

# On the Awakening of the Heart Chakra

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

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Dr. Brugh Joy has asked me to share with you some of the intimate facts connected with the awakening of the heart *chakra*. These intimate facts are not often available. Those who have passed through the experience which involves an awakening to some form of Enlightenment are often, and even typically, very diffident about reporting their inmost experiences. This is particularly true of the Oriental, but not so true of the Western mystics, who have often given autobiographical accounts of their experiences, as William James found out when he was preparing his lectures for *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

A good example would be the story of the search of the Blessed One for the causes and solution of the problem of human suffering. When Gautama Buddha was born, his father had certain astrologers give a resume of his probable future, and they told him that he would either become a great ruler, but that if he ever learned of the state of human suffering in the world, he would abandon that course and become one of the sages or saints who try to help mankind. The father of Gautama wanted a great ruler, and therefore surrounded his child with all of the comforts that could be imagined and guarded him from any knowledge of the condition of the masses of humanity out in the world. He was brought up this way until the time he was marriageable. Then, it is said, that many daughters of noblemen were brought before him; that he put jewels around their necks, and, meanwhile, the ministers of the court watched him to see if he had any preference; but he showed no preference. After all had been completed, then another noble brought his daughter, and, in this case, Gautama took the necklace from his own neck and put it upon hers; she was the one. They were duly married and they had a child, and were living happily in the court. But one day, young Gautama asked his charioteer to take him forth into the countryside. On that trip, for the first time, Gautama became acquainted with the lot of mankind in general. He saw a beggar, who was in a state of deep poverty. He saw a man in advanced stages of illness. And he saw, for the first time, a corpse. He asked his charioteer if this was something very rare, and the charioteer told him that it was quite frequent and the lot, generally, of a large proportion of humanity and that, indeed, death was ultimately the lot of all.

This caused Gautama to grieve, and he pondered. No longer could he be happy within the special situation provided him in the court. One night, while his wife was sleeping with their child, he quietly drew away and went out into the night. He associated himself with a group of very austere practitioners, and for six years carried out the austere practices to an extreme degree, exceeding the conscientiousness of all the others. It is said that he carried his intake of food down to one grain of rice per meal. And then one day, when bathing in a pool of water, was nearly drowned because of his exhaustion. He then realized that this extreme of austere practices was leading him nowhere, so he took a

substantial and good meal and replenished his strength. Then he sat under the Bodhi tree, resolving not to leave until he found the answer to human suffering. There he ultimately attained Enlightenment. And for his life henceforth, he preached the Wisdom that had grown up in him to eliminate the suffering of mankind, and the general philosophy was put forth by him that has come down to us. That was his life work.

This is the objective story that has come down to us. But what were his subjective experiences during that period of searching? Of this, we are told nothing. Did he grieve for his wife and child? Did he despair during the period of long ascetic practice? Did he know desolation? Did he have doubts as to the success of his effort? All of this is left unrecorded, and yet these are experiences which we may pass through when we are, ourselves, engaged upon the search for Fundamental Realization, or Enlightenment. Something of these inner experiences may be told; and they may be a help to those others who, seemingly standing alone, do not know what they may be forced to experience, and do not know what others have passed through.

I, too, along with many others, have entered upon this search. But the motivation for entering upon the search was not the consideration of human suffering; the motivation was more technical than that. While I was still a student in the academy, I made contact with a group who were oriented to the general field of Theosophic, Vedantic, and Buddhistic thought, and I was, frankly, quite intrigued. But there were difficulties; there was even something like a dichotomy between the way of thinking in this group and that which I found in the academy did not seem to meet the critical standards of academic thought. So, for a time, I was drawn two ways. I was impressed with the rigor of academic thought, and yet I was also intrigued by this other way which seemed to open up vaster vistas. This continued for some years. Ultimately, I had a year in the Graduate School of Philosophy at Harvard University where, among other courses, I took two seminars. In these seminars, the students, at one time or another, gave an original paper before the group and were subject to criticism at any point in their presentation—a very valuable discipline.

