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The Truth

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Abstract thinking

Plato's cave

The mass dream

Mind-mechanics

Going directly to self

Keep on working

Yardsticks

Path of reversal

Necessity to act

Q and A

The experience

Influences

Verbalization

What I'd like to talk about tonight is the truth. And that's a rather wide subject, but I'm choosing first of all the mechanism for determining what the truth is. There's no real definition in the dictionary until everything else in the dictionary is proven. We find that it's impossible to define truth, but what we can find is a relative method of evaluating things; and that's the best we have.

Regardless, almost everybody thinks that they've got some form of truth. And I maintain that everybody works toward that truth. I mean everybody. In fact even some of the animal kingdom would prefer to have knowledge of the real state of things, the right answer in place of error. But the word truth has a tremendous range, from objective definitions to absolute understanding. And when you say you're talking about the truth, everyone responds almost automatically: "Yes, I know what you're talking about because I have it." Whether someone knows how many elements there are on the atomic chart or something of that sort, they think that's the truth. But I majored in chemistry around thirty years ago and I remember they told us there were only ninety-two elements, and that was the absolute truth; there couldn't be any more because of some peculiar circumstance. And since then they're still adding elements to the chart.

This type of truth I call small-t truth, no matter how objective and materialist it sounds. We like to say that the material sciences are real, hard truth, found by processes of prediction, and that the answers are very valid. But we never look ahead. It's impossible for us to see how future discoveries will affect our past convictions. At one time we had a theory called phlogiston³ in chemistry, which was superseded by the present theory of oxidation. And this goes all the way down the line.

¹ Url: <http://direct-mind.org/index.php5?title=1978-0226-The-Truth-University-of-Pittsburgh>
For access, send email to editors@direct-mind.org

² This is a better-quality recording and longer version of the undated "Truth, An Early Lecture."

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phlogiston_theory

And now we come to social thinking, that the public thinks certain things are true. We were talking coming down from Akron in the car about billboard advertisements for cigarettes: that a certain type of man is picked to appeal perhaps to a female element. And he's a certain type, let's put it that way; I don't want to get into the description because it might sound negative. And then a certain type of female is picked too, with a cigarette. And young children will go by the billboard and decide that that's the thing to do because these handsome people are showing it. Sometimes the whole framework of social thinking depends upon what some agency is able to flood the public with, whether it's textbooks or billboards or TV, until finally a social state of mind develops in which everybody thinks, "Well, that's it, that's normal. It responds to the democratic majority and the democratic majority is the will of God."

Abstract thinking

We go from there into abstract thinking, because some feel as though the material life or the body is not permanent. There are a few sects who believe in the thing called translation, in which the material body is immortalized, but these are very rare: where Elijah went up in a chariot⁴ or someone was taken in a flying saucer and never returned. There are few instances proven,⁵ much less that when they got up there they were physically immortal. Most of us agree on statistics that show that everybody winds up in the cemetery.

So the next line of investigation – because we're afflicted with the ego of survival – is to find some other form of survival that might happen after we die, some immortality, perhaps in heaven. And enough is written and spoken until everybody believes – because everybody believes, that's all. Everybody believes, and everybody believes that you should never do anything else but believe. But here and there somebody looks at this and says, "Ah, this might be as full of holes as swiss cheese. Where did this thing start?" And if you go back to the sources, do a little translating and read the manuscripts and stuff, you find out that there may have been misinterpretations; that the publicity committee back there changed things as they went along to suit the particular institution at the time.

Plato's cave

This brings us to a point: if you can start to pick up what is going on in the mass human mind, we encounter a thing I call dreaming. And if you're acquainted with Plato, in the Republic,⁶ he talks of humanity as being a man chained in a cave with his back to the opening. The light and the reality is on the outside going by, and what he witnesses is the shadows cast on the wall. And the cave being his only environment, he believes that this is reality. But he's chained, he cannot turn around; this is the significant thing. And I think this illustration is very worthwhile – especially in the fact that we look upon all previous thinkers as being old fashioned or behind us

⁴ 2 Kings 2:11-12

⁵ Possibly none.

⁶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Republic_\(Plato\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Republic_(Plato))

in the evolution of intelligence; that nothing good came until the twentieth century. But if you understand this theme, it means that man must first break loose.

So this is called the cave of illusion. There have been a few books written on it, such as van der Leeuw,⁷ but the average person doesn't encounter them because he doesn't look for them, and he doesn't dream that there has been any investigation or any eminent thinking done in this line. You can take Einstein's concept of the curving of space,⁸ meaning that it might not be what we think. Or the present concept of black holes in space corresponding to ancient writings in Tibet and India, which you can find in Blavatsky, where they talk of the pralaya,^{9,10} the inbreathing and outbreathing of the universe; the universe breathes out, and then someday it breathes back in. And with these observations, all of our concepts about the indestructibility of matter are somehow thrown in jeopardy, and that the world – which we look out there and see, and which seems to be so real – may someday be tucked back into the hand of the magician and disappear.

