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My purpose in coming here tonight is to communicate. Now I could talk for an hour and a half and tell you a lot of things that are in the book,² which you could read later. Or I could harangue you for awhile and you'll have to sit there and listen to it, or else get up and leave when it runs contrary to your liking. And if I prepare a text, you're going to get something prepared from my head, by my head, or by my head for a particular type of head. So rather than this, I'm going to talk for just a little while, and then get directly to a personal communication. That is, I want to know what you want to know. And of course, I don't believe you're coming here expecting a miracle, you're not looking for phenomena, so you'll probably want some questions answered.

I didn't use the word *dialog* purposefully because we get too much of that in a question and answer period. The only rule I want to follow is that I wish to answer questions of inquiry, not questions that are speeches. Because, invariably at every lecture we get someone nuttier than myself who wants to make my podium his podium, and spout off about some cult he has joined, and he thinks he should blend us all into it.

But I want it known that I will spend any amount of time answering sincere questions; that's what I'd rather spend my time doing. Dan, I see some people coming in the back, and they may be confused because we look like a bunch of anarchists, so you can tell them what's going on.

Personal search

There are a good many people here I have never seen before, so I'm going to start by telling you a little bit about why I thought it necessary to be here. And I know no better way to tell you this than to tell you simply about myself: Why am I not in another church or another group, and why am I speaking for a particular type of Zen?

¹ Url: <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1975-1012-Cleveland>
For access, send email to editors@direct-mind.org

² *The Albigen Papers*.

I conclude, as some of the modern psychologists would say,³ that I was afflicted at an early age with a psychological or psycho-classic syndrome – of curiosity; I wanted to find God. And I'm at a loss to know exactly where it came from, beyond my childhood. I was born and raised a Catholic, and in fact I studied for awhile to be a priest. And I thought this would answer the questions. It was just a matter of simple childhood trust; I believed that if you want to be good you go where the good people are, or where they claim they're good. If you want science you go where the scientists are. And these people are in charge of that particular brand of science, and I would go study about God. I was twelve years old when I went into the seminary in Herman, Pennsylvania,⁴ just north of Pittsburgh.

But by the time I was seventeen I was disillusioned. And I'm not throwing any rocks at the Catholic Church; I think it's one of the healthiest institutions you can raise a child in today. But I'm saying it didn't answer my questions. And I took it rather rebelliously, though; I dropped out and started looking elsewhere. And I'm glad I dropped out – I wouldn't want to be part of a monastic life of that sort.

So I started looking into everything, and we don't have enough time to go into all the things I looked into, in those years between then and now. But I got into books on psychology; I thought that perhaps the answer to the truth was in the head. That the mind was smart enough, that if you'd throw enough stuff into the computer it would come out with a very good solution.

So I went into psychology, and I thought I could even find some contact point that some other stupid scientist had overlooked before this wise one came along; I would find the contact point where the brain met the soul. I thought all these things in my early ventures into psychology. I looked into Spiritualism,⁵ and of course, this was 1934 and there weren't too many things to look into at that time. There were a few cults that you could subscribe to; most of them were located out on the west coast. And there were rumors of places in India you could travel to if you had the courage and the money.

So I looked mostly at the phenomena at hand. Spiritualism seemed to be promising because here was a chance to talk to somebody who had died. And if you want proof of what happens to you after death – that's basically what we're after – there's nothing better than to go talk with somebody who is dead. So I tried that. And strangely enough, I talked to a few phantoms. I got so far as to witness a genuine materialization. We sifted and sifted until we found the phonies, we found the cheesecloth gimmickry⁶ and that sort of thing. I'm speaking "we" now – there were a group of people who went, and we finally saw a genuine materialization and talked to some of the entities. And I use the word *entities* although they looked like relatives – again there's a reason for using the word.

³ E.g., William James' term "medical materialism" in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Lecture 1: "In fact, one might almost as well interpret religion as a perversion of the respiratory function," etc. Text in PDF format: <http://selfdefinition.org/christian/>

⁴ Details of seminary experience are in Miami Theosophical Society, October, 1985, page 3. <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1985-10-Theosophical-Society-Miami>

⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritualism>

⁶ See "cheesecloth mania": <http://www.harrypricewebsite.co.uk/Seance/Duncan/leaves-duncan.htm>

But I got no knowledge – of where these voices or where these phantoms were coming from, outside of the energy of the medium’s body. There was no outstanding cosmology, just yes or no answers given to questions you asked. If you didn’t give them a precise question – like, “Is Jesus there?” – you wouldn’t get any information. You couldn’t say, “Tell me about it,” because they’d just say, “It’s wonderful,” and that’s all you’d get. And if you said, “Have you seen Jesus?” they would say, “We think he’s here; I’ve heard that he’s here,” and that sort of thing.

There’s quite a bit of data that can be gathered by looking into this. But I drifted around, away from that and ultimately into yoga. And I see shades of the old raja yoga and hatha yoga creeping up again today, with TM.⁷ We had a word then, it’s called *Om*, and *Om* was something that needed no fee.⁸ You could get it for nothing, just open a book. Every book had *Om* in it. And that’s all you have to do: you get a resonating noise and it will make you quiet, if you breathe regularly and sit quietly. I think part of our trouble is not being able to sit quietly.

