

# Convention 1979: Psychological Report

## Part 1 of 2

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June 1979

For the afternoon session of the Convention to be held on the 12th of August 1979, the subject matter will be concerned with the developments that have taken place as a result of the departure of my wife and *chela* Gertrude and the action of the great dream that was referred to last year.<sup>1</sup>

Since the Convention of 1978, there have been other and new developments. I may say as a general proposition, the fruit of a state of consciousness may be a philosophic statement, or it may be a course of action in the life field, or a combination of the two. In my own instance, the primary fruit has been a philosophic statement. In contrast, the function of psychology lies in an investigation of the concomitant circumstances connected with the state of consciousness. These circumstances may be either physical or psychical. Psychology is essentially a new science. It does not seem to have been particularly developed in the Orient and seems to have started with the work of Fechner, who had been a teacher of physics but who himself had had other experiences that were of a more or less mystical character which he formulated and published under a nom de plume. The early problem that occupied primary attention was the problem of reaction time—a subject on which I, myself, had devoted some considerable time. The external concomitants may be in the form of events, or states of feeling, or other factors. The tendency among many investigators has been to regard a state of consciousness and evaluate it in the light of these concomitants. As William James pointed out in his Gifford Lectures published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, there has been a tendency on the part of representatives of medical materialism to denigrate the content of these states in the light of external deviations such as change of blood pressure, pulse, behavior patterns, and the like. But as James well pointed out, the confusion made in this case was between judgments—existential judgments and judgments of value. The existential situation may be a deviation from the norm; the judgment concerning the value of the consciousness content is of a totally different order. Does it give significance to the life? Does it enrich it? Does it bring about ennobling of character? Does it lead to a greater depth of insight? These are questions that fall in the field of judgments of value. It may well be true, as James suggests, that the condition which may be called the experience of the Divine requires a deviation from the norm in the individual such as different blood pressure, different temperature, different mode of behavior, and the like, and that therefore the situation in which great value comes may in many respects lead to deviations from norm. Deviation from norm is no basis at all for determining a judgment of the value of a state. That is another matter altogether. Does it bring increased happiness? Does it bring greater depth of insight? Does it lead to the enhancement of

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<sup>1</sup> See the audio recording, “Report of Major Dreams.”

character? These are questions that are pertinent—not the questions as to what deviations from norm may be.

Going beyond this preliminary statement, I note the fact that if the death of Gertrude were only a matter of personal concern, it would not be proper to bring the matter before the attention of the present group. But it has had a significance reaching far beyond personal concern. It is a matter of more general concern for two reasons: first, it has affected my capacity in the field of my public activity. There was precipitated as a result of this death a very strong enantiodromia so that it became impossible for me to produce tapes or lectures in the forms which I had employed before. Second, the shock of the death led to a precipitation of the activation of the archetypal dream which had been dreamt several years before, and this dream, according to the analyst, and according to a general statement of Dr. Carl G. Jung, since it is archetypal has a collective meaning as well as an individual meaning and is therefore of collective significance.

Even before the Convention of last year, the psychical condition produced in me by the departure of Gertrude and the activation of the dream was seemingly precipitated as a major, though silent, heart attack. This relieved the psychical condition at the time, but that has left a certain weakness in the heart. Partly as the result of over-medication with respect to this matter, an event occurred on the night following the seventh of September that I interpreted it as the beginning of the death process. I woke up in the night and heard the final breath of the state I was in during sleep and it had a distinct rattle. This seems to have been agonal breathing, as it is known technically. I felt I was dying and immediately affirmed the will to live, and this stopped the process, apparently. At any rate, a doctor who had been there the day before and came the succeeding day did so regard it. In fact, he said that I was on the probability curve of death at the time. And a clairvoyant over in Arizona picked it up also and interpreted it as the beginning of the death process, but this was stopped. I did mend after this sufficiently to get out a tape for a convention to be held by Dr. Joy over on the Monterey Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> He had requested a tape from me several months before, and because of his assistance to me, I felt that I should do so. In this tape, I gave an account of the events such as we are dealing with at the present time, and the tape was received very generously by those who heard it. It was a relatively happy occasion in my own personal experience. I delivered this tape elsewhere and it seems to bring about the same response from those who hear it.

