

Obstacles

Lecture in Cleveland, Ohio on November 12, 1974

by Richard Rose

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Q & A	

I'm amazed that we ever find anything to say about a system that is not a system. About something that leads to nowhere. At least, simultaneously nowhere and everywhere.

Generally after I give a lecture I follow up with an informal talk. Tonight I'll give a few facts about the system we work with, or at least the system of thinking that we're involved in. And I prefer to have you ask questions because we get to the heart of the matter much more quickly that way. We get to what you want to know, while I could talk for two days and never hit the point of understanding for you.

This I consider a unique system or unique group. It has to do with self-definition. Some systems seem to be geared strictly to utility. To improve your business or serve as an anesthetic if your thinking becomes too traumatic. Regardless, we are searchers after the truth. And you may immediately say, "Well, what do you consider the truth?" We don't. I don't ask you to consider what is the truth. I ask you to try to find inconsistencies and retreat from those inconsistencies.

It may be said that we're afraid. The reason people search for the truth is that they're afraid of dying. Manifestly everybody dies, so most people go down the old cattle chute and die in the slaughterhouse without pretending they're any better than anybody else. And a few people set themselves aside and decide they want to know what's going to happen to them, and what the mechanics of dying are, and everything they can learn about it. One school of thinking would accuse these people of being cowards, being fearful, motivated by psychological fear, which I'll not deny.

I think one of the worst ways to lie to yourself is to pretend you're above fear. This fear was one of the lucky implants that nature put in all protoplasmic life to preserve it. The rabbit doesn't mind running from the dog, and if he's possibly smart enough or cunning enough he prolongs his life a few days.

Well if you can prolong your existence a few thousand years or an indefinite period of time, if there is a gamble or long shot in that direction, then I look upon it as being foolish not to take that chance. Rather than just say I'm going to be psychologically perfect and

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not have any fears. The thing is to have the fears and capitalize on them and allow them to motivate you, rather than to allow them to just defeat you into silence.

We start off rather young sometimes. Most people are at least raised in some church, and we become pensive enough and abandon the church. Maybe it's just because of inconsistencies, or imperfections of the hierarchy of the church, that we look somewhere else. Unfortunately if they were addicted to that particular religion or church by virtue of faith or feeling rather than by reasoning, they will gravitate right into another "ism" because of faith or feeling.

If they see the weakness of their perspective they'll try to apply some logic or reasoning or common sense. And of course after awhile you find that logic itself is a vanity. Maybe you have pursued a few cults or "isms" thinking you were logical by so doing, but you'll find in turn that logic is a vanity. And it isn't so bad that it's a vanity, because we can't just overnight clear ourselves of all our vanities. The thing is to know they're there, and if possible to use them.

One of the first stages of philosophic development is the realization that we need both logic and feeling. But each by itself, or either by itself is tangential, apt to lead our energies away from an answer, or to make our answer colored. We come across the word "intuition", which is a combination of feeling and logic, and this becomes a new instrument to chart our path. Not that you're automatically free from all rationalizations and mental weaknesses as soon as you develop your intuition, but you're at least able to run through sciences, books, people, authorities or pseudo-authorities with a new measuring stick.

We have to develop a yardstick to measure these things. We have to give everything a fair look or observation. But we can't take ten years to do it, because we'd soon run out of time, and we can't do it when our mind gets feeble with old age. So if we're able to develop the intuition young enough, there's a possibility that we'll be able to measure more rapidly and come to a proper path in time.

Now all the way down the line you can check. You'll be checking yourself and finding that you joined groups – "isms" or lodges or cults – only to later discard them as inadequate. You'll find that your motivation was inadequate or you wouldn't have joined them. But still you somehow stagger through. This is what I call running between the raindrops. I put in quite a few years before I reached an experience and came to a conclusion, and looking backward I could see the many things that held me up – which I couldn't see at the time.

Consequently, that's the reason the book was written. I'm going to go over some of them briefly with you tonight, rather than saying this is what we are and this is what we do; and then you'll get a better idea of our perspective. I think it's as important to know what our perspective is as to know the mechanics of what we're doing, in this group.

[continued next page]

The Obstacles [see chart at end of talk]

This is a partial list of obstacles. We are not here to become gods, we are here to become fertilizers. If we manage to find some exalted point or capacity it's not by following the path of nature. Nature is interested in the retainment of the fertility of two inches of soil or whatever it is. And we're good husbands, and we're tolerated because of our husbandry.

So the people who have developed spiritual systems or the people who have tried to be spiritual basically found that they had to take some sort of recognition of the role of nature in its proper place. It's not that I believe in unnaturalness, it's just that I believe that we're animals in a sort of a pigpen. And we're robots as well. So we have a task of finding out first of all that we are robots and then secondly finding out how to stop the robot machinery momentarily, and then taking over. Then possibly to escape from the pigpen and the destiny of the pigs in the pigpen.

I'm not saying that there isn't also a spiritual evolution. But it manifestly is continually buried under the natural evolution. For instance, a religion springs up and within a couple years or a couple hundred years it becomes a corrupt established organization. And the people in it, the original founders of it, may have been so diligent that they sacrificed their lives to preserve it – and it's later sold on the open market. You see lots of times it's like politics, the titles and jobs become coveted and it becomes an enormous carnival of sorts. And the search for the truth diminishes with the invasion of money and title and ritual.

Now the Hindus and the Radha Soami sect used the word "Kal" while the Christians use the word "Devil". But the Hindu Kal was a slightly different devil. And incidentally I'm not endorsing or saying that you have to believe in Kal; I'm using the story to pose what might be, or to personify that which might be just natural forces.

This Kal was the fellow who was put in charge of the three lower planes, they say. It would be the equivalent of the earth, astral, and possibly the next one, which would be the etheric or causal plane. I don't know exactly what interpretation they put on it. But he seems to require that not too many of these candidates get away. This is their particular belief or superstition. That all of these beings are an emanation of the God, or Absolute essence, or whatever you want to call it. ("Radha Soami" is what they called it.)

These essences are more or less projected down here and needed here for some function, and his job was to keep them here. Their job was to escape if they could. And he used very clever techniques to keep them here. A man would rise up and say, "Hey, you fellows are deluding yourselves," and they'd form a religion. Then this Kal would immediately infiltrate that religion and poison the minds of the priestcraft. And they would degenerate into a business and forget all about preaching the truth, or looking, or exhorting the members to look for truth. So of course this would consume many millions of people's time and they were safe from learning anything in their lifetimes. And supposedly Kal "helped" them. He helped the hierarchy hold the people in their grasp with eloquence and appeal to feeling and all this sort of thing, rather than a real appraisal of things.

The difference in this – in the Christian concept the soul isn't an inseparable part of the Absolute, an Atman, a finger of Brahman, but in the Christian concept the soul is a loose particle. It floats down here stupidly into some sort of creation or incarnation and then is obligated to find his definition, to find his way, and guess what he's supposed to do, and if he doesn't guess he goes to hell forever. Now this is a big game, and this game is played with such odds and the devil gets the hindmost; he gets the ones who don't guess correctly, which is nearly everybody. So it's a rather bleak prospect.

So in the pursuit of truth we run into obstacles, of which Kal is a symbol perhaps, or the Christian devil is the symbol. And I wonder how much has been changed from the parables they told children and peasants, because the children and peasants couldn't hear except in parable form. Maybe there was at one time a hierarchy that had a more accurate estimation of what was going on. But we encounter in the business of trying to sort the confetti, quite a range of obstacles.

The first I classify as of external nature; by external meaning from the viewpoint of a body: "I am a body." I'm not speaking from the point of view of the Atman in unison with the Brahman. I'm speaking of just what you can see. This is what you have to start with; you can't start with the idea that you're God or that you're part of God. You have to start with what is manifestly in the mirror and work from there. You may discover something else, but it's foolish to start believing something that you can't validate. So we start off with a body, and in this particular instance I'm listing things outside of the body, when I say of an external nature:

The visible terrestrial life and planetary relationships

Now in the view of this little sentence people have come to realize that even planetary relationships somehow afflict your decision-making. At one time of the month you might be even crazy, and at another time of the month you might be somewhat different, or acceptable. So they come into the whole science of astrology, and possibly some planetary relationships are agreeable to spiritual development and others are harmful, or, let's say some expedite and others don't.

Terrestrial life is an obstacle to spiritual search because you live in a jungle. For instance, Cleveland is a jungle as well, there are wild animals all over the town that can kill you before you get home tonight.