But regardless, at the age of twenty-one I came to the conclusion that most of the cults were run by either phonies or faggots, and I was very much disillusioned. Everything had money tied up in it – you had to be paying into some racket. You sensed it was a racket ultimately if you didn’t sense it right away. So for awhile I thought there was absolutely no hope of ever finding anything out certainly; that it all boiled down to man’s stupidity, and some human being playing on other people’s stupidity or gullibility.

Self definition

But it dawned on me that one of the reasons for the impossibility of people finding truth is our limited sensory apparatus. I’m talking about finding truth by finding your self-definition; we’re not talking about how many drops of water are in a bucket of water – not that sort of truth. We’re talking about the real nature of man, the real nature of the universe. And you don’t use those words unless you’ve found that there’s possibly another state of the universe which makes this one look as though it isn’t real.

For instance, we realize our inadequacies when we get into the biological sciences or the science of the human body, where you find that we do not see clearly. We have a limited visual range, we have a limited color range, so that our view of the external world, the small-“r” real world, is limited. Our view of the “real” world has to come through our senses, which are limited. So you’re only going to see what your senses allow you to see – or what you, in reality project, by virtue of interpreting the senses. The senses interpret and then you project a meaning. And sometimes it takes one sense checking out another one to ascertain whether it’s valid.

But when we talk about capital-“r” Reality, or the Truth, we’re talking about: where did man come from? where did each of you come from? who are you now? what is your true identity? where are you going? what is your relation to that which is outside your body? – your real

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation

⁸ Current payment (2011) in TM for a mantra is \$1,500, recently reduced from \$2,500.

relation – and what is your relation to the ultimate plane, the cosmos, if you want to call it that, or the absolute?

So after you start to look at these things you realize that by viewing your learning rate up to a period of time – say from zero to twenty-one, which I was at the time – you conclude that there's an impossible amount to learn. I had taken in a lot of knowledge; I was in college by that time, majoring in chemistry, and I thought I'd find out a lot of truth in chemistry, just because I could throw that into the computer and come out with some answer. But I found out that the number of factors and variables is so great that the human mind's attention span itself would not ever permit you to find ultimate wisdom about all things, and then correlate them and bring out a grand truth. So the idea was to either find another way of finding the truth or give up.

Change of being (direct-mind approach)

It was at this point that I encountered the conviction that man, if he wished to find this sort of truth, the truth of capital-"r" Reality, would inevitably become involved in a change of being. That this present being, this present computer, couldn't handle the load, that's all. He didn't have the years, for one thing. So we have to do something by direct mentality – the mind going directly into the problem. And accelerating the computation, if you want to call it that, by refusing to concentrate too long on the impossible parts, the impossible correlation of factors.

So again, there wasn't much hope because I didn't know of any system that would do that, and at that time I had never heard of Zen. Of course, that's the reason I'm bringing up the word Zen now and that's one of the reasons our group is named Zen. It's because there are only a few systems in the world in my estimation that go into the idea of direct-mind entering of a problem, and a necessary change of being, instead of an accumulation of wisdom.

Wisdom is a vanity. You cannot learn; you can only *become*, when it comes to the deeper esoteric truths of the nature of man. So I had this conviction at the age of twenty-one, but I found no teachers. I found no one who even spoke about this, except in later years I read books by Paul Brunton.⁹ He brought this out. Some of the men of the Orient knew it; some of the men of India knew it. But very few of them that were accessible then had written on methods.

I ran into the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky system later.¹⁰ Gurdjieff¹¹ sensed it; you can read it in his writings that he saw that we were robots, that we were not free men, or men who could go out and plot a course as everyone would like to believe we can. That we were basically robots, helpless robots; and the whole Gurdjieffian science was one of hoping to get you free from being a robot. Well, he prescribed little exercises and this sort of thing, but not a general system; the Gurdjieffians do not have let's say a pointed system, a detailed system, of how you

⁹ Rose recommended *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga* and *The Wisdom of the Overself*. Also see *The Maharshi and His Message* (from *Search in Secret India*) for Brunton's account of meeting Ramana Maharshi. PDF's here: <http://selfdefinition.org/brunton/>

¹⁰ For a brief digest of the Gurdjieff system, see Ouspensky: *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*; <http://selfdefinition.org/gurdjieff/>

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Gurdjieff

can go about changing your state of being. It just advises against mechanicalness and it gives you exercises in this business of self-observation and that sort of thing. But in the long run I don't consider it a complete system.

But regardless, as I said, I was pretty well disgruntled. And I found a deep hatred or anger, if you want to call it that, in myself for the various cults, the various religions, the people who would take your money and your lifetime, taking you to church or something just to get your nickels. And telling you that all you had to do was to listen to them and go to church every Sunday and you would arrive at bugle-land. Or some cult that had some gimmick: if you did this, if you stood on your head long enough, if you repeated certain words or chanted or prayed, or breathed through one nose hole and out through the other – all these little things.

