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PHILOSOPHY RELIGION
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The Tenth Anniversary Issue

WHOLENESS

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Volume X
Number 1

PARABOLA

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

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WHOLENESS

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VOLUME X, NUMBER 1, FEBRUARY, 1985.

FOCUS

This is PARABOLA's first issue of Volume X—the beginning of our tenth year. Looking back, we see how the magazine has changed with the years, and if we look inward as well, we see how we have changed with it; and yet, PARABOLA is still quite recognizable, and so (alas) are we. It seems that willy-nilly everything follows a kind of circular process. There is no standing still, and no sudden transformation. The whole question, the only one to which our response is necessary, is whether the circles of our movement tend to become smaller or larger; whether they are closing down to a dwindling point, or opening to a greater and greater inclusiveness; whether or not, in other words, we are journeying toward wholeness. It is all a process, a *journey toward*; it can never be an arrival. Even our "wholeness" is relative—the measure of our capacity to measure the immeasurable.

PARABOLA's Volume I, Number 1 celebrated the hero. In Volume X, Number 1, we wished to see what is beyond the hero. Is his victory the end of his quest, or the beginning of another, even more far-reaching? Does "happy ever after" mean eternal repose—or could *happiness* be the continuation of the process which brought him, only as a first step, to heroism? And can this process—never-ending, continually enlarging, forever changing—have any identifying signs?

This is not empty theorizing, for if we

are to be, as was said in PARABOLA's first Focus, the heroes of our own lives, this process claims us all; we work with it, or it devours us. And perhaps the identifying signs may be sought for (like the moon in its reflection in a puddle) in those, more accessible to us, of the anti-process, that which causes our fragmentation. For it is disintegration that we see as the central, terrifying fact of our personality-split, atom-split society—so central and so terrifying that even nuclear science begins to look for the moon's reflection.

In his book, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, an eminent physicist, David Bohm, says that in spite of the generally observable fact of fragmentation in human life, "wholeness is what is real," and fragmentation is only "the response of this whole to man's action, guided by illusory perception shaped by fragmentary thought." He defines it further as "in essence, a confusion around the question of difference and sameness (or oneness) . . . *To be confused about what is different and what is not, is to be confused about everything.*"

Between the hurtful divisiveness of false differences and the waste of possibility in the "pudding" of a false sameness lies the entire hope of reality, of wholeness, and of relation. Through this "illusory perception shaped by fragmentary thought" we lose all chance of right relationship, which, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama points out in his talk with Robert Thurman, is based on differences. And so we lose what might be our relative wholeness, since this can only be the wholeness of relating to and participating in a universe on another scale from our small selves.

For our tenth anniversary we have brought together eight interviews with distinguished representatives of the world's great traditions and schools of thought—a real feast of amazing correspondences and subtly contrasting flavors. A sense of taste! What is that but the discrimination we have been speaking about? And where is it more important to exercise it, as sensitively as possible, than in this sharing of the human search for meaning? Here indeed it behooves us to know the difference between what will satisfy, and what will not, both taste and the need for nourishment.

Helen Luke says that the process toward wholeness is a process of letting go, that comes from "a long history of choices in small things"; and what begins this process is the experience of the difference—the real difference—between the ego and the Self. In the words of Pauline de Dampierre, this is the moment when conscience appears, when the ego-coachman of the mind hears the voice of the true "I," the Master within.

And to complete the circle (and in doing so, we hope, making it larger), we said in our original Focus that the first requisite of the hero was the *capacity not to be fooled*. So we pray with St. Francis,

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"Lord, grant us the wisdom to know the differences." Yet, the wisdom is there, buried deep perhaps, but an integral part of our wholeness: the voice of conscience, the taste for the true, the recognition of the shape of the lie. It is there for our attention to find. Whether the circle narrows or widens is a matter of our own choice.

—D.M. Dooling

FULL CIRCLE

A Readers' Forum

Some things in PARABOLA go over my head. But some things are golden nuggets.

I refer specifically to the Thomas Buckley piece (Vol. IX, No. 3). And the paragraphs in it about his uncle, the swim in the lake, and the walk down the trail that "was not the same trail at all."

Another tremendous thing is the interview with Tara Tulku. All of it, of course, but where he speaks about the relative "I"—!

Here I speak in general and express how I feel about words. When they unlock feelings and give cloudy nebulous feelings a reason for being, it is like a step forward, or a door unlocked, or that a right to *be* has been given that did not exist before—when it is the precise word, coming in at the right level, with the relatively exact amount of comparative weight.

—Shirley Diaz
North Miami Beach, Florida

I find that PARABOLA has enriched my thought and enlarged my vision. As an educator who spends large amounts of time

working with teachers to help them observe and listen to children, I once again have gained some new ways to help them recognize themes—the journey, the quest, the pilgrimage—which occur in children's writing and drawing. When such themes are recognized as part of our shared humanity—not limited to a particular age, time, or place—they can better support children through providing stories and asking questions that extend the seeking rather than diminish it.

—Kathryn Sue Updike
Menands, New York

We greatly appreciate PARABOLA's ongoing interest in *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton* and welcome the opportunity to correct several errors that appear in your reviewer's remarks (Vol. IX, No. 4) of *Perspectives,* our introductory survey of Brunton's voluminous notebooks.

1. "'World-Mind' is Brunton's term for "the single power which presides over the entire universe. . . . For us it is God . . . Pure Intelligence. . . . the active agent behind and within the universe. . . . a radiation of the forever incomprehensible Mind. . . . It is the essence of all things and all beings." (pp. 372–373). While this term may at times be applicable to our sun or even to our earth, it should never be used—as your reviewer does—to describe our own minds as enhanced by the evolutionary progress of greater knowledge and scientific information.

2. Brunton does not advocate abandoning ancient systems. He invites us to deep, reflective study of all wisdom-traditions, interpreting them anew in terms more accessible to the West's "own creative and native mind" (p. 177), rather than trying to ape bygone cultures in the changed conditions of today.

3. The heart of Brunton's philosophy is *not*—as the review suggests—*feeling* but rather *insight:* "the highest knowing-faculty of sages. . . ." (p. 274). Much of Chapter 16 speaks against the notion of feeling *alone* as an adequate guide.

4. Brunton does *not* discard all cosmological ideas. P. 348: "A rare but complete illumination must not only pass from the first to the final degree of intensity, but must also contain a picture of the cosmic order . . . the profounder nature of the universe, the inner meaning of individual existence, and the hidden relationship between the two." It is through stressing this extremely important factor that Brunton distinguishes genuine philosophy (i.e., the wisdom-traditions) from self-centered mysticism and unfolds the groundwork for compassionate altruism in the world.

5. Brunton does *not* recommend blindly following our "intuitions," which—as your reviewer rightly observes—may be stupid and dangerous. Much of Chapter 22 speaks to the need and offers methods of

(Continued on page 158)

The Fullness of Emptiness

AN INTERVIEW WITH HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, has a number of principal identities. He is a Buddhist monk in the Order founded by Shakyamuni Buddha around 525 B.C.E. and revitalized by Lama Tsong Khapa around 1400; hence, a spokesman for the ancient educational tradition of the Buddhists. He is a reincarnation of the Buddha Avalokateshvara, the Mahayana Buddhist Archangel of Compassion, and especially the Savior of Tibetans, the King of Tibet (tragically in exile for the last twenty-five years); hence the defender of rights and freedoms of the Tibetans. And he is a Vajra Master of the esoteric Mandalas of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, especially of the Kalachakra Wheel of Time; hence deeply and perhaps prophetically concerned with the positive evolution of all intelligent life in our sacred environment on this planet.

The following interview was conducted at the Deanery at Westminster Abbey, where His Holiness was staying as the guest of the Very Reverend Dean Edward and Mrs. Lilian Carpenter. Under an original portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, in a building built during the lifetime of Tsong Khapa, at the ritual center of the English nation, I asked His Holiness to share with PARABOLA'S readers his vision of Wholeness.

—Robert A.F. Thurman

Dr. Thurman is a professor of Religion at Amherst College, a founder of the American Institute of Buddhist Studies, and an old friend and student of His Holiness's since 1964. The interview was conducted in a mixture of Tibetan and English His Holiness and Professor Thurman tend to speak when they discuss the Dharma in terms of its relevance to today.

R.T. Your Holiness, PARABOLA Magazine would like to ask you about "Wholeness"—the Whole Man, the Whole Person. They say: "We are defining the Whole Person as one who has in his being, to a very high degree, freedom, unity, consciousness, and will. What is your view?"

H.H. What I call the human qualities are love, compassion, tolerance, will. To be warm-hearted—that is true human being. You see, not to have warm feeling in the heart, that is almost not to have fully the nature of a human.

R.T. Would you say, finally, that Buddha is Whole Man?

H.H. Yes—on a high level. Yes, certainly. But when I speak of the good qualities of a human being, that means our ordinary human being, on the human level. Buddha is already beyond the human level.

R.T. If Buddha is beyond ordinary human nature, then some people might think of Him as cold-hearted—someone sort of superhuman, that doesn't care.

H.H. No, no, no, no. What we call Buddha is warm-heartedness developed infinitely, love perfected. And also infinite enlightened consciousness—oh, yes.

R.T. Their next question is: "It has been said that the Whole Person is one who lives simultaneously in two worlds. Do

Photographs by Christophe de Menil

". . . the seed of liberated being comes from the beginning; that seed is there. But that is not sufficient."

you agree with this, and if so, what does it mean to you?''

H.H. This has different meanings. One: the person himself or herself reaches the highest level, but meantime, remains in world affairs—for the sake of other beings, out of altruism. In that way, ''living in two worlds'' can be said. Then again, maybe another meaning: a person who really practices well, and as a result, for himself or herself there is no sort of emotion, but equanimity. One is impartial; but in accordance with circumstances, taking certain action. In his inner world, there are no differences, but in his outer world he or she keeps aware of differences, and accordingly takes action. So you see, two worlds, I think, can be understood on different levels.

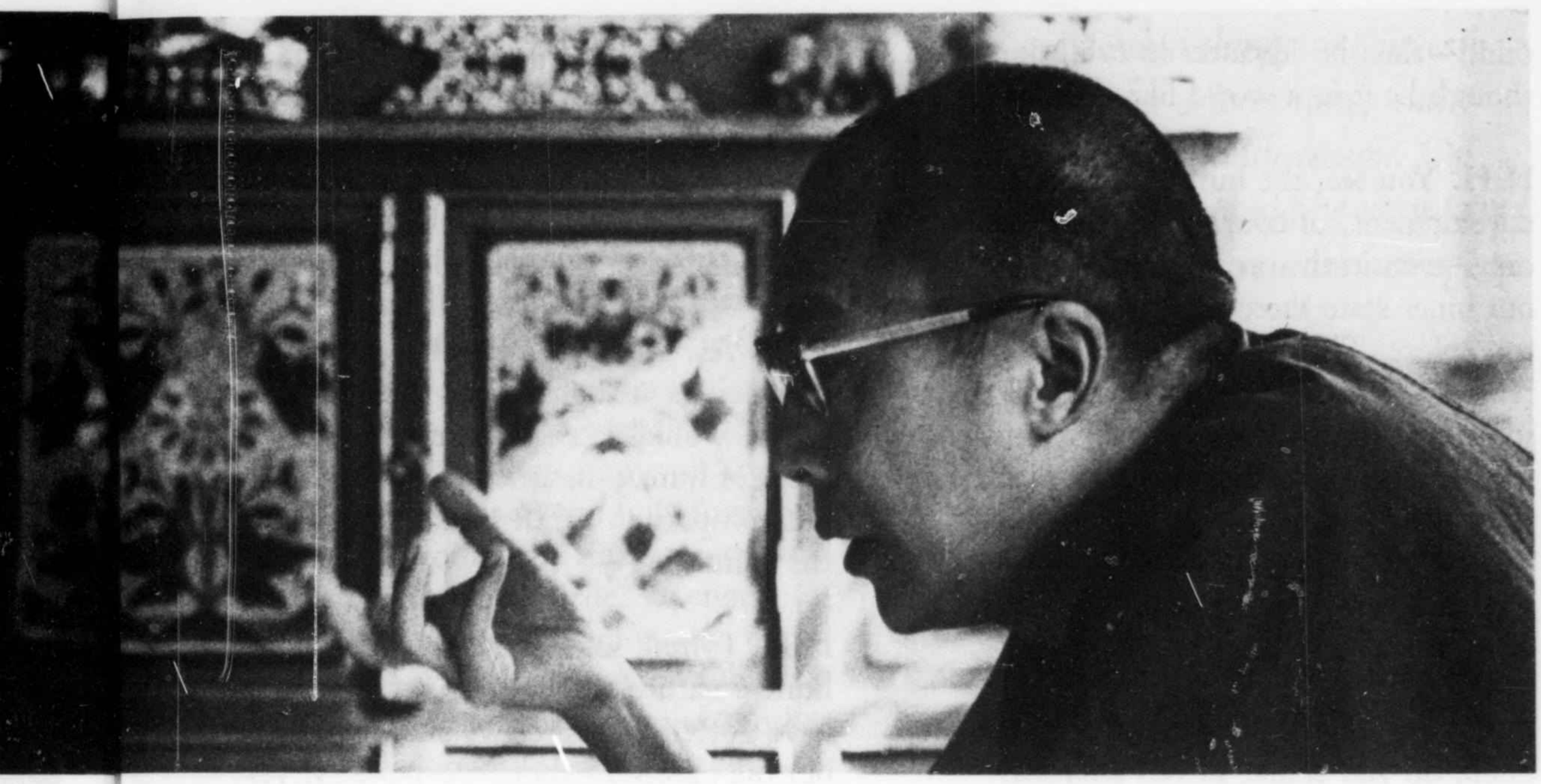
R.T. ''Is there a fully realized, totally developed whole within every human being? Or does the process of struggling to free oneself of ignorance contribute to the perfecting of the individual? In other words, is there only a seed of a liberated being within, which must grow through effort?''

H.H. I think this is correct. In other words, what we call the Buddha-nature—that is the Buddha seed. That means of course there are different aspects of Buddha nature. One aspect is *shūnya**: ''the reality of the mind which needs not to abandon any taints.'' That is what we call Buddha nature, according to the *Ornament of Realizations*. Also, *Sugatagarbha*: according to the *Supreme Tantra*, that also is Buddha nature, and the ultimate nature of consciousness is also called Buddha nature: *Tathāgatagarbha*. So you see, from that viewpoint, the seed of liberated being comes right from the beginning; that seed is there. But that is not sufficient. Just by being there, there's no benefit, right? So you see, one needs effort, to develop, to purify oneself, on the basis of that nature.

R.T. Is it that the fact of that seed being there makes it possible to do it? Without it . . .

H.H. Without it that can't happen. There is no sense in purifying a stone, even though it has the nature of emptiness also. But because the other aspects of the Buddha nature are not there, we can't say that the stone ultimately becomes Buddha.

*The doctrine of emptiness



R.T. "Are human beings, as they are, in any way unfinished?"

H.H. In the spiritual sense?

R.T. Yes, and in the evolutionary sense also, perhaps. Have they reached the fulfilment of their evolution, perfected their brain and heart and understanding, or are they unfinished in that sense?

H.H. In that sense, I don't know. The human brain may develop or it may decrease. I am not at all sure.

R.T. But isn't a Buddha a being with a more developed brain?

H.H. But that's not natural evolution.

R.T. Isn't it? It is not test tube development!

H.H. (*Gales of laughter.*) I think, you see, without effort, that kind of evolution we are speaking about cannot take place. For example, first an animal goes on four legs, then on two legs, then it is easier to run around, yes? Now that is without effort, isn't it?

R.T. I don't think it is without effort.

H.H. Not in the sense that, for example, those four-legged creatures needed some effort to go on two legs—that kind of effort, yes. But I speak of evolution in the Buddhist sense: for example, in the primordial eon, beings do not depend on grosser food. Then they go down, and finally reach a ten-year life span. That period is the worst the human race can reach. Then again another rise, and finally they reach the time of Maitreya's teaching. That we may call "evolution." And that without special effort.

R.T. I see what you mean.

H.H. Simply as you see the seasons changing, these are cycles. We are still, you see, on the line of decline . . .

R.T. Unfortunately.

H.H. (*Laughing.*) You can't say unfortunately. That's just the way it is.

R.T. But, an individual who is reborn after an effort in his individual life—for example, one who creates the spirit of enlightenment, who conceives that higher

mind—then he advances in evolution, even though he is in a world like this.

H.H. You see, the human level of mental development, of course, is not a finished one—even in the ordinary sense, within our inner state there are still many things to explore. This has nothing to do with religious ideology; this is spiritual. I think some part of the brain's capability may be fully utilized only through deep meditation. But meantime, there are certain things still to be explored in the ordinary way. So from that viewpoint, the human being is unfinished.

R.T. (*Laughing.*) Does Buddha have more brain, do you think, in His *ushṇisha*?*

H.H. It is not a question of that. The grosser consciousness depends heavily on particles of matter; so it is the grosser level that has very much to do with the brain. The subtler consciousness is more independent. So the innermost subtle consciousness does not depend so much on the brain. If it did, it couldn't exist without the brain; and you see, in the Buddha state, the grosser mind completely disappears. Luminance, radiance, imminence—the three states of the subtle mind—all of these disappear in the clear light, the clear light of supreme innermost subtle consciousness.

R.T. Exactly, exactly!

Now: "What is the realization which the Whole Person enjoys?" Would you say, like Shāntideva, that the more a person is aware of others, the more they approach wholeness?

H.H. Right!

R.T. So in a sense, to a human being, compassion is almost natural.

H.H. Right, right. As I already said, there are many different levels of the Whole Person. For example, one sees a dog beaten by someone; a Whole Man, on a certain level, then feels a certain kind of pain. Although he is not beaten physically himself, yet mentally he feels he himself gets some kind of blow. If one sees a bug killed before one, one feels a shiver of identification.

R.T. Yes. So though people say that human beings are aggressive, like apes, like tigers, would you say rather that the essence of human nature was not aggression but compassion—differentiating him from the animal?