We have to deal with obstacles. We've got to somehow survive this thing, and find spiritual growth while surviving. And we've got to take that into account: there's no use turning your back on it and saying, "Oh, well, God's on my side." That hasn't been established yet. You're just starting to search.

Invisible or dimensions beyond our senses.

We are influenced by dimensions beyond our senses. As the Hindus spoke of Kal – that was a dimension. We don't see Kal, we don't see the devil if there I such, we don't see entities that are antagonistic. But it's manifest that there are such, and it has come out lately – this Exorcist picture may have been a shocker and an excuse for pornography, but at the same time it served one good purpose: that up until then a tremendous

segment of our population believed that this didn't exist, that there's no such thing as an entity possessing a human body, that only a body could possess a body.

[break in tape]

So even as people presumed that there was only one dimension, because we could only conceive or think in one dimension, some of the drugs for instance, like LSD, brought to the awareness of individuals the possibility that another dimension existed. Not that LSD is good, but it served that purpose while it was doing its damage. Some people had their eyes opened and said, "Hey, there is a chance, maybe, that I'm not just a functioning vegetable which should thrill to reproduction and die."

So we have to be somewhat cognizant of this entire dimension. We've only got two categories covered so far, and this is enormous. A system has to take these into consideration. Now as I said we had other religions, other movements that did take this into consideration, and they even cataloged the devils. But they tried to cure them all with some physical gimmick like burning a candle or throwing some holy water or blessing the marriage, or putting numbers over the door, to keep out the bugs.

Now we get down to ourselves: Obstacles of internal nature. (In the grid I'm trying to list them in their intensity and their negative value.) The greatest obstacles, not only to spiritual growth but to anything that you really decide you want to do, are the appetites. Which most people don't look upon as obstacles, that's something they embrace: sex, security. Some of the Gurdjieffians and the Zen people speak of these as egos. The sex ego, the food ego, the desire for food and the inability to stop eating because of that ego taking over. The desire for security, being tired of hunting and hoping to find some pension so we can be secure. Pleasures, pleasure egos other than sex, and curiosity.

Curiosity is an ego. But without curiosity the amoeba and the simpler life forms would never survive. It's an implant. And all these so-called egos are basically implants. We didn't put them there. They come somehow with the genetic pattern. Consequently, the reluctance that I have to admit that such a thing as a sin exists, because they came with the genetic pattern. I do not look upon any human act as being a sin against some possible creator, but rather as a bit of foolishness as regards to the survival ego, meaning the physical survival itself. We realize that if we let any of these egos take over it's going to shorten our life, or shorten our sanity, let alone our spiritual survival. So these are all natural things that have their place.

Another step of course is that sometimes these can be used, and as we go through them one by one you'll find that people do use them. They use the knowledge of the mechanics of sex and the energy quanta levels to do kundalini yoga; or they fast or go into macrobiotic diets to somehow shake up the pH value of their blood, or whatever it is that changes their thinking and gives them a new outlook on life.

They also change their curiosity vector. This is a drive that we don't have to encourage – we're naturally curious – but very few of us are curious about our origin and definition. So instead of being curious about what's down at the morbid movie, we try to develop the curiosity about our meaning. And we encourage it. We allow ourselves to become more and more curious. And this way we have what I call the reverse vector; instead of

our energies being aimed at the sewer and the cemetery they're now aimed at existence, real existence. A meaning for it.

As I've mentioned before, Victor Frankl has written some books on psychology, such as "Man's Search for Meaning." I've been rather dismayed by most books on psychology but here's one by a fellow who seems to have some idea of what man is all about. He discounts Freud, who thought that we were here to make love and that love was the greatest motivator of mankind. And of course they put it down that anybody who isn't here to make love is naturally abnormal and possibly insane by the Freudian standard. Another psychologist, Adler, was supposed to have said we were here for power, to expand and continue to expand our power perimeter. Well, I never went into that too much.

But Frankl states that we're here to find our meaning. Now I can buy this. Because I cannot understand how anybody can go through traumas of any sort without being curious about those traumas – what caused them? – and then somehow finding out that he's involved in the cause of them. That somewhere the cause started in himself, or at least in his misunderstanding of his environment, which still goes back to him. So man has to first start with his meaning. He has to know who's doing. To me it's useless to make love unless you know who's making love. You eventually, if you live long enough, find out that you were "had". You didn't have, you were had. But it's too late then sometimes to start looking for meaning.

So we go on. There are other things that are not necessarily egos, they're fears. These hold us up. Fear of dying can be an obstacle, to the science of dying. The fear of dying may project us into grabbing at the first straw that comes by.

The fear of scorn or social harm.

It's doubtful whether I could have held a talk like this when I was twenty years of age, because if you weren't chattering along the conventional lines there was no school that would tolerate your speaking. If employers found out you weren't a good lodge member or good church member, they wouldn't hire you, and if they heard you talking esoteric philosophy they thought you were crazy, you were a bad risk.

So thirty years ago everything had to be kept very close and you could only confide in people you could trust, for the security of your family so to speak. And the result was that not too many people got to contact each other, because of the fear of social scorn. Now sometimes we can toss that fear aside and go out and get on a soapbox – but you never got anywhere because the reaction negated anything you gained. Any footage you gained was negated by the inability of people to really stay with you.

The fear of mental or spiritual harm.

Now this is another fear that takes a tremendous lot into consideration. Who are the people most able to do spiritual work? They are spiritual people; but most spiritual people have a preconception of spirituality. They hear me talking, for instance, about something they might consider sacrilegious in their inherited religion. They hear me talking about the nonexistence of sin and they feel as though that certain acts that they

might commit might be very sinful. So they become frightened. They think, "There's a Svengali – watch out for that guy."

I gave a lecture at Kent State two years ago. Two girls came up to the desk and I "knew" them when they came up; I knew their minds. But they stayed four feet away from me. I was talking to some other people and I could feel them, I could feel what they were thinking, that they were actually afraid. But they were basically two very good people. And I said to them, "I know you. But you're afraid and you don't need to be afraid." And they stood there not saying a word, shaking their head. And they never came back; I never saw them again. So here is a case where people out of fear of losing something of spiritual value never gained a spiritual value. And of course there's nothing you can do about it. Their time hasn't come yet, that's all. That's the way I look at it.

The Blocks

The Six Catches

We have a category of spiritual blocks, listed in the Master Game by Robert S. DeRopp, called the "Six Catches". Now these are good to read. So if you get ahold of DeRopp it's a good little handbook. And some psychology books.

The Seven Deadly Sins

Now of course I don't look upon all these as sins; I don't use the word "sin". But these things are psychological terms of a previous generation and a previous century: pride – all of us recognize that as an ego – in those days it was considered something spiritually harmful. And it still is, in this type of work. Lust, anger – we recognize anger as energy-consuming – envy, sloth – this is inertia, a tendency toward laziness. These things will hold you back. They're not necessarily sins but if you're too lazy you'll put it off 'til tomorrow and nothing will ever be done.

Physical limitations

If you've blown all your fuses you can't progress. Maybe if you can't read or your eyesight's destroyed – this may have a limitation on your spiritual growth. I know of one instance of cerebral palsy; this man was very intelligent but he had no control at all of his body. So consequently he couldn't control his energy. He burned up; he had a heart like a hummingbird, it was just cutting his life in half. And he couldn't hold his head still, he couldn't even read a book because he would be jerking. So some physical limitations can afflict you.

Economic exigencies

You can't do too much when you're too hungry. They tell a little joke – I saw it first in an engineering handbook – about Gautama Jones, who sat for years meditating upon his navel. And finally his navel spoke and it said, "Gautama Jones." And he said, "What do you want?" – he was very happy, now he's got an answer. And his navel said, "Gautama

Jones, you're hungry." And he said, "Yes, I know." And the navel spoke back to him, "Gautama Jones, go get yourself a job." Whereupon he arose and went to work.

So this is the practical side of too much meditation. We have to take care of the economic exigencies. We have to do a little planning, we've got to be sensible. We can't presume that there's a God up there before we find him, and that this God knows us, likes us, loves us and is going to feed us.

Rationalizations

Now to identify some of the rationalizations are most common in this work; and one of them is:

That we will be able to do the thing better at a later date.

"I'll have more money tomorrow. I'll wait until I retire and do it." I hear these all the time. One fellow told me, he says, "Dick, wait five years, we'll go to Tibet. My wife's supposed to die in five year's time; the doctor said she won't live over five years." And she didn't. But he was married to another woman before she died. So the only thing I got out of that deal was that I had to help pay for the funeral. (laughter)

That we will ride the tide of humanity into heaven.

You hear this little cliché: "I'm going where everybody else is going." The big democratic cavalcade. The masses cannot be wrong.