People were seizing on these – because people are lazy. People do not want to change their being. They want to do it with the body – they consider that to be their being. And modern psychologists claim that the only being you are is your body. Well if that's all it is, why, build yourself a nice tombstone – that's your future. And forget about what I'm talking about, because the body is headed for the marble orchard.

I continued against these odds. All I had to work with was books, and occasionally I would get in touch with someone who was in touch with somebody else. But it was very scarce, because society in those years looked upon anybody who even looked into a cult as being crazy. If you worked as a chemist or engineer you had to be careful telling the people you worked with that you were interested in occultism or esoteric philosophy, because immediately your job was in jeopardy with the head office. Because you were unstable, and that was worse than being a communist.

Need for group work

So there was very little contact with people of like interest. But I realized at the time that there was a tremendous need for this. I was in my twenties, and I would run into a few people and I'd say there's a tremendous need for people who realize this thing to work together. There are too few people on earth, first of all, who are interested, or who have gotten beyond the vegetative stage, and want to do something besides keeping up with the Joneses or making the nickels for Kroger's. That handful of people who exist on the earth, as Bucke¹² said, are one in a million. One in a million – and I don't think that's a minimization. I think that's a pretty true figure. At least it was when I was younger, because I travelled all over the United States and I found only a handful of people.

And of those handful, very few of them wanted to be dedicated, to do anything with great dedication. They'd say, [vaguely] "Yeah, let's try that." They too were shopping. The average person waited until he was forty years of age, until he burnt out his lust, and then he thought, "Well, let's play with something else." Maybe he was an ex-alcoholic – we found that a lot of the members in our group in the old days had been through Alcoholics Anonymous and they had

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Maurice_Bucke

come through some realization: that the world wasn't exactly what they thought it was before, and they had been needlessly punishing themselves with alcohol. And it was time to get a reappraisal of things through esoteric philosophy, or to join some religious movement to get back their mentality.

But those were most of the people who we got in the groups in those days. And this permeates these older cults today. If you go down to some of these various older esoteric societies, the people are mostly elderly women and a few elderly men who have made it sort of a hobby – of talking about things; it's nice to talk about over a cup of coffee. It's better to loaf with them – you have to loaf with somebody and if you don't drink, that's a good place to loaf. And that's their attitude, but as far as for doing anything, it's too late.

And this seems to be the work of nature: that while you have the energy of youth that's necessary to *transmute*,¹³ as I call it, in a sort of kundalini fashion – you're beset by all the possibilities and opportunities of making money and making women, or making men if you're a woman. So you put all this esoteric investigation in the background; you procrastinate and say, "I'll do this later. As soon as I have my kids raised, then I'll start." And by the time you have your kids raised you might as well forget about it, because you can't hold your attention on anything. Your head is crystallized, your arteries are hard.

And those are the people who form the clubs. This is the unfortunate part about it, in the esoteric societies. But regardless, I did meet some young people – one of them is still in this group today; he's my age, one of the original members.¹⁴ He's slightly alcoholic but he's still in the group. He managed to keep himself drunk, and raise ten kids in the meantime, but he kept his mind also on esoteric philosophy.

But there's a need for people to get together. Because it's just like Alcoholics Anonymous: you start to meditate or you start to read and you set yourself a discipline, and within a week you've forgotten about it. And unless you have a group of people who remind you, this will occur. And we have that in this group today – occasionally we've got to get on the phone and call somebody and say, "Where have you been? are you angry? are you dead, or dying? what's happened?" And then they say, "Oh well, I'm glad you called, because I've been putting it off." And the next thing you know they'll come down to the group meeting. But this is what is necessary. In any human effort we must have cooperation with our fellows. In any scientific laboratory, if you want to discover the substance of a ketone enzyme or something, it's going to take a bunch of people working together. One man by himself can't do it all. So you consult with your colleagues.

And in this instance it's difficult to consult with your colleagues – because most of them are dishonest. Of course they've got this idea of the group brotherhood: you go up to places like Boston where you'll find all sorts of cults, bedded down together, scratching each others' back, and saying, "Well, we've got to tolerate each other because we're all giving our contribution to humanity." Hell, they're not giving anything but confusion, in my estimation.

¹³ Rose, *Energy Transmutation, Betweenness and Transmission*, a.k.a. "The Transmission Papers".

¹⁴ See *Peace to the Wanderer*, full text in PDF: <http://selfdefinition.org/rose/>

There 's a boy from the Pittsburgh group who went up to Boston,¹⁵ and I got a letter from him. He said, "I wish everyone in Pittsburgh could come up to Boston," to experience what he had experienced. He had talked to some of these gurus who were living in Boston – he had dinner in Baba Ram Das's restaurant and he was writing this letter on the table, he said, from this restaurant. He said he found that all the cults there had a clear contrast with what we were doing. Their main objective was to clear out the mind – they call it mind-expansion but it's mostly trying to get the cinders out, from burning out their heads – to free oneself if you're entangled or addicted, to love others, to love the guru, and be in harmony with nature and the real mundane world.