H.H. I think so. I think so. If the basic human nature was aggressive, we would have gotten animal claws and huge teeth—but ours are very short, very pretty, very weak! So that means we are not well equipped to be aggressive beings. Even the size of our mouths is very limited. So I think the basic nature of the human being should be gentle.

R.T. Now PARABOLA asks: "What does it mean to be free and open?"

H.H. I understand the meaning of "open" as just like open door: it can open very easily, without difficulty. Then "free," that is also the same. And as a result of being free and open, the more you receive new ideas, that makes you want to give out more your own energy. That way, I think, each helps the other. The more new ideas come, the more you see the way open for your own expression or thought to go out. That I think is very useful, very necessary, especially these days.

R.T. Don't you think "openness" is a matter of views, primarily—of not what we call "holding one's own view as superior"? For example, a prejudiced person, who thinks he already knows everything, is not exactly open, is he? So in a sense, doesn't "open" mean "free of wrong views"?

H.H. That's right. The more pride, the greater arrogance, then the less open one is. Yes, we do call that holding one's own

*The cranial dome. Buddha's was unusually large.

belief as highest, not accepting other beliefs. Now, there is a different meaning there. The self realizes that our knowledge and our mental development are not fully developed, and feels that there are a lot of new things to be understood; in that sense one is open and free-minded. But there are certain things one investigated oneself, for a long time, and found a conclusion, with reason. On those subjects, you should be very firm. That does not mean you are not open-minded. But since you fully investigated, and you found the firm answer, you accept that as ultimately true. Openness does not mean you are wishy-washy, or that if someone comes and says, "Oh, this is not that," then you change; and another person says the opposite and again you change. It is not like that! Conceit about a view means a certain wrong view of reality, a dogmatic attitude. That is view-conceit. But holding truth as true, without prejudice—there is no pride there.

R.T. But isn't that also not only because the ultimate truth is the right view, but also because the Buddhist view, of absolute negation, selflessness, truthlessness, emptiness, cannot be a dogmatic conviction? One can't hold selflessness as a self, can one? Therefore, there is something about the view itself, since it is absolute negation, that in itself creates openness, wouldn't you say?

H.H. That's a difficult subject. For example, the cognition that ascertains realitylessness just recognizes the mere negation of intrinsic reality. Beyond that, there is no ascertainment of the existence of a realitylessness other than that, nor is there any thought that "it is something other than that." There are no such things. There is the mere recognition of the negation of hypothetical intrinsic reality. Now, in the wake of such an understanding, there is no clinging to any other thing.

R.T. In short, there is not much "Oh, I am; I know." That kind of view-conceit can't easily arise with respect to selflessness.

"There are certain things one investigated oneself, for a long time, and found a conclusion, with reason. On those subjects, you should be very firm. That does not mean you are not open-minded."

H.H. Such does not arise.

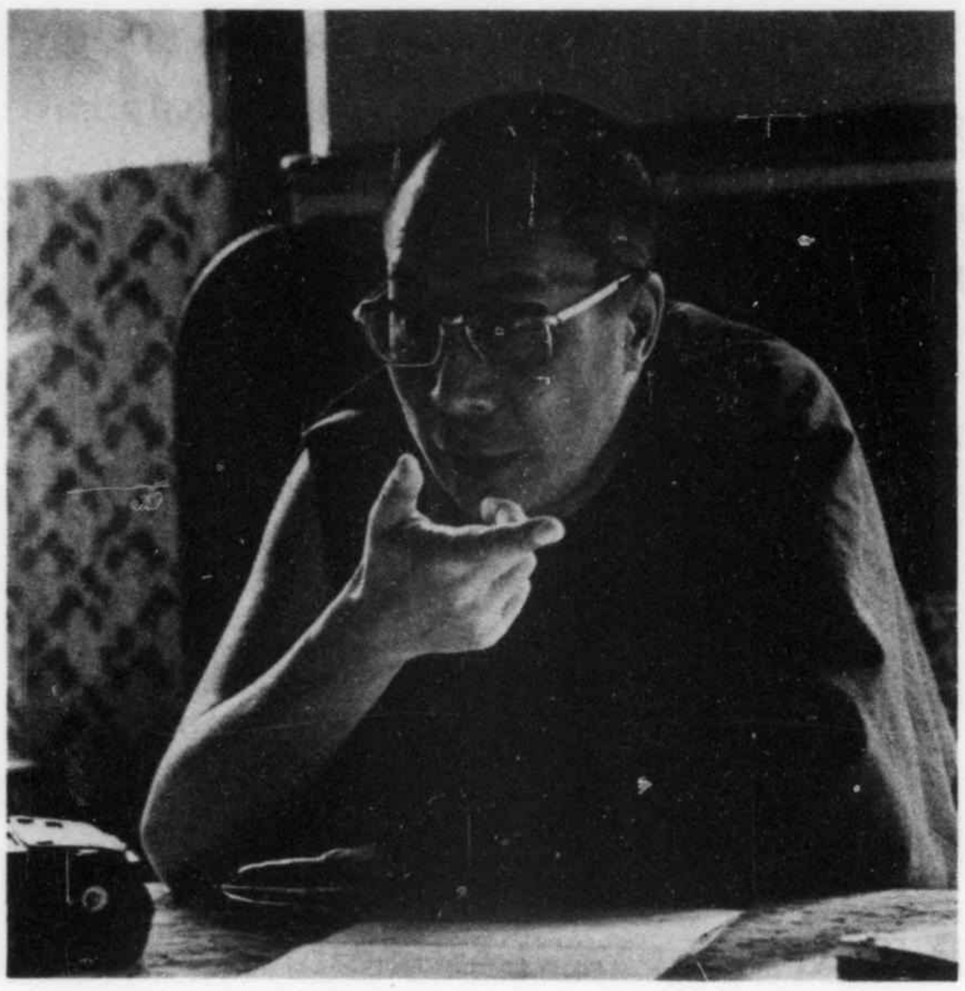
R.T. Without an "I" it's hard to be self-conceited. I'm sure somebody can manage it, but it's not easy!

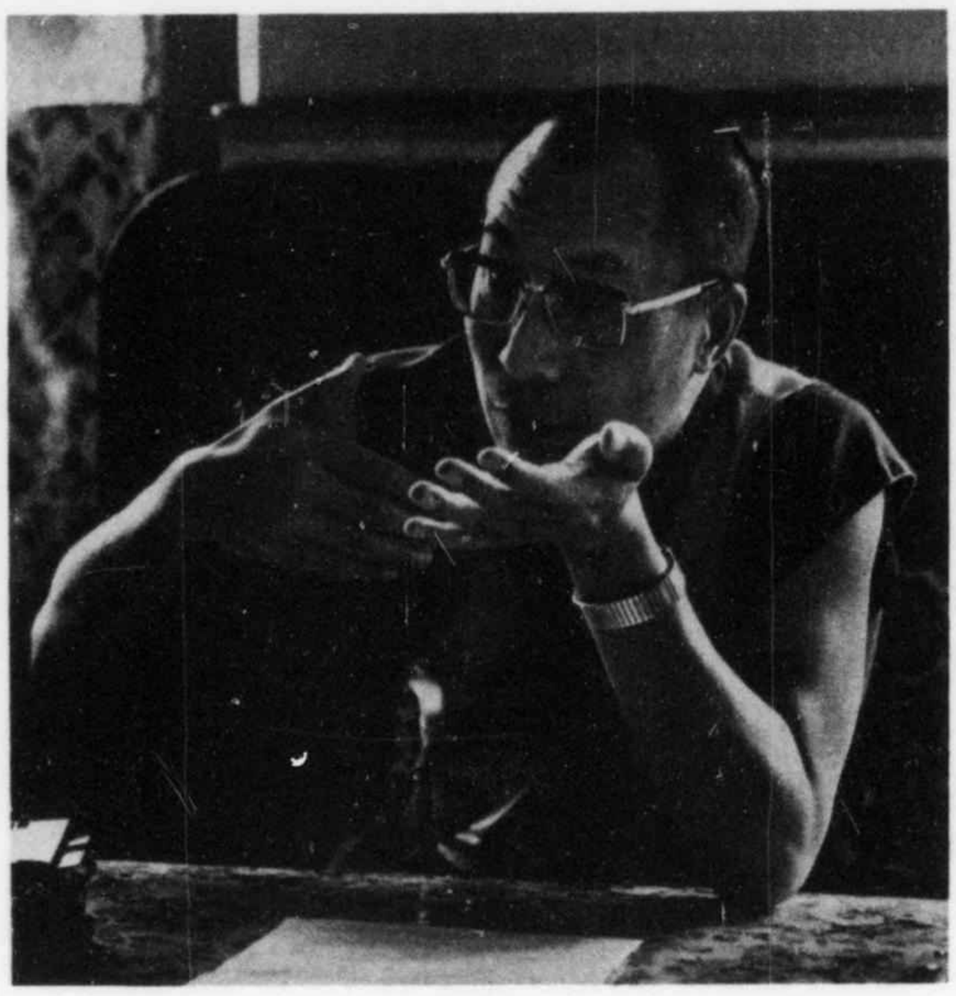
H.H. (*Laughing.*) It will come!

R.T. "How do you see openness in the sense of the non-obstruction of life-force?"

Coming back to fanaticism and dogmatism about views, there is the field of race-relations: "I am white," "I am black," "I am Chinese," "I am American." For such persons, even some little hints of emptiness might make their views more gentle and temper their fanatic ideology, don't you think? It might dawn on them that their deepest identity was something beyond their race or nationality.

H.H. Now, here, you see, two things are involved, so we should be very clear. There are two levels of the strong feeling that I am of this race or that race: one, the conventional level—just the mere recognition that "I am an Easterner" or "I am an American," which is true. There is nothing wrong with that. It is reality. In order to make harmony between races, the basis is difference; there are different types, and it is thus harmony comes. The realization of emptiness in no way harms this feeling. Even I think it supports it. Now this is the level of conventional recognition. Then there is another thing. With this realization, then the other strong feeling, the truth-habit, arises. When that joins this mere recognition, it starts trouble. It is





that feeling that becomes racism; the prejudices of the truth-habit are very much involved. Now, the view of the realization of emptiness is quite contrary to that feeling of truth-habit; it is the antidote for that. For example, I see something good: I appreciate it, it's a good thing. Here there's nothing wrong. Then I go beyond that: "Oh, it is very beautiful!" and I become very much attached to it; then there is something wrong. So you see, the view realizing emptiness removes the exaggerated identity feeling on the second level, not on the first level. The first level, if we misapply emptiness on the conventional level of surface reality, then confusion will arise, nothing can be distinguished, then it will go into nihilism.

R.T. Yes; that's very precise. That's great . . .

Now, another question: "I understand your teaching to say that the Buddha nature is inherent in every person. There is also an expression, especially in Zen Buddhism, 'effortless effort,' which is often misunderstood to mean an inner passivity. What kind of active inner effort is necessary for the liberation of the Whole Person within?"

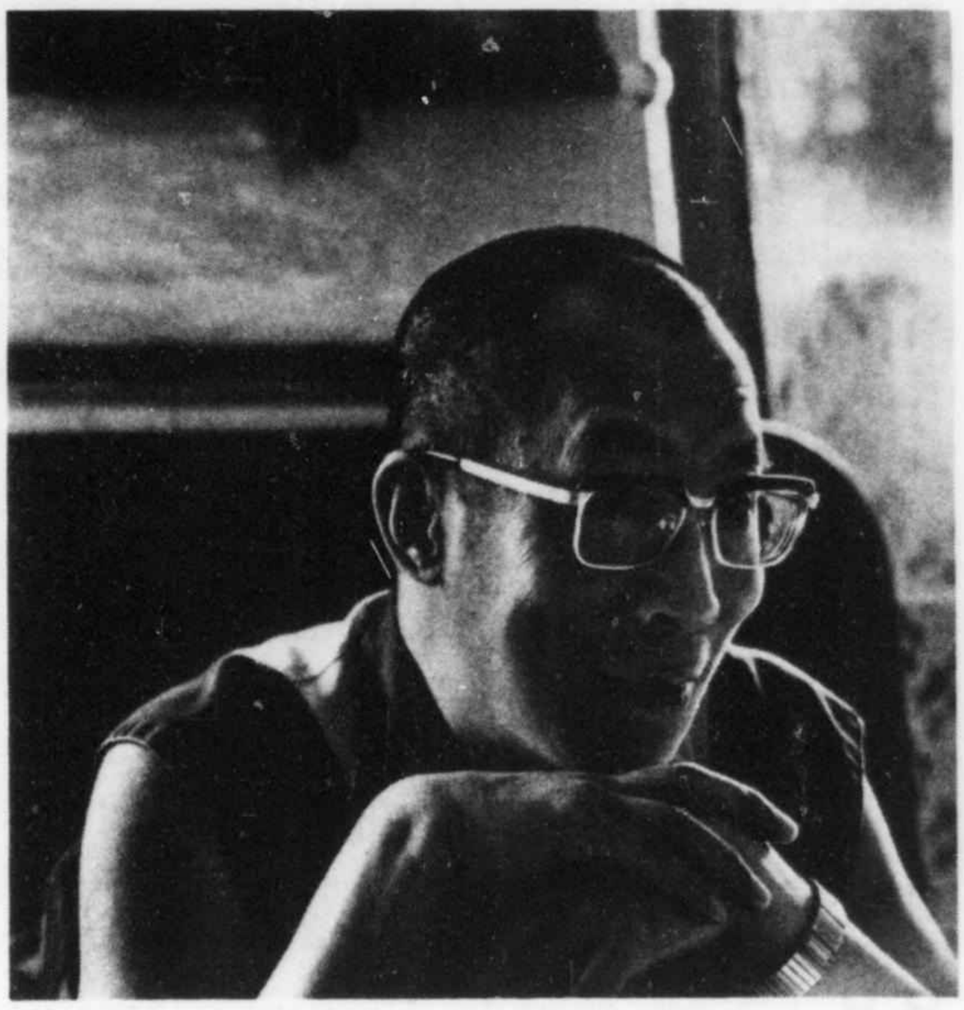
H.H. This "effortless effort" is what is called the effortless striving. Right. Now in the meditation of mental quiescence, in the nine states of mind, there is a state where striving must be abandoned; an effortless concentration is necessary at a certain stage. It is effortless; that means, your mind becomes very tranquil—with good qualities, with its character complete. At that moment, if you make effort, that disturbs the tranquillity. So in order to maintain that pure tranquillity, the sort of effortless effort must be used. Of course, it is a kind of effort. You have to make at least a mental effort: "Now, I don't want to make effort!" That means effort, in order to have less disturbance of meditation.

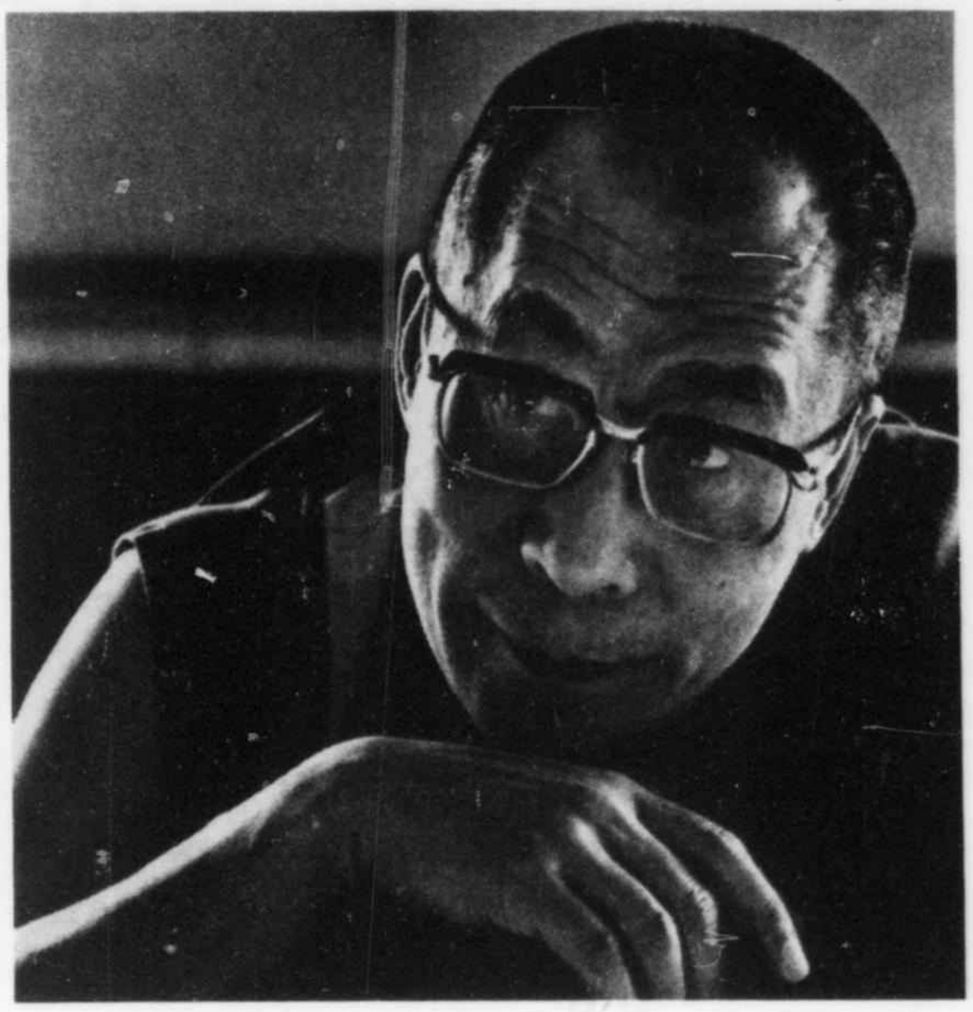
R.T. So there's a kind of wisdom . . .

H.H. No, not a kind of wisdom, a kind of concentration.

R.T. What about the non-perception of three sectors?

H.H. No, no, no. It has nothing to do with that. Before this moment, when your mind tends to depression, then you need some effort to raise up your mind, intensify it. When your mind becomes active and ready to go to different objects in distraction, at that time your mind should be quieted. So that effort must be made. When your mind becomes even, with no more fluctuations, you need to stabilize it;





that is the effortless effort. That is the simple effort to heighten any tendency to depression, lower any tendency to excitement. It is effortless in the sense of subtly balanced. It has nothing to do with emptiness. Of course you need an active inner effort.