On one occasion, one of the more brilliant students gave a paper which was a variation of the Vedantist line of philosophic thought, and he defended it successfully against all the criticism of the other students and the professor; and this impressed me.<sup>1</sup> It indicated that this line which intrigued me was not merely sentimental, but, in fact, could face the harsh dialectic criticism of academically trained minds. It answered my final doubt in this matter. The result was that I came to this conclusion: if this way indicated by Buddhistic, Vedantic, and Theosophic thought is indeed true, then no philosophic formulation which leaves out this side would be complete. And as my orientation at that time had been toward a philosophic career, this was a very important consideration. But because of the dichotomy or even hostility—at that time, at any rate—between the academic mind and this other way of searching, it was impossible to continue in the

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<sup>1</sup> See the audio recording, “On My Philosophy: Extemporaneous Statement,” for a reference to this student (Mr. Rattray).

academic world while making a search to determine whether this which is indicated—say, in the Vedantic thought, is true—could not be continued while in the academy. So after a year of teaching mathematics at Stanford, I withdrew from the academy and began the search, which lasted for twenty-two years without any apparent success.

But during this search, I came, ultimately, to the discovery of Shankara. This was through the volume *The System of the Vedanta* by Paul Deussen. This is a commentary with extended quotation from Shankara's masterpiece consisting of the *Commentary on the Brahma Sutras*. As I read it, I found that it had for me a great familiarity. I would start sentences and know what was coming before I read them—apparently having a familiarity from perhaps past lives. I was deeply intrigued. And one day I felt a special call for the section upon Liberation. I had not come to it yet in my systematic reading, but I turned over to that particular subject and read it in a brief time. And then I sat down on a porch swing in the back portion of our yard, and this thought came to me: that which I am seeking is the true Self, that which is called *Atman*; and I realized that I am already that which I seek and there is, therefore, no reason for seeking further; and I gave up the search at that moment expecting nothing more to happen other than this answer that had come to me. But at that moment the Door opened and I found myself in the midst of a supreme delight or *ananda*. I seemed to be standing upon sacred ground and that there was surrounding me, on all sides, the ultimate Divine. I sensed that the power which rules this universe and that which is beyond this universe is utterly benign; that the seeming suffering of creatures, the distortions and the confusions that we face are only events upon the surface; that beneath all there is a great harmony. The Enlightenment had come, and from that moment forward I had a message to give which was not merely the rehashing of the words of others, but one that grew from a source that I knew immediately. And from that time forward, for the next forty-two years, I had a message to give.

In connection with this experience, there was no profound personal suffering. There was what might be called the suffering that goes with feeling that one had made a mistake; that the search was useless. For twenty-two years the search was barren of success, and I frequently felt that I had forfeited a professional career in the academy for a useless search. That was a kind of suffering; that I had abandoned a career that would have pleased me, for a merely ordinary, mundane life. That was a kind of suffering. But it was not the intense, personal suffering connected with the awakening of the heart center, as will be shown in the sequel.

Before the breakthrough of August 7, 1936, I had not taken the Kwan-Yin vow, nor had I had resolved to follow the way recommended by *The Voice of the Silence*. The Kwan-Yin vow is as follows: "Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; but forever, and everywhere, will I strive for the redemption of all creatures throughout the world." And *The Voice of the Silence* says this: "Do not make of the stream which flows from *Sumeru* a private pond, but render of yourself a streambed that this stream

may flow out for the benefit and redemption of all creatures.”<sup>2</sup> This is called the *Arya* path. The path which leads to self-redemption alone is known as the *Dhyana* path. And he who follows this way is called a *Pratyeka* Buddha: one who selfishly seeks his own spiritual attainment without regard for the collectivity. I was impressed by the moral dignity and rightness of this [Arya Path] and because of that, after the Realization, I had decided to go this way. But I had not been moved, in terms of feeling, with respect to the suffering of all creatures. It was a mental decision, not a decision of feeling.