Now when you get to know the people in our group and the direction we're in, there isn't too much of this I agree with. I don't want anybody loving me; I think that's foolishness. This is a passing carcass – that's about ready to pass completely. And to clean out the mind or expand the mind – this is foolishness because they're only going to clutter it up again with more dope or more weirdness if that's their direction. And the same way with freeing themselves – we freed a few people in our group and they went right back.

My father-in-law was a holy-roller preacher and he healed a guy. He was dying, or at least the doctor said he was dying – it's the old story you know; they're always healing somebody who's dying. He was dying of tuberculosis and they healed him; and the guy was really fresh and chipper for about two years. So about four years later my father-in-law ran into him again, and he was dying again. "What happened?" "Oh, I backslid." Because what he did, he ran for two years on somebody else's energy. If you know anything about what happens in healing, it's generally a transmission of energy from one person to another.¹⁶ So to me it's a foolish way to spend your life, to go around healing people, who are just going back to the whorehouse.

Even harmony with nature, or loving others – love yourself. Don't talk God talk. Don't pretend that you're loving others. You don't know whether you can do others any good. Sometimes the worst thing you can do for people is to even pray for them – until you know what they need. And how do you know what they need? Because you're not God.

This thing of being in harmony with nature: fertilizer – we all contribute in our time, there's no sense in hurrying it. We can't figure those factors out. There's only one thing – if you want to be a true ecologist, bury yourself shallow; six feet is too far to go.

This thing of peace – everybody talks about this. I'm not in favor of peace. I'm in favor of a battle, with yourself. Start fighting with yourself, because you're not at peace. These people going around saying peace are the most miserable people on earth. Because they're not at peace with themselves. And why aren't they at peace with themselves? Because they fought a hypocritical battle and lost. The whole generation has fought a hypocritical battle and lost. They preach brotherhood and a desire for peace, and all the time they're inciting violence. This is nonsense.

¹⁵ Rose lecture in Boston: <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1975-1119-Boston-College> which is published in *Direct-Mind Experience*.

¹⁶ Also in Rose, *Energy Transmutation, Betweenness and Transmission*.

There should never be any hypocrisy in any movement. And when there is, the movement itself will decay and deteriorate. This is unnatural. I consider myself natural. What happens in nature? You fight. The tree fights for the sunshine when the other trees take it and it becomes a leafless hulk. You *fight* for spirituality. Because all growth – spiritual, economic, human, or animal – is pyramidal in form. That’s the reason we’re called the Pyramid Zen Society, incidentally. A lot of the base is manure. Take your choice: fight for the top, for the oxygen, or become a great brotherhood of manure.

Q & A

I’d like to stop at this point and answer your questions, and from those questions possibly swing into areas you’re interested in, and I’ll expand on them if you wish.

Q. You mentioned that it isn’t easy to work by yourself. But you can’t depend on the group for everything. Are there any things you might suggest for developing your attention, on being able to meditate or whatever discipline you set up?

R. One thing about the particular system that we advise, it’s a singular, individual system. I don’t believe in blanket prescriptions for spiritual work. Because each man is different. Each man will find some desire to meditate in a particular fashion. And as I say, a lot of these things out today may be good for some people. I believe for instance that some of the quieting forms of meditation are very good if you’re turbulent. I don’t think they’re necessarily going to take you to any great spiritual heights. But each person should follow their own meditative path. If they need a hint, then they should go to the other people or to a monitor in the group, and say, “Give me some advice.”

Incidentally, since he mentioned the group – we are composed of several groups here; we have a Pittsburgh group and we have four Ohio groups, at different universities.¹⁷ Plus we have an ashram in the country, where some people can go and meditate. (Or play around – most of them go down there and play around.)

But again, these groups in themselves depend on and are no greater than the individuals. And this is the truth about any group: that no organizational setting is greater than its individuals. And if you don’t have a straining for dynamism in your group, naturally the group is not going to do anyone any good. It’s only going to be as good as the individuals. So we’re continually running into a sort of natural law, where it’s the same as with the individual: the individual goes to sleep if he’s not reminded, and the group goes to sleep if it’s not reminded. It has to go back and refresh itself, and find out why it’s going to sleep, why they’re not having better confrontation, and why they’re not having more activity and more vitality in the group. But I don’t like to give out a blanket reaction. Does that answer you?

Q. I was also looking for something an individual can use to keep his head on the work, while he’s not around the people in the group.

¹⁷ Kent, Akron, Cleveland, Columbus.

R. Well, you do have to do this, and generally you don't do it until after you slip. In other words, after a week or so goes by that you're doing nothing, then if you're intelligent you'll automatically recognize this and go back and face it, and say, "I have to do something to remind myself." And if you can get yourself in the habit, then, of say reading a chapter of van der Leeuw¹⁸ or a book of psychology, or anything that's going to be inspirational – so that once a day at least your mind goes back to this. And to me this is a viable prelude to meditation, rather than sitting and meditating about the date you have the day after tomorrow.

[break in tape – question missing]

Desire is put in from the outside. So what you're saying is in all probability that you are being subjected to strong desires from another angle.