R.T. "Can you explain what is meant by compassion and why it seems so little accessible?"

H.H. Now, our compassion is not just sheer emotion by itself. One must think over some reasons; it comes with reasons: thinking that all beings want happiness, do not want suffering; thinking over such reasons, wishing to free them from suffering.

R.T. Besides, from the Buddhist point of view, is it really "so little accessible"? Isn't it quite accessible for a human being?

H.H. Yes, it's not far away from human beings. Their using compassion depends on whether or not they know how to think it over, how to cultivate it in their minds, or whether they make effort. The key is how to use the mind, how to open the mind through reasons, and then make the effort.

R.T. PARABOLA's next question: "Are lower energies to be purified in the sense of removed, or are they to be transformed? In what sense can the lower forces be a help?"

In other words, must the lower energies only be suppressed, or can they be carried into the path and be an actual help, if rightly treated?

H.H. Yes, they can, in some cases. I think the different stages must be considered. The initial, preliminary stage is when the person is not yet much developed in the wisdom field; during that time, the lower energies should be controlled. Then when there is more wisdom power, and also some other technique, then they can be transformed — so that the lower force becomes, instead of an obstacle, a help.

R.T. But if you try to do that too soon . . .

H.H. Without other factors, then by itself it will not work; it is dangerous. For instance, there are certain very powerful poisons, say morphine, which in certain cases can be used for medicine. Aryadeva, in one of his works, put up a great argument: "The various substances enjoyed in the Tantric practice according to the vows, these things can be used in that practice . . . for example, poison can be used effectively as medicine. If it helps, it is no longer poison, but medicine. As it helps, it is to be used."

R.T. Now, "What would be a fruitful attitude for me to hold towards those things in myself which I would like to change? Should I hate these aspects of myself? Study them? Try to eliminate them? Learn to accept them?"

H.H. That depends on your own inner strength. There are different techniques. If it is someone who knows, and who has the capability, that is one thing; if not, the only thing is to eliminate. And after all, the ultimate aim is to eliminate these. But the method sometimes makes use of these negative forces; for example, insects born from wood eat the very wood—it's like that. Those persons who are using these lower energies or wrong thoughts—that does not mean they accept these thoughts, only that a different method is being used. It's something like wrathfully killing one's enemy in the open, or using stealth and deception to kill him; in both cases, the essential point is to kill the enemy. In one case, with a very wrathful face, in the other, a very polite one, and then exploiting his own weakness.

R.T. Yes, like judo.

H.H. Exactly.

R.T. Now they ask: "Is there a relationship with one's own suffering which is not usually understood?"

H.H. In Christian teaching, suffering has some powerful meaning, doesn't it? For example, Jesus took the suffering himself. Now that, you see, was not in the ordinary sense, but something very meaningful. Now in Buddhist tradition, we have every right to avoid, to overcome suffering; but when the suffering actually happens, then, instead of being discouraged or mentally distressed, you simply utilize that occasion in such a way that it will benefit you. For the moment, you will minimize your mental disturbance, and for the long run, you develop a certain kind of motivation that will help you to gain more virtue.

R.T. Your Holiness always says that suffering increases your inner strength.

H.H. That is right.

R.T. But some people might think: well then, I should seek more suffering in order to become stronger.

H.H. (*Laughing.*) This I don't mean.

R.T. But voluntary suffering—in a way, isn't that what it is? Don't Bodhisattvas sometimes seek suffering on purpose?

H.H. Oh yes, they do. "I want to take on myself all the sufferings of living beings." They directly enter into suffering that way. But in that case, you see, actually the suffering does not come!

R.T. Ahh! Is that so? When they seek the suffering, they don't get any?

H.H. No, never. The wishing for suffering makes the suffering disappear.

R.T. That's beautiful.

Another question: "Is significant growth of being possible outside of serious religious practice?"

H.H. In terms of human happiness, I feel it is not necessary to accept one particular religion. Without accepting a religion, but simply developing a realization of the importance of compassion and love, and with that more concern and respect for others, a kind of spiritual development is very possible for those persons who are outside of religion.

R.T. And you feel that development can be significant?

H.H. So long as you are a human being, a member of the human family, you need the others' warm feeling, and therefore it is most important that you try to get more warm feeling, be warm-hearted. I always put emphasis on that. That is actually the

base of all spiritual teaching. Without that, there is no other thing, no so-called spiritual practice. Isn't it so? With this, the spiritual development will come. And now you see, if someone lives with these qualities, even an extreme atheist, the Buddhist viewpoint is that when life ends, if a person has lived within this life very honestly and as a good person, then because of that behavior, he will get a good result in the next life. On the contrary, one who has talked about the future life and Nirvana very much without that practice, although that person belonged to the category of the spiritual groups, in reality he will face more problems. This I believe.

". . . simply developing a realization of the importance of compassion and love, and with that more concern and respect for others, a kind of spiritual development is very possible for those persons who are outside religion."

R.T. Then: "In light of the plurality of religious traditions living side by side in the world today, many people find it impossible to move wholeheartedly into any one tradition; such is the dilemma of modern western man. Yet to draw a little from this tradition and a little from that seems too often to lead to a featureless pudding. What advice can you give to those in this predicament?"

H.H. What is "pudding"?

R.T. *Thugpa*—everything boiled down to a mush.

H.H. (*Laughing.*) Oh, oh, oh, oh. . .

At the initial stage, I think there is nothing wrong in taking something from this tradition and other things from that tradition—not necessarily becoming a follower of a particular tradition but simply remaining as a good human being. I think that is possible; not only possible, I think it is good. Then if you want further development, a deeper level—it is like education. On the school level, you learn this subject a little, that subject a little. Then you become interested in one field; then you have to choose one particular subject, and train, and become an expert in that line. In the spiritual line also, when you want to deepen your understanding and your experience, then you should follow one tradition. And develop.

R.T. Yes. I was struck yesterday by your use of the metaphor "spiritual supermarket" to mean something good; I thought it was very beautiful. Usually people use that expression to mean something bad, but you meant that a supermarket offers many choices, many options.

H.H. Ah-hah! Do they usually think of it as something bad? Why?

R.T. Precisely because of the idea that with a little bit of everything it will become *thugpa*, a hodgepodge, as in the question. But you turned it around, and I agree with your interpretation, definitely: "supermarket" means you have more possibility, more different kinds of people can get what they need. You're not stuck with the one thing they have in the little village store. That's wonderful, and it applies here.

Now, "What advice would you give to an ordinary Western man or woman who is concerned about discovering his or her true inner nature?"

H.H. I think, to try to get at least some time, with quiet and relaxation, to think more inwardly and to investigate the inner world. That may help. Then sometimes, when one is very much involved in hatred or attachment, if there is time or possibility during that very moment, just to try to look inward: "What is attachment? What is the nature of anger?" That also is good.

R.T. "What is the proper relationship of knowledge to feeling in one's search for the Whole Person within, and what role does the body play in this search?" In other words, is intellectual understanding helpful at all, or is it just an obstacle?

H.H. Ah, but you see, generally speaking, the intellect is not at all an obstacle for searching inner truth. But certain experiences are reached at certain times without using the intellectual side, simply through a kind of direct feeling; that also is possible, from the Buddhist viewpoint. But usually, reasonings are essential. Nevertheless, when you practice the path of Unexcelled Yoga Tantra, when you cultivate the bliss-void-indivisible samadhi, you don't practice analytic meditation, you proceed by concentrative, non-discursive meditation alone. It's the same with the Great Perfection and Great Soul teachings. Now that does not mean that intellect is fundamentally useless. These are different times and different circumstances.

R.T. Especially during the time of learning and reflection prior to meditation. You can't just proceed on faith.

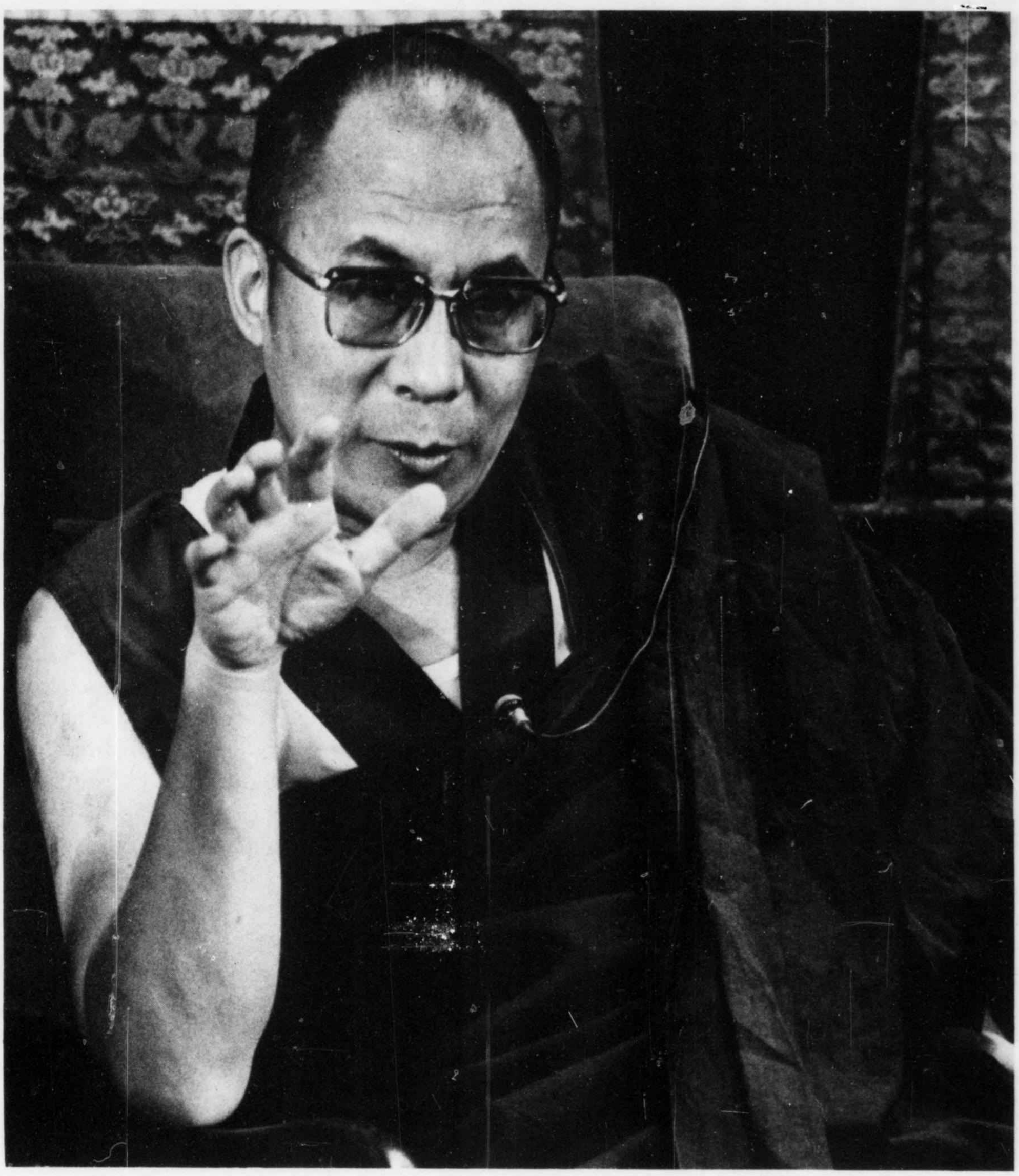
H.H. That's it.

R.T. So would you say that intellectual knowledge initially is crucial?

H.H. Yes. And then in connection with the role of the body, you see, when intellectual work is carried on, the brain and its physical particles is very much involved. So you see usually these intellectual thoughts are a grosser level of mind, which is very much connected with the cell particles. In a state wherein the grosser mind becomes inactive, then the subtler mind becomes more active, and at that moment the relation of the subtler mind and the body cells is left behind, so at that time the intellectual work also is left behind.

R.T. However, isn't it true that to enter the subtle mind state, the blueprint of the structures—of channels, winds, drops, the four lights, luminance, radiance, imminence, clear light—the image of these structures must be in the imagination. This must be said to be a kind of intellectual activity, mustn't it? The mind must hold these images as targets.

H.H. Quite so. Now there are two ways: one method is the meditation of non-thinking—these are the methods of the Great Perfection and Great Seal. Through the non-conception practice, one should reach clear light. There are other methods, through *tummo* heat yoga, through *Vajra* incantation, through breathing practice and



so on. But in every case, in the initial stage, the other factor must be there. Even for the practice of the Great Perfection, it requires renunciation, it requires the spirit of enlightenment. Again now, the intellectual function is indispensable.

R.T. There is an intellectual decision to excise intellect, isn't there? For example, "I am not going to think, I am going to cancel intellect and dwell in clear, blank voidness." To decide this one must use an image of blank voidness, a negative image—isn't that so?

"In a state wherein the grosser mind becomes inactive, then the subtler mind becomes more active . . ."

H.H. That is certainly so. I don't know the exact meaning of the word "intellect" in English, but if it is our Tibetan *togpa*, conceptual thought, then the decision, "I am going to meditate in a thoughtless state," is itself a thought.

R.T. Could one use the simile of shooting a gun? Your sight, aiming at the target, is the concept. To hit the target you must sight accurately, have the right concept. The actual shooting is not a concept; the bullet just goes where it is aimed. So that is the non-conceptual concentration. But of course, the aiming is crucial. Is that a fair example?

H.H. Yes, that's fine. It's quite useful . . . Of course, there are still some problems. When we talk of the thoughtless state, we are talking really of a deeper level.

R.T. Yes, of course.

The next question is: "What Buddhist concepts are most misunderstood by Westerners, and what troubles you most about the consequences of this misunderstanding?"

H.H. I think *shunya* is one of them, and also some Tantric practices; and something like "the blood-drinking deities."

R.T. (*Laughing.*) Cannibal activity!

H.H. For example, Vajrabhairava, the tutelary deity, is very easy to misunderstand; it really looks like some kind of devil. And one can only slowly understand its function as a symbol of the union of the wisdom of great bliss and voidness after an awful lot of explanations. Otherwise, it is very misunderstandable. And sex!

R.T. Yes, certainly; there was a lot of confusion about Tantra based on poorly translated Hindu sources.

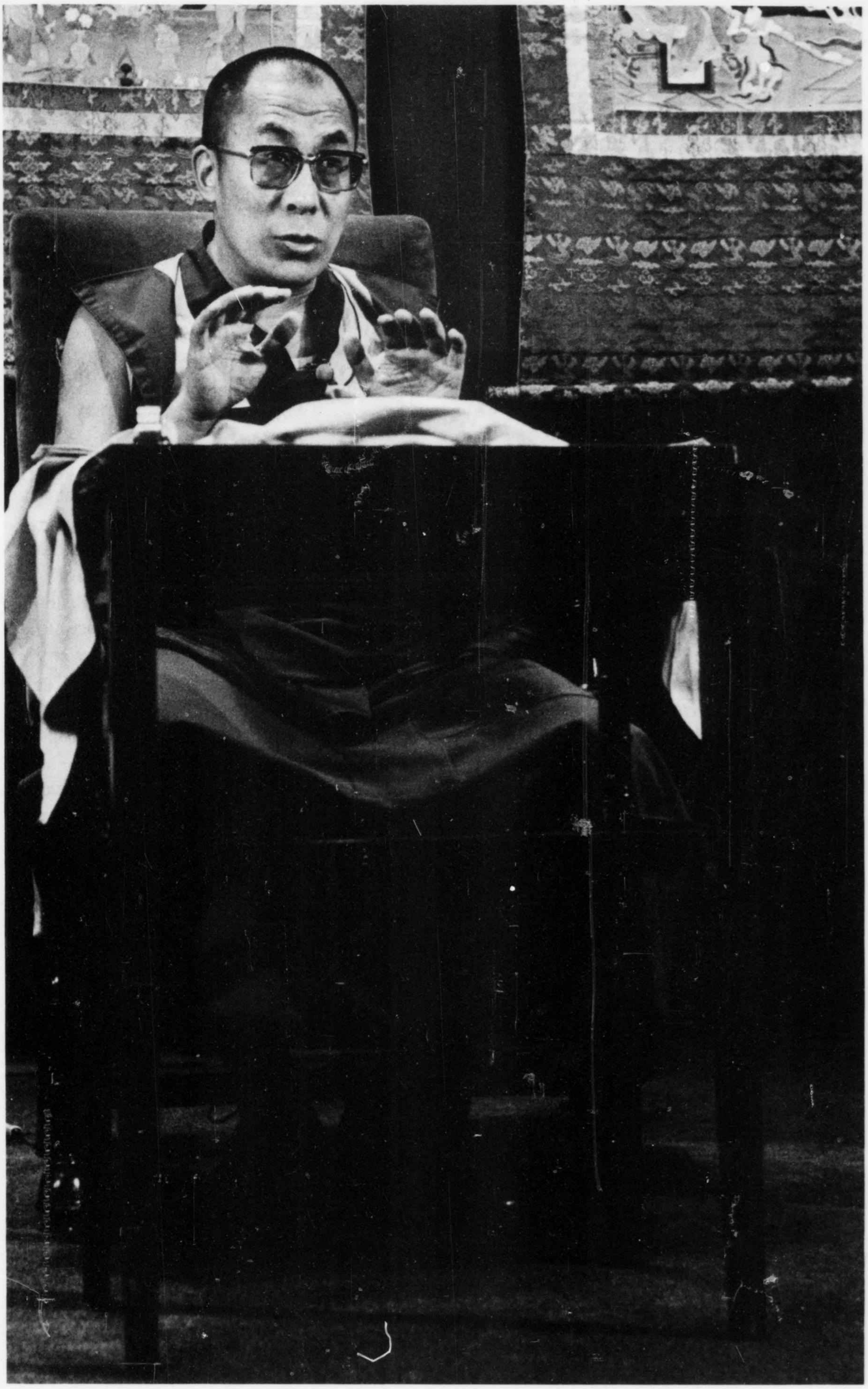
H.H. What is troubling is the simple fact of the misunderstanding preventing people from getting the right idea. Some people who don't really know anything and pretend to know a lot about it cause the most trouble. And if it is thought that Tibetan Buddhism is some kind of strange business, this is very harmful to Tibetans, as it makes people not respect their culture and so not defend their human rights, not cry out against their national tragedy.