That social services or good works have spiritual gain.

Social services are little things playing God. I know a fellow who feeds ants. But he's got grandchildren who need his affection. He never learned how to be affectionate with his children, but he now has to compensate for this. He goes out and gives the ants bread crumbs and talks to them. And he believes that God will see him; he believes that this is somehow a karmic thing. He's a very erudite philosopher, in fact; he's a very scholarly man. He was a research engineer. In fact, he was here the last time I was here.² You may have seen him sitting here with a cane. (laughs)

That the Gods have ears.

Salvation through prayers: All you have to do is keep chanting and making a noise.

That the Gods have noses and eyes.

Incense and altars and displays. These are nice little toys that you can play with.

That positive thinking will make gods of us lead us to liberation.

² See [1974-1012-Cleveland](#)

A lot of philosophic people find gimmicks. They find some little gimmick that works in the social living patterns, like love or positive thinking, and it helps their business. And then they say, "Oh, let's use that in theology. Let's just keep a positive attitude and everything will go right." And it will go right, that's all.

That the guru will save us.

They do this in India. They just attach themselves to somebody and they drop their pride – and sometimes their belongings too – and just say, "I'm going to give you everything, you take care of me." This is another one, and it's really a long shot. He better have something.

That faith will save us.

I never fail to repeat this, that faith is a law and there's a gimmick called faith. By that I mean, if you want certain phenomena to occur you'd better have faith. Certain phenomena do occur, within limitations. Just like healing has occurred. It's a formula that was discovered by the thaumaturgists many hundreds of years ago. But they never put a leg on a man whose leg was chopped off. They may have pulled some epileptics from a tomb, who presumably were dead, but they never put a leg on anyone. Because it has limitations.

And this is something that the majority of people who follow this line of thinking never bother to investigate. They say, "Faith will move mountains"- but why doesn't it move a mountain? Well it doesn't move mountains because the people where that mountain would move don't believe that the mountain's going to move. You have too many people believing "not". This is one thing. Also you have basically limitations; this only works within certain limitations.

That spiritual paths may be evaluated by their popularity.

Again we go back to democracy. "Everybody goes to our church."

That we can feel our way alone.

Some people say, "Oh, I know." How do you know? "Oh, I just know." We always have to test that if we want to really be safe.

That we can do it with our omnipotent reason.

Like a fellow told me he had proven beyond any shadow of a doubt that he was nothing more than a bundle of conditioned reflexes. So I said, "I thought I heard a voice but I'll ignore it. It's just a bundle of conditioned reflexes."

That God or Mr. X will take care of everything.

This is the variation of the knight-on-the-white-horse rescue theme.

That our present belief shall be our final evaluation of truth.

Now as you go up the ladder in this business of investigating you hang on to certain beliefs – momentarily or maybe for ten years. And I have watched some people go through them. When you get older you're able to look back and see your own set of disillusionments. I was raised in a faith that I left when I was about seventeen years old – I didn't leave it completely but I sure quit working actively in it.

But I became interested in quite a few other things, such as spiritualism. And I pursued the séances until I found a genuine materialization. I was able to talk with some entities, who pretended at least to be the spirits of dead people. And you'd think, and I thought at the time, "This is a real sensible way of finding out about life after death: let's go talk to the dead."

So I talked to these entities and they talked nonsense. And then after all this, after years of running from one materialization camp – Chesterfield, Brady Lake, they had mediums, and over in Ephrata, Pennsylvania they had an encampment there.

We finally found a good one, a genuine one – most of them are just phony, they had some sort of luminous cheesecloth that was supposed to be ectoplasm and if you looked real close sometimes you could see safety pins, where they pinned it.

But we did find one place where they were genuine. There were entities that appeared, and some of them exploded, some of them went down through the concrete floor. But we couldn't get any information out of them. We couldn't even get enough proof that they were the actual relative they claimed to be. Because they only answered "Yes" to a precise question. If you said, "Who are you?" they'd say, "I'm your brother." And you'd buy that because they looked like your brother. But when you'd say, "Is Cousin there?" – they would say only "yes" and very carefully not say "she's here" or "he's here." Because they seemed as though they were depending on the interrogator for the information.

There was some information that came through, I'll not deny this. One man had quite a revelation: His father had evidently died and he didn't know about it. The fellow came through and said, "I'm your father."

But there was no way to get information from them. And you begin to feel as though you were either being deluded or that people were stupider after they died than they were before – which would leave us in a bad light. I mean try to find out something in "this" life. But I went back and I remembered a little passage in the Bible where, I think it was Christ who said, "The dead know nothing." [actually is Ecclesiastes 9:5] And I thought he may well have been telling the truth at the time.

Anyhow, you go from one of these to another. And as you go you leave the others behind with sort of an idea, "Well, I've wised-up." Now at each level you're on, you're very cynical about the people on those levels you left behind, but never dream that there's another level ahead. This is the amazing thing. And this is the big Tower of Babel that stands between honest seekers of the truth: every one of them has found a plateau. They found what they consider a realization, and it's the realization that they were "wrong".

Q. Is enlightenment a plateau? [rest is inaudible]

R. Well, if you can tell me what enlightenment is I'll tell you what plateau is beyond it.

Q. How about the enlightened state in which Gautama Buddha was?

R. I never met the man. The only thing I can tell you is what I have experienced myself. I am somehow loathe to compare or to hold as a shining example someone whom we only meet indirectly through literature. I don't think we have to. (But if that's all we have to go by, that may be well.)

Q. What's your opinion of the enlightenment of Buddha? [inaudible]?

R. Of whom?

Q. inaudible

R. I have none. I have none. I like what I read about Buddha. But as far as me saying, "Yes, beyond a shadow of a doubt I endorse these writings as being the final truth" – I couldn't do that. Nor could I endorse that Christ had any enlightenment or had reached any exaltation. Nor Meher Baba – I didn't know Meher Baba.³ Or Yogananda.

Q. Did you ever run across ... inaudible?

R. No, no. I wanted to go to India when I was younger. I realized later that this was another rationalization. That while you're travelling you don't have to search within yourself. And everyone does this. I know quite a few people who made the circle of the earth looking for the truth – and truth is not geographical. And until they get wise to the fact that it's not geographical, then they have to keep circling the earth.

Q. Do you believe that you need a teacher?

R. Yes, I think it helps. I don't say that you "need" one, not unless you're – if you walk wobbly then you need one. But if you're dynamic then you don't need a teacher. All you need is a direction and you'll find that yourself too, if you're dynamic enough. Well, the final rationalization is ...

That everything is hopeless or useless.

We find that this is a very tough, noble comment that some people make. "Well, I'm just a dog and when I die, that's it. And I'm not going to kid myself; I'm going to go about living to the best of my ability, and there's no sense in trying to find out anything because manifestly the finite mind will never perceive the infinite." This is an old theological axiom that some people use as a form of rationalization.

Q. inaudible

R. Yeah. So I say futility is futile. It might have its good point but it's also futile. You have no gamble at all then. You just stop before you start, and there's nothing in that either.

³ See [1976-0304-Pittsburgh-Meeting](#) for long discussion on Meher Baba

Formal Q & A begins

[note: apologies for inaudibility of many questions; very noisy tape.]

So now I'd prefer if there were questions asked, because then I'll know where you're coming from, and then I can return, and we can discuss the points you want to discuss.

[break in tape]

Well, it's a cessation of action before you start. In other words, this is what held me up. Because I was involved in Christian theology. And we accept it and we don't look. And we accept such clichés then as "have faith". I say "have doubt". Don't have faith, have doubt. Respectful doubt: there may be something. Just don't doubt everything, destroying every premise that comes up. You approach with the idea, "I want to know the answer." But I don't believe in just saying "yes, yes". For example this man just asked me a question, and he may have thought I was facetious, about refusing to validate a system. It's not being facetious; I'm trying to be exact. I want to be exactly honest with him.

Now of course Zen is sort of a distillation of Buddha, the Buddhistic teachings. For instance, I had a Zen teacher years ago. He asked if I was interested in his lineage and I said no. Because I realized that he may have some names he could give me – these names supposedly trace clear back to Buddha, which would make him a direct heir of Buddha, but there could have been three idiots in between whom I couldn't have identified, or three phonies. And nine chances out of ten, a lot of these people who were heirs, who were teachers, were not necessarily enlightened. So how much could you get, then? What would be the end result of this, unless the man standing in front of you could be validated? That's all that counts, the man standing in front of you.

