

As an intimate part of that supernal consciousness, there is a sense of power and authority literally of

cosmic proportions. By contrast, the marchings of the Caesars and the conquests of science are but the games of children. For these achievements, which seem so portentous and commanding upon the pages of human history, all inhere in a field of consciousness that in its very roots is subject to that Higher Power and Authority. Before mere cataclysms of nature, if they are on sufficiently large a scale, the resources of our mightiest rulers and of our science stand impotent. Yet those very forces of nature rest dependent upon that transcendent and seeming Void in order that they may have any existence whatsoever. The mystery before birth and after death lies encompassed within it. All this, all this play of visible and invisible forces seem no more than a dream-drama during a moment's sleep in the illimitable vastness of Eternity. And so, from out that Eternity speaks the Voice of the never-sleeping Consciousness, and before the commanding Authority and irresistible Power of that Voice, all dreams, though of cosmic proportions, dissolve.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *The Philosophy of Consciousness without an Object* (New York: Julian Press, 1973), p. 65.

The Laughing Man: You say at the end of your preface to *Pathways through to Space*, "The motive should always be the good of all creatures, not one's private good." Agehananda Bharati would argue against this. He said that this kind of motive is not rooted in Realization itself, but it is something you bring to it. I mention him because he is a representative of Hinduism on the one hand and on the other hand he seems to be a real skeptic as regards mystical experience, even though he apparently had mystical experiences himself on three different occasions. In your case mystical experience has had a very lasting influence, and in his case it has not made any apparent

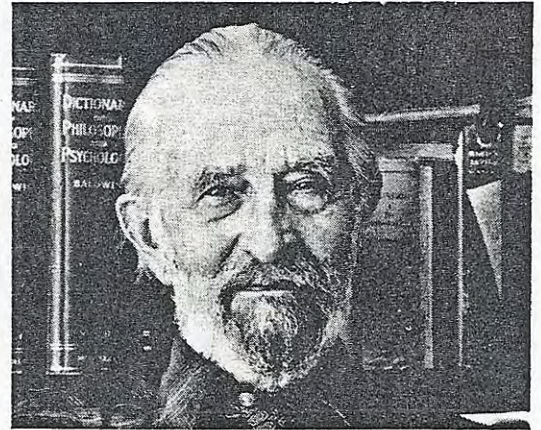
difference whatsoever. How would you interpret that?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I doubt that he experienced the same thing that I experienced. I cannot imagine a person going through what I experienced without being enormously influenced. My whole world-orientation went through a radical change. It brought hope, delight, assurance, and a sense of security. That has been my experience. Others may report different experiences—I don't think I have exhausted the possibilities by any means.

There may be other doors not so delightful as the door I know. The experience of delight I knew is beyond

anything experienced in the world field, an incredible delight. It would seem so gentle and lovely while I would be in it, but when I would come out of it, I would find that my animal body had been strained by it. It was difficult for that body, and that body suffered, although I did not know it at the time. Out of consideration for that animal body, I deliberately reduced the intensity of the state—I found it was very much subject to the will—until the animal body could take it without strain. That I did, though I was disgusted with the body. In returning to this fount I kept within a degree of experience that was not too severe for the body consciousness.

The Laughing Man: You say in your book, "Highly developed capacity in relative knowledge is not to be scorned. Many genuinely Illumined men have not seen clearly with respect to this point. The result is that while such men have made the crossing for themselves, they have left poor bridges for others." Would you say one should develop one's ego and worldly personality before embarking on a spiritual Way?



Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I would say so. Otherwise, you might not have the strength to deal with it, but be swept by it too completely. I was able to maintain a critical perspective throughout the experience, but that called for a certain strength of mind. When I was younger I might not have been able to deal with it.