R.T. Now it is asked: "Are true religious teachings fragile? Is the greatest threat to their potency and vigor from inside or from outside? And if from inside, what are the threats?"

H.H. I don't think religious teaching is easy to wipe out, but very difficult. Once it is deep-rooted, I don't think it is easy to destroy. The actual threat comes from the inside. That means, you see, those so-called "religious persons" who do not practice well, do not follow a proper way. That is the most dangerous, the greatest threat. In our own Tibetan case, there is the outside threat. Of course, it can easily destroy the temples and monasteries, but it is very difficult to destroy the inner feeling. But suppose one Tibetan monk or lama behaves badly, then that can do very much harm. That can really destroy the inner faith, the inner feeling. So the actual threat comes from within. And also, using religion as the instrument for division; that also is a threat. And then I think in some cases, you yourself can have too much attachment to the ideology and lose the basic aim of religion, of helping humankind.

R.T. We come to the last question: "What is the task of the Whole Man, and what fundamental questions are you concerned with in relation to your sojourn on earth?"

H.H. The task of the Whole Man is to help others; that's my firm teaching, that's my message. That is my own belief. For me, the fundamental question is better relations, better relations among human beings—and whatever I can contribute to that. ■



Letting Go

AN INTERVIEW WITH HELEN M. LUKE

Helen Luke was born in 1904 in England. She received a Masters degree in French and Italian literature from Somerville College, Oxford. Twenty years later, she became interested in the work of C.G. Jung, and studied his thought in Zurich and London. Arriving in the United States in 1949, she established a practice as a counselor in Los Angeles. Today her work continues through her writings—Crossroad has published three collections of her essays, including Woman: Earth and Spirit, The Inner Story, *and most recently,* The Voice Within*—and at the Apple Farm Community, begun in 1962 near Three Rivers, Michigan.*

Apple Farm has been described as a "center for people seeking to discover and appropriate the transforming power of symbols in their lives," and as a "women's contemplative community." Neither of these descriptions convey the impressions which begin to gather during even a brief visit. It is clear that the steadily growing number of people who settle near Apple Farm are deeply committed to what Jung termed "the way of individuation." Perhaps this is why it seems to be a community without any of the pejorative implications of a group. One meets individuals, breathing free air, finding their own way. It is Helen Luke's own deep search, the warmth and vision which have grown from it, and her uncompromising respect for the dignity of the individual which make the unique atmosphere of Apple Farm possible—and the special quality of her words in the interview which follows.

—Lorraine Kisly

Lorraine Kisly You expressed some uneasiness when I told you the theme of this issue, and suggested that it might be better if it were called "Approaching Wholeness." Why is that?

Helen Luke I think my feeling is that very few people in any generation do actually come to what we could call wholeness incarnate. There may be a lot more who do so just before they die. But as long as we are in linear time, it cannot be put into words, or talked about really by anyone who is still on the way. There are moments for all of us, I think, when we break out beyond that and have a glimpse of what it is, but the few great ones—those whom the East would call Buddhas, whom we would call those who live the Christ within all the time—are very, very, rare. But they do exist. And I do think we should talk about our intuitions of wholeness. This is very important in the beginning. Once one knows it is there, one can be absolutely certain of meaning in life—and go along whatever one's way is, trying to remember. We're so apt to forget.

L.K. It's curious what it is in us which does remember.

H.L. There is something which remembers—it's always there. I don't think anyone who has once experienced it would ever forget entirely. Although it can turn negative.

L.K. In what way?

H.L. When it's swallowed up by a power drive from the ego.

Photographs by Lorraine Kisly

L.K. The glimpse itself can become an obstacle?

H.L. Well, wholeness must include everything. It is our choice as human beings as to whether we experience it positively or negatively. You may have read Charles Williams' *Descent Into Hell.* It's so clear there that Wentworth, who ends up in a state of hell, does so by small choices along the way. He is absorbed *into* wholeness, though he as a unique person no longer exists. After all, Dante made it very clear that hell is a choice. People who were in his Hell, if offered Heaven, would not and could not choose it.

L.K. You have written that people do get what it is that they want. Why do you think it is that so few seem to choose the path toward wholeness—that so many choose peace, perhaps, rather than struggle?

H.L. It could be said, I think, that we all try to choose peace, but that many move further and further away from it by evasion of the struggles and necessary conflicts of the human journey. What the one on the way to hell chooses all the time is peace for himself; rejection of everybody else except his own ego; like Wentworth, he chooses his own images of a lover instead of an actual lover, and so on. The point about peace is that the true peace does not come until one has been through *all* the struggles of the ego, and until one has accepted boundaries and conflict—to the bitter end. That's what the whole Christian story is about. That's what the cross is.

L.K. Jung has written that what we call consciousness is just a tiny island in the vast and deep sea of the psyche, and that man is a small part of the whole and can never really know it. So we are limited in many ways.

H.L. Yes, because we are still centered in the ego, you see: I find it very interesting that you are doing this issue on "Wholeness" after your first issue which was on "The Hero." We all have to experience at first the strengthening of the ego, the development of its ability to discriminate, to make choices, to get into trouble, to get out of it, and so on. And then comes a point when one has to sacrifice the hero. The hero himself has had to make his sacrifices along the way in order to defeat the dragon, to achieve his aim. Now this in Jungian terms would be the journey of the ego getting to know its shadow side—all the parts that have been repressed, both good and bad. It isn't that the shadow is only the dark elements which we think are wicked, because one can also repress one's positive abilities if one does not want to take the responsibility of living them. But there comes a time when the ego relatively knows all it can, has come to terms with its dark sides, can recognize when it is being possessed by projections, and so on.

And when that work is largely done—and this I think is a very important moment on Jung's way of individuation, as he called it—there comes a time when we must sacrifice the will to achieve, the time when we then have to let go. It's what Lao Tzu says—that when you are pursuing learning you gain something every day, but when you turn to the Tao—which means wholeness, really—then you drop something every day, you let go of something every day. It's a letting go process, and it takes usually many years, letting go by degrees. For instance, if you don't begin to let go of your will to be successful, to achieve in the outer world—or anywhere else, for that matter, the inner world too—you will go on saying that you must get better and better every day, the ego will go on saying it. What begins that process of letting go is when you can really experience the difference between the ego—that little light of consciousness that we have—and the Self, which is the whole Self, the whole sphere and also the center. The Self is a Jungian term, in India it is the Atman, and in the West the Christ within, the divine wholeness both immanent in every unique human being and at the same time transcendent and universal. If you are still identified with the ego, after you have had a glimpse of the Self, then you may begin to be possessed by a drive for power even if you weren't before. This is how so many cults develop. The leader had a very real vision at one time as a young man, but then he begins to teach it and it becomes identified with his personal ego. Now in each one of us this can easily happen, to some degree.

". . . the true peace does not come until one has been through all the struggles of the ego, and until one has accepted boundaries and conflict—to the bitter end."

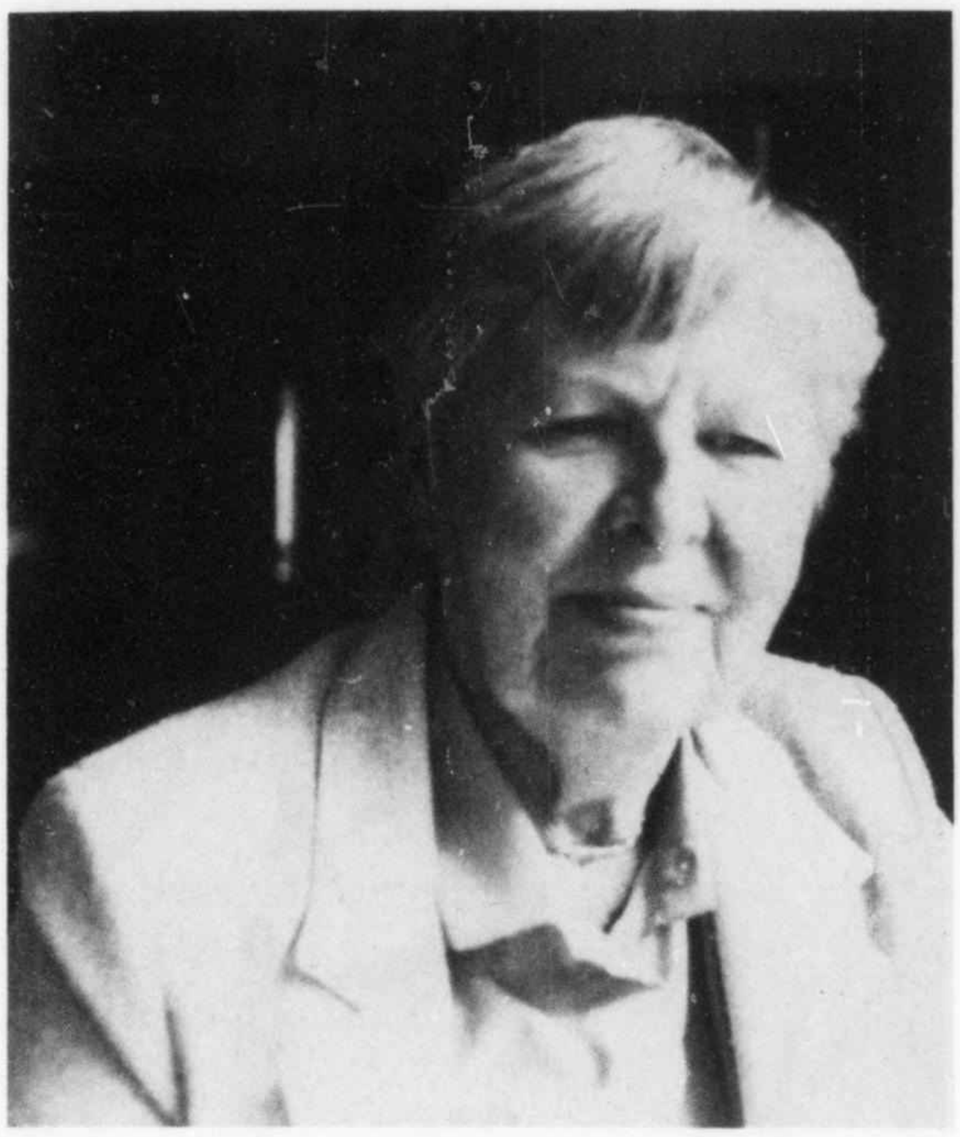
L.K. In the hero's journey, then, it is necessary to develop the ego very strongly so that there is then something which can let go?

H.L. Exactly; through the ego's choices the inner vision becomes incarnate. In a recent book by Russell Lockhart, *Words as Eggs,* he asks in the introduction, what are we to do after we have done the absolutely necessary work of coming to terms with the shadow, with the "animus" and "anima," the masculine in a woman, the feminine in a man, the inner figures? We can now recognize them and know when one of them starts playing tricks and so on—what do we do then? It seems that very often psychologists are not clear when the religious side must take over; not in the literal church sense, but in the deepest spiritual sense.

L.K. In all of your work I feel a kind of interdependence between the way of Jung, turning to what is dark, what is hidden, and the Christian way of turning toward the light of Logos. I don't know if you feel this is so.

H.L. Yes, but when you say the light of Logos, do you mean God? Well, don't call it Logos, because the Self is not just Logos, it is Eros as well, and indeed, the Self is the unity of opposites. It is the truth of Chris-

tianity, too, but you rightly say that Christians so often mistake the light of Logos for the whole. Jung pointed out the absolute necessity for the feminine values without which there would be no perception of Self. This is especially true in our time when everything is geared toward achieve-



". . . one can also repress one's positive abilities if one does not want to take the responsibility of living them."

ment. One of the best antidotes to that is to read Lao Tzu, I think: "When you do nothing, everything is done." And it's true—if you are talking on the right level. But it's mostly not understood. You see, it is so much a matter of levels. Of course cause and effect and all that comes from them operate in our daily lives on that level the whole time. But it cannot really have a meaning—and that's our great danger—unless we recognize that time itself doesn't exist. That's what physicists are now telling us. It is a very exciting thing in our time, modern physics, which is confirming everything that the East has known for thousands of years.

L.K. The fact that something can be true on one level, and utterly false on another, causes a great deal of confusion, I think. And also the inaccessibility of a level higher than one is on.

H.L. Yes. The point of the second half of life, then, is to discover that level which makes all the other levels distinct, yet one in the whole. I have seen as I get *really* old that something fascinating begins to happen. It happens, as everybody knows, that you begin to remember early things in your life very vividly—and then you are apt to forget things that happened yesterday because they're not important anymore somehow. My view is that you do remember things that are really vital, but you forget much that isn't. At any rate, you remember the early things. And then there is, so to speak, a choice: you can either let that state, as so many people naturally do, become nostalgia, or even senility, or what can happen is that those memories suddenly acquire an enormously enhanced meaning in the whole of your life. You begin to see your life as a circle instead of as a straight line. That's just one place where you begin to find that level where everything is a circle. But we have to walk on the straight lines, and we have to experience fully the horizontal and the vertical, the earth and the spirit, and the meeting point at the center before that can happen.

L.K. In Castaneda's book, Don Juan called old age the last enemy, and your description of how that last enemy is overcome is quite different from images of fighting against it, denying it—or simply sinking into it. You are saying that it is a time for continuing to grow—a very important kind of new growth.

H.L. That's the vital thing, and you can only do that by letting things go, not by holding on. It comes, in my experience, little by little, in allowing outer responsibilities to drop away at the right times. But more and more—and I think this is most important—it becomes a matter of turning our attention to the smallest things. I can so easily feel that I have to get over with washing the dishes or whatever

needs doing around the house in order to get down to doing what is really important—to sit down and write, or meditate, or whatever! After you let go the hero who wants to kill the dragon and go out and conquer, the task becomes a matter of full attention to the smallest fact. And you can catch yourself rejecting a fact. Over and over. Whether it is the fact of this table, or the fact of having slipped and fallen, or whatever may happen to you, or the world, or anything else, but also the fact of the chair you are sitting in. The whole either doesn't exist, or it exists in everything. We are forever trying to exclude the ego's failures—to exclude in order to find our peace that way. But to find our peace by including everything dark and light, is a very great suffering for the ego, because it has to give up all its will to dominate. The ego doesn't get any weaker; in fact, it probably gets a lot stronger, and the darkness becomes much darker as consciousness becomes greater. But both are facts. And without both, one cannot come near to that level where wholeness can be lived—at least some of the time!

L.K. Gurdjieff said, "The bigger the angel, the bigger the devil."

H.L. Exactly so. Wasn't it Rilke who refused to go to see Freud or to go into analysis because he said that they might take away his devils, but they'd also take away his angels? And that's true, with most analysis. It can happen when analysis is geared to making someone feel good in the world, adjusted and all the rest. That's the great difference in Jung—he's not concerned about whether you are terribly well adjusted in the world, because what he's interested in is the psyche in its relationship to the Self. The ego is terribly important—it's still a complex, it's still there—but it can become one with the Self without losing its uniqueness. That's the marvelous thing.

L.K. I have a question here about how words can mean such different things, for example relationship and dependence which on the one hand can mean an excuse and an escape—to lose oneself in relationship with another, to escape responsibility in dependence. On the other hand there is true relationship and real dependence arising from the facts you were just speaking of. Related to this is the child who appears to have

"You have to separate in order to unite, because uniting means two unique things that meet. Not two fuzzy things—that merge!"

a kind of wholeness and integrity, and the adult, who seems to have to go through a process of fragmentation and division before the meaning of relationship and dependence can become so utterly different.

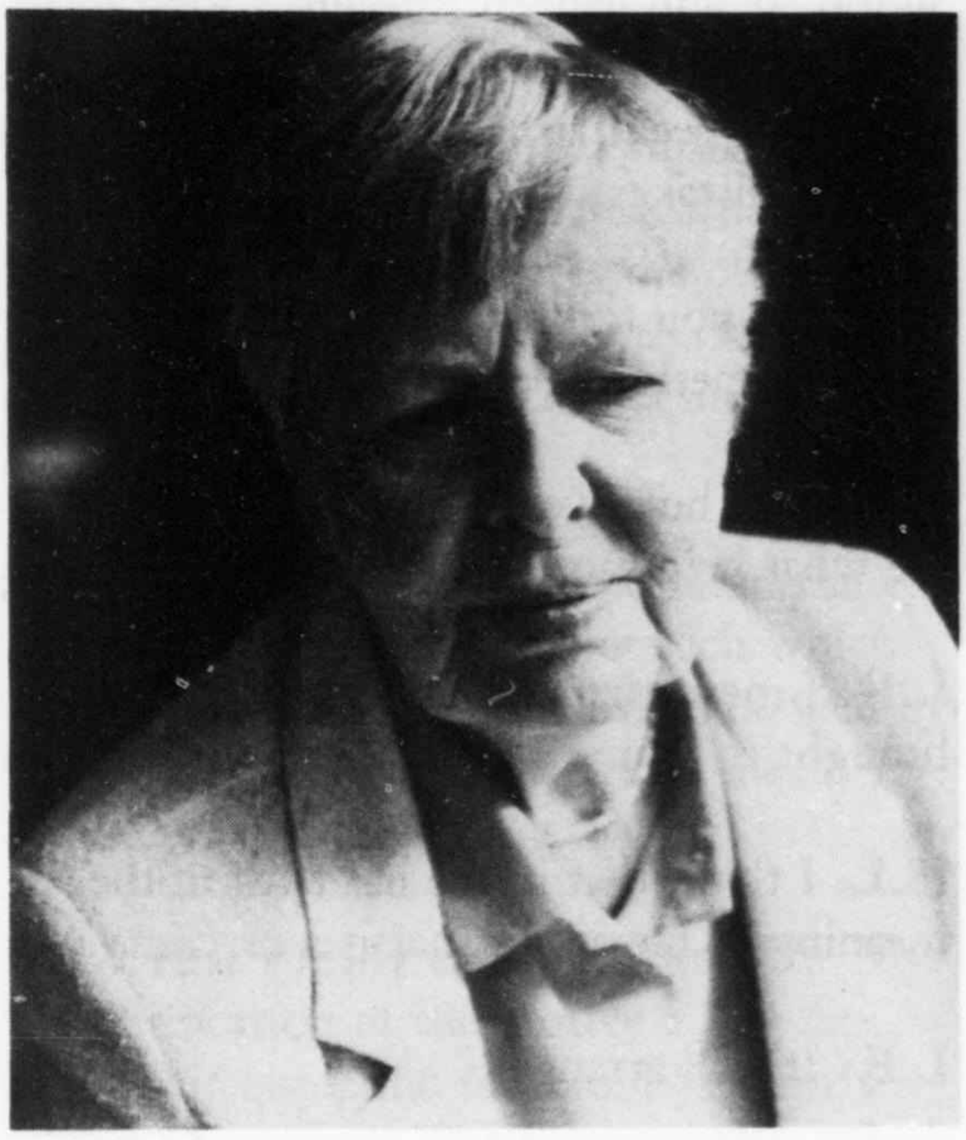
H.L. Yes, that really is the point. The enormous difference is that when you begin to know yourself and to glimpse the Self—the wholeness in which all relationship is free and yet essential—you are no longer relating through projection. The child is simply unconsciously one with the wholeness of everything. As soon as it begins to say "I," then comes the beginning of that kind of dependence which is projection. There is a kind of magical attraction

from the unconscious. You are part of an archetypal situation—mother and child, and so on. The work of gaining consciousness is to free yourself from identification with one person or another. If you find you hate a person or that there is something that makes you absolutely furious, you may be perfectly sure that it is a part of yourself that is projected there—no matter how true it may be that the other person is behaving badly. You could see that without getting all het up about it. It's normal that one should be angry at things that go on, but there's quite a different quality in that anger if you have ceased to project. If you are projecting you are incapable of compassion, you are incapable of understanding that this person is behaving in this way for reasons that you cannot see, from problems that you know nothing about, but that we all share.

