

Autobiographical Material: My Academic Life and Embarking upon My Spiritual Quest

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This tape is planned for the Convention of next August. It will not be restricted to one particular subject. It's more like a *potpourri*, and I shall develop it perhaps through a series of tapes covering a wide range of ground. I do not know whether I shall still be here at that time, and even less whether I shall be here for the Convention of 1983, as I shall be 95 before next Convention and I am also a widower, and both of these factors tend toward termination. Nonetheless, if I am not here in August, it is my request that those who will be continuing this work shall hold the Convention and present this tape. It would be in that case, my final word.

In 1909, in the early portion of my junior year at Stanford University, I was one day in the post office and I saw an announcement of Theosophical meetings on Waverly Street, a private residence. This aroused my curiosity. The Greek terms from which this word is derived are '*theos*' and '*Sophia*' meaning, literally, "divine wisdom." In due course, I attended a meeting. I found it to be a Theosophical group known as the Temple of the People. They aroused my interest and I attended meetings more or less frequently thereafter. There was a profound contrast between the mental processes which I found exemplified in this group as contrasted to those which I found in the university. In the latter, the orientation was predominantly to empiric science and to the theoretical principle represented by mathematics. In this group, on the other hand, I found a predominance of what might be called intuitive thinking, which, however, was not formulated in ways that would pass the canons of academic criticism. Nonetheless, the people seemed to be reasonable in their orientation to life in the world, although there was clearly an element of otherworldliness. I found, thereafter, a dual attraction between the university and the work of this group, also in the literature to which I was introduced through this group. But there were often elements of contradiction, and there were problems of thinking that did not fit the canons of rational thought. Ever since then, these two sides have been important in my life. Ultimately, that which I learned from this Theosophical group was what we might call orientation to a goal, contrasting with what I learned from the university which supplied method, the means of sound thinking. Ever since then, I have held to these two aspects. I have not rejected one for the sake of the other, but dealt with the problem of reconciliation.

There was another critically important episode. This occurred in the academic year of 1912 and '13 when I was a student in the Graduate School of Philosophy at Harvard University and specifically in the metaphysical seminar. In this seminar, each of the participants was required to prepare a philosophic statement in the form of a paper to be read before the group and subjected to the criticism of anyone present, student or professor, and it was the basic requirement that he defend his thesis. On one occasion, a

very brilliant student from Scotland gave a paper on the Vedanta.¹ Now, the Vedanta is a form of religious philosophy in India. It is said to have three forms known as the Advaita Vedanta, the Visishtadvaita Vedanta, and the Dvaita Vedanta. I do not remember which form was brought up, but the thinking in this form of religious philosophy has marked similarities to that which I had found in the thinking of the Theosophical group in Palo Alto. This student was able to defend his thesis effectively against the criticism of all comers including the supervising professor, and then I saw that here was something worthy of serious attention. If there is a truth, a domain, corresponding to that which was developed in the Theosophical Society and in Vedantist thinking which was really sound, which really met the canons of sound thinking, then no one could develop a philosophic system which would be adequate if it left out this domain. And if this domain was in fact true, if the statement was true concerning it, no philosophic statement or point of view of life view could be produced which left it out. And that determination proved to be of decisive importance in the life pattern which I thereafter chose.

As a student in the University of Stanford, I majored in the Department of Pure Mathematics. At that time there were two departments of mathematics at Stanford, one pure and one applied. In the field of applied mathematics the interest is the use of a mathematical tool for dealing with problems which are ultimately other than mathematics, but in the pure department, the end is mathematics for its own sake. This is a special kind of orientation. I already knew that my largest academic interest was in the mathematical field, and it was for that reason I chose this department. I was not thinking of a future career of something that would be of economic use. I chose mathematics because of sheer love of the subject matter, of something worthy as an end in itself.