The mass dream

So with this in mind we get to looking for reality. And unless we realize that we're chained in a cave and we're witnessing a dream – possibly more than one dream – there's very little hope in getting loose and getting outside of it. To give you an idea of what I mean: a child is born into what I consider a projected world – that by some chance all of us agree upon in advance. Now we don't have time to prove this tonight, except to refer to ideas like the cave of Plato. But using chemistry or physics we can come to such conclusions, as that green is every color but green, and in reality black is not black but the absence of color. And we wonder how we adjust in our heads what we see by the lens of the eye; that while the eye sees everything upside-down, we all agree that the world is right-side-up.

But we enter this projected world and somehow instantaneously accept it. And within the projected world of the massive dream there is a smaller dream, and that's the family dream – in which the child is rewarded by pleasant things, by food and later by toys, until it develops an idea almost that the parent is deific. And the child develops a personality that pleases these exalted creatures to get whatever it wants in life, which is basically toys and trifles and that sort of thing. And it develops a compliance with a dream state – because before the child is born the two people who had the child dreamed. It wasn't necessarily reality; they dreamed of having a family, of certain little cherubic offspring who would be perfect and wonderful and would grow up to be leaders of the nation or geniuses or whatever they wanted them to be, to take over the old man's business or something. But the whole thing was dreamed ahead of time. And for a brief time the child accepts the dream, crawls into it as well as he can, completely, one hundred

⁷ JJ van der Leeuw, *Conquest of Illusion* <http://selfdefinition.org/van-der-leeuw/conquest-of-illusion.htm>

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spacetime>

⁹ E.g., *The Secret Doctrine*: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/the/sd/sd2-1-18.htm> (search on *pralaya*)

¹⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pralaya>

percent, and loses itself in the dream until something else comes along, until it starts dreaming its own dream.

The reason I'm bringing this out is that these dreams pretty much depend upon the feeling that each person is impressed with: that it must conform to and believe this dream. That half the trick, as the fellow says when he joins the army, is believing the sergeant. Don't doubt him. I used to hear the soldiers saying this, "You better believe it." You had to throw yourself into a state of mind, regardless of how ridiculous it was, to preserve your head from lumps. So the child does this too, and a whole civilization develops.

Mind-mechanics

And then we have dream experts. I just picked up a book before I came here – I haven't had time to read it yet, the title is *The Mind Parasites*,^{11, 12} – but I can see where a lot of people are wise to this and they're trying to manipulate it, like with the cigarette advertisements. Or the politicians who say, "This poll went from 95 to 96 to 97," and everybody says, "I've got to be on that band wagon." This is popularity, but popularity is not necessarily the truth.

There's an inclination in humanity to deify democracy; that just because most people agree upon something, that will make it a fact. And this same thing is carried over into theology. Today if you give a talk, you'll have people that ask whether you believe in any of these schisms they're running around with now, revolution or Lord knows what. And I'll say, "I'm not involved in politics, don't bother me with that stuff." And they say, "Well, you're not a spiritual man; because today everyone knows that everybody who is spiritual is involved in revolution." Well I'm not so sure about that, but this seems to be what some of the mind mechanics are trying to enforce, the idea that everybody believes it.

Now if this is true, that we are prone to getting into dream states on a massive scale, to where even the nature of the universe is affected – Chilton-Pearce talks about this in *Crack In The Cosmic Egg*¹³ – he says that we can undo this whole civilized pattern by using an alternative set of symbols. Make two and two equal to five instead of four and you'll come up with some amazing results. You'll shake the whole structure up and we'll be able to perform miracles with our new set of symbols. But mostly when you realize this dream-thinking, you see the difficulty in doing any real honest research on a subjective or a philosophic level.

Now we could go along and say, "So what? – in a hundred or two hundred years science caught up and we corrected the error, and now we're in the facts again; and if the facts change in the future that's alright." But there's a trend today in sociology and psychology to whip up a sort of mass belief, that certain things are true, even though they're a lie – absurd lies – so that we'll find compatibility with each other. And they say the only way you can reach this is to believe this stuff. Now if this is our trend, can you figure what will happen to your head? – will you really be

¹¹ Colin Wilson. 1967. PDF here: <http://selfdefinition.org/colin-wilson/>

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

¹³ PDF: <http://www.selfdefinition.org/psychology/>

able to hold onto the facts after awhile? We'll either wind up with a new form of magic, in which mankind will be able as a mass to create stuff, to change matter by virtue of this clever little trick, or we'll wind up with wholesale confusion on an increasing scale.