After thirty-three days, though I had expected nothing more, there had walked into my consciousness a new and most unexpected Realization, reaching to greater depths of profundity than had the one on August 7. This was not a Realization in terms of a great *ananda*, or delight. It was rather a neutral state in which one stood, as it were, between the *sangsaric*, or the world of outer consciousness, and the *nirvanic*, or the world of inner beauty, peace, and delight, and with the capacity to move either way, and even to bring something of the *nirvanic* to share with those who might be open to that sharing. And something of this has been embedded into the volume called *Pathways Through to Space*. But the important point is that this was a rational, moral decision, not an expression of deep compassion for suffering creatures.

With these two Realizations, I had a work to do, and this consisted of an effort to make a contribution to carving out a Western Way that might meet the needs of Western man. It is not generally valid to transfer, unaltered, the way that is valid for the Oriental man to the West and apply it in the same spirit, for that can be a case of employing the right way with the wrong man, which leads to wrong results.<sup>3</sup> The way of the Eastern man is normal to his nature and right for him. But likewise, there is a way for the Western man, and we have not, as yet, perfected such a way, as have the Orientals for themselves. And my work became the making of some contribution to this way. This was essentially

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<sup>2</sup> See H. P Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1928), 72-73.

Would'st thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru? Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

If thou would'st have that stream of hard-earn'd knowledge, of Wisdom heaven-born, remain sweet running waters, thou should'st not leave it to become a stagnant pond.

Know, if of Amitabha, the “Boundless Age”, thou would'st become co-worker, then must thou shed the light acquired, like to the Bodhisattvas twain, upon the span of all three worlds.

Know that the stream of superhuman knowledge and the Deva-Wisdom thou hast won, must, from thyself, the channel of Alaya be poured forth into another bed.

Know, O Narjol, thou of the Secret Path, its pure fresh waters must be used to sweeter make the Ocean's bitter waves—that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Carl G Jung's statement in his “Commentary” to *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (New York: Causeway Books, 1975, 79:

An ancient adept has said: But if the wrong man uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way.

a very rewarding and happy occupation; it far transcended a life restricted to the academic world. But after forty-two years, this work was largely finished, and now something totally unexpected broke into the picture.

But, now, to understand what next transpired will require a bit of personal history and the acquaintance with a major archetypal dream of some fifty years ago. In 1959, my first wife of forty years passed in, leaving me in a state of deep depression. We had married for the work in which we both were deeply involved, and not for the usual biological reasons. This had been a productive life, out of which had come the publication of some books and a large number of lectures. But I was so involved in the depression that I realized that I must find another feminine companion if I was to continue with the work. I made a search and found one called Gertrude. This resulted in an extremely harmonious relationship, and one that proved to be highly productive. During that association, which was of nineteen years duration, I produced perhaps half a million words on tape. It was an idyllic relationship; one of unbelievable harmony and beauty. But on May 28, 1978, she had a stroke and passed in, leaving me in a state of shock. With this, a dream of about fifty years earlier became activated. It seems that the relationship between Gertrude and myself was so harmonious and effective that the action of the dream could not become activated without the dissolution of the relationship. One of the analysts has suggested that Gertrude was withdrawn for the very purpose of bringing about an activation of the dream. Therefore, to understand what is now implied will require a delineation of that dream.

The dream was as follows. The setting of the dream was in an empty theater, with no one present except those who played a part in the dream. There was a stage in front, raised a few feet above the orchestra and the orchestra seats; yet there was a means of descent from the stage to the aisles—one on the right side and one on the left side—and these aisles ran to the back of the theater with a space for crossing over from one aisle to the other so that there was a continuous course from the stage to the back, up to the stage again, and so on. Over the right aisle there was a box at balcony level, with the box lying directly over the right aisle. In the box, there sat a numinous figure—the Sage or the Master—with a beard. I, myself, in my own proper person, was somehow fused with this Sage and saw the action as though from his perspective. There seems to have been someone to the right of him in the box, to whom he spoke and said that the dream events would concern him and that he should go down to the wings next to the stage; and he so departed. I never saw this figure. I have assumed that it was the archetype of the *shadow* in Dr. Jung's system, but I do not actually know whether it was a masculine or a feminine figure. On the stage to the left side there was a bed upon which lay a young woman in a stage of advanced exhaustion. The action started with the entrance of Mephisto from the left wing. He entered upon a dance of superhuman proportions, and produced with complete precision. The dance grew in fury and seemed to develop a magnetic condition that aroused the young woman from the bed, so that she also took part in the dance. The fury grew until it reached a point where it could no longer be contained by the stage. And with the young woman leading, it proceeded down from the stage to the right aisle, [and] with Mephisto following, proceeded around in back to the left aisle, then to the stage again, crossing it, and repeating for several roundings's. The Sage, meanwhile, watched the operation with deep attention. It soon became evident that the young woman was

