian philosopher; and then there was the occasion when the *tulku* of the Buddha, which had entered into him replacing his intermediate principle so that in one sense Shankara was the Buddha again, but this time with the equipment of a *Brahmin*, and that that *tulku* was supposed to last for thirty-two years. The story is a little more complicated than that, but that's sufficient for our purposes. Then, it is said, the *tulku* was withdrawn and his own intermediate principle was returned to him. Now, the intermediate principle that was indigenous to Shankara had not taken part in all the activity which Shankara performed throughout his lifetime. Here Shankara was functioning at the very highest level of consciousness available at the time, really in part the consciousness of the Great Buddha, and he was an outstanding Indian philosopher. The withdrawal of the *tulku* and the replacement by the corresponding principle that was indigenous to Shankara was equivalent to a great slump. It is said that he entered a cave and has never been seen since. He had the power to withdraw the life principle by act of will and in effect committed suicide, but invoking thereby the penalty of the law. And

that penalty, as stated by certain Tibetan sources, was death at the same age against his will by violence in a subsequent incarnation. He withdrew at thirty-three, and bearing in mind the dates given by Subba Row that he was here in 510 B.C., not the general position that he was incarnated at 700 A.D., it would be possible for him to have incarnated as the Christ, who died by violence against his will at the same age of thirty-three.<sup>4</sup>

Now, an objection that is raised as to this conception is in this form, that Shankara was a great philosopher and Christ was not. He was primarily a man of feeling. It is not, however, an effective objection, for the Monad in a series of incarnations would not put forth a repetition, in general, of the same particular qualities since the total entity is much more than the particular qualities that could make up a given incarnation. Shankara was a philosopher. Christ a man of feeling, primarily; and there's no contradiction in that. In general, we may expect that a subsequent incarnation of a given individual would appear quite differently from what his appearance had been in a previous incarnation. There could be cases in which a given individual would incarnate the same principles more than once. The case of Cardinal de Cusa and Copernicus were one and the same and carried out the same idea would be a case where the same principle was incarnated more than once. But in general the rule would be that a different side of the total character would appear in a later incarnation as contrasted to that of an earlier incarnation.

Now, the bearing of this right here is upon certain experiences that I have been passing through during this period that was initiated by the death of Gertrude. According to the evaluation of the big dream, with which I think all of you are familiar, that started the activation of the process of that dream which had been dreamed on the order of fifty years before; and that it involved a rather enormous psychical activation. The death of Gertrude was the inciting cause of this activation and has put me through extremely difficult psychic process, so much so that when it apparently went through a precipitation into a physical form giving me a major heart attack, I felt relief, not a precipitation of a more difficult condition but of an easier condition.

Now, I have noticed that as I study myself that I find something emerging which is strange to me. No longer a philosophic thinker. I do not seem to have the capacity to put out material in the rational, philosophic form which has been characteristic of the production of the past fifty years. That here something strange is emerging inside myself. And because of my primary identification with the effort that started fifty years before, that is something that is happening with respect to all the work to which I am personally related. I don't think that you will hear from me in the future any further production in the form of the tapes with which you have been so long familiar. I seem to move over to something that's more like drama or like story telling for making a point. I don't feel at home with this. It feels strange and I'm rather uncomfortable with it. The tapes that I have for Convention are different from any that I have produced heretofore. They're

---

<sup>4</sup> T. Subba Row, "Sri Sankaracharya's Date and Doctrine," *The Theosophist* 4, no. 12 (September 1883): 304-310. The following quote is from p. 310:

We may perhaps now venture to place before the public the exact date assigned to Sankaracharya by Tibetan and Indian Initiates. According to the historical information in their possession he was born in the year B.C. 510 (51 years and 2 months after the date of Buddha's nirvana) . . .

autobiographical in a sense that is intimately connected with the work in which I have been engaged, They bring out something of the side which has always been more or less hidden by me.