Now we basically have two methods of finding out the truth about ourself. It's manifest that if you wanted to find the total truth, about let's say your nature before birth, during life, and after death, a religion or philosophy that doesn't answer all three questions would be incomplete. And I used to lay this yardstick down and put these cults alongside it.¹⁴ Some of them will tell you where you're going after you die, but there's no mention of where you came from. And some may tell you both where you came from and where you're going after you die, but they never bother to identify who's talking or what is here.

But there are basically two methods of determining this (and if you know a third I'll add it without any prejudice) and they are psychology and esoteric philosophy or religion. So we've gotten into a dream state in psychology – I'm talking about behavioristic psychology, not about people like Szasz¹⁵ and Jung¹⁶ – where the current party line seems to be that there's nothing but a body; what you see is what you get; that the body just reacts in certain predictable ways. And things like after-death experiences, immortality, ESP, and thought-projection are all figments of the imagination; and until these are proven, the psychologists can very smoothly reject them as nonexistent.

So we're at a loss if we're going to let ourselves depend upon authority. It's nice that you can go to church once a week and say, "Well, I let the preacher do my thinking – that's what he gets paid for." This seems to be a tendency. I worked in a research laboratory¹⁷ up at Alliance, Ohio years ago – we were working on the atomic submarine – and I thought, "Boy, I'll meet the best brains in the nation. I'm going to see what they've come up with, using their little slide rules, on life after death." And I found that almost every one of them was shocked when the question was put to them, that they would be expected to answer. They were specialists, that's all. One of them told me flatly: "I pay the preacher to do that for me; that's his business. He spends his whole life at it. He's an expert."

We find that anybody who went through college, no matter how he got through, comes out with a shingle and he's an expert. And this is legal; this is the way our courts are run. If you don't have that you can't testify; whether as an alienist, a psychologist, on behalf of some man's life, you have to have the shingle. Consequently the authorities are creating a tremendous dream state to suit themselves, so that they can sell this merchandise, package it and put it on the market without argumentation.

¹⁴ *Albigen Papers*, chapter 4, "On Gurus and Unique Systems".

¹⁵ Thomas Szasz, e.g., *The Myth of Mental Illness*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Szasz
PDF here: <http://selfdefinition.org/psychology/>

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Jung

¹⁷ Bobcock & Wilcox, research technician, 1947. See Bob Martin's *Peace to the Wanderer*, p. 26:

Going directly to self

Let's go on now to finding some method of going directly into ourself with the help of some religious or esoteric system. And again we're faced with this question of truth. But here we find everyone calling everyone else liars. As I've often said, when I was young my sole environment was a Christian atmosphere, and one of the first things I heard was that we were the only true people and everyone else were liars. But I looked around a little further and I found out that those other people also said the same, "Don't fool yourself, we have it, nobody else has it."

This was given to me in the form of a joke that a minister told. A fellow went to heaven and was being shown around the different movements. The people were still into the same religions: the ones who were shouting on earth were still shouting and rolling in the lawn in heaven. And all the time they were walking along there was a big wall, and the guy asked, "We've seen that all these churches still exist, but what's behind this wall?" And they told him, "Be quiet – the Catholics are back there and they don't know that anybody else is here." And that hit me, because I was born and raised a Catholic and I could see the sense in it. How could anybody, just by denouncing, actually establish any truth? There had to be something more than just brainwashing your kids into a dream state of mind, complete with love and attraction, and fear, if you didn't perform, and that sort of thing.

So it takes a bit of looking. And eventually, when I was about twenty years of age I came to the conclusion that there was a major thing missing. I finally got an English translation of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*,^{18,19} in which is supposed to be proof of the existence of God,²⁰ proof of the immortality of man. And one of the things that was continually repeated in Christian theology was the fact that the finite mind would never perceive the infinite. Don't try to reach it, just believe.²¹

Well, that's pretty hard to swallow, to believe like that. Because you know again that whatever they would ask you to believe, there are other people of faith who believe the opposite; whole armies marched up and massacred each other, each with a profound conviction and belief. And the almighty Lord above wouldn't budge. There was no protestation from up above, except way back in the Old Testament, when an angel was supposed to have come down to help Gideon²² – who didn't have too good a reputation, incidentally. And a man with a very good reputation was crucified later and there was hardly a rumble; no deliverance.