These lineage things mean nothing. So if the lineage means nothing, Buddha means nothing, and in Zen this is one of the remarks they make. One of the things you have to learn to do is to kill the Buddha. You don't try to cling to a concept of a man and make icons of him. This is what we're into with Zen now – there may be people coming in here waiting for me to quote Zen poetry. I know nothing of Zen poetry. I think this is foolishness.

Now on koans – we have koans in the Western world, you get them every day. Maybe in a more primitive society they had to search for them, but we get them every day by the handful. And all you have to do is observe the koans you're getting naturally.

Q. What kind of koans are we getting every day?

R. Getting punched in the nose, having some ...

Q. It doesn't have to be [inaudible] ...

R. No – it depends on how much you cause trouble. (laughter)

Q. Are you enlightened?

R. Yes.

Q. inaudible

R. No.

Q. Why don't you blow your brains out?

R. Why should I? I've thought of that. It doesn't matter. I don't think my life has any more meaning than my death, in the final analysis. But to take an action – I have no reason for that either. It might hurt, too. (laughter)

Q. inaudible ... pull yourself up ... inaudible

R. You can't pull yourself up to a rung at all until you know there's a rung there. The system that we talk about is one of a reversal from error, not a postulation and an approach to a rung. This to me is the whole error of organized religion. They postulate a God that they cannot prove. And then they postulate a lot of human attributes to that God. He is what we want him to be. He has concepts of justice similar to our own. He wouldn't salt us down and eat us by any chance. He loves us. The rabbits think the same thing about us, perhaps, that we wouldn't salt them down and eat them; we may be gods to them, because we seem to be able to pull some tricks, some magic that they can't pull.

But regardless, we postulate a whole theological system and then pretend. It's like children who concoct a game in the back yard: "You're going to be this and I'll be this and then we'll go by these rules." And the whole human race is doing this.

But the path, the real path – and this is the reason I use the word Zen a tremendous lot because they're one of the few people who use it – is that you don't take anything. When you take the koan "mu" you're taking a koan that asks you a question that's almost nonsensical without any answer, and that's "Who Am I?" And you ask it over and over and over. Or "Why?"

But this is a lot more sensible than saying "I am so-and-so" – or "I am a creation of God." Immediately you've spoken yourself out a whole big bundle of strings you're going to have to analyze and explain. And nobody ever does it. They just create more string, they just wrap more around the ball.

Q. inaudible

R. No, no. If I failed to answer your question then ask me again. It's possible that I rambled.

Q. ... we're hitting you with a lot more [inaudible] ...

R. I invite questions for the purpose of bringing out stuff – maybe there's someone else that would be interested besides yourself. But while I'm answering you I think that I could mention this or that also, because it will help build a general picture. Everyone here is looking for possibly a capsule form of what we're doing. This thing takes years. So if I can say something that will help this little kernel of information, that will add to it for the general group understanding, then I'll throw it in. So I'm answering.

Q. inaudible.

R. Well, by virtue of the experience. I don't say that there isn't a possibility of exploration, but there is nothing beyond the Absolute in our comprehension – if there is, the relative mind is very lucky to even comprehend the Absolute. It really doesn't comprehend it, it experiences it. It "is" it, momentarily.

Q. Do you experience that with [inaudible]?

R. No. That's death.

Q. Don't you think that's a higher realm?

R. Yes, but you can't stay on it.

Q. Why?

R. Well, In other words, if you stay in death you would stay dead. It can only last for a certain period of time, in our time, clock time, sun time.

Q. Yeah, but we all know that clock time is [inaudible].

R. Well, be careful with your space-time concept. You can be facetious.

Q. I'm not being facetious, what I'm saying is that the true experiential time [long inaudible statement].

R. Of course you're postulating ahead of time. That's the reason I don't define it.

Q. long inaudible statement

R. You lost me. I mean I don't know where you're going. I don't know where you're at right now.

Q. The people in our culture are pretty ignorant. Like they'll go to work and talk about killing time, or they'll go to a party where they're supposed to have a good time and be miserable, and they have all these notions of what certainty is.

R. That's what I'm talking about in our search through religions. Our definition of God is colored by what we want God to be. He's a humanoid creature; and of course we're humanoid creatures and we color all of our concepts. But I'm not talking about concepts, I'm talking about [the unknown] "X".

So this is what we continually do in our thinking; we try to remove the human element from it and say it's possible that God doesn't have whiskers. That he's not an old man, with compassion in human terms and justice in human terms. It might not be a deity, it might not be a separate personality.

Q. For the meeting there was a poster [inaudible]. Can you tell me what true happiness is?

R. Not for you.

Q. In each one of us is it something different?

Q. Yes, that would be the relative thing. Of course personally I don't believe that happiness exists as we believe it to be – titillation – I think this is an imagined thing. I don't believe in happiness. Now maybe I'm speaking from the wrong viewpoint, because what I'm saying is that when you look at happiness you're looking at a side of an experience that is inevitably followed by unhappiness. We can only have happiness by having unhappiness with which to compare it.

So it's basically a type of experience, or half of an experience, that really a human being – certain things affect his imagination, and that's a sort of hypnosis or reward for acts performed or acts about to be performed.

What I'm trying to get across is that people presume, just like he said, they think they go out and have a good time but they find out later they didn't have a good time, they were taken for a ride. At the time we are convinced that we're happy but later we evaluate it and find out that it isn't happiness, as we would have liked for it to have been. Because we never bothered to define it, we never bothered to define what our experience was.

It's just like pain. Pain and pleasure: one doesn't exist without the other. Concepts of good and bad do not exist without the other. It's the only way we can value things in the relative world. But looking at it from an absolute viewpoint, let's say, not necessarily having to know the absolute to do it, but in a philosophic viewpoint you can realize that good and bad are somehow two sides of the same coin. It's just a matter of which side you look at.

To give you an example, the human mind, that is, the relative mind can be influenced. Again, I suspect mostly from implants: most of our concept of pleasure comes from implants. There are certain acts we perform that we would not bother to perform if there were not some physical titillation involved in it. And then from this basis we try to evaluate that there is a whole field of experience called pleasure. But it may be nothing more than a whole field of hypnosis, by these implants that are so strong that they hypnotize us momentarily. We go out and perform a certain act.

In other words, it's possible that a child would not drink its first mouthful of milk if there weren't some mucus sensitivity there that we appreciate as taste. And it experiences that as pleasure. This then is something imposed on the person. The message in those posters is to try to cause people to think a bit: Are you experiencing pleasure or is pleasure experiencing you? Is the thing experiencing you? Are you being had, so to

speaking? Does the fish catch the fisherman or does the fisherman catch the fish? Does a man catch a woman or does nature catch both?

Now people don't stop to think. I hear people say, "I have." I have this girl, or I have this boy, or he's my man, or that's my woman. And I sometimes think, "Ho, ho. What an idiot." (laughter) This guy has a "fever", that's what he has. So this is what I'm talking about with pleasure. All of this web is thrown in, and then on top of it the holy water.

[break in tape]

Q. inaudible

R. No, no, no. Hopeless is a [inaudible] – I just wouldn't let go, I just kept on. I would do anything. If I found macrobiotic diet would do it I'd go into that. Of course I gave up a lot of that stuff and tried other things. It was the idea that I kept my attention on it, relentlessly, that's all.

Q. On what?

R. On finding my definition. On narrowing down the fields of exploration. Of discounting. I left a discount field behind me, things I discounted, trying to continue to narrow this down.

Q. What do you concentrate on now?

R. Sometimes I don't think I do.

Q. inaudible

R. Oh, I don't bother to do that either. I know what it's all about and I don't care to die too many times. (laughter) Next time I might want to get it over.

Q. That's pretty cool.

R. It's traumatic, believe me. It's not this blissful trip that you read about in poetry.

Q. [inaudible] ... I don't understand ... [long inaudible question]

R. Well, it isn't my baggage. I'm sorting garbage. You retreat backwards, you step backward, you don't face, and postulate and attack face-on to a place where you have no knowledge of its point of existence. You have to retreat backwards. You step away by studying stuff and rejecting. I say it's a business of tentatively accepting something that's less ridiculous and discounting completely that which is more ridiculous. And this is the only process you can follow. You can't say, "Well, I'm going to find God." First of all even if you really believed that he existed beyond a shadow of a doubt, you wouldn't know where to look.

So you have to start with what you have. And in studying what you have, you have libraries, you have people who claim, you have theologies that are contemporary, or

“isms” or philosophies that are contemporary. Take these all into consideration, and if your intuition says “grab that” you grab it. Until it starts to smell, and then you throw it away. And you grab something else. And this is the only thing you can do. But you can’t start off presuming you’re divine with an impeccable intuition and ability to choose the right path, or the conceit that some divine being’s going to reach down and pick you up by the back of the neck and say, “I want you.”