I believe that what happens in a lot of people who get into esoteric philosophy is, we become interested, and we may find some things that will attract our attention, and maybe attend a certain group very diligently for weeks or months or a year or so. And then all of a sudden you'll say, "Well, I'm surfeited. I'm kind of fed up, it sounds like a bunch of hokum." So you'll go back and play the game, go out and get drunk, maybe shake your head up again. And maybe stay drunk – the game of life I'm talking about – being drunk with life again, the small-"r" real world.

But then you're reminded, if the thing is in you, if the seed is planted, with the desire to return. But I don't believe that anyone should ever try to force themselves to desire this. You just can't do it. I think that would negate it, in fact, the more you would say to yourself, "I've got to desire this." If we are really pretty honest with ourself, then deep inside an answer would pop out eventually, that you were being foolish, trying to force yourself to desire something. We just say that the group might stimulate you. That's an external stimulation, if the group has the ability to do it.

Q, In *The Albigen Papers*, just before "Three Books of the Absolute"¹⁹ – you mention that when you came back from your experience you felt you had a message of joy and hope for humanity. Has your opinion of that changed since then?

R. Well I've been worn pretty badly in the last twenty-five years. You can't convey a message to anyone unless they can hear. Of course, that might sound rather egotistical – but again, you go back to Bucke, who was one of the outstanding authorities on cosmic consciousness,²⁰ and he says only one in a million.

So we continue Bucke's odds and say, "Well, there are other people." This is a new generation; this is the acid generation, the people who have seen other dimensions with the help of chemicals. And perhaps they will lean away from the materialistic world and look for a real dimension, perhaps one that's more real than this. But even under those circumstances, the only thing I can see, the difference between when I was in my twenties and now, is that there are people now who are listening. The number of people really acting, I'm not sure. But there

¹⁸ JJ van der Leeuw, *Conquest of Illusion*. <http://selfdefinition.org/van-der-leeuw/conquest-of-illusion.htm>

¹⁹ PDF – 7 pages: <http://www.richardrose.org/ThreeBooks.pdf>

²⁰ *Cosmic Consciousness*. Full text in html format: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/cc/index.htm>

were no people listening until the acid generation, no people in any great number. So acid had some good, although it may have killed a lot of people.

Q. Do you think there is value in the philosophy of yoga?

R. Yes. The only reason I commented is that I don't believe in making a racket out of this stuff. I think it should be free. Nearly everything you want to learn in yoga, you can learn out of books, and you can get them from the public library. Or somebody who knows something about it should be able to tell you about it without charging you. This is the whole thing. I think there's a tremendous racket being run on this.

Q. Isn't there a practical need for charging money sometimes?

R. Yes. Of course we're getting into a hairline distinction – for instance, we've got lights burning here today. Someone should pay for these lights, and the people who should pay for them are the people sitting here. But there's no charge tonight, so somebody's paying for it regardless. But I believe that when a group of people meet they should pay for the room rent – that sort of thing, pro-rated, my rate the same as yours. That's what I believe. Unless of course, if I have to come a long distance and pay a bus fare to come up to talk to you, it's cheaper for you to pay my bus fare than it is for all of you to come down to my place. So you make an economy thing out of it.

Pyramid

Q. You seem to imply that it's impossible to ever have any social harmony, that man is destined for just chaos. And why does that necessarily have to come up in your system? Why can't you have these experiences happen in your head, along with getting along with other people?

R. Well, how much time have you got?

Q. Well, if it takes [inaudible]?

R. What, to improve the world?

Q. No, no, just to improve your part of it.

R. How do you know my part isn't improved?

Q. Well, no, you seem to offer a belief in just climbing to the top.

R. No, no. I'm talking about climbing to the top of this particular field, of spiritual progress. This girl over here was asking a question about yoga: there are two distinct, polar, parts of yoga: raja yoga and hatha yoga. We presume that hatha yoga is preliminary or at the base of the pyramid. But you may have to go through it to get to raja yoga, and maybe go on to something still further like Zen. But this is an escalatory thing, and there is an accumulation of effort. But I'm not talking about social effort. I'm not talking about financial gain or ambition.

Definitions

Q. Could you define some words for me?

R. Possibly, I don't know.

Q. Esoteric?

R. Uh, well – esoteric is the opposite of exoteric, I think. [laughs] But anyhow, it means a hidden form of knowledge which isn't commonly available to the public. So that esoteric philosophy is not a Hegelian type, or the conventional type of philosophy. Esoteric philosophy has to deal with transcendentalism, mostly, meaning things unseen, metaphysics.²¹ Of course the definition of the word metaphysics has changed over time. Metaphysics at one time meant transcendentalism. Today it means ontology²² or something.

Q. Ashram?

R. The reason we use the word *ashram* – we call our place in the country an ashram. When I was in the seminary we had the word *retreat house* – this is somewhat similar. But I use the word ashram to distinguish from monastery, because we have nobody down there but people interested in a single objective, and that is this work. But we have no closed doors, and by that I mean we don't lock you in. There's no commitment; you don't have to sign up for a week or a year or ten years or the rest of your life. You come in and just agree to be agreeable and show some manifestation that you're interested in the same type of speculation that we are.