So it's pretty hard to believe all this stuff when you look deeper into it. I'm not trying to break any stained glass windows; I'm just saying let's look at things, let's look at the translations. And

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summa_Theologica Read online here: <http://www.op.org/summa/>

²⁰ See http://www.richmond-philosophy.net/rjp/rjp20_samuel.php

²¹ Aquinas himself (if not the clergy in Rose's seminary) went on to speak of the "beatific vision", the intuitive perception of the being of God; see page 2: <http://www.answers101.org/articles/beatific.pdf>

²² In the lecture Rose says, "a legion of angels", corrected here. Judges ch. 6-8.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gideon>

these are things I did when I was young. And I came to the conclusion that if I had about two thousand years I might be able to chuck all these factors into the computer and come up with some decisions. But I didn't have two thousand years. I realized looking ahead that possibly when I reached forty I'd start to crystallize: my veins would get hard, and I wouldn't be able to get into a lot of heavy strain in pursuing these things.

So it came to me that there must be a shortcut. And I got into a few books that said, yes, there is a shortcut. Of course in these same books, once I got into them I discovered a whole new crop of hucksters – someone spinning something out of whole cloth, saying this is truth and selling it on the market. So this is another factor: besides the difficulties in perceiving the truth, you encounter deliberate efforts by the biggest part of humanity to deceive each other. And the probability of finding something is thereby decreased. But regardless, I found that the underlying concept was that you had to go directly within; that a person could not *learn* the truth. When I was twenty-one years of age I was majoring in chemistry in college, and I gave up the whole idea; I continued a few years in college but I gave up the whole conceit that I would tear this universe apart and put it in a test tube and find the essence of matter.

I felt that if I wanted the truth I would have to change the vehicle. Back in this old book on theology was this thing that the finite mind would never perceive the infinite. But what they didn't say was that the finite mind might someday become less finite – and with this new condition, observe and understand things that are not understandable by the finite mind. So the result was experimentation, looking around, hunting for wise men, wise books. But it involved a change of being, a change of vehicle. And then just hoping against blind hope, with all the odds in the world against that you're going to find anything; you're hoping you will, but the odds are that you won't.

Keep on working

You can find hardly anyone who knows the answer. You can pick up books on it – and there *are* people who found the solution, like Ramana Maharshi, Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ – but these people are out of your reach, generally. They're either dead or silent, and their words first have been written by another person and then translated, so you can't be sure of too much of anything. The process then of course is to keep on plugging, in the hope that something will break through. But there are systems, if you want to look into them, and there are books you can read – today there are an increasing number of them. There were none, hardly, when I was a boy twenty years of age. The Depression was on and there was no way to travel to India as some people do today. You just had to stay where you were, and you were lucky to have a job and eat.

I got back then of course to the business of not succeeding – it went on for several years, in fact, until I was thirty years of age.²³ And many a time I thought, "Boy, I'm the biggest idiot on earth. I should be out getting drunk instead of being on this." I was trying all these little things

²³ (1947) Rose says "thirty-two" in the original, corrected here.

that were indicated as being the mechanism, such as a vegetarian diet, standing on your head, concentrating on this point or that point, and abstaining from everything that would poison your blood stream, all that sort of thing. And nothing was happening – except that I wore a lot of the hair off my head, standing on it. And I came to the conclusion that I had been kidding myself. And you'd pick up books by psychologists who say, "This guy is sick." And why is he sick? Because he's opposing the normal curve of life and death. And the normal curve says everybody dies, they die ignorant, and it's abnormal to try to live beyond the normal lifespan of three score and ten.

But I maintain that the whole system of modern psychology is survival; of course it's a form of herd survival: "If you live the way we tell you to live, you won't cause any ripples and you won't wind up in jail or slain; your conduct will be acceptable because it will be just like everyone else's." Of course, the fallacy behind this normal curve thing is that when people approach a certain common vice, this becomes normal too. A thousand years ago this vice may have been a sin that would send you to hell; today it's an attribute of the gods. So by democracy we change the whole theological structure of the heavens.

The chance of survival should not be limited to just functional survival as a taxpayer. If there is a chance for a longer type of survival – whether that be translation, as some people believe, or some sort of out-of-the-body survival, if there's an essence – then that should still conform to the psychological theme, meaning survival or better functioning. But regardless, if you get interested and you come that far, you're going to encounter a tremendous lot of obstruction. You're going to have a lot of obstacles to get around or survive.

And I tried to do this work by myself. I'd get a book on yoga and turn the page and it said stand on your head, so I stood on my head, that's all. Supposedly that fellow knew what he was talking about, perhaps. If he didn't, maybe where there's smoke there's some fire, let's try it at least – there's nothing else to do but experiment. But the experiments failed for some reason. And they fail largely because, well, you get tired, for one thing, and then you've got to take time out to hunt for a job, to make a living. Or you go to college and you get into that state of mind; and that's a state of mind you'd better believe also. [break in tape] So there are time spans that go by in which you can't do anything. There are time spans when you get completely disgusted with yourself. You think, "Well, I'm just kidding myself."