L.K. Just to be sure I'm clear here, projection is really a kind of identification of yourself with the other?

H.L. And you don't do it deliberately. It just happens. Projection is the way you see everything that is unconscious in yourself. If you didn't have that projection, you'd never see it. You wouldn't even know you had it. Once you begin to take projections back, this magical kind of tie changes. Once you begin to let go—and this takes a great deal of hard work and watching, and attention and humility: when once you can ask what is it in me that *must* have this to depend on—the minute you begin to make that separation between yourself and that projection it may then become a sense of relationship. This is so even if it is a relationship with something you dislike and will go on disliking—no one is trying to tell you that you ought to feel differently in that sense—but it will also be compassionate. That, I believe, is what the East means by saying all is emptiness, all is compassion. Not just emptiness—nothing there—but filled with compassion, which is a suffering with whatever is involved. You see the difference? It doesn't mean you can do without relationship: very much the opposite. But you recognize that relationship cannot happen until you are separate. Otherwise it is just a mixup in the unconscious of two people. You have to separate in order to unite, because uniting means two unique things that meet. Not two fuzzy things—that merge!

That gradual letting go still has to have a context. I think it's enormously important to realize as we work with dreams and the unconscious and other people do the same kind of work in different ways, that when you have an insight it's not enough just to understand. It has then somehow to be put into actual life. It has to be incarnate. This is the true meaning of Christianity. Someone will say he or she has had a big dream and that she feels what it means and so on—she or he must do *something* with it, write it down, paint it, do something *in this world* with it, and after that let it take effect in daily life. It has to make a change, however tiny. This is nearly always a letting go of something. It's all a prepara-



". . . when you begin to know yourself and to glimpse the Self—the wholeness in which all relationship is free and yet essential—you are no longer relating through projections."

tion, of course, for the final letting go of death.

L.K. You have written something about forgiveness that I wanted to ask you about. You wrote, ". . . it is the breakthrough of forgiveness, in its most profound sense—universal and particular, impersonal and personal—that alone brings the 'letting go,' the ultimate freedom of the spirit. For in the moment of that realization every false guilt, whether seen as one's own or as other people's, is gone forever—and the real guilt which each of us carries, of refusal to see, to be aware, is accepted. So we may look open-eyed at ourselves and the world and suffer the pain and joy of the divine conflict which is the human condition, the meaning of incarnation." It seems that something must appear to make this possible, to make one *able.*

H.L. It may appear in something that happens to you, comes to you from the outer world, or it may appear from something that comes to you suddenly from the inner world. It will happen through a long history of choices in small things. The unwillingness to see is to say "no" to life, to the risk of mistakes, to facts.

L.K. Do you think that with all the difficulties something helps as well?

H.L. Oh, but of course! The difficulties are what help most!

L.K. I mean that the right difficulties are brought to you at the right time.

H.L. I think that if one has faith in the meaning of life at all, that is a certainty.

L.K. It's all arranged?

H.L. I don't like the word arranged. It just *is.* It's your fate, and you have a choice how to live it. The East would call it your karma.

L.K. I have a question about what is really one's own. Certainly all the energies of youth are given, one's talents, weakness, and so on are given, but they all seem like raw material. Is there something at the end which could be there and have the taste of being one's own?

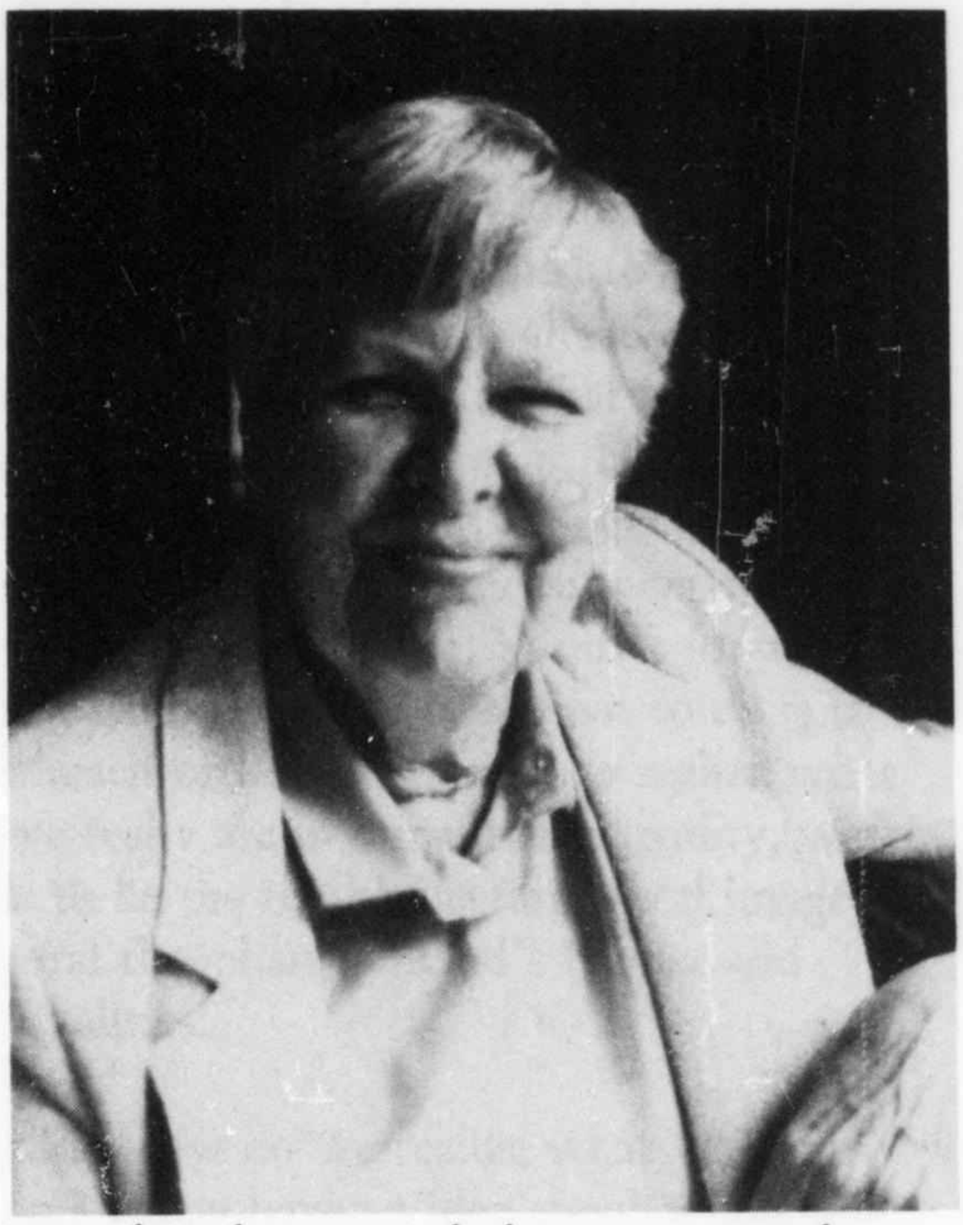
H.L. Your own—how do you mean that? That seems to be a matter of discrimination in the use of words. How does St. Paul put it? "Having nothing, yet possessing all things." Now I would rather have it the other way round, as possessing nothing, yet having all things, because there are so many negative meanings to possession. But it means the same thing, of course. In the ultimate wholeness we surely have everything, but we don't have it exclusively. It isn't ours and not somebody else's. That's the difference, and that is the letting go. You don't any longer feel, "I have the right to this." You don't have rights, you don't have demands, you don't have wishes. No, that's not true, your ego has them all the time! Don't think you are going to lose your ego's carryings-on; you're not. You merely are not moved by them in the old way. Less and less are they the center of your life. They operate on a certain level, but they become less and less demanding—of people, of things, of everything. Meister Eckhart said we must let go even of the demand to know God. Then it becomes yours. Then it is given to you—when it is completely let go.

L.K. Well, there seems to be some sort of task that we have in the course of our lives, and there must be an enormous difference between a person who achieves this aim and one who does not. As we are, this remains only a possibility in us.

H.L. It's a possibility, and it is enormously important for the whole world that some individuals grow to a deep and full consciousness.

L.K. Is there something which characterizes the way towards this?

H.L. I think there is something that one can notice in one's own life very clearly.



"In the ultimate wholeness we surely have everything, but we don't have it exclusively. It isn't ours and not somebody else's."

There comes a point when an utterly different kind of suffering is possible, not a neurotic suffering. At the same time that one begins to move beyond the hero/villain stage, one no longer goes up and down into exaltations and depressions. It is the kind of suffering that comes when you accept the fact of whatever it is—a depression is when you don't accept the fact. The suffering which is not a depression can bring a deeper darkness, but it doesn't affect your behavior or those around you. The weight is gone, because there will also be a kind of joy that goes with it, which is nothing emotional. There is a possibility to move beyond being dominated by your emotions. That's the mistake people always make—we think we always have to be improving the ego. We don't. We have to put it through its journey of knowing itself and understanding itself, and so on, and then we shall recognize that its emotions are not objective. They are purely subjective, which is a necessary stage. But then comes what Jung calls objective cognition, and the kind of love he writes about in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections.* The love that is beyond all desiring, all emotions; and that is whole in itself because nothing is excluded.

L.K. Feeling without emotion?

H.L. None of these words somehow express it because it is a state of being, a state of the soul. In fact it is reality itself. But one just glimpses these things, now and then.

L.K. It is a long way from the way compassion is sometimes understood—as a sea of emotionality.

H.L. The feeling of wishing to save the world comes very often out of a wish to escape from having compassion on your own darkness, for what is inside yourself. If you don't start there you will never have true compassion. First comes compassion for your own weaknesses, and then for the person next to you. Now that doesn't mean that we shouldn't support causes—what matters is *who* supports the causes. You may have to fight, but if you don't fight with forgiveness and compassion, you simply are recreating the same situation. One opposite always creates the other, unless you begin to let go of both of them, then both can become real in a unity which is beyond them.

L.K. What you say brings to mind the words of Dame Julian of Norwich which you've written about. "All shall be well by the purification of the motive in the ground of our beseeching."

H.L. That's really the point, isn't it, "By the purification of the motive . . ." Actually this quotation is from T.S. Eliot's "Four Quartets." The motive—that which moves us from the very ground of our being, is slowly purified here in time through the individual's commitment to the emptying process which is the quest of wholeness. Then, in Lady Julian's words, "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." ■

The Long Journey

AN INTERVIEW WITH SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

Today newspapers, magazines, and bulletin boards bristle with advertisements for spiritual guidance, and it sometimes seems as though anyone who knows how to sit in the lotus position feels qualified to hang out a shingle as a teacher of wisdom. It is a relief, then, to hear in the midst of this babel the clear and reasoned voice of Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, for twenty-one years a professor of Islamic philosophy and the history of science at Teheran University, and founder and first president of the Iranian Academy of Philosophy.

Dr. Nasr met with me in his book-lined office in the Gelamen Library at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where he is University Professor of Islamic Studies. As he spoke with quiet authority of the Islamic approach to wholeness, and of his firm belief in the necessity of rooting spiritual search in one of the great religious traditions, it became clear that Dr. Nasr brought to our discussion not only the great erudition evinced in his many books—the most recent of which are The Writings of Frithjof Schuon: A Basic Reader *(Amity House, 1985) and* Islamic Art and Spirituality *(Allen & Unwin: The Golgonooza Press, 1985)—but something more: a firsthand experience of the struggle towards wholeness.*

—Jeff Zaleski

Jeff Zaleski In your essay "Sufism and the Integration of Man," which appears in your book *Sufi Essays*, you write that "Islam is the religion of unity . . ." and that ". . . the whole programme of Sufism . . . is to free man from the prison of multiplicity, to cure him from hypocrisy and to make him whole, for it is only in being whole that man can become holy." How would you define the whole man? What are his attributes?

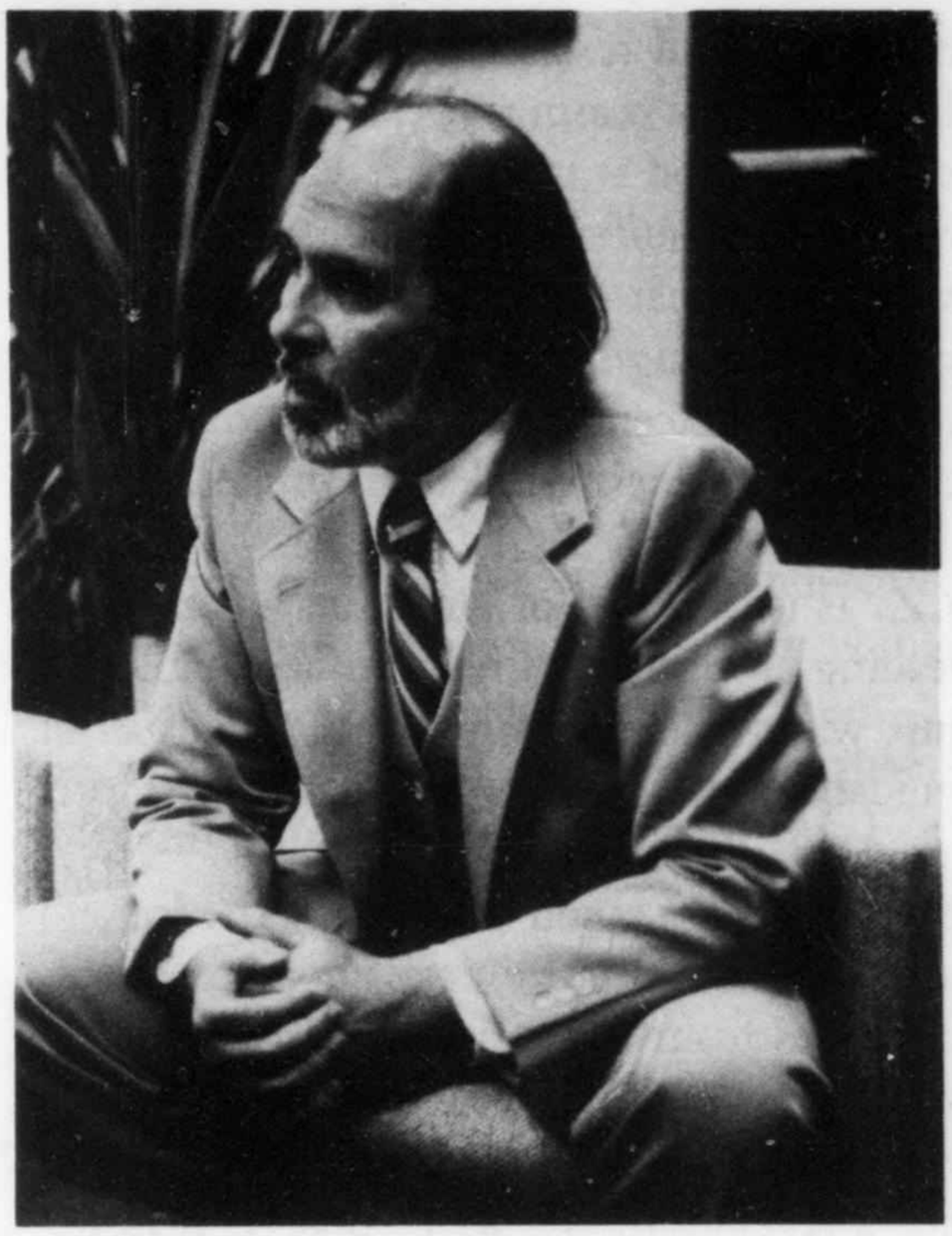
Seyyed Hossein Nasr The whole man is a person who realizes fully what it means to be man. That is, he has, or she has—and throughout this essay when I say "man" I mean both sexes—within himself realized all the possibilities of existence, the perfection of all the qualities with which God—ultimate Reality—has embellished human nature, but which is not fully manifested in all members of the human race. This idea goes back, of course, to the central Sufi doctrine of the Perfect Man or the Universal Man, *al-Insan al-kamil*, according to which every creature reflects in its own way some aspect, or quality, of the Divine Nature, some Divine Name or Divine Quality in its specific Islamic reference. (*al-Asmā' wa'l-Sifāt*.) Only man is the mirror of all the Divine Names and Qualities. Therefore, to say "Man" is to say "totali-

ty" and "wholeness": that is, all aspects of the Supreme Divinity which have manifested themselves in the cosmos, all that which is not within the Divine Nature in its metacosmic reality, all that radiates from the Face which God has turned towards the created order, all that is already contained in a reflected fashion in what is implied by being man, by being *insān*. Now, to be whole is to realize this fullness of our own nature. The Sufi answer to your question would be very simple: in order for a man to be whole, all he or she has to do is to be himself or herself; that is, to realize what we really are in our ultimate reality, which is to be the total reflection, total image, total theophany of God's Names and Qualities.