Q. inaudible

R. Well, actually the experience came to me twice. The second time was, well, both times it was spontaneous. And if it happens to you in any other form than a spontaneous event, it’s not necessarily valid.

Q. Did you take acid with [inaudible]? (laughter)

R. No, I think you can die with acid. I went through the death experience with LSD. I did it on purpose because I heard there was a death experience, and I thought, well, if this is a way to go back into this, Ok, I’ll try it. But acid doesn’t give you the – you enter another dimension, that’s all. You enter a “bardo”. You enter the prop room. So when I saw that, I never took acid a second time. I’ve met quite a few people who have taken acid and I’ve described this trip to them, and this was not just a halfway trip, it was one of the most colorful and prolonged trips they encountered, my description of what occurred.

Incidentally I was conscious of an entity. You know how Don Juan talks to Mescalito – there’s one for LSD too, believe me. When I was coming down out of this – I went completely out, my eyes, my sight disappeared, my body disappeared, the room disappeared, everything. But I was aware all the time of an entity. And as I was coming back I saw the fellow in the room who had given me this acid. I said to him, “Where is the pimp? Where did the pimp go?” Because this is a super-sensual experience for which I paid a price, and I knew that something picked it up. Somebody picked up that tab, I was sure. But I always had the feeling he was behind me, I could never turn and really see him. It was an entity behind me. So this is where a lot of your primitive theologians got the concept of demons and devils. They’re real, they’re just as real as this floor or that table.

But that will not be enlightenment. And unfortunately you destroy your vehicle through which to achieve, possibly, the real experience if you aren’t careful. Once around is enough.

Q. [inaudible] ... lead up to enlightenment?

R. Yes. Well, it would save a lot of time perhaps if you came to the group or talked to some of the boys and went down to their apartment and borrowed the book or something. Because there’s quite a bit to speak about and quite a bit to read. I believe also that a lot of it depends on the individual. Whereas one fellow might be into TM and in his situation I’d say that’s good. And to another person I’d say, hey, you don’t need it, you’re putting yourself to sleep, you’re hypnotizing yourself.

One person may be in need of starving himself a bit, so a macrobiotic diet might do him a lot of good. But another person who’s burned all his magic little chemicals out – I call it

the lost vitamins – with dope, this fellow may need to eat meat instead of macrobiotics, to get some of these magical vitamins back again. (Somebody starts laughing.) He knows what I'm talking about. (laughter) So in each case it's a little bit different.

The main thing is learning to reverse your vector. Learning to conserve your energy. Learning to change food energy into somatic energy and to neural energy and to spiritual energy. And there's nothing mysterious about this, nothing cultish. It can all be demonstrated, the effect can be shown, that is to say. When a person transmutes energy at that level and you reach what I call a spiritual quantum you can heal people, and this is demonstrable. Healing is demonstrable.

So there are levels of energy. And it's not something that I say alone. There are books on kundalini yoga you can look into. A lot of this system is not necessarily – for instance I mention here in the chapter after the one I just read [fifth paper, Obstacles], the beginning of a search.

The first thing is to take a step. And you don't have to follow a mysterious path, it's apparent.

If you want to build a house, a lot of people would say they're not a carpenter. I built a house and I wasn't a carpenter. But I found a hammer and I learned how to use it. I picked up a square and learned how to use it. It might have been laborious but it only took me three months. In three months' time I built a house. Because you just begin. You don't put it off and say, "Oh boy, I better consult some more, and consult some more, or study or go to school and learn this or that. No, you grab it and start doing it. Make some mistakes.

Of course, if you're loafing in a clubhouse where there are some tradesmen who can say, "Hey, here's how you'll smash your fingers," then you don't smash your fingers. And this is the advantage of having a group. Some people in there have been down that road a few hundred feet ahead of you. They don't necessarily have to have reached enlightenment – they've been down there a few hundred feet and they've encountered some obstacles, they've tripped, they've bloodied their nose and now they can stop you from bloodying your nose.

So it's basically a conservation of energy and a dynamic application of attention.

In one of the books on Zen, I remember somebody asking a teacher in a little anecdote, "What is needed?" He said, "Attention, attention, attention." He just repeated that. Meaning, "Here's the formula three times." Because if I say it once, everybody hears that word "attention" but they pay no attention to it. That's the reason we go in for exotic Asiatic "isms" instead of into esoteric Christianity. There are enlightened men in Christianity, there are enlightened men in Hinduism. But we become rebellious about our parental religions as we become rebellious about our parents. So we have to look elsewhere.

Q. inaudible

R. Yes, I see a lot of value in esoteric Christianity, and as I said, I can see a tremendous lot of meaning in the advice of certain sages who were basically Christian. There was a

book lying here, I see one of the boys had it, if you want to pick it up sometime, it's by Ramana Maharshi. There isn't much more that I could say, in talking about the stages or levels of enlightenment – it's amazing how well he draws them out. He never mentions the word Zen and he was not a Christian, but he has it. At least I know, when I read it, that this man has been there, he knows what he's talking about. He's not putting any icing on it, he's just telling you plain and simple what it is.

Q. Does the thing you put your attention in have importance in itself, to have a direction to enlightenment, or ...

R. The word enlightenment means nothing to you. The word enlightenment means nothing to anyone until they're enlightened. So consequently, as soon as we start using that I always try to head you off at the pass, because you're postulating something.

So the only thing that any disciplines you indulge in have to be, are only disciplines to minimize your ignorance. To retreat from ignorance, not to approach an ideal. There is no ideal. There is no ideal for you. This man asked me a question [about whether RR is enlightened] and I answered him, but I answered rather slowly because I'd rather he didn't ask the question. I won't lie, even though I opened myself up maybe to a lot of criticism, but at the same time I don't want it defined and I don't think you should try to define it even if you could. If I could by some method tell you the symptoms that would happen right before you reach enlightenment, you're liable to create this. You're liable to synthetically create a situation and imagine you're enlightened, and then destroy for all time the chance of your really being that. It would preclude it.

Q. On this last point, if this system aims at self-definition, considered [inaudible] that the person who would know it or experience it is known at this point ... inaudible

R. It's like I said to him, there's no use in really talking or doing or acting unless you know who's doing. Now of course this is also paradoxical – as soon as you make an effort you can say, well you're doing something and you don't know who's doing it. But I'm still saying that you hold this in your head though. You say, "Hey, I'm working from ignorance. I'm doing but I know nothing." The difference is that another person may say, "Hey, I'm going to heaven."

Q. Were you?

R. The Hound of Heaven. (long pause) Momentarily. (laughs)

(room falls silent)

[continued next page]

Lecture of questions

Alright. I had something here. These are little thought-provokers:

Does a man own a house or does the house own him?

Does a man have power or is he overpowered?

Does a man enjoy or is he consumed?

Does a man really reason or is it all a complex rationalization?

Does a man rationalize or is he so programmed?

Can a man learn that which he really wishes to, by himself alone?

Can a man become?

How shall he know what he should become?

Why build anthills before knowing what an ant is?

Why do we build conceptual towers of Babel about human thinking before we know that which thought is?

How can you dare to define thought before knowing the source-cause of all thought, or the essence of thought?

When you describe bouncing do you describe the striking object or that which is struck?

The reason I brought that in – that is basically what thought is. Thought is something that is a bit of bouncing – things bounce off our experiential sensitivities.

Can you start thinking? Can you stop thinking?

The thing that I'm amazed about – some schools of psychology never bother to analyze thought. Although we only agree to be behavior scientists, we can't separate behavior from thinking. Yet no one knows about it. And they say, "I think, therefore I am." Or, "I know I think." But if you know what thought is, can you start it? Or stop it? Try it sometimes. Try right now for instance to stop thinking.

Is thought something received or something projected?

Is thought a sort of somatic effluvium? Like a boil-over, an ESP boil-over.

Do we think or are we forced to think?

Is negative thinking as commonly discussed, negative to man or negative to nature?

Does the brain generate thought like a radio generates a message, coming from its speaker? Like an ESP tower?

Is thought limited to the brain?

When a tree bends over, does it create wind by waving its branches?

Can theological facts be established by voting?

Is Mary the mother of God or is humanity the mother of God? (Both of these may be fallacies.)

Is God determined by victorious armies?

Is virtue established by psychological edict (we took a vote, the normal curve decides virtue and sanity), by ecclesiastical vote, or by the prerequisites of our ultimate essence?

What is sin, an offense against yourself, an offense against your fellowman, or an offense against God?