So what happens then is only by accident, because it's a blind struggle. If I have found something in my life, it's been almost an accident – because I had no real guide except a tenacious desire and a continual reapplication of energy. But I realized when I was about twenty-eight years of age that I wasn't getting anyplace. I pretty much used to alienate myself from society. I felt that they were disturbing – I felt influences from them. And I tried to keep by myself as much as possible; that like the monk in the monastery or the hermit in the desert, I could think better if I weren't bothered by other people's states of mind.

Yardsticks

Yet the biggest obstacle I encountered in this search was not finding people who knew something. And I was always “rewarded” with somebody who wanted something, usually money or sex. There were people who claimed they had something, but when you got to meet them they’d say, “Yes, we have an esoteric group who’s headquarters are in the Himalayas, or underneath the mountains in Central Europe. We emanated from ancient Egypt and we’ve got some secret people hiding in the northern lands. But it’s going to cost you a thousand dollars.”

And I came to the conclusion that either these people didn’t think much of the treasure they held – when they priced it at whatever they priced it at, a thousand dollars or ten thousand, they didn’t think much of it – or else they were lying and they had nothing and were just running a business. And this developed in me a tremendous anger. I built up a resentment for all of the isms, no matter what they were.

But I noted that there were certain key factors that were found in movements, like common denominators. And I marked them down as yardsticks, and began to apply them.²⁴ And as soon as I came into a new movement and they had these things I considered defects, I avoided them. And simultaneously with this, I got angry enough to make up my mind that if I ever found out anything I would try to make it available to people who were capable – young enough and capable of doing something with it. And they could perhaps save themselves ten years fooling with wild directions.

One of these yardsticks of course is money. You can’t sell the truth and it cannot be bought. And that doesn’t mean that if you meet in a certain room or form a little group and you pay the rent, that somebody should live there for nothing. But there should be no profit, no fees, no rake-off. No man should eat from the other man’s table; each person should support himself. Simply because it gets to be a disease: you get a whole institutional hierarchy built up, just living off of people who are sincerely clinging to them in the hopes of truth.

The second thing of course is that the truth does not require outward manifestation – such as robes, titles, ranks, degrees, all this sort of thing. So that when I came into a place and people were standing around in long flowing robes, I moved back out. I said that this doesn’t have to be. They’re playing some kind of game. They’re back into child’s play, dressing up with the curtains off the window, imagining they’re princesses and princes – and hoping that this dream will catch on and everybody will become filled with awe, and pay them a thousand dollars, as priests and priestesses.

The third thing is secrecy; this is a big handicap or impediment. I could see back in the Middle Ages, when they were chopping up people for religious-political reasons, it was a good idea to keep your mouth shut. But today I see no need for that – and yet I’d guess there’s as much secrecy now as there was then. I went into a temple out in Denver, Colorado once time²⁵ – I’m

²⁴ See *The Albigen Papers*, chapter 4, “On Gurus and Unique Systems”.

²⁵ Nov. 26, 1986 TAT Meeting: “I went out to the ‘I Am’ cult in Denver and didn’t stay 15 minutes.” Possibly the Ascended Masters/Saint Germain Foundation. <http://www.saintgermainfoundation.org>

not going to mention the name because I don't want to offend anyone; that might be someone's level, and if it's your level it's necessary for you. But I had heard about it and just went in off the street; I saw the sign up there and went in. There were people standing around in what looked like evening gowns.²⁶ And I said, "What's going on? I heard about this outfit and I'd like to check into it." So one of them says, "How did you get in here? No one gets in until they've been a member for seven years." Well at least I had saved myself seven years' time. And I said, "All I want to do is ask you a few questions about what you're doing and then I'll be on my way. What do you know? What's the culmination of all this discipline and training?" "Seven years," he says. "You come back. You've got to fill out the application form and join, and then when you reach a certain degree you'll be told certain things."

I did come to the conclusion that secrecy may well be necessary in many cases. I don't believe in telling children about Santa Claus, but I don't believe in telling children about weird forms of sex either, just because it's the truth. So secrecy of that type perhaps should be carried out. But when you have people who are mature and capable, and it's not going to hurt them to hear it, then secrecy is only a veil for deceit in many cases, where there is nothing when you finally get through it.