J.Z. How do we realize what we really are? I may have an idea about wholeness, about the perfect man, but I see *myself* fragmented. How does one become whole?

S.H.N. This is a very interesting question from the point of view of the everyday consciousness of human beings. The very fact that we pose such a question means that there exists within our mind and soul an echo, no matter how faint, and a light, no matter how dim, of that wholeness. Why is it that we who are fragmented even talk about wholeness? It means we have a reminiscence in our being of being whole. Now here lies in fact the key to your question: namely, wholeness brings with it the certitude of its own reality, precisely because the human being is composed of multiple levels of existence, of different powers—physical, mental, psychological, spiritual; and this is very important, not to mistake the spiritual for the psychological, or the mental for the intellectual, which is the other aspect of the spiritual. Because man possesses all of these faculties inwardly, unless he gains access to them there is always a sense of loss.

It's as if you asked me the question, "How do I know when water quenches my thirst?" If you get hold of real water and have real thirst, the very drinking of the water will quench your thirst, and nothing else. There is within the nature of



Photographs by Anne Suydam

"The very fact that we pose such a question means that there exists within our mind and soul an echo, no matter how faint, and a light, no matter how dim, of that wholeness."

man a quest for wholeness, which is itself a great miracle because we are not whole. Where do we get this urge? Where did we find the origin of the idea of wholeness? Deep down within ourselves, that wholeness from which we have become separated by our externalized existence beckons us. It calls upon us. And the call continues until we hearken to its voice and are able to live in such a way as to fulfill the innate need for wholeness; and questions as to how we reach it are really theoretical. The thirst we have to externalize ourselves—the need for satisfaction through an action which is external to ourselves and therefore which is against what wholeness really implies—continues in us. We all have it; it is the root of all of our miseries. But it is never fulfilled unless it turns upon itself, moves in an inward direction—rather than

outward—and reaches wholeness. Therefore, the very ceasing of this craving for externalization is proof that we have reached wholeness. Unless a person reaches wholeness, that craving never ceases. Its goal may change, but the fire is never extinguished except through the proximity of the Sacred which wholeness implies.

J.Z. Is it possible for an ordinary person leading an ordinary life in an honorable and just way to achieve wholeness, or is special guidance necessary? Is a teacher necessary?

S.H.N. If we could only break the ice which separates our everyday awareness of ourselves from the spring of eternal life which resides at our heart, in the center of our being, we would neither need a teacher nor a revelation. But man, that is, man in the present cycle of humanity—at the time of Adam all men were prophets—man in this day and age cannot break that ice without the help of God—without the help of the ultimate source of our own being—and without the help of a teacher. Wholeness on the highest level belongs only to a great saint in the sense that everything that person does always comes from a single center: and that is why only a saint is beyond hypocrisy. But that highest level of wholeness is not achievable for everyone. There are lower levels, however; there's a kind of hierarchy of wholeness. On a more restricted level there are the teachings of religion, which are meant for everyone; for example, the Divine Law in Islam, the *Shari'ah*, if practiced faithfully, produces a degree of wholeness and of integration in life which is sufficient for a man to live happily and to die in felicity, but not sufficient to realize wholeness on the highest level, which is union with the Divine and all that implies: the integration of all aspects of our being and the awareness of the One at the highest level. For that stage to be attained there's always need of a teacher, and if there are exceptions, it is only to prove the rule.

I always come back to the beautiful saying of the Gospels, when Christ mentions, "The wind bloweth where it listeth." I learned the significance of this many, many years ago from a writing of Frithjof Schuon, where he spoke about the possibility of the Spirit manifesting itself where God wills, outside the ways in which we would expect. And this saying has many applications, one of which is the answer to your question: that it is possible for certain exceptional individuals to be pulled by the attraction of Heaven without a human teacher. But that possibility, although it might be realized in certain cases, is not an excuse for not having a spiritual teacher, nor does it manifest itself very often. So one comes back to the famous saying of Bāyazid, the great Sufi of Khorasan, of the ninth Christian century, who in talking about people who seek this ultimate wholeness said that the spiritual master of those who have no spiritual master is the Devil. This integration of the higher faculties of the soul, which surely belong to God, is impossible without the help of a person who has already undergone the process of this integration, because one otherwise deals with very powerful and dangerous forces which often, under the guise of integration, lead to disintegration and permanent damage to an aspect of the soul which really only God and the Sacred can mold and remold.

J.Z. Is it possible for those who are not following a particular religious path to achieve any degree of wholeness?

S.H.N. If I can emphasize "any degree," then yes. There are people, especially in this day and age in which many, because of the loss of the more metaphysical dimensions of the Western religions, have fallen out of their traditions and are looking for something, who may live close to nature and its beauties; and having a kind of simple soul which is satisfied with the grace emanating from the natural environment, they may attain through that a certain degree of wholeness. But man is not just a "natural" being in that sense. Such people carry within themselves, of course, those deeper layers of the soul, and the problem of not having integrated those elements into the conscious aspect of their being manifests itself sooner or later. To integrate

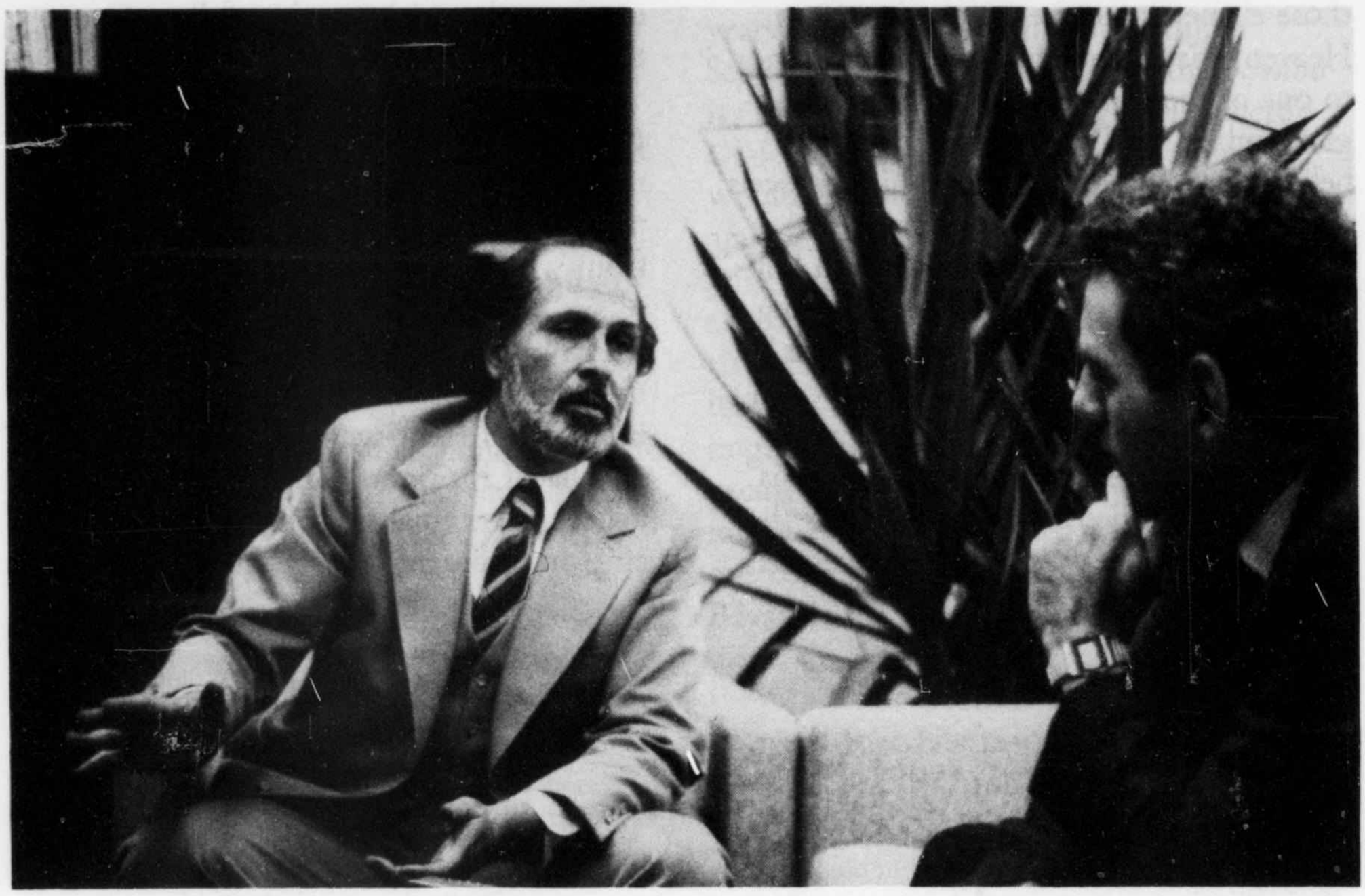
those elements requires a mandate from Heaven; that is, one has to live according to one of the traditions, one of the religions which God has revealed. I do not believe that wholeness, in the higher levels of the meaning of this word, and as it gradually becomes synonymous with holiness, is possible without the door having opened from the heavenly side towards humanity. Man cannot force this door open by himself, and the door always opens from the divine side. You might say it is the Logos that descends—that Avatar that descends from Heaven—who then opens up the path which we then follow from this side.

J.Z. What are the chief obstacles that a man will face on the path towards wholeness? What is it in ourselves that keeps us from wholeness?

S.H.N. This is of course a very profound theological question which can be answered in many different ways. Christianity would say that it is original sin; Islam does not believe in original sin, but believes that the chief impediment is forgetfulness. But I want to answer this in a kind of present-day, "existential" manner, as it concerns the predicament of modern man. If you'd asked this question of me a hundred years ago, when my ancestors lived in Kashan—if God had willed that I'd be teaching there then, rather than a hundred years later, here in Washington—I would have answered that the chief impediment, of course, is this veil of forgetfulness which covers our inner nature. This veil has to do with our passions, with what the Koran calls *al-nafs al-ammārah;* that is, the part of our soul which commands us to do evil—the passionate, externalizing, dissipating aspect of our soul. That would be the major obstacle, and always there would be a kind

Muhammed preaching

"This integration of the higher faculties of the soul, which surely belong to God, is impossible without the help of a person who has already undergone the process of the integration."



". . . the inner meaning of religions becomes less and less accessible, to the extent that human beings become less qualified to understand that inner meaning."

of contention between it and the Will of God, which one must follow.

Today, however, there's another very major obstacle which the men of old did not face. Then, human beings—in normal situations, at least—knew that there was such a thing as wholeness. Today men face first of all the obstacle of not even being clear as to the existence of wholeness, to say nothing of its attainment. If you were a Muslim, or a Christian, or a Hindu, living traditionally, you would not ask yourself the question, "Is there such a thing as wholeness, and is there a path towards it?" You would ask yourself the question, "Do I want to follow this path or not?" You knew that a path was there; for instance, if you were in the Islamic world, you knew that the Khāngāh or Zāwiyah, the Sufi center, was there, that there were people who followed the path of wholeness. Today the first obstacle is that many human beings are forced to ask, for the first time in the history of the world as we know it, "What is the meaning of life, anyway?"; that is, having to discover the questions of certitude and doubt, of truth and falsehood, by themselves. And therefore the first obstacle is precisely to remove our ignorance of the nature of Reality, if I can express it in an intellectual language; or, in a religious manner, to discover the goal of life: that it is in fact possible to be whole, and therefore it is a desirable goal. And once decided which goal to follow, whom should I choose as master? Now there is a more universal choice which did not even present itself to any humanity before us, and that is the possibility of even choosing one's religion. Except in rare situations, such as in Kashmir in the thirteenth century, this was never a choice to be made by human beings.

There is of course also a great compensation in all of this, in that since this first obstacle presents an exceptional challenge, once it's overcome God makes the second obstacle much more easy to surmount. A

traditional Muslim, Hindu, Jew, or Buddhist accepted with certitude the truth of their religion. In the traditional situation the skeptic was not one who doubted God or his tradition, but who within that world of certitude might be skeptical about certain schools, certain trends of thought. And therefore to follow the spiritual path, to be placed under the direct beam of the Divine Grace which shines upon us, was a much more difficult feat to achieve. Today attraction of Divine Grace is made easier by the very difficulty of our predicament, the difficulty of the human situation. And for that reason, although the obstacles have changed, perhaps because of God's justice, the attainment is not that much more difficult. It's just the type of difficulty which is altered with present-day humanity.

J.Z. The first obstacle you speak of, the difficulty of people today to begin focusing on their internal situation, is a serious one. There are fewer and fewer nations where true spiritual teaching is available. Why is this? Is this a consequence of an internal flaw in religions themselves, that people are less and less interested in their teachings?

S.H.N. This is again a question which can be answered in two different ways. From one point of view one could say that the inner meaning of religions becomes less and less accessible, to the extent that human beings become less qualified to understand that inner meaning. Secondly, in fact present-day humanity doesn't deserve anything more than it is able to attain. That is, it is the externalization of man today which makes the inward less accessible. But having said that, I want to add that in fact the inner dimension is not completely inaccessible. There is again a kind of divine compensation, putting aside all the pseudo-teachers and pseudo-gurus who provide a kind of spiritual guidance in reverse, from below rather than from above, and whose teachings correspond in effect to the subversion of so much of what remains of religion in the modern world. Putting that phenomenon aside, I would say that, first of all, authentic spiritual instruction can never cease completely without the world collapsing. There's a saying in Arabic according to which the earth shall never become empty of the person who's witness to God, who is a true spiritual teacher. That cannot happen; that's not metaphysically possible.

And at a more external level, precisely because you have this eclipse of the normal methods of attaining spiritual instruction, there is a kind of casting of the inward outward by the authorities of tradition, in the highest sense of the word: an externalization which has never been available before. Before this day and age you never had a humanity which could read the greatest pearls of wisdom of all the religions just by going into any bookstore, like the Yes! bookshop three blocks from here, and being able to read Lao-Tse and the Upanishads and Sufi masterpieces and Meister Eckhart and Hasidic writings and the Kabbala and God knows what. What does this phenomenon mean? Why is it that the most gifted spiritual person in even a country like India, or Persia, which have been great centers of mysticism in days gone by, did not have such a possibility? It means that you have again, because of this compensation which exists in the Divine and the human order, a kind of availability of things which in themselves were difficult of access before. Look at Judaism: if you were living in Spain in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, you would have belonged to a Jewish community which represented one of the peaks of Jewish culture. And at that time there were masters of Lurian Kabbala. What would you have had to do in order to be able to read some of these texts? After perhaps twenty years of studying Hebrew with this teacher and that teacher, finally you might be taught Lurian Kabbala. And now any kid as a college freshman can go and pick up the Zohar or the books of Lurian Kabbala in a bookstore.

This is not equal to instruction, of course, but even the theoretical exposition of that type of doctrine in the modern world has something to do with the question you posed, and this instruction has not become completely unavailable. To the extent that humanity falls spiritually and be-

comes more and more externalized, less and less interested in the inner dimensions of religion, these dimensions recede, without dying out completely. Those inner dimensions have receded most for that humanity which has externalized itself most: Europe and Western civilization. And to the extent that Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Oriental Judaism undergo the same process, the inner dimension of the religion becomes less and less accessible. But by means of the compensation of which I've spoken, the door always remains open; and that is because ultimately we are responsible before God, and God is just. From the spiritual point of view you cannot stand on the Day of Judgment before the Lord and say, "Oh Lord, because I could not find Meister Eckhart in New York I stopped believing in you." For the person who seeks, the saying of Christ, "Seek and ye shall find," will hold true until He returns. That was not a temporal statement. But where you have to knock, and where you will find, may be different from days gone by.

J.Z. Assuming one begins to walk towards the open door of which you speak, one examines oneself and sees one's fragmentary nature. You spoke earlier about the passions. What is a useful attitude towards our fragmented nature, towards our passions? Should we eradicate them, or use them? How does remembrance, of which you also spoke, enter in here?

S.H.N. I'm always very careful when questions like this are asked of me. It is necessary to mention a point which is absolutely crucial: spiritual instruction is not meant for general public consumption. Religions, in their exoteric form and with their general instructions, are. Commandments such as: you should be good, you should not lie, you should be humble, and the Ten Commandments: these are for all men. But how to control the passions? What to do with them? The alchemy of the transformation of human passions is not exactly the same for all human beings. Traditional science of the soul was like traditional medicine: it did not give the same prescription to every patient. But today

". . . we may be very disciplined for fifteen or twenty minutes or even longer, but then the first wind that blows topples us over, because we have not yet slain the dragon."