My other interests in the university were divided between psychology and, ultimately, philosophy, as a Department of Philosophy was established while I was at the university. I became, in the psychological department, an assistant to one of the teachers, namely, the reader who gave the grades to the students after I had already had a course. When the philosophy department was founded, which took place during the time I was at the university, I took, ultimately, all courses offered. These included Formal and Inductive Logic, the History of Philosophy, a course in ethics, and one seminar. Ultimately, a course was introduced in the *Critique of Pure Reason* if I would take it in the following year, which I said I would. That is where work became difficult. I took, ultimately, all the courses offered in the mathematics department plus one that was also put into the curriculum because I said I would take it. There were interests beyond this. I had some contact with the linguistic field, with economics, with politics, and some biology. But my focus was centered in mathematics, philosophy, and psychology.

Ultimately, I received a scholarship which rendered it possible for me to go to Harvard where I matriculated in the Graduate School of Philosophy, and there I had the following courses: one in the philosophy of religion; again, one in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, because there is no subject more important than the contribution of Immanuel Kant; one in symbolic logic; and two seminars—one in metaphysics and one in epistemology. This proved to be a very valuable year. Unfortunately, two men who had

¹ See the audio recording, "On My Philosophy: Extemporaneous Statement," for a reference to this student by the name of Mr. Rattray.

achieved superior reputations in the university were no longer there. William James had passed away and Josiah Royce, a philosophic representative of the idealistic school, had had a stroke and was not teaching.

The year at Harvard proved to be very valuable and in many ways in addition to the field of academic interest in the classes themselves. New England was the first portion of this country to develop a literary reputation. It is the country of Emerson, of Hawthorne, of the Alcotts, and of several others. I did on one occasion take a hiking trip from Cambridge up to Concord where Ralph Waldo Emerson had his residence. I saw his house in such good shape that one seemed to expect someone to step out of it at any moment. I saw Concord Bridge, or rather a cement replica of the original bridge, where the Battle of Concord Bridge was fought during the American Revolution. I walked across it and returned. I saw from the bridge the large two story dwelling where Emerson's grandfather was at the time of the Revolution and the balcony from which he saw the battle. The parishioners had locked him in because they did not think that a clergyman should take an active part in a battle. I saw the home of Hawthorn and of the Alcotts; walked down what was known as the philosophers' road in an earlier day. Also, while at Cambridge I kept up my contact with a small group that was still interested in Theosophical thought—certain members of the Temple of the People.

I also investigated certain of the various mediums who existed at that time. It is said that William James made a study of mediumistic activity, and I actually ran across his trail. This was a totally new experience to me. Some manifestations did not seem to me to be real, but others did seem to have some sort of validity. There was one couple who seemed to be perfectly sincere, and on one occasion the woman who was the medium began to talk in a very weird way. Someone who was almost inarticulate seemed to be speaking through her, and the man very gently spoke to him. What seemed to have happened was that this person had passed in and was in a state of confusion on the other side—did not know where he was and what to do—and the man very gently told him where he was, gave him instructions as to what to do, and gave him other grounds for comfort. Gradually this inarticulate individual became more and more articulate and less and less distraught. It was my first experience with what I later learned was a kind of channeling. This couple seemed to be very sincere. When the woman came out of her trance, she evidently, or at least apparently, did not know what had happened and apologized for falling asleep. I found evidence that some of the efforts were probably less than sincere. And I also ran across the trail of William James.

Also, there was a big advantage that one experiences when at Harvard. Men of distinction from Europe and elsewhere come there—one was Bergson, the French philosopher who Ralph Barton Perry lists along with the Pragmatists. He gave a lecture in French under the title *The Philosophie du Changement*, but it was all in French and I understood not a word of it. Later, he met with the faculty and the graduate students in another room, and there questions were asked and he spoke in English, and that English was perfect. The lecture need not have been in French.