You've all heard, I think, the dream. It is true that my orientation to the domain of thought was very strong with a repression of the feeling side so far as public expression was concerned. I felt rather undressed if I expressed anything of the feeling side and I was not inclined to do that. And it is represented in the dream as having a Mephisto character. It even involved a destructive effect upon the *anima* principle—the *anima* principle being the feminine aspect which is in the nature of a man, just as the *animus* aspect is a masculine principle that is in the nature of the woman.

Now, if you deal with the problem of Enlightenment in its completion, that which the finished Sage ultimately brings, there are two aspects in the completed form, and those aspects are the principle of Wisdom and the principle of Compassion. They are related to the *chakras*: one of the crown which is *sahasrara* and the other *anahata* which is the heart center. The complete Enlightenment involves the activation of both, not of one alone. The Compassion is as fundamental a part of the functioning of the Sage or the Buddha as is the Wisdom; and there is evidence to believe that I personally am facing the activation of the *anahata* level, which nonetheless has proven to be an exceedingly painful process. But what it involves in any future work connected with the tape production, it means those tapes will not be a continuation in the style of the tapes with which you have been familiar for several years. I am perhaps no longer the philosopher in the sense that have been. What I will be, I don't know. But this somehow affects the work. It is as though, here at very advanced old age, for I am ninety-one, as though I am entering into another incarnation, and I seem to be a stranger to myself and probably will be a stranger to you.

Now, what remains of the old tapes seem to have a character that is like that of going to seed as though a certain line of production occupying a period of fifty years has finally finished itself and something more of a different sort is coming forth. The Convention will deal with this transformation. Analysts have said that while it is something very personal for me, it is also of collective importance. The dreams involved archetypes, and Robert Johnson pointed out that Jung noted that an archetypal dream is never only of personal significance. It is as though an individual dreams something that is important to the collectivity. What will emerge, I do not now know. That only the future can tell, but I do say that it seems to me that at the terminal end of life, I am going through another incarnation.

I thought that was more important to bring to your attention than the particular tape which you will be able to hear at some other time that I have here on the recorder. There are two tapes connected with the book recently written and published by Swami Rama, which is a work of very considerable interest, for he brings you to an acquaintance with the Himalayan Brothers, particularly of a Vedantist type of orientation.<sup>5</sup> There is however another sense in which we refer to the Brothers that is to be found in *The Mahatma Letters*. The Brothers in this case are known as: one known as Koot Hoomi, one known as Morya,

---

<sup>5</sup> Swami Ajaya, ed., *Living with the Himalayan Masters: Spiritual Experiences of Swami Rama* (Honesdale, Pa.: Himalayan International Institute, 1978).

and one known as Hilarion, though he does not appear in *The Mahatma Letters*. It is said that Koot Hoomi, who had been a student in a Western university at some time in the past, had a greater sympathy for Western mind than was true of the Brothers in general and that he saw a possibility of their accepting something of esoteric knowledge that was not generally felt by the Brothers as a class. He says he was supported by the one known as Morya and the one known as Hilarion, and also was given permission by the *Maha Chohan* to act, but the Brothers generally did not support him in this. As a result of this we have had the advantage of *Isis Unveiled* and of *The Secret Doctrine*. *Isis Unveiled*, according to the account was actually authored by several of the Brothers writing by *tulku* through H. P. Blavatsky—she stepping aside when they were present and sometimes listening to what they said, sometimes stepping way back not listening.

And there is a funny incident told by Olcott, who was one of the associates of H.P. Blavatsky at that time in New York. There was a woman guest in the house where they were living, and she had finished her visit and had gone up to H.P. Blavatsky and gave her quite a good kiss upon the cheek. Olcott knew who was occupying HPB at the time and he had difficulty keeping his face straight. But he accompanied the lady to the door as she left and he came back; and the one who was at that time using H.P. Blavatsky's body was a very ascetic *sadhu*, and he mournfully said to Olcott as though it was a tragedy, "She kissed me." Well, that can happen. I've had the same experience. I once thought that I was kissing Sherifa my wife, but there was a Sage—the Atlantean Sage who is referred to in *Pathways*—actually present at the time, and a masculine voice said, "Is it the custom in this country for men to kiss each other?" Which makes you feel a bit foolish, but it can happen.