But the word ashram is borrowed from the Hindu. And incidentally, I'm not in favor of using Hindu terminology; it's very deceptive. People *like* this. They'll pay for a Hindu word. The word *swami* for instance, means teacher. So does *Der Führer* – take your choice, they're synonymous. And the word *chakra* is a neuron, unless you've seen something luminous around that neuron. If you have never seen this, you can presume that it's one of your nerve ganglions.

Enlightenment

We get a lot of this – there's so much of it coming out, that in order to hold a conversation today on some point of esoteric philosophy a person has to know the Indian language, and this is absurd. I think it nearly all can be expressed in English. But we do borrow some words, for instance *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*²³ – this is enlightenment. And why don't we use the word *enlightenment*? Because – I was in a beer joint the other day and a fellow standing next to me said, "I've been enlightened." And I said, "Yes? How did it happen?" I was curious; I thought I found a brother. But he had just dropped some acid.

²¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics>

²² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontology>

²³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samadhi>

People have all sorts of connotations about what the word enlightenment means. And they believe that *satori* is a higher exaltation than enlightenment, but this is not true. Satori is a “wow!” experience. And this isn’t a Hindu word, it’s a Japanese derivation, which supposedly means the highest spiritual experience, but this is not true.

And I don’t want to leave the impression that Zen is the only or the highest spiritual path. The spiritual path is individual. I have met men in my life who have reached enlightenment and who never heard of the word Zen. And we cannot brush these people aside and say, “They don’t go to our church – they’re out.” This is nonsense. It depends on the individual, however he gets it. And that’s the reason we don’t legislate, for instance, who comes into the group or what they believe – as long as they don’t cause trouble, that’s all.

Because if a person wants to come down to the farm or the ashram or whatever you call it and meditate, and he’s sincere – and that’s what he wants to do; he doesn’t want to come down and smoke dope – then that’s alright. I don’t care whether he uses as one fellow did the Lord’s Prayer – one man I knew²⁴ reached enlightenment by virtue of studying the Lord’s Prayer – focusing his entire energy and attention upon the Lord’s Prayer.

And I think we have to give not only admission but a tremendous amount of reinforcement to this type of spiritual experience. We must never get the idea – this is one of the weaknesses that we all have had; I had it myself when I was in my twenties – that the wisdom is in China or India or Japan. This is nonsense; the wisdom is inside of *you*.

And what is it that brings it out? A hunger, a desire, like he said back there. That desire has to be there – you can’t create it. But if that desire is inside of you, I don’t care what religion you belong to. The only thing I will say is that in almost every religion, including the Hindu religion, they generally create an organization that runs contrary to the original investigation. We have a sample of it right down there close to the farm,²⁵ a movement that basically has ancestral origins that predate Christianity. And some of the particular people in this movement are using it for a racket.

Consequently, when you get into too much organization and too much ritual, dogma, you take your mind away from thinking about yourself and about truth. If you’re going to find the truth, you’re going to have to find it through the self, not through some altar with candles burning, or a lot of rubrics, and venal sins and mortal sins that you’re afraid of committing, and this sort of thing. You have to face it.

But in these same ranks of people belonging to these established religions, are people who have brushed all this aside, like St. John of the Cross,^{26,27} and they have reached enlightenment. And we’ve got to find brotherhood with these people, not criticism. The only

²⁴ Paul Wood, from Dallas, Texas. For recount see “Obstacles, Cleveland, Ohio”, Nov. 12, 1974, <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1974-1112-Obstacles-Cleveland> and “Definition of Zen”, 1970s, <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1970s-Definition-of-Zen-Kent-State>

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Vrindaban

²⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_of_the_Cross

²⁷ *Dark Night of the Soul* in PDF format: <http://selfdefinition.org/christian/>

criticism I find is with people who pretend, who have some false front and stand behind some church door and say, "This is the only place the truth is." Nonsense. Because the person talking may not have any idea what capital-"t" Truth is.

Atman and Brahman

Q. What about Atman – is that a Hindu word?

R. Yes, the Atman and the Brahman^{28,29} – it's pretty hard to speak of one without the other. It's a Hindu concept, or I'd say it's more of an esoteric Brahmanistic³⁰ concept – we've never paid the proper attention to it in the western world. In the Christian world we look upon ourselves as a creature such as we see in the mirror, who is made in the image of a God, a personal being. And I'm more inclined to believe that we are not what we see in the mirror, but that we have created a God in the image of what we see in the mirror. So this part in the western concept, for what it's worth, is erroneous.

The Oriental on the other hand sees his God [Brahman] as being universal or absolute, not personal, and each of us being irrevocably attached to him and a part of him, in the form of the Atman – a spark, the end of a ray emanating from the absolute. A finger of God which at death he pulls back in, and when he reincarnates he sticks it back out, so to speak. That ray goes in and out. So I'll say this, that if you talk to many people who have the experience of sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi, this is what they find. They don't find a man with a long beard up there, that's related to me on my mother's side, far back.

Stages and exaltations

And in regard to these other terms I'm using, if any of you have read Ramana Maharshi – he gives a good example.³¹ We talk a lot about spiritual experiences, and it's good to know that they are not all the same. There's the salvationistic experience – and if you're acquainted with the Gurdjieffian terminology, he talks about man number one, two, three and four.³² But I maintain that men one, two, three and four are instinctive, emotional, intellectual and philosophic.