There were circumstances that led to my meeting another figure of great importance, namely, the East Indian poet Tagore. I happened to have some information concerning a Har Dayal that I met at Stanford, who had founded a society of a very leftist sort, and I had received a card from him, or someone else at Stanford, in which

he announced a development of a society which was of the far left. On that card, he enunciated the principle of sexual purity but without celibacy. I showed this card to some of the Indian students who were at Harvard at the time—as I was known to them, having been over where they were at different times—and they looked at this statement and asked what does he mean by that? And I told them, as I had known Har Dayal at Stanford, that he implied a kind of interrelationship between men and women where it was not one-to-one but many-to-many, and they were horrified. But this proved to be a fortunate circumstance for me, as when the great Tagore came to Harvard one of the East Indian students, a scholarship student from Calcutta University, had seen Tagore and told him about what I had said concerning this one known as Har Dayal, and Tagore expressed a wish to see me to get some more information. The result was that I had the great honor of talking to Tagore for a half hour. He was somewhat shocked himself and indicated that he would use his influence to checkmate the effect of the work of the Har Dayal. But for me it was a fortunate circumstance, as it gave me an opportunity to talk with that great mystical poet.

There was one development which took place while I was at Harvard which I regard as being of major importance. It was there I learned of Saint Issa. The story is this: that a certain Russian was traveling in Tibet and on a certain occasion had broken his leg. His name was Notovitch. He was taken into one of the monasteries, probably a Buddhist monastery, and given such help as was needed. And while he was convalescing, they let him see a manuscript, and this manuscript purported to be the account of the one who is known to us as Jesus and subsequently as the Christ during the eighteen years from the age of twelve to the age of forty. As I remember the account, Jesus left Palestine at about the age when it was the custom for young men, or young boys, to be betrothed and traveled to the East. In this account it states that he spent considerable time in Kashmir Valley and that one of the mounds or hills there is especially associated with him; that he there had that fundamental experience which is called variously Enlightenment or Fundamental Realization; that he instituted a work in this area and that he traveled from there to other points to give his message. Ultimately, he remembered the land of his birth and returned to Palestine, and there the account of the Gospels tells, presumably, the story of his life during the last three years. This I found quite important. There is no explanation of how the one who was known as Jesus came to be endowed with a special power or to have come into the possession of a special message. This account of Saint Issa would give the explanation. It was through the same kind of event as started the work of Buddhism in the person of Gautama Buddha, namely, the experience, or more strictly *imperience*, of Enlightenment. It is my contention that here is broken out, or into the consciousness, a means of cognition that is other than sense perception or conceptual cognition, but is a cognition of a third and entirely different sort and, in fact, is based upon the principle of fusion of the knower and the known.

There was another contact made at Harvard that proved to be of considerable value. This was the meeting and discussing with Norbert Wiener. He was a special case. He is listed as a prodigy, and, in fact, in his own autobiography the first volume is called *Ex-Prodigy*. He was brought up in his earliest years under the tutelage of his father. His father was a Harvard professor in the field of languages and, in fact, had a mastery of an incredible number of languages. The father brought up his son, or took over his training at the age of one, so I have been told. He finished his grade school by the age of nine,

finished high school by the age of eleven, went to Tufts College, which is in Cambridge, and finished a four year course in three years, and then had four straight graduate years in the United States, two away from Harvard and the last two at Harvard, and of these I was there when he was completing his second graduate year at Harvard. He took his PhD at the age of 18. Now, he was in two seminars which I attended, as well as a class in symbolic logic. He was the intellectual equal of the older students, and the average age of the graduate students would run in the range of 24 to 26. His intellectual capacity was quite adequate; but, one thing that I noticed was that the feeling side of the nature seemed to be that which was normal for a youth of 18, but was immature from the perspective of young men of the age of 24 to 26. This produced a kind of dissonance which irritated a good many of the older men. Figures of speech would be used that had an overly youthful quality about them and it produced a kind of dissonance. But there was no question about the intellectual ability of Norbert Wiener. He has become since that day the big name in connection with the development of the computer and has also developed the idea of the “cybernetics team.” He did a useful life’s work—useful for those who shall follow him. Whether it was the happiest kind of life may be a question because it would seem that the feeling side is not subject to the prodigy kind of development, but that it develops more in the normal way as being aligned with the normal age of the individual. Of course in later life balance was recovered.