The Laughing Man: Would you speculate that some of the people who are now in mental institutions had personalities too weak to deal with the Realization?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: Yes. It is possible it could be too much for one without the personal strength of mind. One can be swept by it and not return. I had control. I could return to ordinary consciousness when I so chose, and then enter the Illumined state again at the appropriate

time. I did not enter that state idly. I did it to render value available to others through my speaking and through my writing, but not as an idle activity for my personal enjoyment.

The Laughing Man: Who decided to enter and to return from that state?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: That which I call "I," this human being, decided.

The Laughing Man: The Atman did not make that choice?

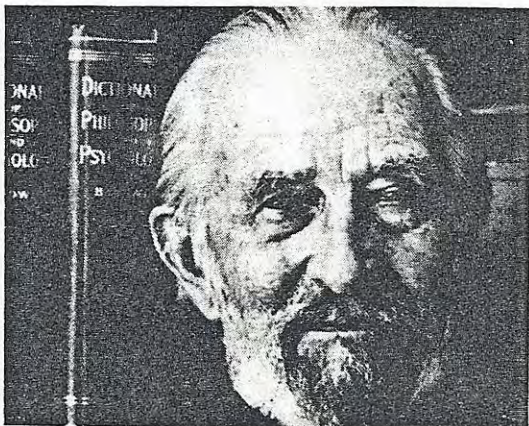
Franklin Merrell-Wolff: How could it? There is a zone where the lines overlap, as it were—the personal consciousness and the Atman may be in a kind of a confusion for the occasion, and then draw apart. This is my experience.

The Laughing Man: What made you decide not to remain in that state, but to resume the finite personality?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I felt the experience was not for myself alone, that I was merely a representative of humanity. My task was to make it available to humanity as far as I could. That was my moral obligation, and that has been the governing attitude in my work ever since. This is not a private value that belongs to me. In a way, I'm an agent for it, to render it as available as possible to the consciousness of humanity. Others may render it available through other devices than those which I command, but I use what I have.

In my estimation, it is the most precious experience anyone can have. To know this Realization is worth any price that might be exacted, including death itself. That would be my valuation of it. It is utterly rich beyond anything in this world that I know—the source of a deep happiness and richness.

The Laughing Man: Has the experience returned to you since the month in 1936?



Franklin Merrell-Wolff: In one sense, I have returned to it at will, though not with the degree of intensity of that time. It

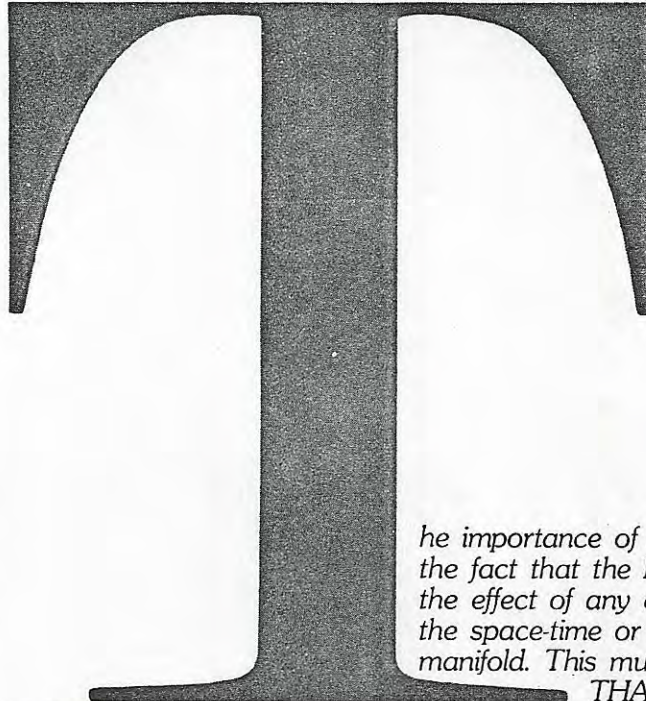
is a strain on the organism.

The Laughing Man: Were you fully functional during that experience?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: As far as I am aware, I was. I was in command of my organism. I could withdraw or enter the experience more or less at will, and render it available to others.