Now we come to an event that is very strange indeed. During the night, following the 13th of February, I found myself in a very strange condition. At first it seemed as though I awoke and was aware of something like a dream, but the state of consciousness in the supposed dream was so much like the rational consciousness of the waking state that I, at first, tended to regard it as a waking state during sleep—which is a state of consciousness identified by Sri Aurobindo. The content of the state was this: that I'd had a Realization but did not have the energy to bring it out and that therefore an effort was being made to record it. Now, all of this sounds sensible all right. Then I proceeded in a process which at first I thought was waking up, but it was not like any process of waking

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<sup>2</sup> See the audio recording, "On the Awakening of the Heart Chakra."

up I have ever experienced before. Waking up, ordinarily, is a straight-forward simple process, but in this case I seemed to be running through something like a channel. It took progression through this to get to the full objective consciousness. While passing through it, I experienced a slipping from what could be one stage to another in which the portion of the experience which was related to the recording of the dream became dreamlike, whereas, it had been, formerly, very objective like in waking consciousness. Then I proceeded further and found myself in the normal consciousness lying in bed, and at this point the whole experience became dreamlike and I could not recover any of the content of the Realization that had seemed to have taken place.

Now, this was very strange because I was witnessing this process with a portion of my mind at the same time I was going through the process. Later reflection on this led me to recall my experiences in 1936 when the initial breakthrough came. There was a division in consciousness at that time: one portion witnessing the process while another portion went through the process; [and,] the witnessing portion was able to record the process. The same thing appeared to be true here. Then it suddenly dawned upon me that I was passing through something like the death channel but moving from within to the outer state of relative consciousness here in this world. It thus seemed that I had made a trial run of the death process: the first part of it during sleep and therefore unconsciously [and] there seemed then to be in that zone a Realization. This was the idea definitely in my consciousness—and I was aware of it in the rational-like terms that are characteristic of our objective consciousness, not in the relatively fuzzy terms that are characteristic of the dream consciousness—and then came out through the death channel consciously. Note especially the two points where, first, part of the experience became dream-like in my consciousness whereas previously it had full reality value; and second, where the whole of it became dream-like whereas it had had reality value before. ‘Dream-like’ as I’m using the term now, has the meaning of becoming unreal as though it were a kind of *maya*.

Now, this is a type of experience that I had in 1936, and in one case, this characteristic was especially noted. At that time, I started from that state in which one has stripped away from the true self all objectivity; it is not any object before consciousness whatsoever and becomes instead recognized as a pure subject which is never objective and thus may be represented as a point position—a point that has position only and has no qualities, properties, dimensions, and so forth, but which is surrounded by an environment of all possible objects both gross and subtle. From this I went through a process of ascension up to a critical point in which there was a momentary or even instantaneous blackout and then found the self as an illimitable sphere embracing the whole universe, and from that perspective the sense of the “point-I” seemed unreal. Later I returned from the position in which the self seemed to be an illimitable sphere back to the ordinary position where it seemed point-like, and then, in turn, the state in which it seemed like an all embracing sphere became, or seemed to become, unreal. The characteristic of these points is just that [in] a transition from one level to another, and when one reaches the latter level, the former level seems unreal. Now, this very kind of

experience is discussed explicitly in a certain section of *The Secret Doctrine*.<sup>3</sup> It is there stated that the construction of our consciousness is such that when we move from one plane to another, as from plane *a* to plane *b*, from the perspective of plane *b*, plane *a* will seem unreal; and vice versa, if one moves from *b* to *a*. And it states there that this will continue until the individual attains Absolute Consciousness. Now, in my experience in February, a portion of my consciousness was observing the process while another portion was going through it. It was aware of all of these steps and could remember the events in 1936. I, therefore, did not make the judgment that the experience was a *maya* because it was dream-like, but I recognized the fact that this [process] I was going through [was] the typical process mentioned in that section of *The Secret Doctrine* and which I had experienced in 1936.

Now, there is one thing very surprising here. I would not have been surprised if there had been just one critical such point, but there were two. If there had been but one critical such point, I would have said that there was a movement from *kamaloka* to [the] normal waking plane or *loka*. But there were two such steps. Then I remembered that it is stated that there are different levels in *kamaloka* and that, therefore, one could have this experience in the *kamaloka* condition—a moving from one level to another such that the level just left seems unreal from the standpoint of the level attained. This, then, would account for the fact which we are told about in *The Mahatma Letters* that most individuals when dying do not even know that they have died.<sup>4</sup> The waking experience would have disappeared into a kind of *maya* or sense of unreality, and the current condition in *kamaloka* would be that which has the reality value.

If one, however, can divide the consciousness so that one portion is witnessing what is transpiring and remembering the experiences he may have had on this field, or the instruction he may have read in this field, that portion of the consciousness could discount the sense of becoming dream-like or unreal and embrace the whole as part of a total valid experience. I think we're dealing here with something of very great importance. If one is successful, then he could pass through the death experience and know that he had transferred from one plane to another, could discount the feeling of unreality or dream-likeness that attaches to the plane left, and thus know that he had moved from the ordinary plane of life into another plane which in *The Voice of the Silence*, in *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters*, is called “kama-loka.” The key to this, as I see it, is in holding that divided consciousness; and this could be a matter of supreme importance if one is to achieve conscious dying—which is really a misnomer—for it is really a moving from one plane to another and know that he has done that. In that case, we begin to achieve something of command.