I believe that the exaltations people reach in their lifetimes are graduations from one of these levels to another. That whenever you leave the instinctive level, you leave it by virtue of

²⁸ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atman_\(Hinduism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atman_(Hinduism))

²⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahman>

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedic_Brahmanism

³¹ *Be as You Are: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, by David Godman. Full text in searchable PDF is here: <http://www.selfdefinition.org/ramana/>

³² See chapter 4 of P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*. <http://selfdefinition.org/gurdjieff/>

adopting or reaching out in yearning with emotion: a love for Jesus, or a love for Buddha – for example with this chanting Buddha³³ – just keeping your mind on that until you become quieted.

Or as I observed with my father-in-law, who reached the salvation experience through chanting Jesus – complete subjugation of the self to Jesus and that sort of thing. He reached the salvationistic experience, which was an exaltation, an illumination, and he lived with it for awhile and thought that he was one with God. But after some time, many of these people will realize that this was an emotional experience, and that somehow their intellect is still troubling them: “Maybe you’re not telling yourself the truth; maybe you’re just carried away. Because after all these twenty, thirty, forty years of praying, this fellow’s never answered you. So you’d better take a second look.” So then they go back: they either start back into fundamentalism, or they start into numerology or astrology or something to try to use their intellect.

And by appealing to their intellect they’ll have another experience. This incidentally is what I call the “wow!” experience or the eureka experience; and this is the equivalent of the satori³⁴ that’s described in books you’ll pick up on Zen.³⁵ The momentary “wow!” you’ll get from studying algebra after intense application. All wisdom and all growth is the result of tension, and if you hold that tension so long you’ll either find the answer or you’ll create one. And so we never know for sure until we’ve reach the final step, whether these exaltations were found or created.

But you keep your head on a certain problem. And of course with Zen it may be a nonsense-koan; it may be just a simple question, “Who am I? And why am I not getting the answer?” And after awhile you become convinced that you have broken through, you’ve reached this light: “Now I know how to solve the algebraic problem,” so to speak, and you think you have the answer. And you rest on that for awhile. But again, after some time you realize that you’ve been the victim of the vanity of your logic; that you thought you were smart. And you realize that there’s another fellow, maybe many other people, who also through the vanity of their logic have come up with concept structures that sound just as harmonious and just as valid as yours. And you say, “How can all of these be right? There’s something wrong here.”

Samadhi

But this is what happens when you rely on logic alone; that almost anything you wish to prove can be proven. So you go on and you hunger for the philosophic stage. And of course by saying “philosophic” we mix philosophy in with other symbols; wisdom is only the juggling of symbols, whether they’re algebraic symbols or Biblical fundamentalistic symbols. And now we juggle with ways of living; we go beyond just the symbols of the intellect and we go into ways of living and experiments of our own being – until finally we enter the exaltation of kevala samadhi, called cosmic consciousness by Bucke.

³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nichiren_Shoshu

³⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satori> From the present discussion, Rose uses the term “satori” to indicate an awakening to a new way of seeing things, based on the intellect, which is somewhat arbitrary.

³⁵ Rose specifically mentions accounts in Philip Kapleau, *Three Pillars of Zen*, second half of book: <http://books.google.com/books?id=KczYq22WAeYC>

Now there are symptoms to each one of these experiences. And the way to tell the top experience from a mundane experience, from one on the ladder, is that kevala samadhi or cosmic consciousness bears relative signposts. If you read the accounts in Bucke's book, *Cosmic Consciousness* – all these experiences are accompanied by light. It's like an acid trip. The city of Montreal lit up for Bucke at night; the whole thing turned into a rose-colored panorama. He felt at peace with the world. These feelings and scenes are relative. Whereas in sahaja samadhi there are no visual sights; there are no sounds. There are no sound currents that some of these raja yoga teachings talk about – those are all limited to the kevala stage.

Ramana Maharshi brings this out better than any author I have ever encountered. I pretty much gave up on trying to delineate myself the difference in all these words. People have certain conceptions, they come to your lectures and they think they have learned the last word on enlightenment. And it's amazing, the wide range of definitions they have individually for what enlightenment is.

Enlightenment is the destruction of the mind; there is no mind left. While in cosmic consciousness, your mind is there: you see with your eyeballs and you see a little bit that your eyeballs don't see. And this is the same with the psychedelic trips – the acid trip.³⁶ The acid trip is a visualization. It's another dimension, but it's still a relative experience. And it has a sensual payment, the same way all physical experiences have: you have a sensual experience and you pay for it with energy from your body. That's the difference.

To give you another little keynote, in case you're interested in these things, the following is Maharshi's quotation or terminology:³⁷ kevala samadhi or cosmic consciousness is the same as a bucket being lowered into a well, on a windlass, and left lying in the bottom of the well. This is the mind resting in bliss. At which almost any time you can pull the rope back up, and you can go back and do your day's work. And you may experience this two hours before you go to work in the factory, and you repeatedly experience it, although it doesn't come very often in life.