After completing the term at Harvard and completing the examinations, which afforded me no difficulties, I faced the problem as to how I might finance another year. The scholarship which made this year possible was for one year alone. I had applied for a traveling scholarship, having the thought that I might continue studies in Germany. Wiener also had applied for the same one and he got it; although, he told me that our grades were the same, but he had been in Harvard for two years and it was judged that he had earned it for that reason. Personally, I was glad it worked out that way, for if I had gone to Germany to study, I would have been caught there by the First World War.

There was also another line that I opened up and that was the possibility of a teaching job in India. I had an offer in a missionary school of a teaching position in the field of mathematics. However, I wrote to the Temple headquarters asking for advice and I received a message from the Brother who supervised the Temple of the People. And he said, “A greater than I has said that the Child of the East will find his call to action in the West wind.” And then he went on to say, “It would seem that if you *return* to India you might be caught up in Indian quietism.” It was not an absolute statement as to the course I should take, but the point was made for me to consider. I decided not to “return” to India. Put the word return in quotes. I’ve never been in India in this lifetime, so there is an interesting suggestion in the use of that word.

I found employment on the North Shore about 20 miles from Boston, but I could not earn enough in a summer’s period to finance another semester. I communicated with the head of the philosophy department, and he said the problem could be handled all right. Evidently graduate students are employed in the rendering of service with respect to some of the larger classes, like the History of Philosophy, taking some of the more ordinary chores off the back of the lecturer. However, I had no positive assurance. But it so happened that before the summer was finished I received a communication from Stanford in which I was offered the opportunity of teaching mathematics during the

sabbatical leave of Dr. Blichfeldt, namely, to continue in his general courses; and that led to the decision to return. And my course of destiny might have been quite otherwise if I had continued at Harvard.

In due course, I returned to Stanford choosing the most roundabout, and at the same time, the most economic course that I could follow. I saw a lot of country and took a full seven days to make the trip, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The year of teaching at Stanford, I regard as one of the most delightful that I have ever experienced. The more difficult courses which had been taught by Dr. Blichfeldt were discontinued. I handled simply his general courses. This included solid geometry, trigonometry, a general course, and for a brief time, I taught non-Euclidean geometry. Dr. Blichfeldt did not leave the university immediately. He was absent at the beginning of the semester, came back and taught some of his more advanced courses, and then left for study at another university in the second semester. I had his courses in solid geometry, trigonometry, and the general course, and for the first few weeks I taught his course in non-Euclidean geometry.

This is a very interesting field. To a degree it is a misnomer. There are three forms of geometry taught here, one of which is Euclidean, one Lobachevskian, and one Riemannian. They are based upon a feature in the Greek geometry that is ambiguous. There is the famous parallel axiom, but it is formulated in such a complex way that it seems to be like a theorem, so that efforts were made to try to prove it from the fundamental assumptions and definitions that already existed in the geometry. But all efforts of this sort failed. Then finally an effort was made to see what the results would be if it were assumed that something other than the so-called parallel axiom was the fundamental assumption. Lobachevsky assumed that it was possible to draw through a point two lines on a plane that were parallel to a given line, and then follow up the consequences. It was found that a perfectly self-consistent geometry could thus be developed, and yet every proposition that involved the parallel axiom in Euclidian geometry had a different form in this Lobachevskian geometry. There was also another effort made by a man of the name of Riemann, namely that no line could be drawn through a point on a plane that was parallel to a given line within that plane, in other words, that all such straight lines met in a finite distance. This was known as the Riemannian geometry and a perfectly self-consistent geometry was built in that form. So, there were three forms of geometry: one Euclidean, and two non-Euclidean.