When I rendered it available to others, it was connected with a very

strange thing, an experience of heat. Many individuals reported a heat that became at times rather uncomfortable. Why should there be this heat involved? The rationale of that is something that is not yet fully explained to me. I call it "induction" in the electrical sense. When you are dealing with an audience, the presence of this consciousness has an inductive effect with respect to other



he importance of the Guru lies in the fact that the Recognition is not the effect of any causes set up in the space-time or subject-object manifold. This must be so, for

THAT which transcends causality cannot be Itself an effect of something else. Recognition actually is a spontaneous induction out of Spirit Itself. Man's personal effort merely removes barriers in his nature that inhibit this spontaneous induction. So there is a real, though greatly misunderstood, truth in the statement that man is saved through the Love of God. But this Love manifests to men through the Sons of God, i.e., through Those who have attained God-Realization. The Guru is the embodiment of Divinity to the disciple and, through Him in general, the spontaneous 'act' of Spirit manifests in the individual disciple. . . .

I have spoken of the power of 'induction' or 'contagion.' Since writing that I have had rather extensive experience with this power, and have found it even more potent than I then realized. On innumerable occasions, when, either spontaneously or deliberately, I entered the Field of the Current, responsive individuals, who were present, were carried into the same Field in greater or lesser degree. I have secured several written reports of these induced states, and, in many instances, have been astonished by the mystical depths revealed in them. I have a number of reports which would compare more than favorably with the bulk of those given in Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness or in William James' Varieties of Religious Experience.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *Pathways through to Space*, pp. 93-94, 256.

individuals in the same way that electricity can have an inductive effect.

The Laughing Man: Do you explain this as a form of manipulating the Life Current, which was visible to you at the time? Is the Life Current magnified in your own body and therefore somehow impacting the people who are in proximity to you?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: It might very well be like that. There is something about the consciousness which suggests fluidity. There is a sense of flow, but not flow like a mere stream, for it is flow from the past to the future, as though consciousness has this flow. This is the reason I use the word current. At any rate, I find that with practice the organism becomes

intensify the entrance into that state, might you become unaware of your surroundings altogether?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: Oh yes, one could experience blackout from this environment.

The Laughing Man: That would be more like traditional samadhi (other than Sahaj Samadhi, in which one is aware of the environment, but at the same time intuits the Brahman Reality).

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: Yes.

The Laughing Man: Agehananda Bharati denies that such states have any ontological status. He holds that they are all brain-induced and that the moment the brain would be dissected, the experience would stop. But most mystics hold

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more and more attuned to carrying this state or current of consciousness and power so that it becomes more and more natural to carry it, not a strain. It is subject to control by the will. I have been able to turn to it or turn away from it. At times, in turning away, I have had to deal with turning away from delight, but I found no difficulty in that. I was not attached to delight. I knew that the delight was available, but I did not have to indulge myself. I don't play with it for personal indulgence. I respect it profoundly. It is a rare treasure.

The Laughing Man: You do not seem to go into a trance state, which is what classical samadhi is about.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: No, it's certainly not a catatonic trance. There is an element of light trance in the state, but not a heavy trance. There is an awareness of the environment all the time. Yet I am aware of being in a different current of consciousness. In intensive penetration, one might have other experiences, but I kept within that range.

The Laughing Man: If you were to

that such states are the only reality there is, and if the body were to die, it would make no difference at all—the reality and the realization would continue. What is your feeling?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I'm not inclined to an exclusive interpretation of the experience, to say that my experience of it was exclusively valid. This is what I know so far, but there may be a richness beyond this that I do not yet know.

The Laughing Man: Would you say that your experience was Real, or would you say that it could have been due to memory, due to reading about Brahman, and that it is only a reality on the level of the brain? That is the criticism of the positivists.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: There is no awareness of brain when you are in this state. It is just an awareness of a quality of consciousness. When one deals with the idea of a brain, one is dealing with theory that is instituted by outer man, not Realized man. In a way, the brain is rather irrelevant, for one is moving in the state of consciousness. Let the theoreticians

have their brains, but I know one can move into consciousness where the concept of brain is unnecessary. This consciousness is something almost like a companion—unutterably sweet and kindly. The feeling of dealing with a friend is strong.