For instance, I talked to a lady who was a Rosicrucian – I talked to several of them in fact through my lifetime; we had a group in Ohio for many years where the members went from group to group and took initiations, just to learn what they were doing. And I knew of this lady in New York who had been a Rosicrucian. (I'm safe in using that term because there are about four different orders in this country.) Their stated purpose was to find their astral master. And I found many of them who had spent their entire lives in this – and who finally had been told there was no more, after being told that there were arcane secrets they could get into. At a certain point they were told, "Well, you've used up all the coupons; there are no more left we can send out, and we can't take you any further." So this to me becomes a sad travesty: people led year after year into believing that there's always something better around the corner.

Path of reversal

So with this in mind we embark upon what I call a system of search – which I have never heard described before, so I wanted to bring it up. That it's impossible to postulate God – even though everybody does at first, and then hopes to hang onto that belief and God will magically appear. But it's impossible to say, "I'm going to find God," because we don't know what God is. And it's impossible to postulate truth. Not even the dictionary can define truth; it can say what something means in relation to some other word – but if it could define truth, the whole answer would be right there in the dictionary. It's like the judge saying, "The whole truth and nothing but the truth," never realizing what a tremendous thing he throws on that witness.

But if we're sensible, our search has to follow common sense: that we cannot approach a postulated objective that is subjective, such as an abstraction like God. We might be able to

²⁶ Photo here with gown and image of St. Germain: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Am_Activity

approach San Francisco, but even then, this is subjective if we've never been to San Francisco. We may trust that the road leads us there, but we'll always be pulling out that road map and hoping it's there when we get there. We're never quite sure what we're going to see until we see it, even in concrete matters. But in an abstract or subjective postulation, you can't with any safety use a word like "God". We can't just say, "We're going to find immortality."

But there is a way, using the mind, trying to make it less finite, capable of handling infinite values or evaluations in the computer. In the business of approaching an impossible postulate, these same tactics must be held: and that is by retreating, not aiming in any particular direction. Never aim in any direction; just avoid the foolishness. This is a little trick that I call *reversing the vector*. It's the only way you can go. You've got to evaluate the garbage and see if you can find something good inside. And hang onto that good – and check a few other garbage cans, and maybe you'll find a little good there. Collectively you may find some type of philosophy or conclusion, which in ensuing years you may reject as garbage too. But there will always be something a little more sensible, a little more evidential, that you'll be able to investigate. And by using a process of rejecting the absurd, the immensely absurd, while taking tentatively that which may be possible, we work with that, until nearly all that we have that's possible, ninety-nine percent of it, also becomes totally absurd, or more absurd than something else we investigated.

Necessity to act

So by using these yardsticks to help you expedite this thing, it's possible in a lifetime to cancel out a tremendous number of major isms. You find yourself a direction, and once you find it, hang onto it, and carry it on until you see something happen, if it happens. If it doesn't, at least you've had a good hobby. And that's what I thought my own life would be. I could see that this type of pursuit might bring me something, and it might bring me just a wasted life. But by the same token I came to the conclusion that nothing would be wasted. Because at least I functioned in action, not in acceptance or just living like a dog until the ax fell, and saying, "Well, that's what everybody else does."

I believed that if I died without knowing anything, my *self* as an act would be important. At least that would be the history of my life. I think that every man's being is that which he does; not that which he thinks or that which he pretends or that which in some sort of fear he accepts as his life. But if a man acts, that's what he is. We are a fact, even if that fact is not immortally conscious. We are an immortal fact. And I would much rather be an active fact than one that just allows things to happen.

Consequently, pursuing along this line, I encountered what I considered a valid experience. And the next step of course was trying to translate this so somebody else would understand it. And I spent quite a few years and a bit of futility there. Immediately I thought that everybody was interested in learning what it was all about. But it's impossible when you use words, the English language, to convey this; you're not understood. For instance you use the word *truth* and if there are a hundred people here they're going to have a hundred different ideas, unless we nail down

exactly what we mean by the truth. So first of all you have to find people who are somewhat of the same mind.

Some of the old psychologists even said this business of searching for the truth is a sickness.^{27,28} The medical materialists used to say you could define a man's sickness by what he believes, by which church he goes to. And the whole population who went to church, who indulged in working toward abstract things, were indicating some abnormality – as though Christ had a martyrdom complex and St. Paul was an epileptic who fell off his horse and mistook the stars that he saw for astral stars. And Buddha was a catatonic; he sat for years and couldn't move, underneath his tree.