Well, I thought I'd give you this talk, which is partly reminiscent and partly has to do with some things that are actually happening that are important in connection with any work with which I am connected. And now if you have any questions, we might take them up.

Participant: Why would something like that occur at your age, Franklin, rather than wait for another incarnation?

Wolff: Yes, that is a very good question. It rather astounds me, cause there can't be enough life left for any particular development. No, I don't understand that.

Participant: Do you have the feeling that you might be incarnated again almost immediately?

Wolff: No, I don't about that. I'm not too anxious for that as a matter of fact. I'm much more interested in the problem of how to make the passage from this plane through the gate of death to the next plane and keep the relative consciousness on the sideline so that it can record the process. Now, I did use that method in 1936 because in an Enlightening Realization, there is a shift from one plane of consciousness to another. Now, there's a place in *The Secret Doctrine* where it speaks of the effect of moving from one plane to another which I verified. The organization of the state of being here is through a series of planes such that when one moves from plane *A* to plane *B* from the perspective of plane *B*, plane *A* seems unreal. It seems like a *maya*; and I found that it can even tend to disappear from your consciousness. But . . .

Participant: Plane A being relative consciousness.

Wolff: Hmm?

Participant: Plane A being your relative consciousness?

Wolff: No, you shift—what I did was to hold the relative consciousness on the sideline. To split the consciousness and hold the relative consciousness on the sideline while another part of the consciousness went through the transition. And the relative consciousness on the sideline could record the movement from one plane to the other; whereas, otherwise you could make the transition and have the original plane wiped out of your consciousness. You wouldn't know that you'd made the transition. And seems to be what happens ordinarily when one passes through the process of death. You'll find this in *The Mahatma Letters*, where it is said more than once that if a person dies and knows that he has died he is either an adept or a sorcerer.<sup>6</sup> The ordinary person doesn't know that. Now, to be in a consciousness aware of the transition can be effected, and apparently must be effected by this split in the consciousness, so that one part of the consciousness observes while the other part goes through the transition. A connection with death doesn't mean that one has moved over to the next plane. I know I have moved over to the next plane, you see, that it is a different plane and it's a different way of consciousness. Then I could know that I've gone through the process which men call death. It really isn't death in the last analysis. It's merely a shift to a different level, but it involves the dropping of the physical vehicle; whereas, in the experience of Illumination you do not have the dropping of the physical vehicle, and therefore it's not quite as radical. Yet, nonetheless, in Illumination you're going through the equivalent of the death process in a higher sense—what we call death. But as a matter of fact, death is not death. Death is not termination as we ordinarily think. It's transition to a different level. Now, part of the total problem of death is the problem of the anguish of lost relationship. If one could reduce this by a becoming more acquainted with the transition from one plane to another, and the ability to know that, then death could mean less of a separation than otherwise it ordinarily is. The pain of it is the separation from loved ones.

Participant: In going through that, Franklin, would that enable one to carry that knowledge over when you come back into another body?

Wolff: Well, that I think might be an ultimate objective.

Participant: Mm-hmm.

Wolff: Clearly there are entities which we call the Brothers, with a capital 'B', who have been able to trace all these processes and report them, otherwise how would we have the knowledge that has been given to us on the subject matter. Somebody, or somebodies, have researched that and thus determined it is so. That implies that it is possible to make the transitions between the planes and report back what the facts are. Of course it takes superior equipment, but that is merely a matter of breaking out that equipment. Then we can reduce, at least, the sting of death.

---

<sup>6</sup> A. T. Barker, ed., *The Mahatma Letters* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1923): 124-125.