losing out in the contest with Mephisto, and at this point, and then alone, the Sage intervened. Somehow it was known that the power of Mephisto was almost equal to that of the Sage. The Sage proceeded to project at Mephisto two forces—one was the force of love and the other was the force of hate—projected in rapid alternation. It seemed to be known in the dream that Mephisto was immune to the force of love alone or to the force of hate alone, but that he could not endure the rapid oscillation of these two forces. When Mephisto, following the young woman, came back under the box, he looked up at the Sage, and I saw anger in his eyes; and he sent at the Sage a force, which came in the steaming of bullets. These, the Sage caught in his mouth and spewed back at Mephisto. And then I awoke with a sense of victory.

I am convinced [that] if the outcome of this dream had not been positive, there would never have been the events of August 7, 1936. But it seems that the real point of activation of this dream has been at the present time; such is the opinion of the two analysts who have given it consideration. The two analysts agree that the young woman represents the *anima*, or the feminine portion that is in the nature of a man; that Mephisto represents the intellect; and that the Sage represents the Divine, or higher aspect of the human entity. They agree in asserting that highly concentrated intellectual activity, which was represented by Mephisto, had drained the energy in the anima to the point of near annihilation; that annihilation was avoided by the intervention of the Sage; that in practical application it meant that by intensive intellectual activity I had drained the anima in myself to this point of near annihilation; but not that this was not intended—that in order to achieve a necessary step in the work which had to be done, this degree of concentration was required.

For myself, I do not find the identification of the pure intellect with Mephisto satisfactory. Why should it be so regarded? For by the action of the intellect our science has become possible, and all of the benefits from that science, which simply are immense, are thus rendered available. In particular, by means of this science, agricultural yield in the world has been increased, thus rendering a greater population possible. But as I meditated upon this question, it suddenly dawned upon me that this was the action of the intellect in isolation from the heart. And a certain light was thrown upon it by a reference to the myth of the Grail.

In the form of the myth of the Grail that was drawn upon by Wagner in his composition of *Parsifal*, a certain incident throws a light upon this. It was a basic rule in the Grail myth that the Grail, or Cup, which represents the heart, should not be separated from the Spear, which represents the intellect. But at one time, Amfortas, who was the ruling head of the Grail Monastery, took the Spear, or the intellect, by itself, and went forth to do battle with Klingsor, the black magician. In this battle he was worsted, and Klingsor secured the Spear. With that, he wounded Amfortas; and Amfortas suffered from this wound until later, Parsifal, who ultimately returned the Spear, was able to heal it. Klingsor, with the Spear, went forth and built his castle in which he enthroned his powers. He did battle with the knights of the Grail and otherwise sought to win them over to his side; [and, he] had corrupted several of them and had them in his employ. He represented the force that was antagonistic to the purposes of the Grail representation in the myth. Ultimately, when young Parsifal appeared, he, in his journeys, went to the

castle of Klingsor and conquered all the forces there, including Klingsor himself, and re-attained the Spear which he ultimately returned to the Grail Monastery, so that the Cup, or Grail, and the Spear were united again, which means the union of the heart and the mind.