So you run that risk also; you run the risk of being called crazy. You run the risk of *going* crazy. I remember back when I started, I said, "Yeah, a lot of people seem to go crazy with this idea of religion – maybe I'll flip my lid and they'll haul me away. And that will be a rather disgraceful fact; instead of being a charger of windmills I'll be a gibbering idiot in some nuthouse." But you have to take certain risks if you want to get anything done. I maintain that these things operate according to laws, and these apply to all segments of life. If you're poor and you want to be a millionaire you've got to set a priority. Getting that million dollars is your priority and you'll do without certain things, or you'll focus all your possible energy in a given direction, hoping that by throwing all the mud you can at the ceiling some of it will stick.

The same thing applies to spiritual work. If you're going to be a thinker one hour a day, one day a week, that's the degree of fact-man that you are: one twenty-fourth of one seventh. And this is the reason not much is accomplished. Because everyone puts the majority of their time into vegetating, and harmonizing with the major dream-plan of humanity, and they neglect the business of finding out who is acting. And of course this goes back again to this question, of why reproduce? why get carried away making money or whatever until you know who's reproducing or being ambitious? And by the same token, why espouse causes or try to form great political empires until you know the factors? – first of all, the factors involved in that, and then the great factor itself, the factors that control us or the factors which we are.

And along with this of course I come with a perennial question, which I accuse psychologists and psychiatrists of never answering, and that is, "What is sanity?"^{29,30} Is it just behavioral acceptance, reading the mind of the masses? Taking a certain type of behavior of solitary men who are outside the majority and voting them for death? Is that really sanity? Is the spirit of man something that's just a by-product of the body, or is it a thing in itself? And when we realize that possibly these are things-in-themselves and not just outgrowths of a body, and if we want to understand the mind, we should get into it, and find out at least the chief motivator: that which the mind is and that which propels the mind into existence.

²⁷ William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. ch. 1: "In fact, one might almost as well interpret religion as a perversion of the respiratory function." PDF here: <http://selfdefinition.org/christian/>

²⁸ See <http://selfdefinition.org/psychology/james-medical-materialism.htm>

²⁹ 1983-0323-Lecture-of-Questions-Pittsburgh: "True sanity can be close to despair."

³⁰ 1976-0726-Lecture-Pittsburgh: "My definition of sanity? Retreat from garbage. ... Sanity is *that which is*. A state which is closest to the essence of man."

Q and A

Now I want to digress at this point and open the talk up for questions. I have only told you what comes to my head, and it may be inadequate. But this is the general pattern; the book was written to put this into print, in case someone wanted to hear about it who didn't have access to me, or maybe if I kicked the bucket. There's a coherent blueprint laid down, I hope, and I can't cover all of that tonight. But I feel that what I have said so far will give you at least some inkling of a direction. And if this does give you an inkling and you have some questions, then I prefer that we engage in a form of dialog.

I'd like to say, though, that at almost every place I talk there are people who are not interested in what I'm saying. They're not curious. They go to certain meetings just to preach their own particular beliefs – which are well and good, and they may necessarily be valid for them. But I'm suggesting in advance that if a person asks questions, they ask out of curiosity, not out of trying to prove that I'm crazy or that they're wiser than I am. I'm willing to sign papers in advance saying you're wiser than I, and we'll drop it at that. I do not care for loaded questions. We're not in it for an argument. This sort of abstraction basically comes down to a struggle for understanding with whatever words you use. So we can't use Socratic cleverness in trying to show that the other fellow's universe is upside-down by virtue of just being able to twist things upside-down momentarily. But if you listen, and pick up any ideas I've talked about that you'd like to have me enlarge upon, or any explanation, I'll be glad to, and we'll carry it from there.

The experience

Q. [mostly inaudible question about Rose's mystical experience]

R. Are you acquainted with the book *Cosmic Consciousness* by Richard Bucke? ³¹ Are you acquainted with the words *satori* or enlightenment? Well, the experience I had I think falls into the latter category, if we can judge by the description of Ramana Maharshi and Bucke. Bucke used the label cosmic consciousness [kevala nirvikalpa samadhi], but Ramana Maharshi talked about a further experience he labeled sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi.³² It's an understanding of the totality of things, whereas of course kevala samadhi is the realization of the harmony of mundane things. And satori³³ [kensho³⁴] is the first popping through in the mind of a perfect relationship in a set of symbols, or a realization or amazement that comes from studying a set of symbols. I believe the same thing happens in algebra. So there are different types of exaltations. But when it happened, of course, I realized I didn't need to look any further, let's put it that way.