The Laughing Man: How do you experience your body when you are in the Illumined state?

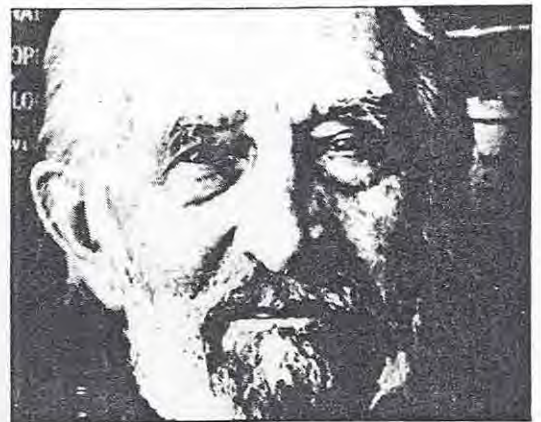
Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I am inclined to say that it seems more or less irrelevant.

The Laughing Man: You obviously have a great sensitivity to the real function of the Guru. You mention Shankara as your Guru by way of sympathy.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: Oh yes, I had the feeling of orientation to him as though he were my Guru. I felt very close to him. Shankara was one figure that counted for me, but I have always honored the Blessed One, the Great Buddha. I regard three beings as the source in this day of our spiritual realization—Buddha, Shankara, and Christ. I accept all three, but the one that talked most closely to me was Shankara. He was a superb thinker. Christ was preeminently a man of feeling. Buddha formulated the way. It seems others wrote the Sutras, but he was the cause of their being written. Those three I think are the ultimate source of our spiritual values in this time.

The Laughing Man: In your second book, which is a more philosophical look at the experience you had forty-five years ago, you say, "There returns once again an adumbrative Presence of that awful Majesty." It has become a sense of Presence. You no longer identify with it.

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: Yes, I have a sense of Presence. I do not necessarily go into it at all times to the same degree of



deepness. Sometimes the contact is more superficial and other times it is more profound. Suppose you went hand in

hand with a delightful friend through a beautiful garden without any harshness whatsoever. Think of this other consciousness as that delightful friend. That would give you an impression of the kind of experience I have had over and over again. The experience is utterly informal and comfortable.