Participant: Also, would one be able in carrying that knowledge over, that you had been on the physical plane, would that make you more able to help those upon this plane?

Wolff: I should say most emphatically.

Participant: Yes, it seems to me.

Wolff: Most emphatically. It could ease the way of the one who is making the transition. It is said that Sherifa, who was my first wife, came and met Gertrude when she made the crossing, and helped to make her acquainted with steps required. Clearly, here we have entities—I have met them—who are able to follow this process at least so far. And I've had reports from people that were not connected with each other that were in confirmation—not different reports, reported the same thing. One thing, for instance, that if you speak to the body of one who has passed in, the one who has passed in can hear what you say. That is a way of communication. It's a one-way communication of course. I did so speak to the body of Gertrude while she was lying in state in our house, and from both sources I got verification that she got the whole of what I said. That means the separation is not so great as we ordinarily imagine, that there is a possibility of cross-communication in some measure and that should help a great deal in taking out the sting of death. I've given some attention to the death problem. I did a lot last Convention you may remember, and I'm going on into it more, for if we can take the tragedy out of death or reduce it, that would be something very helpful indeed. But it is not total separation that we have imagined it to be. Of course, the body does not continue. If you use cremation it's reduced to ashes; if you don't then decay takes over, and it's actually better for the departed one if the body is cremated there is no magnetic pull involved, and that physical aspect, of course, you just have to say goodbye to that; but that is not the essence of the individual who was embodied, that is not the inner character, qualities, and so forth, and much of that continues. And if one could make further correlation with that which continues, then much the sting of death is removed.

Participant: Franklin, why is it, even in India, where cremation is ordinarily used that great sages or saints will not be cremated?

Wolff: I don't know that that is so, but apparently from what Swami Rama has said, as a . . . prefer to throw themselves into the Ganges. When they want to depart, they heave the body into the Ganges afterwards, somehow, according to his account in that book over there. I know that cremation was recommended by HPB in the early days of the Theosophic movement.

Participant: Even that that we call the personality does not continue as personality. Isn't that right?

Wolff: I don't . . .

Participant: The essence.

Wolff: I don't know how far we limit what we mean necessarily by the word 'personality'. The purely physical side is one thing, but you have the—how do you separate the character of the individual from the personality? There are qualities in there like a devotion and so forth that are part of the whole. I'm not too satisfied with the idea that the personality is wholly excluded.

Participant: Well, no, I don't think it's wholly excluded, but I don't think it's wholly included either.

Wolff: That may well be. It depends upon—transitory portions of it, little quirks and so forth that are of no significance or importance; but it also, if there is a devotional spirit, that's part of that personality and that devotional spirit is tied into something immortal.

Participant: When you go in, Franklin, do you want us to sit around you and talk to you?

Wolff: What? I didn't get your question.

Participant: I said, when you go in do you want us to sit and talk to you?

Wolff: If you can. Yeah, I'd like to keep it in correlation. I'd like to keep on the problem. I'm viewing this as a problem. I don't want to stop being a problem worker because I die—because the body dies. I'm not dying.

Participant: The only trouble with that is we won't get any answers, Franklin.

Wolff: Well, not as yet, but how do we know what may be the possibility in the future?

Participant: Right.

Participant: No, I mean if we talk to you and ask any questions, we won't get any answers.

Wolff: Yeah, but how do we know that that problem can't be worked out?

Participant: Well.

Wolff: I'm approaching the problem in this way, that any idea of something you can do is in principle possible until the reverse is proven. I'm not assuming that you can't do it to begin with. I'm assuming that you can. Now, you'll find you'll run into some impossibilities; okay, but I'm not going to make impossibilities beforehand. See? It's a matter of approach to it. You should start with the attitude that everything is possible until you learn otherwise; instead of starting with the attitude all these things are impossible.

Participant: The impossible just takes longer.

Wolff: Hmm?