Q. What was the trigger for it? The whole search for enlightenment?

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Maurice_Bucke pdf here: <http://selfdefinition.org/christian/>

³² See chart: <http://albigen.com/uarelove/sahaja.aspx>

³³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satori>

³⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kensho>

R. You'd have to look at a hundred and one things, but it was an accident, basically. The reason I'm going to avoid telling you what it was is because it was [inaudible]. And I say there's no sense in beating a dead horse just to describe something that happened; the horse is dead, so to speak. I've encountered many exaltations, where people have had salvationistic experiences, wow experiences or satori experiences, cosmic consciousness, in which the world seems beautiful, filled with light and radiant bliss, ecstasy and so on. But one of the things that marks this other type of experience in all the cases that I've encountered, and of course I haven't encountered too many, is the feelings of nothingness and the extent of nothingness in relation to everythingness, if you want to call it that.

I don't think it can be aptly explained. But I do know this much, that the reason I think these things are authentic, in the people I have heard, is that they were spontaneous, and there was no common trigger. It wasn't that you said so many prayers or whirled so many prayer wheels and after ten thousand whirls you became enlightened, or that there's any prediction possible. And I'm glad it's that way, because whenever you get into prediction you get into sciences; it becomes a very scientific thing but you also get into creation and projection. So that the experiences may be invalid by virtue of a person reading the symptoms and mimicking them. And this is my complaint about a lot of Zen today; there are a lot of Zen people running around talking about no-mind. So they try to mimic this, to feel what no-mind would be like, to imitate it. And what they're doing is eventually projecting it. It's like a person who sees a mirage because he sees what he wants to; he creates an experience that he hungered for and projected.

Influences

Q. On the sheet that was passed around you had a quote I believe from your book on things that affect the drive for truth, that influence it..

R. Right. In other words, there are influences, human influences, that are obstacles to finding truth. To be effective you have to have a priority. If you think, for instance, that you're going to do things simultaneously – to make a million dollars, and at the same time to go through a system one day a week, and try to follow a certain discipline that will take you to a realization – my guess is that you'll fail because of the division of energy, the division of the tension. One will take from the other. I hope that answers you; I'd forgotten what's on the sheet, to be honest with you.

Q. I think that quote was more about what confuses the mind from the realization of truth.

R. Everything confuses it. Everything.

Q. I was wondering why you didn't include language.

R. Language is part of it too. For instance I'm talking now and I wrote a book, but still I say in the final analysis that words are useless. I knew a Zen teacher up in Connecticut³⁵ and he said this,

³⁵ Alfred Pulyan. <http://www.selfdiscoveryportal.com/Pulyan.htm>

that words were useless. So I asked him, "What are you talking for then?" And he says, "Well, we've got to use what we have until we can transcend it." When you get to the point where you don't need words, when you can convey directly, which is called transmission, then we don't need them. But until that time you wrestle with definitions and misconceptions. Talleyrand once remarked that words were intended to disguise meaning, not to convey it.³⁶ There's the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. It may have been a tower but at the same time it may have just been the fact that when people started using words they built a pyramid and got stuck with it: a whole big gob of things they got hooked on and had to understand. And that takes a lifetime, and while we're understanding the vocabulary we already have, the dictionary is expanding, with more words, more complex terminology.

Verbalization

So there is a hint of that and an inclination in a lot of people to dump all the words and go to direct thinking – and this isn't always advisable either, because you have to have some direction. As I said, you evaluate all the isms on the face of the earth; this is a verbal pursuit, a philosophic analysis. And when you get through with that you may dump the whole thing. Because when your head opens up there will be no verbalization. You won't hear a voice say, "Hey, you've arrived; this is the ninety-ninth floor." No, you'll just be there, that's all.

Another thing is that the condition of the mind when you reach it is not going to be something you can verbalize. Because part of the procedure calls for an intense application of mental energy. This is what you encounter in principal Zen koans, an intense amount of concentrated energy to bring a mind to a point where there is no mind – which I call fattening up the head before you chop it off. Now this may sound difficult to understand. But the mind doesn't go there. The mind does not go there. If the mind went there it could come back and describe it. But you're just aware of that when you get there.

Q. Do you advocate the use of koans?

R. I think everybody uses koans – you're getting them all the time if you associate with other people. We take a technique that has a Chinese or Japanese word and it sounds magical to us and different. But everybody's getting koans all the time. If you're fighting with your wife it's a koan; if you're fighting with your employee it's a koan. You're forced to concentrate, you're in a trap and you're going to have to do some heavy thinking, to find out where you are and what you're going to do about it. So that's a koan. But as for most of the koans you hear in Zen – we don't accentuate that in the group. We're called a Zen Society, but it's not because we're Buddhists or use or endorse all their techniques. I don't believe in attaching ourselves to anything, and no one in the group is attached to a particular system.

[End of recording. This is the first 60 minutes of at least a 2 hour talk, so some Q&A is missing.]

³⁶ "La parole nous a été donnée pour déguiser notre pensée." The word was given us to disguise our thought.