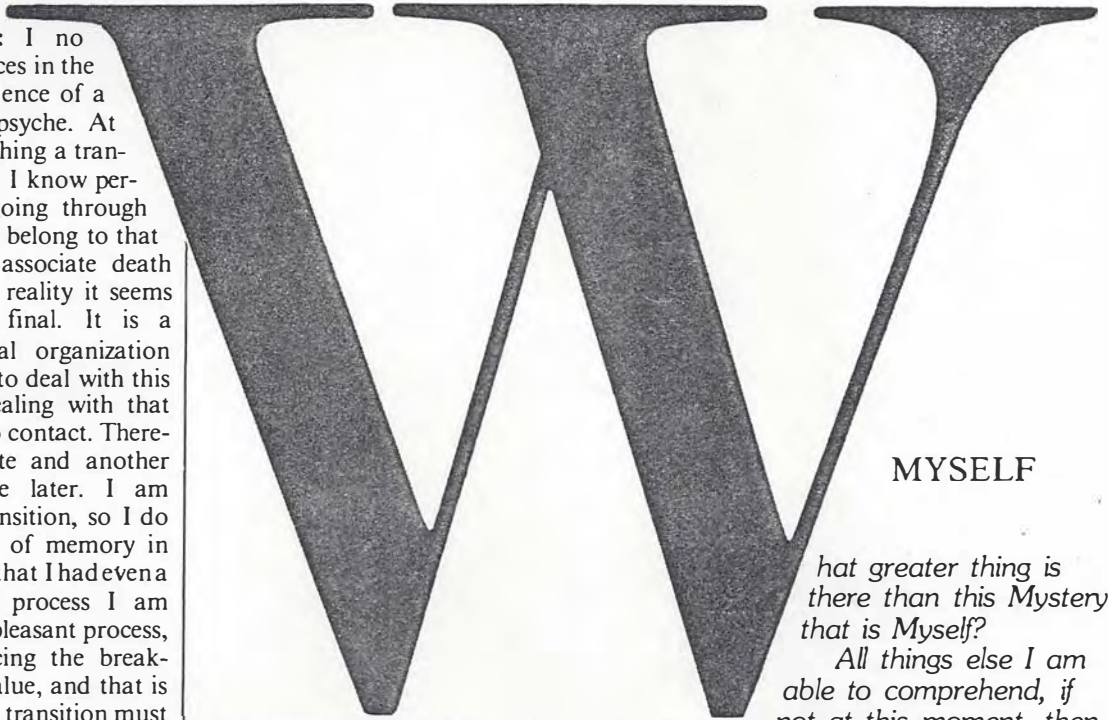
The Laughing Man: In the early days you were able to will yourself back into that state. What about now?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I no longer have those resources in the same way. There is evidence of a breaking down in the psyche. At ninety-six, I am approaching a transition. I am facing death. I know perfectly well that I am going through certain of the stages that belong to that transition. Though we associate death with something final, in reality it seems not to be something final. It is a transition. The psychical organization that I have now is fitted to deal with this world, not fitted for dealing with that which I am proceeding to contact. Therefore, it must disintegrate and another reintegration take place later. I am passing through that transition, so I do not have the sharpness of memory in regard to this experience that I had even a few months ago. This process I am passing through is not a pleasant process, because I am experiencing the breakdown of things that I value, and that is not easy to take. But this transition must be completed. I go forward with a certain faith in that which I do not yet know. I have faith that there will come a reintegration of my cognitive possibilities.

The Laughing Man: Looking back on your long life, would you now act differently in response to the realization that you enjoyed for a month only to lose it? Would you perhaps seek out an Adept like the Buddha who is stably established in that disposition and therefore could guide your reawakening?

Franklin Merrell-Wolff: I would be delighted to have an interview with the Buddha! ●

The following lines were written by Franklin Merrell-Wolff during ecstatic Identity with the underlying Consciousness of manifest existence. Thus, the "Me" in this passage is not the egoic self-reference of ordinary speech, but refers to the Transcendental Self. While this confession of temporary Identity with the Atman is true sixth stage Self-Realization, it should not be confused with the seventh stage Adept's confession of unalterable and perpetual Identity with Radiant Transcendental Being, the Ultimate Reality of all beings and things.



MYSELF

What greater thing is there than this Mystery that is Myself?

All things else I am able to comprehend, if not at this moment, then

in time I can do so, and that is why I am able to give them names. And that which I have named is in thralldom to Me. So all creatures serve Me from the most elemental up to the highest Gods. But the SELF that I AM has no name, for no word that points toward Me comprehends Me. Names mean forms, whether gross or subtle, but I AM without form and, therefore, eternally nameless.

I comprehend all, but am comprehended by none.

I sustain all, yet need no support.

All creatures are but revelations of Me; for in Me abides their very existence, yet though they were not, I AM.

This space I produce that My Glory may be revealed; yet I alone Realize that Revelation.

Upon this space I cast My Shadow in numberless variations, yet ever remain One—apart.

I AM the theme of all melodies and reveal portions of My endless Richness in symphonic elaboration.

I lead all scientists to Me as they seek for the Truth, which is none other than Myself.

The devotee seeks Me through the raiment of My Being, yet I abide in that devotee.

He who does violence but seeks Me in ignorance.

I AM the Love of all lovers, and I also am the Lover and the Beloved.

Beside Me there is none other.