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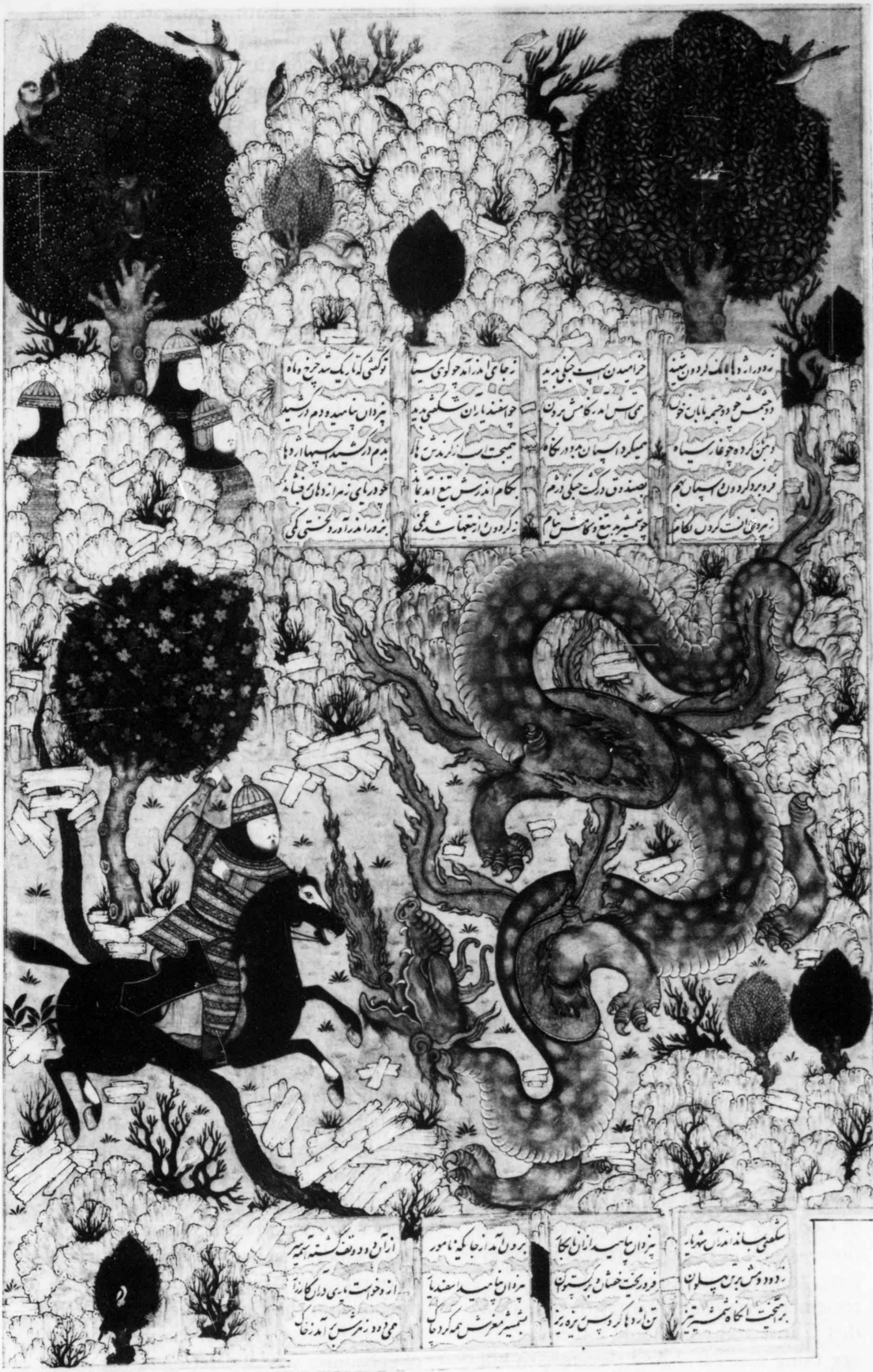
many people who try to play the role of pseudo-guru commit the mistake of modern medicine, of giving an aspirin to whoever has a headache. The patient is considered to be an "it," as if this were the science of physics, where calcium has a specific weight whether it is in Washington or Kansas City or San Francisco. So I am opposed to giving a generalized answer to these questions, except as it concerns general principles. The case of each aspirant is different.

But in a general sense, there is a stage in the spiritual life when one has to slay the dragon. At some point St. George or St. Michael have to come along to slay the dragon in our soul—not the Chinese dragon, which in Chinese alchemy means the power of the soul as it grows wings and flies, but dragon in the sense of a sort of fiendish demonic force which prevents the hero from reaching the treasure, as in our children's stories in Western Europe and Asia as well as in America. This dragon has to be slain by the spiritual power which St. George or St. Michael represent; and their lance represents a direct Divine Presence without which it is not possible to slay this dragon. The dragon is *much* more powerful than we are. We are swallowed up very easily. That's why we can read a book about all these things and feel that we have mastered the subject; we may be very disciplined for fifteen or twenty minutes or even longer, but then the first wind that blows topples us over, because we have not as yet slain the dragon. It is therefore necessary that, at the beginning of the path, you be able to slay the dragon, to subdue this passion. The Sufis refer to this principle by saying that we have to make the devil in us Muslim; that is, make that rebellious nature in us surrender itself to God.



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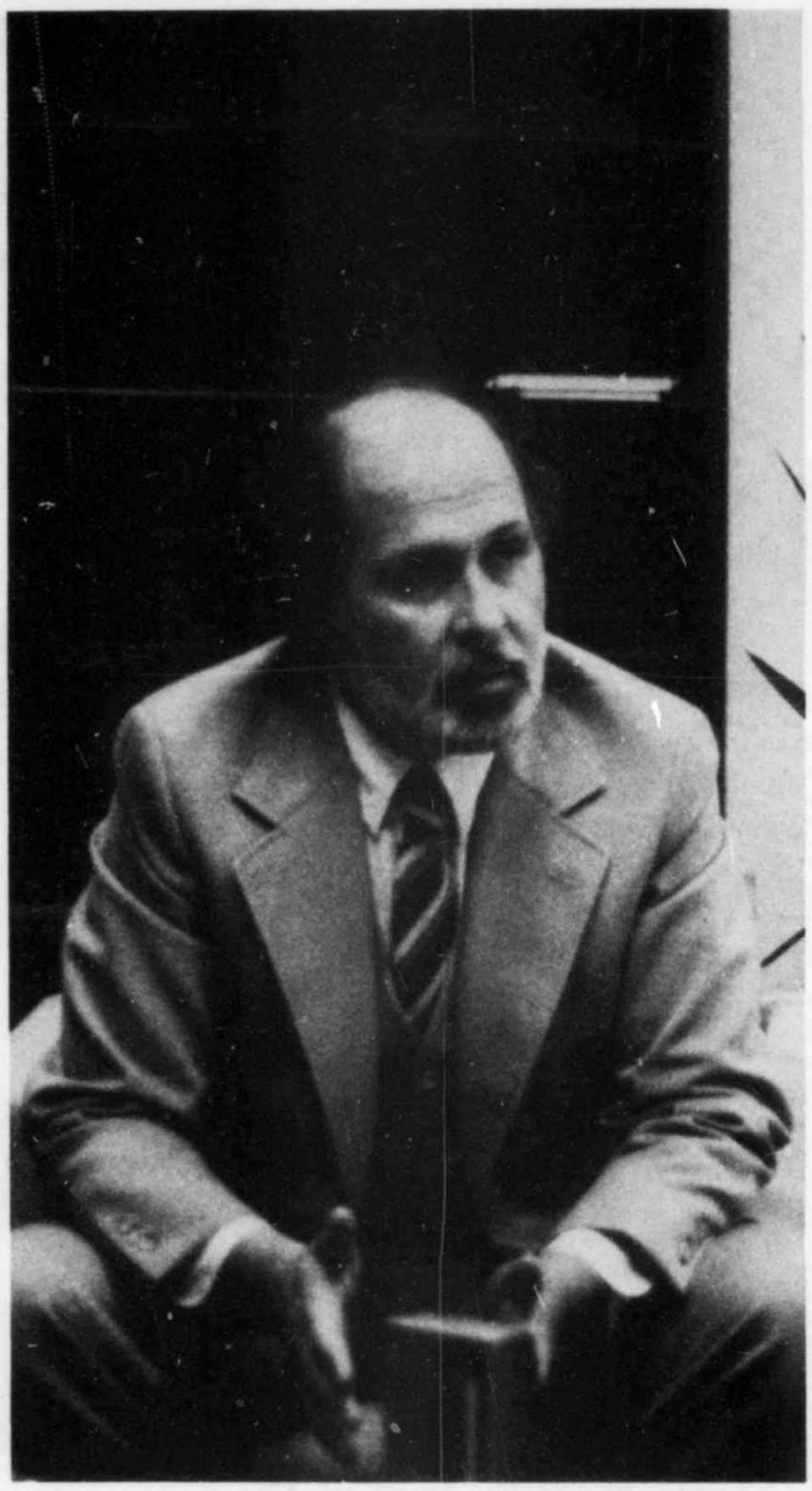

"The body is in fact from another point of view very positive, because it is created by God and doesn't have the independence which our soul has to rebel against God."

Now, this process implies a kind of death. When we say "life," what do we mean by it? We mean this everyday consciousness, which is really the forgetfulness of God. We remember our everyday ambitions—to eat, to enjoy ourselves in the evening, to get up in the morning; we remember everything except the one thing that Christ said you should remember, the one thing necessary. And therefore to kill this consciousness is really "to die." So the first stage is a death, a purgation. That is universal in all spiritual paths. But that death does not kill our immortal soul; it leads to its coming to life. So the next stage is the stage of expansion, of the coming to life of the inner aspects which had been hidden by the force of this dragon which was suffocating them. And that in turn leads to union, to the fruit of the path, which is knowledge of God and love of God. So I would say that the three universal stages of contraction, expansion, and union, as Evelyn Underhill, the famous classical writer of the Western mystical tradition, mentions, pertain in one way or another to all spiritual paths.

But how in each individual case the passions are transmuted, what passion it is that a particular individual must try to work against, for that there is no general formula. Certain human beings have a false pride, and this pride hides itself in the form of a false humility. There are other human beings in whom this is not the sin; the sin is, let's say, that of carnal passions. Their case is very, very different and it is totally wrong and in fact very dangerous to try to give a general formula for the instructions needed as far as the spiritual path is concerned.

J.Z. In "Sufism and the Integration of Man" you mention Rumi writing that the adept in the spiritual retreat must invoke the Holy Name until his toes begin to say "Allah." What is the role of the body in the search for wholeness?

S.H.N. I shall speak here from the point of view of the Islamic metaphysical tradition, but what I have to say also can be found, *mutatis mutandis*, in the spiritual teachings of Christianity, where the dichotomy between body and soul is emphasized much more, especially in the mainstream of Augustinian theology. In Islam, as in the other two monotheistic religions, wholeness includes the body. Why is it that all three religions believe in the resurrection of the body on the Day of Judgment? When we stand before God, in that final moment of encounter which determines the whole destiny of human beings—all of this life is a

journey towards that one moment, of encounter with God—our body, according to those theologies, is present along with our soul. Take the Christian case: Christ ascended to heaven bodily. The Catholics believe that the Virgin Mary also ascended to heaven corporeally. Judaism has the chariot of Elias. Islam has the ascension of the Prophet, *al-mi'rāj*, which was a corporeal ascent, not just a spiritual one, the latter being open to everyone—*al-mi'rāj al-rūhām*. So the body is somehow part of that whole of which we are speaking.

Sufism emphasizes this a great deal. Rather than basing itself on a dichotomy between body and soul, it might begin at a particular stage, especially in ascetic Sufism, with a negation of the body. As I have said, somewhere along the way you have to die. One has to avoid, let us say, this or that passion, but always realizing that it is not the body that is the culprit. It is the concupiscent soul as it's attached to the body. It is not our hand or our mouth that commits an illicit act from a religious point of view; it is the intention behind it, within our soul, that does so. And what Sufism tries to do is to disassociate the soul from excessive attention to the bodily passions, while the body remains, in a sense, neutral. The body is in fact from another point of view very positive, because it is created by God and doesn't have the independence which our soul has to rebel against God. Say you have an atheist who says, "I don't believe in God." His pulse continues to beat, however, and his liver continues to function. And that organic functioning is seen from the Islamic point of view as meaning that these organs are following God's command, irrespective of the conscious mind which might deny God or His Will. That's why on the Day of Judgment each part of our body will bear testimony to us, independent of ourselves, according to famous eschatological descriptions that we have in the sacred scripture.

Now, in the second, later stage of the path, as the soul becomes purified it does not leave the body—the body is still there, we're still alive—and it realizes the significance of the body as God's creation and as a temple of the spirit. The idea of the body as a temple is very, very important, for it is related to the great influence and effect that a transmuted sensuality, which is also spiritual, has upon the spiritual life. Man is the bridge between heaven and earth. On the one hand, he is to leave earth for heaven; on the other, he is to bring back heaven on earth. He is to serve as a conduit, a channel, for Divine Grace, *barakah*. And this sensualized spirituality—which is so important in Sufism and which often is manifested in the forms of eroticism, and the love for perfume, for beauty, especially for female beauty, and all that which is mentioned in Sufi poetry—has to do with the positive function that the body then plays in this very important duty of the spiritualized man to transmit the Divine Presence to the world about him, including the world of nature.

At the same time, the body represents the outer limits of our individuality, and therefore when it participates in the divine rites we are sure that we are participating wholly in them. That's why Jalāl a-Dīn Rūmi says that you should sit down and invoke the name of God until your toes say "Allah, Allah"; this incredible poem in the *Mathnawi* refers to the very esoteric and of course never publicly divulged practices according to which, finally, the body participates in the prayer of the heart, and man realizes the function of the body as an extension of the heart, of our inner center, and therefore an *extremely* important container of what we call the soul. I'll give you an example. All of us are aware that we have a body, of course, and from one point of view it is an impediment, if seen only as passion and veil. On the other hand, just imagine what kind of people we would be if we could always remain in our bodies. In the Hesychast tradition there's a saying, "Only the saints can remain in their bodies." If we will only remain in our bodies we would become perfect masters of meditation; because the one thing in us which never stays put is our mind. That's one aspect of its wonder, but on the other hand, it is the unbridled mental passion which makes it impossible to concentrate, to submit oneself to God and to open up the heart as the seat of contemplative

"The religion which cannot cater to the needs of its potential saints and sages gradually ceases to have saints, and then fissures begin to appear in its walls, leading to its collapse."

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knowledge. And the body can play an important role in the actual process of bridling the mind. If we could only live our mental life within the body we would become masters of the contemplative path. All one has to do is to place oneself in God's Name and place the Name in the heart. But how hard it is to achieve this apparently simple action.

J.Z. It has been said, "Be aware of every breath."

S.H.N. Yes, that of course is an allusion to the spiritual technique of the invocation of the Name of God, which in fact has to do with the expansion of the breast, since the lungs exist within the breast, and each breath expands the lungs. Breathing is not only related to the fundamental pulse which enables human life to continue, it also is the rhythm which, in the Sufi who's aware of the presence of God, relates him to God. So every time you breathe and you don't remember God, in a sense you've failed to achieve wholeness, and have fallen below the perfection of wholeness.

J.Z. In the search for wholeness, do men and women have different paths to travel? Or is the path the same for both?

S.H.N. First of all, the male and female natures are not accidental. The differences are not only biological, and not only psychological. The differences do not stop even on the spiritual level, but have their roots in the Divine Nature itself. The principles of male and female represent essentially a complementarity which goes back to God Himself. All this debate now about God as Himself or as Herself is due to the forgetting of the metaphysical doctrine of the Divine Nature which always embraces both aspects or poles. God in His Essence—or Its Essence—is above all duality; at the same time, God's Infinitude is the principle of femininity *in divinis*, while God's Absoluteness is the principle or Divine Prototype of masculinity. At the root of what appears on the human plane as the male and female stands the Divine Nature, and there is nothing at all accidental about the male-female distinction. There is such a thing as female spirituality. There is such a thing as male spirituality. Of course, all human beings also contain both of these elements within themselves to some degree.

As far as the practices of Sufism are concerned, they are the same for men and women. Both are seen as immortal beings with the possibility of reaching the Divine. And that is because men and women complement each other and reflect their common androgynic origin. They're both whole and segmented. That is why the possibilities of both celibacy and of sexual union have spiritual significance: because both realities are present in human nature. A person who lives a celibate life wants to show that he or she is, in fact, an image of the whole without the need of the other sex; that is the basis of celibacy in Buddhism and in Christianity. Whereas in the other philosophy, as it exists in Islam and Judaism and Hinduism, in which sexuality is positive and in which one encounters a powerful current of spiritualized sexuality, it is sexual union which symbolizes the complementarity of the male and the female, and hence wholeness. So both of these possibilities are realizable and have to be contained in any major spiritual path, such as Sufism; but by and large Sufism, as the esoteric dimension of Islam, a religion in which spiritualized sexuality is emphasized, leans upon the pole of the importance of the complementarity of the sexes. This does not mean that there are two different programs, one for men and one for women. In the same way that on the level of Divine Law all of the injunctions of the *Shāri'ah* are the same for men and women, all the fasting, the daily prayers, the paying of alms, the going on pilgrimage, the responsibility for moral action, the question

of the judgment of God—except during the menstrual period of a woman, when she does not perform her daily prayers and does not fast—the general instructions and practices are the same. But the nuances, the delicacies of what spiritual instruction is given to a particular individual, are not the same. They are not something to be promulgated in a general manner for everyone whether man or woman. It's like what I said before about the differences between individuals. Every serious Sufi master takes into consideration the differences between his or her male and female disciples as well

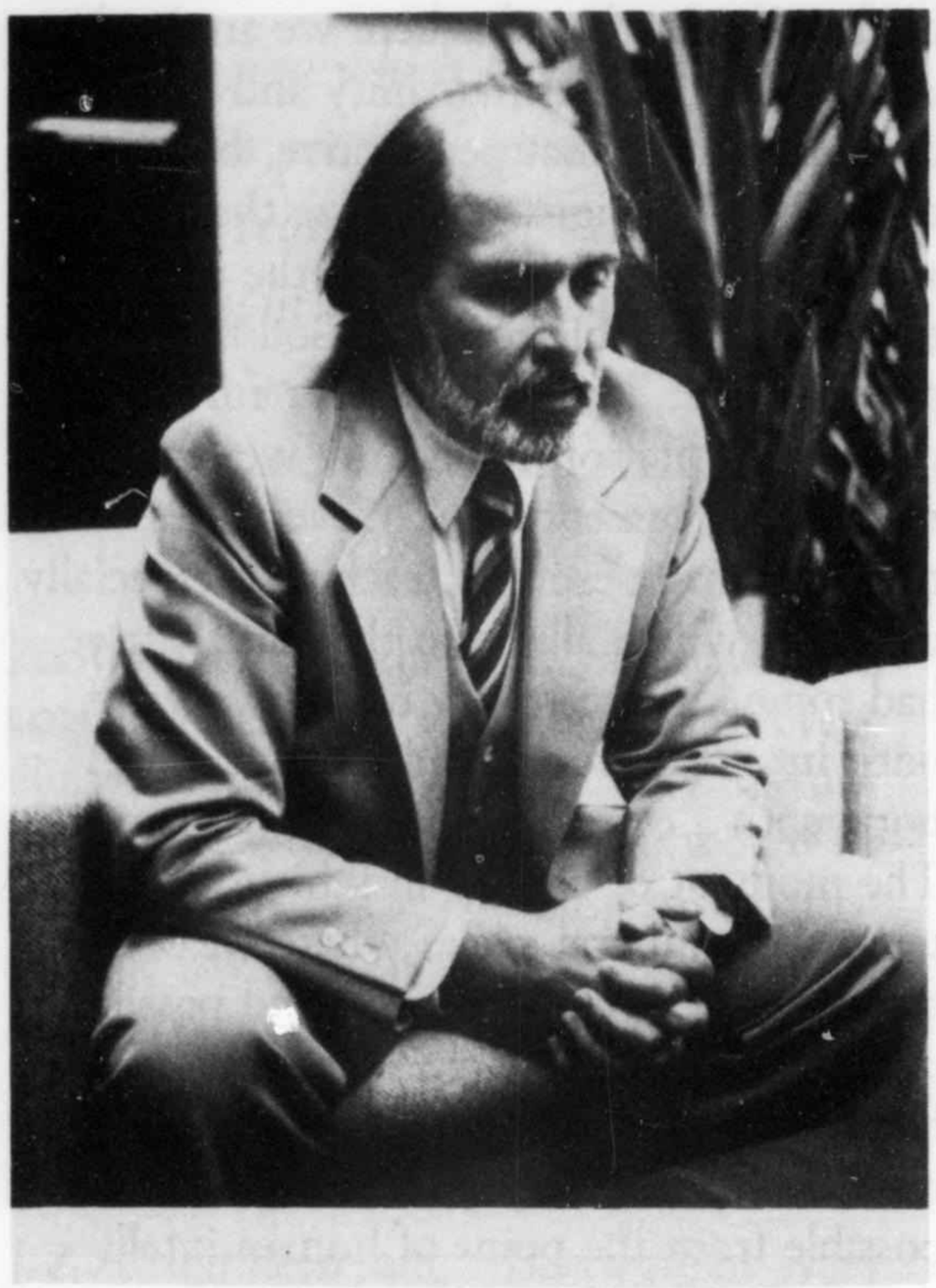
Wāḥid, *"One"*

as between members of each sex. It needs to be mentioned that there are also women spiritual masters in Sufism; not just disciples. Perhaps the number has been less but there have been some very great women spiritual masters and saints. So while there is no black and white difference of spiritual techniques for men and women in Sufism, at the same time male and female spirituality are recognized for what they are, and that in some way, in every human being who's of a spiritual nature, these elements are intertwined.