The point here is that when the intellect operates in conjunction with the heart, or the feeling side, it is not a negative power; it is not represented by Mephisto. It's only when it operates in isolation from the Cup, or Grail—or in other words, the principle of the feeling of the heart—that it does become a negative force. And yet, in the view of the interpreters of the dream, this pure activity of the intellect was a necessary one in a stage of my own work; but now the time had come when the two principles, represented by the Grail and the Spear, should be reunited. They also maintain that a dream involving archetypes is a dream not only for the individual dreamer, but has collective importance. One of the interpreters said, that that through which I am personally passing will also be experienced by others, and they also will have to pass through it. The importance of these myths lies in the fact that, evidently, they represent a means of communication from the collective unconscious to the conscious side; just the same as dreams play a similar office.

In my work, I have functioned at a level of intensive intellectual concentration, and this was not regarded by the analysts as a mistake, but rather as an effort required to accomplish an essential breakthrough. But the time had come when the price of this had to be considered. The work had been produced at the cost of the anima, or the inner woman, and it was necessary to salvage her and reestablish her full strength. Owing to the fact that the combination of myself with Gertrude rendered me immune from the activation of the dream, it was suggested by one of the analysts that she was deliberately withdrawn to render me vulnerable to that activation.

At this point, we shall return to the biographical material. On May 28, 1978, Gertrude prepared my breakfast, though she did not eat herself [as she] not feeling too well. Little did I know that this was the last breakfast prepared by her. Then we proceeded to prepare the room for the Sunday meeting, as we were accustomed to holding the meeting in our home. A little later she said, "Turn this meeting over to so-and-so and come with me to the emergency room of the hospital." As Gertrude was unable to drive, and I was too blind with cataract to drive myself, a friend took us down. As she was lying in the emergency room bed, she was moaning. I asked her how she felt. She said that she had never suffered before as she was suffering now. I asked her if the moaning helped, and she said, "Yes." [This was] the last word I ever heard uttered by her. A little later, the doctor gave her Demerol, and she fell asleep. So I, with the friend, went to a restaurant and had lunch. When we returned, the doctor said she had had a stroke, and was now upon a life-supporting machine which did her breathing for her. Her body was on that machine for two days. I felt that if she were going in, then this would be harmful to her. I checked this with two sources that had a way to inner knowledge, and they verified this. I drew in a consultant who checked with the attendant doctor, and they came to the conclusion that there was no hope. So I made the decision—which was the last service I could render her—that her body should be withdrawn from the life-support

system, though this hurt immensely, for it was the end of the last hope. Later I learned that this gave her a great freedom and that to have done otherwise would have been cruel.

Subsequently, her body was taken to her home, where she lay in state for twenty-four hours. A rose was on a table beside her, and a candle burned there all night. We played the German *Requiem* and *Parsifal*, and the lights were on throughout the night. When no one else was around, I came to her and spoke to her body, for I had learned that what one says to the body of him who has passed away, will be heard by the real entity. And I told her what I thought of her, as I'd never told her during life, even though my heart was bleeding. Later I learned that she heard all of it, and this was some consolation.

Actually, it is not the one who passes in that has to face the hard facts of death, for from all that we can learn, the way that opens up to most of these, except such as have committed suicide, is a much happier and freer way, and it is those who have remained behind who face the grimness of the loss. The pain of the loss is for those who are left behind; and the greater the love for the departed, the greater the pain. And one could make an egregious error here, by deciding that he would not love, for life without love is an empty thing.

I found that our home, which had been very largely built by us, and [to which] she had added many touches, had been a precious place to us, [but] all of a sudden, it became an empty house. And along with the desolation produced by Gertrude's departure, the processes of the dream became activated within me. Along with the desolation produced by the departure of Gertrude, I found that I had lost the control of mental processes that I had possessed throughout my life. Ultimately, the complex psychical condition produced by the loss of Gertrude and the activation of the processes of the dream, was precipitated into a physical form in the form of a major heart attack. During this heart attack, I felt relief from the psychical processes and rested more easily. Fortunately, it was a sleeping heart attack, or one without pain. Today I have learned to live without the companion, although it still hurts; but, I have also learned how to live with hurt.