Is an offense against God recognized by divine outcry, earthquake or cosmic catastrophe?

Is it a sin to eat meat? Are the animals our brothers? Are they possessed of intelligence and soul? Do animals sin when they eat other animals? Or are such sinning animals pardoned for keeping ecology in balance? Is it wrong to kill except for food? Do we do wrong by not eating the people we kill?

Who is knowledgeable about good?

Is good that which we desire, or that which is in itself good?

What is the condition of being good-in-itself?

Is evil the child of good, or is it a twin?

If a man drives a horse through a plate glass window, should the man be prosecuted, or is it the horse who should be prosecuted?

If a man robs to feed his children, should we prosecute the man or that which drove him, the children?

If a man rapes a girl should we prosecute a) the man, b) the girl who drove him or tempted him, c) his ancestors for his genetic inheritance or glandular inclination, or d) the force that designed mankind? (He could have left those things off, you know.)

What is equality?

Was Sampson equal to Delilah? Is a baby equal to a dying man?

Are you only half of a plan by not possessing both sexes?

Is peace of mind more important than global peace or herd peace? I hear people running around playing God but they don't try to find out who they are.

Who or what are you?

Are you only a body? Are you rather a complex organism, a cell colony?

Is the brain a monitoring station designed for the organism's indefinite survival, or is our body programmed for death by the death gene following procreation? When the wheat is ripe the stem gets wobbly.

Is all religion and philosophy merely rationalization emanating from that computer to answer constant cellular awareness of death? Or is the universal belief in life after death an intuitive reading from that computer, a reading not completely translatable into computer symbols which are limited?

Is there a soul? Did it exist before the body? Or must it be developed, grown or evolved?

Prove the following (now here's a lot of words that you run into, and people accept them and hardly give them a second thought):

Mind, other than somatic awareness; subconscious mind; ego; id; super-ego; chakra; kundalini; tisra til; astral, etheric, causal body; desire body; ectoplasm; halo; aura; spiritual ear (Shabd); conscience; spiritual nectar (the adenoidal drip); philosopher's stone; guardian angel; hydrogen [Gurdjieff's usage].

What is the correct definition of sanity? Do our psychologists practice rationalization and make-believe when they substitute behaviorism for a deeper set of factors of human origins? Or factors of prenatal determination. Meaning factors that would bring us to the knowledge of the true essence of man. In other words, even in behavioristic psychology they're not dealing with all the factors. Some of them are prenatal (of course they would refuse to accept those) or as Carl Jung might infer, archetypal factors.

Do they not procrastinate the search for real causes? Do they not manifest a possible paranoia, in fear that subjective observations or pursuits might find more substantial things about the essence of man?

Which is the worse schizophrenic, the man who talks in tongues, the schizoid who is possessed and cannot help himself – or the professionals who create great volumes of confusing, complex terminology, describing nothing better than their own frustrating dichotomy?

Which is worse, the manic-depressive who broods or babbles as a result of excessive voltage, chemical imbalance, some electrolytic deficiency or toxic condition – or the pompous alienist who babbles on the witness stand that this or that man should be subjected to ice pick, shock treatment or electric chair?

More Q & A

Now those questions are not really tied into philosophy, but they're designed to prod thinking a little bit, and so are the things on the posters. The posters show representative parts [a man and woman face-to-face, holding up masks]. They're supposed to challenge and say, "look and think" – or "let's look at it from another angle" at least. Let's come in from another angle if possible. We're kind of cemented into one viewpoint.

Q. inaudible [suggestion to read Three Books of the Absolute?]

R. Well, I don't think it would be a good idea because – I think you'd understand it if you read it. You have read it, haven't you? Right. But I don't think everyone here should, until they have read the whole book, or at least parts of it.

Q. inaudible

R. Because I couldn't talk. I had no language. I also said I knew a man who had reached enlightenment by reading, meditating and fighting with the Lord's Prayer. He took the Lord's Prayer – he knew nothing of Zen, he knew nothing of philosophy.

He was an aviator in World War II. His name was Paul Wood,⁴ from Dallas, Texas. But he was just a Christian, that's all, with a very average Christian upbringing, except that he believed it. He was very devout. And he became involved in the war – he was in charge of killing off a few Japanese, a few hundred thousand in fact. So he resented it. First he questioned it. He said, "I've been trained to believe that God's in charge." And he looked upon God as this patriarchal being with human justice standards. He said, "I don't approve of what I'm doing. What's going on here? Why is He allowing this to continue? – this is an evil thing that's going on, we're killing each other."

Well he began talking to himself I guess in the army, and they cashiered him out and sent him home. He kept on talking to himself. His wife cashiered him out, threw him out. His children rejected him. He still went around – he had a koan he had to solve, and it was, "Why, why, why, why?" And he went to the Bible, that was the only thing he knew – he didn't know anything about esoteric philosophy. He went to the Bible and he opened it up, and in the Bible it said that if you would have a question answered pray thusly, and it's the Lord's Prayer that followed. I might be saying this incorrectly, I don't know, but he got it out of the Bible.

So he took the Lord's Prayer and just worked on it day and night. And he analyzed it – backwards, forwards, he took the value of the words and tried to find what did he mean? Was there some meaning in there that would give him a formula, or the answer?

And the more he worked with this Lord's Prayer the worse his luck became. The family was falling apart, he was losing jobs. He was trying to build up enough courage to commit suicide. He said he took a job as a car salesman, in a dealership. He had an unusually hard day – that was it, that was the straw that broke the camel's back. He said he laid his head down on the desk and prayed for God to kill him. He didn't have the

⁴ Newspaper article from 1965: <http://selfdefinition.org/christian/paul-wood-story.htm>

courage so he prayed for God to kill him. He said he passed out. And his experience was what followed. It lasted for days, incidentally. He was in the hospital. [inaudible]

And he came up to Akron, Ohio when I was in Akron doing some of this foraging around. He would sit and tell us about his experience. And that's all he would do. He'd just say, "All I can do is tell you what happened." And we'd say, just like anybody else would, "What would you advise us to do?" And he'd say, "Say the Lord's Prayer."

But this only worked for him. This was somehow germane to his antecedent, to his makeup. He had to attack that which he had available, and all he had available was the Lord's Prayer, the only instrument he had to work with. But he did it honestly and diligently. He never gave up. He had that same tenacity, he would follow it through, and if he couldn't get it he wanted to be killed, he wanted to die trying. And the result was he was rewarded. If you can call it a reward. But anyhow he got the answer.

Well I heard him. And I noticed that he couldn't communicate this to other people. And it was a profound experience, it lasted much longer than any experience I have ever heard of before and I was profoundly convinced. (I had mine to compare with.)

And he was in a room with some of these executives, scientists from Firestone and Goodyear down here in Akron and they were sitting there sneering at him. They thought, you know, "What kind of a nut is this?" He looked like the Crazy Guggenheim, if you're acquainted with the character, Jackie Gleason's sidekick. He looked like he'd been boiled in booze. I think he had drunk quite a bit of it in his time. He was a fat puffy guy with heavy eyes. But when he started talking you noticed a change; there was some sort of a change that came over him.

Incidentally he never went back with his wife. He met another girl, one of the most beautiful women I had seen in a long time, he had picked her up in Texas someplace. So these wiseacres all thought, "Well, for a man who's reached enlightenment, he's picked himself a good looking wife, so we'll get ahold of her." This fellow whose house I was in had ten kids and they were kicking footballs through the windows, so we went out in the garage to hold our meeting. And he went to the house to go to the bathroom and in came his wife with coffee or something. And one fellow says to her, "Hey, what do you make of your husband?" She never hesitated in her stride or batted an eye, she says, "My husband is God." And I kind of think she meant it. I think she knew it.

Of course, they couldn't quite get it. Because they didn't lead spiritual lives, they were basically scientists. All they knew were materialistic sciences.

Q. inaudible question about political revolution

R. No.

Q. Why?

R. This is mundane? This is a picture show. What do you want to do, get into the act? It's just an act.

Q. Uh, no, but ... people are in great pain because of these structures in society.

R. Some people pledge themselves to a theater act which is no doubt painful.

Q. I understand that.

R. See, I don't doubt but what this is somebody's game – this is what we have to do. Some people are plumbers and the others are soldiers. But somehow I just don't like to get involved in this drama. I prefer to sit in the audience and watch it.

Q. Isn't that as relevant as being on the stage?

R. No, see, I'm speaking of another position. It depends on what you're after. If you're after money you can take this same conservation of energy system and become a millionaire. You can maybe become a general. I'm not interested in millionaires or generals, or being a general.