Participant: The impossible just takes longer.

Wolff: Yes. Right. Right. In other words, all we know from the literature is a small fraction and all we know it is, "Thus, it is said." We don't know it authentically until we have verified it ourselves. And what is said is very, very limited indeed. It's just giving a broad sketch. Now, what are the possibilities that are not yet known to us? One can go with the attitude that everything is possible to begin with until it's proven otherwise; or he can go with the attitude that everything is impossible and that will shut off his investigation. Of course, I'm perfectly convinced that I can imagine something that is impossible, but I'm not assuming beforehand that it's impossible. I've noticed there is a tendency among people to think too much in terms of impossibility. Let us



change the attitude. If I have this idea that here is something that may be done, take the attitude that this is possible in principle until the reverse is proven, you see, and you may make some discoveries that are surprising. I've had a certain verification, quite recently, that I've actually been talking to Gertrude. It's difficult to interpret the back return. Cross-communication does exist therefore. If it can be done through the body, it may be done through other means. This is a voyage of discovery.

Participant: Are these other means thought forms, or psychic energy, or both?

Wolff: Well, one that I know of is a sort of . . . Well, here, you have a relation, say, to the person who has passed away as a sensuous entity, that is gone; as one of your daily communications, that is gone; but you also have relationships on the level of affection, heart relationships. Now, you may find that that relationship continues, a cross-correlation is possible on that ground, so that a kind of intercommunication can remain.

Participant: If it's a heart correlation then it would be through the intuition.

Wolff: Yes. Yes, undoubtedly it would come through intuitions rather than definitive evidence. One would like something definitive, of course, but you have to have the faith to move upon your impressions. Yeah. And be prepared to make mistakes of course. You'll probably find you'll make mistakes, but you'll also make some very positive discoveries. And that can go a long way to take the sting out of death. That it does not separate those who have a strong affectional relationship as we have imagined. It may. Now, on the other hand, if one is glad of getting rid of a partner, I don't think you'd set up a communication.

Participant: No, probably not.

Participant: Is it necessary for the one who has gone on to be aware of it?

Wolff: Well, for it to be fully satisfactory, yes; but the one that's gone on should be aware of it.

Participant: But if they have lost track of the fact that they have left the body?

Wolff: Yeah. That, that, that would . . . Yeah, there are problems, but what we're getting towards is a state where one when he passes in knows that he passed in.

Participant: But I'm not sure if I knew that I passed in that I'd want to hang around to talk to people who still cared about me.

Wolff: Well, if you cared . . .

Participant: I'd be too curious about what's going on . . .

Participant: Yeah, I'd want a break from the miseries of this world.

Wolff: Well, if you cared for them, you might want to.

Participant: But if I cared for them I might not want to because I don't want . . . I wouldn't want somebody to keep me focused here, so I wouldn't want to keep somebody else focused.

Wolff: Well, that depends on your circumstance, what you're dealing with. If you're working on a problem of understanding the interrelationships of the planes and your partner on the other side also wants to do that.

Participant: Yeah.

Wolff: Of course, we're dealing with things that are on the border of adeptship, I'd say, but that's the thing personally I'm oriented to. And I think we all should be oriented to it. In fact, one of the purposes of my work here altogether is to bring those who come so that they are aiming at adeptship. That's the thrust, you might say, of all the work that I'm connected with—to aim at adeptship. It's the right of everyone to aim at it. Of course, it may take an awful lot of work to do it, but that's the aim, and not to be nincompoops forever.

Participant: That's was generously understated, Franklin, toned down. I could think of some other adjectives.

Wolff: Now, every student, if he got the thrust of my work, would feel that it was aiming at the development of the latent power of adeptship. "All the powers of nature lie before you," says K.H., "*take what you can.*"<sup>7</sup> But you've got to take it. It doesn't come handed to you on a platter. Take what you can.

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 65: "There are the powers of all nature before you; *take what you can.*"