But while this all seems like ultimate catastrophe, yet, there was a brighter side. On a day in August, I delivered an extemporaneous lecture to a group that has often come to hear my taped lectures, and at the end of the discussion following, I entered into a major *ananda*, one which was centered in the *anahata* portion, and this lasted for fourteen hours—the longest *ananda* that I have ever known.<sup>4</sup> And at the end of this, I had a kind of Realization in which the meaning of life or death had the same value; life or death seemed to have the same meaning.

Now, this is something that is a little difficult to comprehend, and I may suggest how it can be understood by considering the dichotomy of up and down. The movement downward is in the direction of gravitational pull; upward is a movement in the direction against gravitational pull. But imagine that one was transported out into deep space where the gravitational pull either does not exist, or is so balanced that it has no residue of attraction in

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<sup>4</sup>For more on this subject, see the audio recordings, "Impromptu Statement of My Present Condition" and "Convention 1978: Extemporaneous Discussion of Personal Problems."



any one direction. In such a state of perfect balance, the slightest subjective energy, like the action of the will, could be effective in producing motion in any chosen direction. Up and down would no longer have contrasting meanings; they would mean exactly the same thing. Now, consider that one entered into a state in which the same thing was true of the dichotomy of life and death, then, the movement either towards continued living, or the movement towards the process of death would have exactly the same value. And in this, one feels that he has the capacity, legitimately, to move either way. And to illustrate this, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, I woke up and heard a rattle in my breath. I sensed that I was dying, and instinctively, before I had time for reflection, I affirmed life, and stopped the dying process as easily as though by a wave of the hand. This I did before I had any time for reflection. Afterwards, when I reflected upon it, I wondered if I hadn't been a darned fool, for everything we know indicates that the way beyond through the channel of death is more delightful than the life here. There, we are told, that one meets the Being of Light, who seems to be identical with the Clear Light of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*; and also, my companion is over there, and there are many other intriguing things. So, I was rather inclined to kick myself, for now life has surged up and there may be many years before there is another opportunity. In a state of perfect balance, the action, even of a small amount, of the subjective exertion of the will can be determinant.

Manifestly, the current process is not complete. This report is like an interim report on a process that has not yet attained a determinant conclusion. Now the question arises: Why should the process of awakening the heart center prove to be so brutally painful, whereas, the process whereby the yoga of knowledge led to an awakening was by contrast almost painless? An answer has come to me: the yoga of love or compassion requires an acquaintance with the suffering of mankind and all creatures. One does not understand the suffering of creatures unless he, himself, has passed through something of that suffering. By this direct experience, or imperience, he has the understanding and knows what it means. And that gives us a reason why the way of the heart may be a very painful way, whereas the way of the mind may be virtually painless.

There is a point here that deserves at least a brief consideration. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, three forms of yoga are presented, and are called the *Trimarga*. These are the yoga of devotion, or love, or compassion; the yoga of action, or *karma* yoga; and the yoga of knowledge, or *jnana* yoga. These may be viewed as alternative courses, and that one only takes one or the other of these paths. But Aurobindo has maintained otherwise—that the full yogic experience requires the passage over all three paths before the journey has been completed. While it is true, apparently, that by passing over any one of these alternative paths there is a certain subordinate experience of the values or the powers of the other two, the deeper meaning of each path can be attained only by passing through all three. And as Sri Aurobindo has suggested, they may be entered upon at the same time, or successively. But if one enters upon them successively, then he may pass through one path, and when he has attained to a certain degree of completion, be required, even, to abandon that path and enter into one of the others, and finally through the third path. The order of procedure may be various. It might be conceived that one would start with *bhakti* yoga or the yoga of devotion, pass to *karma* yoga, or the yoga of action, and finally reach *jnana* yoga, or the yoga of knowledge, but the course may be otherwise organized. In my

experience, the path of first entrance was the yoga of knowledge. And now it appears that more or less willy-nilly, I am being made to pass through the yoga of devotion, or *bhakti* yoga, and then, ultimately, through the yoga of action. These may or may not be completed in one lifetime; but most likely, it will take the effort of a series of lives—at least three. I never anticipated that I would be almost compelled to take a second path at this advanced age of ninety-one, but it is apparently so. In the end, he who has passed over all three of the paths of the *Trimarga* will have attained to a completion.