Q. What about helping other people?

R. I am not interested in humanity. I can only help the person on the rung below me and I can only be helped by the person on the rung above me, in the spiritual path. To pretend – when you do these things you rationalize your own actions. You say, "I'm going to do all this for humanity," but you don't do anything for yourself. I am selfish. I advise selfishness – capital-S selfishness, not small-s selfishness. Everybody should be Selfish according to capital-S. Find your inner Self. And then you find that this is a pageant.

Q. inaudible

R. Right, I can't convey it. I can't convince – you asked me if I believe, and I said no, I can't. To me this is a picture show, which we project. I don't believe in getting involved in it.

Q. Is it possible that your inner self is a picture show too?

R. My inner self is a projection but it isn't a picture show. In other words, when I speak of capital-S Self I'm talking about a ray of the Absolute. That is "is-ness" itself. That's just my point of contact with the total. But that is a projection, and you might say that is the Absolute, the point at which I touch the Absolute, whatever you want to call it.

But the events that occur on what we see in front of us, our projection – projected from a plane called the universal mind or what I call the manifested mind, or the Tibetans call a bardo – this is a bardo projected from another bardo. And this is demonstrable, that when you become too involved in it you suffer.

Q. inaudible

R. In this game, this act, you suffer. And when you've learned to detach yourself from this game you no longer suffer.

In other words, you become a believer in the act. There used to be an old Shakespearian actor who played Shylock. And he would become so obsessed by getting this pound of flesh – they'd take two stagehands and walk him up and down behind the theater shouting in his ear, "Remember that's just a play." And he'd say, "I want that pound of flesh." He really believed that he needed a pound of flesh, and it would take hours after every play to bring that man down. And this is what life is. This is what you're doing now.

Q. inaudible

R. Oh, right, right. You have to, that's all. I realize what you're saying. See you're always walking kind of a razor's edge of discrimination. You always have to. Like I said, one of the weaknesses or things that oppose spiritual work is apathy. Weariness, physical weariness, mental weariness that you have to overcome. That's part of the vector-building. When you build yourself a vector you carry yourself through these moments of despairing. You despair and you give up and you still keep on working, because you build up a forward-moving vector.

Q. inaudible

R. Yes. You have to gauge with your intuition every step of the way. Every step of the way. It's not just saying, "Well, now I'm on the path and all I have to do is coast downhill." Nothing like that happens. It may be a battle.

Q. ... path of letting go ... inaudible ... desire you necessarily follow is there any chance of ... where you get back into the same thing as you were before?

R. Well, first of all you don't let go. Benoit wrote a book, "Let Go." That's not an advisable method. Things leave. You disqualify them. Like smoking cigarettes, when you become convinced that they're not important, really not important, they leave. You don't really have to chuck stuff aside as much as just recognize that it's not important.

When you enter, as is said, the hills cease to be hills and the valleys cease to be valleys. In other words, your whole appreciation of this pleasure-scene ceases and you realize that it's all sheer nonsense, basically illusion. So you come back and you're once more relative. At one time you're not relative, you're Absolute. But you come back, and you have a body – how do you eat, how do you go to the toilet? Believe me. Consequently, I'm aware of what this body wants but somehow it's not important.

That's the reason I don't think you reach enlightenment until you've built this vector – because if you didn't have a vector that carried you past this experience, that would be it, you'd die.

And what is the point in coming back? I don't know. Whether it's more valuable to come back or more valuable to stay. But one thing is, for your fellow man, for the fellow on the rung below – and of course this was incorporated into my vector, strangely enough. Because I was very angry in my youth. I ran into phonies, all sorts of hucksters, wanting money for everything. For every little bit of wisdom they give you they want to rake you off for a few thousand dollars, and so they degenerate into rackets.

So that I swore that if I ever found something I would make it available. And I have a strange superstition that that's what aided me to find. Now I can't validate that with any proof. I can say I have a superstition that that helped. Because this vector then meant that when you reached there it isn't the end of the project; the project isn't finished. And this automatically brings you back to complete your task. All of which is determined by yourself ahead of time. That's the only way I can explain it. I don't know why Paul Wood returned.

Q. You were saying that a person should be selfish ...?

R. Yes.

Q. Maybe you are selfish, I don't know, but if you were selfish, what are you doing here explaining this, trying to enlighten us when you could be sitting at home in front of your fireplace?

R. Doing what?

Q. Being happy and not sharing with us.

R. Yes, I know, I just got done explaining it, it's a compulsion. I built this compulsion up thirty years ago, before it ever happened. And I'm just going through it. I don't know anything else that is more important. And maybe it's not important. I may be talking to people who consider me a fool, or they are foolish for even listening. But regardless, I have nothing better to do, that's all.

Q. On this enlightenment, do you feel it coming up by stages...?

R. No.

Q. ... or does it hit you all of a sudden?

R. You only value things in retrospect. In other words, always when you're looking ahead you're full of despair. You really feel as though you're never going to achieve anything. If you've got an intelligent computer, a well-ordered computer, you're going to realize that you're not going anyplace. You don't go anyplace until you go every-place. You don't know anything until you know everything.

So consequently, you know this is the prospect and you despair at how it's going to happen. But by looking backward you see certain stages of accomplishment. There are people who have been in the group for say two and three years – they haven't reached enlightenment, but they have felt so much of a change that they never want to stop. They never want to go back and be a pig in a pigpen again. So these things you have to look back upon. Nothing can look forward. As poet Robert Burns said it, about the furrow. You plough the furrow. [paraphrase follows] "forward I look upon things dreary; forward we cannot see, I wait in fear ..."

Q. inaudible

R. Yes. But basically everyone acts like pigs.

Q. inaudible

R. I don't know how much. I presume that the whole visible creation is a projection of mankind, the mind of mankind. So that we can't help it. Nature "demands" pigs. Because they root in the soil and keep it fertile. This competition – the trees are pigs. The trees compete. There's no socialism in trees; each one tries to kill the one next to it, and the one that kills the most gets to the sun, it's share of the sunshine, and crowds out the others. This is the same mood as the human rat race. So that there is a natural mandate in the rat race, in the dog-eat-dog. There's no real natural reason for brotherhood. When you degenerate into brotherhood and everybody gets a corn cob apiece we'll all be pigs. Friction is the cause of thought. Suffering, irritation, is the cause of thought. Not an equal distribution of corncobs.

Q. In regard to what you said about social change before, you seem to think it's not worth going into. Then you said something about when you were 21 years old and it was very difficult for someone to start a group like this, because the general attitude of people in society would think you were crazy. Don't you think that society has changed in that regard?

R. I don't know. LSD is an eye-opener but how million are committing suicide, slowly or suddenly, for that little bit of eye-opener? Maybe some profit but how many die? How many were absolutely destroyed from it? So by the same token, maybe I was just sour grapes. I don't know about that. Maybe there were people I could have worked with. St. John of the Cross worked it out alone. His own people put him in prison – he lived in much tighter times than I grew up in; they chopped their heads off if they found them studying on the side.

So regardless, I still can't say we have to bring all of humanity up. This is what happened to Jesus Christ, I presume. He violated the law of the ladder by going down two or more rungs and they pulled him down by the hair of the head. Lynched him. You can only deal with those who have ears, and the only people who can hear you are people who are very close to you in mental kinship, in understanding-kinship.

Q. But I think social change has happened.

R. Well, it hasn't been by any efforts of anybody. All the social change that you see is the result of automatic reactions of sardines in a sardine can. So don't think that any noble creatures have brought all these nice things about. I don't know how many of them are nice and how many are curses. We have many more books, we have more literature to read so we can drown ourselves. I'm always telling the boys, I go into these little centers they have set up and I find too many books. Too much confusion. Which becomes like a weakness in itself. Not acting on their spiritual selves, they're just reading and reading and reading. Sometime you have to stop and start acting. And of course if you have millions of volumes of esoteric literature and new approaches and new angles – that just means you've got that much more to evaluate in order to make a decision. That takes more time. And it becomes a rationalization, a tangent, a tangential effort, rather than coming back to the center.

Now I think that anything, any philosophy that involves changing the status of the earth is facetious and God-playing. Because we do not know the factors. We do not even know the factors involved in the natural patterns. We know some of them, we can see the tree competing for the atmosphere and that sort of thing, but we do not know all the factors. We do not know why man is here. All we know is that which seems to be evident, that he's basically an animal.

Q. So you think that things can't be done on a person-to-person basis?

R. I do not believe that I can affect this madhouse one iota. I wouldn't try. I think that anybody who does try – that's their game, that's all. That's just their game.