His description of sahaja samadhi, which is the equivalent of our term enlightenment, is that the river enters the ocean and ceases to be. It does not return. You cannot return once the river enters the ocean; because it loses its identity in the ocean. The Atman loses itself once more in the Brahman. The self goes to God, and there is no more self as we know the self. This is the idea.

Hallucinogens

Q. Do you classify all hallucinogens the same as acid?

R. No. I'm using the word loosely, but I do know that there is a psychedelic experience with acid. Not all people who have taken acid have had this; some of them just get high. Mescaline

³⁶ For Rose on his LSD experience see Cleveland, November 12, 1974 ("Obstacles") and Boston, November 19, 1975: <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1974-1112-Obstacles-Cleveland> and <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1975-1119-Boston-College>

³⁷ See chart: <http://www.albigen.com/uarelove/sahaja.aspx>

also has it. I don't know exactly the limits of mescaline. And I understand that you can get it from the sacred mushrooms, psilocybin, but I don't know exactly what type of experience that is. I'm speaking of an experience in which you actually enter a dimension of color or a dimension of emotion or vibration. Sometimes there are people in it and sometimes there aren't. But regardless, it's another dimension – we see it, or witness it, but it doesn't answer to our previous knowledge, or our previous sensory apparatus. But I'm just using that word so if any of you are acquainted with acid you'll know what I mean.

Q. Peyote is contentment. Since you're surrounded in a materialistic world, you need a kick to get you back into a more natural something, to get you back. To be with truth.

R. I don't think you can do it with acid, to be honest with you.

Q. I didn't say acid.

R. Oh. Peyote?

Q. Peyote. [long hallucinogenic pause] It produces a feeling that you are a part of everything.

R. Oh, yes. I don't deny this. In fact, that's why I talk about the acid generation, so to speak. Because you do feel that you're one with the world. But it isn't a question of trying to be one with the world, or trying to be one with the ultimate. This is a misinterpretation, of coming back and being one with this illusory drama – trying to identify once more. The people who take this hallucinogenic drug, instead of looking deeper to try to find the reality that they should be one with, are coming back to the tragedy and trying to be one with *it*. You're taking it too seriously, in other words.

More Q & A

Q. I noticed that during the talk you used a lot of words from the Gurdjieffian system. What's your evaluation of that? And my second question is, if the mind is gone in enlightenment, what functions in the everyday world?

R. I'll answer your second one first. What functions in the everyday world is the everyday mind, because you come back to it. The experience of the mind dying is not permanent. And if it is, why then you don't come back, that's all.

Q. So you just touch the absolute?

R. For a brief period of time – well, a brief period of time might be days.

Change of being

Q. You think there's something different with you if you've been enlightened?

R. Physically? I don't think so.

Q. No, I mean in your being.

R. My being, your being, can't change.

Q. You spoke before of a change of being.

R. Change of being, yes. This is a bit confusing. Because we're talking about your being as the Atman or the ray of God – this doesn't change. What changes is your appreciation, or your finding of that being. Just like you can't read the fine print without your spectacles, so you have to adjust the eyeballs. It has to be an accommodation, and that's the change of being that has to occur, to find the real being. The real being does not change. Man's being – if you want to call it his soul, that's a loose word – his essence doesn't change.

Q. But if his being doesn't change, then why should I strive to see that being? Because when I die I'll be enlightened anyway.

R. Do you think you will? Why do you say that unless you know it?

Q. I've read a lot of accounts of it.

R. Why do you take what you read? One of the things we advise is to doubt. Doubt everything until you're certain of all. There is a danger of just reading a book and taking it as gospel, whether it's one book or another.

Q. But you just said that my being doesn't change.

R. You're taking my word for it. And you know darn well you're *not* going to take my word for it – you're either going to discount it or you're going to go out and prove it yourself.

Q. Why would you want to change your being?

R. I don't know. I don't know why *you* would want to. I don't even know why I wanted to. I believe that sometimes there's a magnetic draw. I believe that some people are drawn toward spiritual things and other people are not, that's all.

Q. Magnetic center then.

R. No, I'm not saying magnetic center – don't confuse this by using Gurdjieffian terminology in reference to this point, because some will get the wrong impression. I'm saying that I presume that possibly the being itself calls. The call of the Father, they say. That's all.

Gurdjieff

Now, the other question was about my appraisal of Gurdjieff. I studied what I could at the particular time; and of course, when I was your age there were no Gurdjieffian groups in the

United States. There are some springing up now that aren't as closely related as they were when I was younger, because when I was younger Gurdjieff was living; he died in 1949. All we had were books by Ouspensky or by such people as Margaret Anderson³⁸ and so on; books by his so-called disciples. And in none of those books do I find a system – that was my comment. So if someone else does, if they find a system that they can follow, that's very good; that's wonderful.

This system

Q. What kind of Zen does this particular group offer?

R. Well, ours is basically a system of going and looking within yourself. And as I said, it's individualistic. There are certain points of advice we give to people who may ask for them, general points, and also unique advice. But the main thing is to apply the same energy that you would to any other project. If you want success, say if you wanted to be a millionaire ...

[end]

[60 minutes total time - if you have a longer version of this tape, please advise]

³⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Caroline_Anderson