It is an interesting sidelight to note the fact that the geometrical form which Albert Einstein chose for his General Theory of Relativity was not the Euclidean form but the Riemannian form. It fitted the needs of his theory better than the Euclidean—a very interesting fact. The question has been raised, was raised in fact by some student, which one is true, which one applies to this world? And the answer given by the teacher was any one of them could be applied. Any one could be used for dealing with the practical problems involving the use of geometry, only the handling of the problems would be simpler by one of the systems rather than by one of the other two, and that would be the form which one would normally choose. And Einstein found the Riemannian system the most logically usable in connection with his General Theory. It changes the meaning of the relationship between geometry and the world of objective sensuous perception. There is no one conceptual way of handling these relationships. There are, in at least geometry, three possible ways. And this carries some implications of very great interest, that here

we're dealing with different approaches, or many means of organization of our thinking, with respect to the world of sensuous experience. There is not just one true system, but there are alternative possibilities. It leads to some very interesting implications.

I refer the listener, now, to the tapes dealing with the question of the descent of the *Manasaputra*, which is connected, as is there pointed out, with the Luciferian myth, the myth of Prometheus, and the myth of the fallen Angels.² What we have here in the evolution of this humanity is a double kind of evolution: the evolution that is connected with the equipment of a so-called ape-like creature which is not an ape, namely, a sensuous equipment, and an added equipment that came from the fallen *Manasaputra*. It is from the latter we get our conceptual capacity. Now, there could arise a question as to which one gives us the true view of the world, and there is not a simple answer to this question. Certainly, the conceptual power gives us command in the world that we do not have with the sensuous equipment alone. It is that which makes a man a greater power than any other animal no matter how strong that animal may be. Yet, one may ask what view is the true view? As we have just taken up the question of being able to apply different geometries to the problems of this world, and that therefore there is no one system that is the true system, that we are guided rather by a principle of simplicity of application rather than a consideration of true and false, that here we have in the conceptual order a power to command, as it were, a power to control. But the question of what is the ultimate truth is not apparently thereby solved. There is truth to the extent that the right concept does give us command, but there may be more than one right concept, as we found was true in the case of the use of non-Euclidean geometries. Therefore truth takes on a more complex meaning than it formerly seemed to have, that there is more than one true way of dealing with the problems of this world. I find this line of thought very suggestive.

Throughout my teaching year at Stanford, I taught three courses; one was a general course designed for students who were not required to have a large or substantial mathematical knowledge but who still could use some knowledge, namely, those who were following perhaps in the medical field, or the legal field, or such other professions. This course consisted of solid geometry, or not solid geometry, ordinary college algebra, analytic geometry, and a small touch of calculus. I enjoyed particularly the teaching of this course, and I had an intelligent group of students there. I also had an easy time in the teaching of trigonometry. But I ran into a problem in connection with solid geometry that is really not so much a rational problem as a problem connected with the capacity of imagination. Solid geometry consists of figures in three dimensions; plane geometry, on the other hand, dealt with figures consisting of only two dimensions. One must be able to imagine in three dimensions in order to follow the reasoning involved in solid geometry. Actually, the geometry we inherited from the Greeks is essentially simple, but if one cannot imagine in three dimensions, he is lost.