I seem now to have had two experiences of going in during sleep and, therefore, unconsciously—that is into, toward, or to the death plane. What I very much wish for is

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<sup>3</sup> Wolff may have meant to refer to *The Mahatma Letters* here.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Letter 20c, which states that “Those who know they are dead in their physical body—can only be either adepts or—sorcerers; and these two are the exceptions to the general rule.” A. T. Barker, ed., *The Mahatma Letters* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1923), 128.

to take a trial run in this action consciously. Here I think we have a problem with the breath—it may be necessary to stop the breath and do it consciously. On this point, I am not certain. It might be that the body could continue to breathe autonomously while the real entity moves in when it is a case of a trial run. All of this is, for me, part of a preparation for a truly conscious death—something which I have heard called *maha-samadhi*. This means death without being forced to die by reason of illness or injury, but because it is a conscious process.

Now, returning to the experience: as I emerged into the full waking state—knowing myself as lying in a bed in a room which was entirely familiar—at this point I found myself in a state in which the death process or the continued life process seemed to be equally accessible. It seemed as though I could will to go either way. It was like a fine balance between what we call dying and what we call living, and that it was right within my own volition to determine which way I would go. Well, the thought came to me that there were some of my people in the Phoenix area which I would like to meet at least for the last time and certain special individuals that I wanted to meet in connection with this experience; so, therefore, I affirmed the life position—to will to continue life. Although, the path into death was the more attractive one—of course this is just what we call death, actually it is just another way of life—because there were many features that attracted me to that plane or side of consciousness. There was Gertrude, for instance, but there also might be Sherifa if she had not taken other incarnation; and there might be my stepson, Jim Briggs, who was very close to me; and relatives of mine that have gone in; and of great importance, the students that I have had who have gone in; and other persons with whom my relations were causal, but belong to past life. The accumulative attractive force was very strong, yet I did not wish to take this step until I had finished certain things that needed to be done in Phoenix. As a result, I called to someone, whom I knew had a capacity to draw me outward as against this strong inward attraction, until such time as the work that I had in mind was finished. It seemed a preposterous thing to call anybody in for a purpose like this, but I made the call and to my delight the individual responded. There was no trouble, the process of life continued, it took no real effort of will, and I had an opportunity of contact with an individual whom I told of this experience and certain other matters that had been taken up on our tapes. I was told by her that a certain one of the Brothers was listening to what I said. And there was relayed through her a request to me from this Brother, that I should live longer—a request that I feel completely bound to answer, to respect, and honor. And it is because of this request that I am now willing life, though I would prefer personally to go in to what is known generally as the death plane. I found nothing in this experience that was at all frightening or anything that was objectionable about it; on the contrary, it was intriguingly interesting.

Since taping the foregoing, I have had a very strong impression that the event of the Realization did not take place on what is ordinarily known as *kamaloka*, but actually took place on the level of the *devachanic* state. This makes sense, for the *devachanic* state, as we understand it, is a state akin to a state of Realization. This, then, would mean that the two incidents of a slip, as it were, from one level to another level was a transition from the *devachanic* state to the *kamalokic* state, and then from the *kamalokic* state outward to our waking consciousness out here. This, then, would imply some sort of

correlation with Gertrude. And as I have been formulating this material upon this tape, in a certain subtle sense, I have been reproducing the experience in my consciousness again and I have had a recurrence of the sense of Gertrude being present in a subtle way which is not exactly wholly within or without, but in some sense that does not exactly fit our categories—a type of experience that I had in a stronger form, on the period between the ninth and tenth of last March; an experience which I shall discuss later. And during this time, with this sense of presence, I've been producing the material that has just been heard without a sense of strain. I felt strong while doing it, just as I used to feel in my production of tapes when Gertrude was alive here.

In connection with this production, it actually was almost impossible for me to start the operation. All of last week I tried to do so, but I could not reach the energy level that made such production possible. Again I struggled on last Monday and only with difficulty was able to produce the introductory remarks. There seemed to be an energy demand which I could not effect. But as I got into the process of describing this experience, I had the sense of the energetic reinforcement that was characteristic of my production during the days when Gertrude was here. It persisted to this morning, and I had a delightful hour before breakfast. But during the time of listening to the *Today [Show]* news and the eating of breakfast, I lost it again. This sense of presence is effective, but is very tenuous. It is not easily held. It is very subtle and one seems to have to hold the mind in a state of a subtle kind of concentration to maintain its presence as a conscious fact. It was not so when Gertrude was here in embodied form. This is put down for such value as it may have for those who are interested in this kind of subject matter.