Q. Do you think that anyone ... inaudible ... exposed to these people that do all the ... inaudible.

R. It isn't always brought on "by" a traumatic experience, it generally "is" a traumatic experience. Because you're departing. The trauma is the changeover from the relative state to an Absolute state, which is in itself traumatic. Once you enter then it's no longer traumatic. It's only the transition. Coming back it's again traumatic. Coming back. But the state itself, the indescribable state, is not traumatic.

Q. [question on whether he took LSD prior to his experience in Seattle]

R. No. Since then. I did it to see if I could provoke the experience.

Q. inaudible ... the body ...

R. Well I have no way of checking that. I had the conviction of dying. In other words, I knew that I would forget who I was. And I did. It took me about two weeks to really come back to my other state of mind.

Q. Ok, I was wondering, if somebody actually did that ... inaudible

R. You don't experience enlightenment because you experience death. A tremendous lot of people die and never experience enlightenment; I'm quite convinced of this. I mean literally die and they're buried, and they don't experience enlightenment. Some of them go to a bardo – this is the reason Tibetan research is carried on, because manifestly, most people enter a bardo – which they created, a bardo of belief. They project another bardo from this bardo. In other words, this is a projected bardo, and instead of realizing this is illusion they project another one yet. They say, "I'm going to heaven and Uncle Jake and Aunt Jane," and sure enough, while they're dying they're reaching. And I've seen them reaching and calling names. But the person who is entering enlightenment doesn't call names. He's quite convinced that he is nothing; he is entering nothingness.

Q. What do you think about speaking in tongues?

R. Well, it's invasion, generally. In some cases it's invasion. In some people it might be talent, mediumistic, but sometimes it's invasion. Possession in other words. For instance the kid that they exorcised, if you read the accounts of that. I didn't see the picture [The

Exorcist] but I read the accounts in 1949 when it happened, and the accounts in the newspaper when somebody interviewed this priest [inaudible]. The kid spoke in languages that he had no knowledge of. So he was invaded.

Now of course we have certain religious people ...

Q. Yeah, they say they speak in tongues.

R. Yes, my father-in-law used to speak in tongues. But it was always the same thing. I didn't know whether he was speaking in tongues or had some fancy double-talk, but it always came out the same. But it's possible that people do speak – things take them over. Now, the quality of that which takes them over is open to question: Is it good, is it bad, is it negative, is it positive, is it going to help or to hurt? – I don't know. But still, these are physical creatures. We like to think that everything that isn't human is spiritual, that everything that isn't protoplasmic according to our analyses is spiritual. Well, that is not true. There are a lot of things, a lot of entities that exist – I say all of them are physical, they're basically physical, basically material.

Q. When [the religious people] all speak in tongues do they understand each other?

R. This is the fallacy of all this speaking in tongues. In the Bible, the speaking in tongues referred to people, like an Apostle, who would go out and he'd talk in his own language but everyone understood him. Now the modern evangelists have twisted this event. So that they go out and utter gibberish, which no one understands except the people who are inspired by God. And then of course everybody wants to get in on the act and they say, "Yeah, he meant this ..." Now there's a tremendous reversal of meaning there. When St. Paul or whoever it was went out and talked, he talked in his native language and everyone understood him. That was the claim. But what we experience, or what we hear – I haven't witnessed all of the cases, but now just what I've observed myself – what I've heard in the holy-roller churches is basically gibberish. Which if it was a language I didn't understand it. Now according to the Bible I should have been able to understand it.

Well, the fellows who have been here awhile, the group meets here every Tuesday. I won't be here next time – I can't make it up – it's too far – but some of the time. But the group meets here. [inaudible]

Q. We have copies of Mr. Rose's book available, if you want to pick it up.

Q. The group takes donations to help us function ...

R. To build a marble palace in West Virginia. (laughter)

Q. It covers Mr. Rose's cost of gasoline to come up here.

R. Sometimes I notice a kind of feeling of disbelief when they pass that hat. But the posters have to be printed. Most all of our expenses are pro-rated. I come a limited number of times at my own expense and then I say, "Well, if the group furnishes gasoline money I'll come back." If I'm no more value than that then I shouldn't come back. I don't believe in charging for my hours or anything of that sort, but I do believe

that if there is a value at all, then they can furnish the gasoline money. But there's no compulsion.

Q. May I take a look at the book?

R. Yes, absolutely, if you don't take it away. (laughter) We've had that happen too.

Q. Inaudible question about the Albigen Papers.

R. No, no, it's strictly method. The half is a critique. In other words it says here's how you run through the raindrops, how you avoid the garbage. It's critical. And then the second half is a method, the method of retreating from error, with the greatest possible facility.

The book is a generalized position. Most of the system is given verbally. We were talking about that today – it's impossible to write – well, it isn't impossible but sometimes you destroy or give the wrong impression by putting everything down in print. I have a paper that's called Transmutation of Energy and Transmission – it's only available to members of the group who have been in for awhile, who are pretty sure that they really want to retain their energy and transmute their energy. I'm not interested in selling it. Like this book here – we only printed a hundred copies, that's the reason it costs so much; it was almost a Xerox price or very near. But I didn't think there'd be over a hundred people interested, or a hundred people who would really need it – because of the percentages. Most people are looking for some pleasure-excuse, peace of mind or happiness or money, success in the relative world.

Q. What is peace of mind?

R. Of course, there is such a thing as peace of mind, I mean it's momentary. Sometimes it's not momentary, I had it for seven years, it was the most beautiful time of my life. From when I was 21 to 28. But at the age of 28 I realized I had been kidding myself, I was just asleep. I found a way of living that kept me from having trouble; I had serenity and that sort of thing. It's like the boys doing TM now, a lot of boys are doing TM to find peace of mind and find a certain serenity; but it becomes a hog-wallow after awhile, you just don't get anyplace. There are no questions answered, and then when you realize that you become chagrined, and you start fighting again for understanding. So it's possible for a period of time to obtain peace of mind. I came to the conclusion that if I needed a rest I'd get it in the cemetery. I was going to find out the answer first and give up the peace of mind.

Q. inaudible ... your occupation in metallurgy and the materialistic sciences.

R. I majored in chemistry, I worked as a chemist, I worked as an aeronautical engineer, I worked as a biochemist of sorts – in the development of streptomycin, penicillin.

Q. inaudible

R. Yes. I did – that's the reason I got out of it. That's when I was young. I travelled around the country and stayed in one place for one year, and then changed and went on. I find that these scientific pursuits are desk jobs, where you have to use your head all day, consume all of your mental energy. In other words you build up mental quantum but

you use it every day, so you can't transmute any of that into spiritual quantum. It's very difficult to do anything spiritual when your head is being occupied – so I worked with my hands, I went into the contracting business, and then I could come home in the evening and think. My mental energy was there to use. And I found that much better.

Q. You said that when you were a young person [inaudible ... church ... Bible...]

R. I was a Catholic.

Q. I guess that was your introduction to spiritualism – is that true?

R. Spiritualism? Spiritual work you mean.

Q. Yes, I'm sorry. [inaudible] Me, I've been mostly a materialistic type, raised you know.

R. Yeah, well, see – I don't know why I was born into the family I was born into. I have a tremendous lot of respect for the Christian principles. I have a tremendous disrespect for the venality and the intolerance of the certain kind of ...

End of tape

From page 176 of Albigen Papers, 5th Paper, Obstacles to Transcendental Efforts. Note, this is copyrighted material.

LIST OF OBSTACLES

Of External Nature:

Visible, terrestrial life and planetary relationships.

Invisible, or dimensions beyond our senses.

Of Internal Nature:

The Appetites:

Sex

Security

Food

Pleasures other than sex

Curiosity

The Fears:

Fear of dying

Fear of scorn or social harm

Fear of mental or spiritual harm

The Blocks:

The seven deadly sins

The six catches

Physical limitations

Economic exigencies

Forms of Rationalization:

That we will be able to do the thing better at a later date. (Procrastination)

That we will ride the tide of humanity into heaven.

That social services or "good works" have spiritual gain.

That the gods have ears. Salvation through prayers.

That the gods have noses and eyes. Incense and displays.

That positive thinking will make gods of us or lead us to liberation.

That the guru will save us.

That faith will save us.

That spiritual paths may be evaluated by their popularity.

That we can "feel" our way alone. (Intuition alone).

That we can do it with our omnipotent reason.

That God, (or Mr. X) will take care of everything. This is a variation of the "knight on the white horse" rationalization.

That our present belief shall be our final evaluation of Truth.

That everything else is hopeless or useless.

[end]