Now, it so happens that there always is a certain number of students who come into the university who are enamored with the prospect of taking up work in the field of engineering. Now, in most engineering—not perhaps all, but most—it is necessary to be

² See the audio recordings, "Is the Intellect the Devil?," parts 1-4, and "Descent of the *Manasaputra*," parts 1 and 2.

able to imagine in three dimensions; and, therefore, mastery of solid geometry is a must. Now, the certain number of students avoided their solid geometry in high school, and a course was offered them at the university. If they could not qualify in it, their future in engineering was nil. It was the policy of the university to weed them out as soon as possible so that they would not waste time in a field where they could not ultimately qualify. They might make good physicians, good lawyers, or function in some other non-engineering field very effectively, and it was felt best to eliminate those who could not qualify in their first year. But, it made a very difficult problem from the standpoint of the teacher. Solid geometry, I had found, was a very simple subject when I studied it, but when I taught it I found it was one of the most difficult things to get across when the students lacked the capacity to imagine in three dimensions. Actually, a majority of the class, perhaps about two-thirds, would fail or be conditioned; and that is a discouraging sort of thing from the standpoint of the teacher.

However, on the whole, this year of mathematical instruction was for me a happy year. I continued my interest in the Theosophical field. I associated again with the students that I had met earlier, and I became more confirmed that here was something to be taken very seriously.

Ultimately, at the end of the year, I faced this problem: shall I return to the academic path, complete my doctorate, and become a professional teacher in either mathematics or philosophy, or shall I start the search for that other something which I had learned of through Theosophical and some certain other sources. I finally made the choice to abandon the academic career; and then I went into the wilderness. At that time I did not know that I was following a path that had been followed many times before. Those who seek that objective which is known variously as Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment, typically, in at least many cases if not most, go into the wilderness for their search. Many dwell in caves connected with the Himalaya Mountains, some in small huts along the Ganges River, or other places in the forest, and often live upon those gifts of food or other necessities which people may bring to them. I had not known this at the time when I went into the wilderness south of Carmel, but I was following a path that had been trodden well before myself.

The wilderness south of Carmel, and along the coast north of San Francisco, consists of a combination of the rather low coastal ranges and the ocean and constitutes two of the top scenic areas of California, and at one time I was strongly drawn to establishing my final residence in that area. But ultimately the appeal of the far greater mountains known as the Sierra Nevada with their multiple interests won my affection, and I finally settled in the latter. Nonetheless, the decision was not easy. I did not stay long in the wilderness when I finished my academic year of teaching at Stanford.

After a few months, I drove with a team down to Halcyon, which was the headquarters of the Temple of the People. I had made the decision to go the way of the mystic call. I did not then realize how long this journey would be. I had had the opportunity of an academic career, and it would have been for me a happy career; but, I returned to a much more humble way of life for a period of twenty-two years. But, it ultimately proved to be the wisest choice. Many a time in those twenty-two years, I thought I had made a mistake, but in the end the victory came, and I'll tell this story as the next part of this record.

Halcyon was a small community located about fifteen miles south of the town of San Luis Obispo following the road. The community existed for the students of the Temple of the People. It was not a general town. They had their own post office and their own small grocery store. But, however, they were located near other towns where more general shopping was possible. There were headquarter buildings where meetings were held. Meetings were held every Sunday and during the week. The work was in the general field of Theosophy. It followed, in a broad sense, the material that was given in *The Secret Doctrine* that had been written down by H. P. Blavatsky; though, it is said, it was authored by three individuals, namely, one who was known as Koot Hoomi, another known as Morya, and by HPB herself. Though she was the writer of all, she was the author of only part of the volume.

This brings up a method of communication which is atypical. It is known as “channeling.” In the case of individuals who have attained at least a certain degree of adeptship, it is possible for their intelligence principle to be transferred to an individual who has channeling capacity, and take over the control of the body, but particularly the control of the mental functions in that individual, for a limited period of time; and the real entity who properly belongs to that body, steps aside, and, it is said, may listen to what is being said through her organism or step aside completely and remain uninformed concerning it. It is said that *The Secret Doctrine* was written this way and also that the teachings of the Temple were very largely written by this method, but in this case, the principal contributor was a Greek Adept known by the name of Hilarion, so that the work was largely the thought of three individuals known respectively as Koot Hoomi, Morya, and Hilarion.

This would seem to be an appropriate time to produce a footnote observation on the distinction between mediumship and legitimate channeling. Throughout the mass of Theosophic literature, one will find an extended critique of that which is known variously as spiritualism and mediumship where there is often supposed to be communication through a medium by an entity who has passed to the other side through the normal process of death. There is a great deal of criticism of this practice to be found throughout Theosophical literature; but then the thought arises, there is a means of communication called channeling which is employed by the very individuals who are highly critical of mediumship. What is implied here is the following: that there is a positive aspect of this function of communication and a negative aspect and that there is considerable danger involved in the negative form of practice. On the other hand, in the case of the positive communication through channels, there is, so far as my experience goes, always the presence of an Adept who is making the communication. It is not a communication from Tom, Dick, and Harry who may have passed over to the other side through death. This channeling is by living entities, though they may not always be upon the physical plane. We will be dealing with this subject later when we deal with the possibility of communication from an Adept who has passed over to the other side by the normal process of death.

Let us return now to the closing days of the sojourn in the wilderness south of Carmel. A one-hundred-sixty acres of government land had been secured by one of the associates, and we had accumulated a certain number of tools such as were necessary for the cutting down and cutting up of trees, the plows, cultivators, and other implements that

were horse drawn. We actually did cut down a straight grain redwood tree about four feet in diameter for the making of split shakes and split lumber which we employed in construction. It really was an activity that reproduced the life of the early days in the wilderness, and I carry from it a memory that I do indeed cherish. But it soon became evident that the purpose which I had in mind was not here being furthered, so there was a rearrangement established in which I took the team, which I had purchased, and the wagon, and certain hay supplies, and other supplies, and started on the long trip down to Halcyon—a trip of 250 miles in a horse drawn vehicle, which means traveling on average about twenty miles a day, for that is as much as horses can maintain in day after day travel. It is very different from what we know today in the rapid transit afforded by the automobile. It gave me the experience directly of our early pioneers, and I do cherish that experience to this day. In due course, I did arrive at Halcyon. And here begins a new chapter.

One may ask the question, why are there groups or entities such as the Temple of the People, or of the Theosophical Society that was founded in New York in 1875 and later continued in India? Why are there stories of the initiates at the time of Plato and of Pythagoras in our Western history? Why do we speak of Egyptian mysteries, as well as of Greek mysteries, and of the hidden teachings of the Orient? In our ordinary approach to the subject of knowledge as given in our exoteric schools and universities, we think of knowledge as a common inheritance and that the problem is simply the training of individuals in the beginning so that they may acquire and understand this knowledge. But the mystic tradition which is handed down from the past involves something more, namely, that there is a kind of knowledge in the world which is not available to everybody, that indeed candidates for this knowledge may be subjected to many tests and trials and prove themselves as worthy, and usually the knowledge is given upon the basis of a pledge of secrecy. And one may ask why? There is one answer that is very easily found, and that is that much of this knowledge is of a sort that involves real power—and power that can be misused—and that therefore the custodians of this knowledge should be well-proven individuals in terms of their personal character and in terms of their discretion, so that this knowledge, which on one hand might be used for the edification and advance of humanity on one side, yet could be used by those with questionable motivation as a force for personal power and actually as serving the enslavement of humanity. Therefore, such knowledge should be handled with great care.

Now, in a simple little organization like the Temple of the People, there naturally would not be present a grievously potent type of knowledge that could be easily acquired or even acquired with minor tests. But at least something of the preparation for the ultimate receiving of such knowledge could be learned in such small groups of people, in most cases quite sincere, but not always as wise as one might wish, so that there is a preliminary discipline or training toward a day when there may be demand made upon individuals to serve as custodians of a very potent kind of knowledge and power for the benefit of humanity, but which nonetheless should be kept safely guarded away from those who might use it to their own injury or otherwise unwisely, and even might employ it maliciously. The record of such institutions, or perhaps more precisely, the tradition of such a record, exists apparently from earliest times. It is therefore something to be taken very seriously.