J.Z. You speak of every human being who's of a spiritual nature. Why are some people called to seek a spiritual way, and others not?

S.H.N. The question you pose is a very important one. The non-monotheistic religions, especially those of India, give the answer of the chains of life and death, of birth and rebirth and where we are in that cycle. Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, does not accept that perspective, because these three religions emphasize the present state of the human being and the importance of being able to reach God from the present state. They do not therefore emphasize meditation upon how we have reached the present state. Nevertheless, there are many esoteric teachings, especially in Islam, which allude to the fact that we had some kind of reality before we were born into this world, and that we were born with a certain nature that defines us. The moment of history in which we entered the temporal cycle, where we were born, and with what powers and possibilities, are all related to the state that we had before we came into what we call the terrestrial life. It is very difficult—in fact, impossible from the point of human intelligence—to give the exact reasons why you were born in New York, I was born in Teheran, a third person in Belgium; why you and I were born in the twentieth century, someone else in the thirteenth century; why you may be a very good musician, and I a very bad one; or, why a particular person has a deep love for God and some other person doesn't. It seems that the moment we enter into the terrestrial life, what we bring to this world already depends on who we are. Astrology tries to deal with this a bit, relating it to the progression of the stars. But it needs much more than astrological knowledge to be able to relate what one is and the situation of one's life. Of course, heredity has a lot to do with it. But the question remains, "Why is it that we are born of a particular father and mother?" These questions are not easy to answer in the context of our discussion because they need a great deal of metaphysical preparation. They are not impossible to understand, but they're difficult to explain without that preparation.

What I can say, however, is that not all human beings start from the same point either intellectually or spiritually. But because we are human, because we all have the imprint of the Divine upon our forehead, God's justice requires that we all have the same access to Him. And that is



". . . the quality of the action of a person who is whole differs from the quality of others' actions. What he says, the way he looks at people: the deep effect that is left is due to the fact that it comes from a different source of action, a different layer of inner being."

why religion in its general formulation never excludes any of its followers.

But the inner teachings of a religion have to be for those who are prepared to receive them. If all human beings had the same yearning or love for God, then the inner teachings would be for everyone; but that is not the case of human reality. And no religion can fail to cater to the needs of the few who seek God here and now, for such a failure would mean that religion destroying the equilibrium of the whole collectivity, exactly as it has happened in the Western world—because it always is those few who seek God who are like the salt of society. The religion which cannot cater to the needs of its potential saints and sages gradually ceases to have saints, and then fissures begin to appear in its walls, leading to its collapse. The exoteric body of the religion begins to decompose. Therefore the need for that inner teaching reserved for the few is present because of the different capabilities of human beings. It seems that human beings stand in different points on this long journey of man from God and to God. We are all equal in that we shall stand before Him on the Day of Judgment and will be judged accordingly—His laws are for all of us—but how close we are to Him now and what knowledge of Him we have now and our love for Him now—those are not equal.

J.Z. Does a person who's achieved wholeness, or a great degree of wholeness, have a particular role to play towards his or her fellow humanity?

S.H.N. In all the debate which goes on in the modern world between those who would like to debunk the contemplative ideal and in a kind of Aurobindean manner to think that perfection consists in coming back into the world and remaking it, and those who uphold the traditional ideal, what is really forgotten is that it is the human being's vocation which determines what he should do—what the Buddhists would call his *dharma*. We must follow our own nature. There are those whom God has willed that after gaining wholeness they should do things for other human beings. There are others whom God has willed simply to be, which is a very, very important manner of serving mankind. Like the light above our heads: it doesn't *do* anything, but it illuminates this whole room. It is this function of wholeness which has been belittled in the modern world, to the great detriment of the modern world, with its over-emphasis on action. And there are other human beings whose vocation it is to *make*; that is, people who are artistic.

So I do not want to give a single answer. There are three different modes of reflecting wholeness. One is through service, charity on all levels; for example, Christian saints who created hospitals for the poor—and that must not be mixed up

with the kind of atheistic charity in the modern world which wants to be good despite God. I'm speaking of traditionally religious charity and living a life of service, like the Karma yoga of the Hindus. A person who is whole lives this life in a manner that is whole, and there's tremendous effect in the actions which such a person performs. That's something which many people forget: the quality of the action of a person who is whole differs from the quality of others' actions. What he says, the way he looks at people: the deep effect that is left is due to the fact that it comes from a different source of action, a different layer of inner being.

The second mode is the mode of making, the whole field of *ars*—not art in the modern sense, but the Latin *ars*. Such a person might be simply a gardener, or the holder of some small job; it doesn't need to be grandiose art in the modern Western sense. A person with wholeness would bring this quality to whatever he would make or do. All his activity would be "art." In traditional civilization, a gardener or a woodcutter could be a man who had a great deal of wholeness, and whatever he did would reflect this wholeness in a manner which benefited those around him.

And the third is what is called the mode of being, that of those whose whole function it is to either disseminate knowledge—whose act of charity it is to teach—or to simply be a presence, not "to do anything" but simply to be a sort of silent witness to God. They're like a window onto the world of light.

There is no rivalry between these various modes, and it's a great tragedy that there has been polemical writing during the last century over this issue, with people attacking even the great medieval saints, because they did not cater to the needs of the poor. This modern aberration is due to a total misunderstanding of the nature of the world of man and of God. It has led to this terrible situation today when much of theology is destroyed in the name of human service, without human service in fact getting any better despite this sacrilegious sacrifice as a result of which the functions of theology have become nearly forgotten.

J.Z. Do you have any practical advice for someone who's beginning to sense the need for more wholeness in his or her life?

S.H.N. The person who already feels a lack of wholeness has received a gift from heaven. We say in Sufism that the only person whose ignorance is incurable is a person who doesn't know that he is ignorant. To know that one is ignorant is already the first stage of cure from ignorance. In the same way, to realize that one is lacking wholeness is already a blessing from heaven, even if it comes from such a little thing as wanting to eat wholesome and natural food. Like everything else, this can become a fad; nevertheless, it is a positive sign. But the important thing is, to be true to one's self; never to relent in one's quest for wholeness. Never to be lazy until one really finds wholeness. The great danger is a kind of momentary and passing state which appears as equilibrium or a small degree of wholeness, and which leads to forgetting that this was just a step or a station house on the path, not the goal. The danger is to become consolidated and petrified in that station. It is said in Sufism that any person upon the spiritual path who pays attention to the extraordinary powers, or even the great visions, that he or she may receive, will be barred from the vision of God. You might even be able to walk on water, but that's not the purpose of following Sufism. We're not following Sufism to walk on water or to do other miracles, but to be able to reach God. In the same way, the quest for wholeness, which enters into the heart of a person—which itself is a blessing from Heaven—should never come to an end unless one really gains wholeness in its ultimate sense. One must examine oneself, be always true to oneself, be honest with oneself; until, of course, one finds the path. One must find the way which suits one's nature and for which one is made. Once this occurs, it is the path which will decide for us. But of course from an inner point of view it's always the path that chooses the man, and not the man who chooses the path. ■

Gentle Events

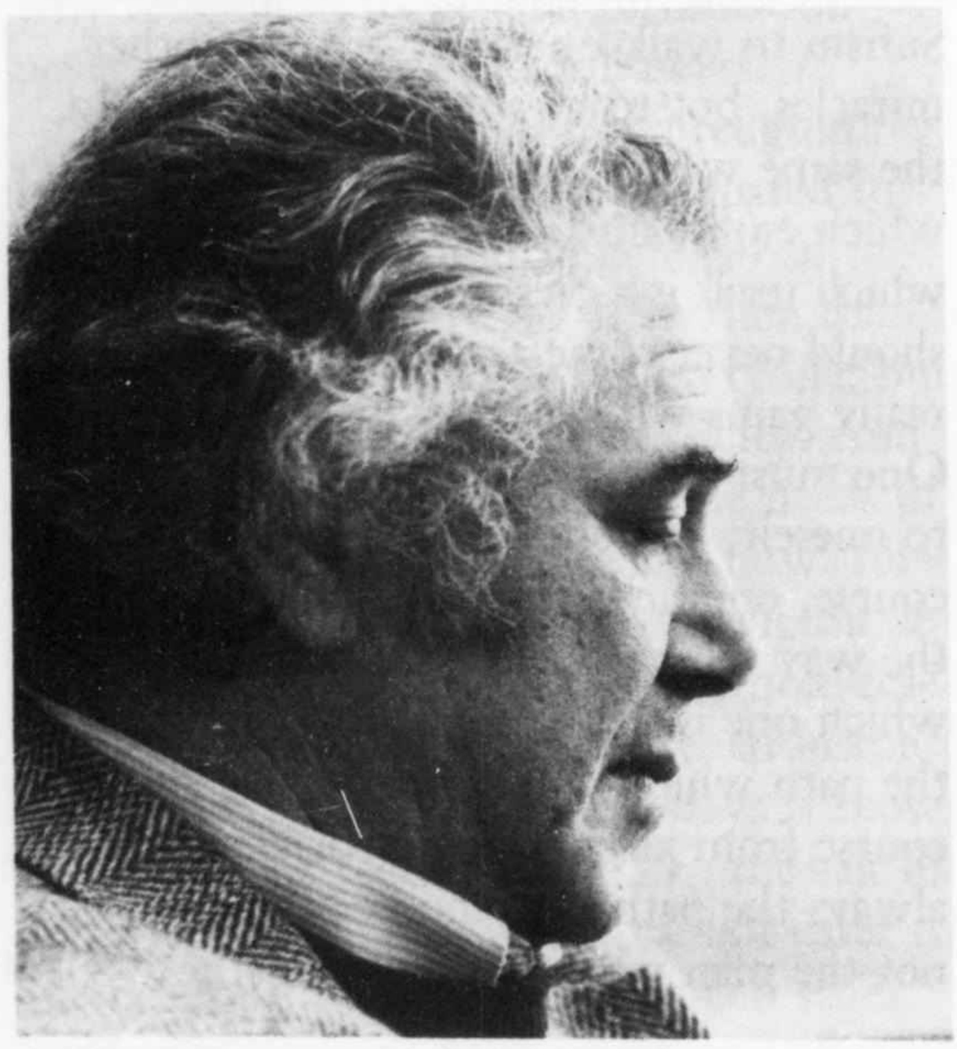
A CONVERSATION BETWEEN GEOFFREY CHEW AND JACOB NEEDLEMAN

In ancient times physics and philosophy were one, but in 1593 Copernicus, by placing the earth in subordinate revolution to the sun, precipitated a sometimes bitter split which has lasted until today. Recent findings in the subatomic realm, however, suggest that physics and metaphysics may be mirror images of each other after all.

To examine philosophy's and physics's approach to wholeness—and to each other— PARABOLA *turned to Dr. Geoffrey Chew and Dr. Jacob Needleman. Dr. Chew is Professor of Physics at the Berkeley campus of the University of California, where he formulated the "bootstrap" theory. Initiated into physics during World War II at Los Alamos, where he met Enrico Fermi, under whom he later studied at the University of Chicago, Dr. Chew is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Needleman is Professor of Philosophy at San Francisco State University and Director of the Center for the Study of New Religions at the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley. He is the author of several well-known books, including* The New Religions, Lost Christianity, The Heart of Philosophy, *and, most recently,* The Way of the Physicians *(Harper & Row, May 1985).*

Leona Butler, a colleague of Dr. Needleman's who has worked with him on several projects, graciously agreed to host the discussion between Dr. Chew and Dr. Needleman.

—The Editors



Jacob Needleman

Leona Butler Is there a place where physics—or more broadly, science—and philosophy meet today?

Jacob Needleman One thinks of how science felt as an enterprise to Isaac Newton several hundred years ago: as something sacred—not religious in any doctrinal way—but there was something sacred about the inquiries of a Newton or a Kepler. They wanted to come in touch, in their own language, with how God operates. They had a sense of nature as encompassing all of life: a universal order. They tried to

participate in the whole.

Geoffrey Chew Physics, to the extent that it's a profession, has a vested interest in trying to define itself sharply. Physicists tend to think there is an absolutely precise meaning to hard science—based on reproducible experiments; even though modern physics has revealed the fallacy in that idea. Physicists work with twentieth century developments that say you can't sharply separate physics from other disciplines, but nevertheless they act as if you can.

L.B. You mention Newton. With him, there was a direct connection with the observation of phenomena. Is the scientist of today—particularly the physicist—cut off from that type of direct observation?

J.N. One thinks of the old-time naturalist who wades into a pond and not only thinks, but feels and senses, and who comes out with something which is not just a feeling about the phenomena he was observing, but a feeling of value at the same time. I thought of this when I recently visited the Stanford Linear Accelerator. A physicist friend planned to show me his work. I was awe-struck but also depressed by the huge spaces of the Accelerator; and then I saw where my friend did his work: a computer room. I felt sorry for this brilliant man, of whom I am very fond; he has to spend his days in front of printouts like a file clerk. We seem to be getting more removed from those sources of perception which are not just in the intellect. An astronomer whom I spoke to said, "You know, I rarely get to look through a telescope anymore. I'm just looking at printouts all the time, in a rather dreary room." That's not only sad, but may be leading in the wrong direction, because the feeling of things is a clue to meaning, and the head by itself can never really yield meaning. It can get data, but the meaning—the priorities, the overall picture in relation to other things in the universe and in oneself—cannot come from there.

As a theoretical physicist you're interested in the overall picture, particularly with the bootstrap theory?

Geoffrey Chew

G.C. That's right, but it's very hard to pursue the bootstrap idea and stay within the normally defined regime of physics.

L.B. One can appreciate the absolute necessity for a sharply defined discipline. It reminds me of an art—let's say, learning to play the piano—where you can't break the rules until you know them. But at a certain point you also need to be able to break the rules.

G.C. It's very much the same in physics.

J.N. Can we get a brief statement on what bootstrap thinking is?

G.C. To answer that runs into a fundamental language difficulty; the language we use is prejudicial. It's based on accepting the Cartesian-Newtonian view of the world: the world is made of objects moving around in space-time. Most of our language is based on that idea, so it's difficult to describe the bootstrap notion in ordinary language; in the last few years we have begun to develop a graphical language which is less prejudiced. Another problem with ordinary language is its linearity. It is sequential: it starts somewhere, there is a

sequence of words. One of the basic bootstrap ideas is that everything is interconnected. There isn't a logical starting point from which you can take off. You're supposed to understand the ingredients of nature in terms of their compatibility with each other. For example, physics since the time of Newton has almost always started with the notion of space-time. But from the bootstrap point of view, that's not satisfactory. You're supposed to understand space-time as part of the whole, and not to take it as the essential embedding structure. Furthermore, almost any physicist will adjoin to the space-time idea the requirement of an equation of motion. But the bootstrap point of view would be: maybe there is an equation of motion, and maybe there isn't. You don't start by saying there must be an equation of motion. I remember once visiting the University of Florida where, unknown to me, Paul Dirac was in residence after his retirement from Cambridge. I'd been invited to talk, and I'd decided to discuss the bootstrap idea, with the key objective of explaining that there didn't *have* to be an equation of motion. Before the colloquium, the chairman of the department surprised me by saying, "Let me introduce you to Professor Dirac." I was taken down to talk to this demigod of physics, and he immediately said, "Don't you believe that the essential problem is to find the equation of motion?"

L.B. One is struck by the fact that physics, perhaps more than any of the other sciences, has moments of creativity or breakthrough. These moments can't come from the ordinary mind; we know that because we all have had those moments of creativity. I wonder if the real question here isn't about the state, the awareness, by which I see something, something I've been trying to understand, in an entirely new way.

J.N. To search for a theory that can include all the relationships and all the particles or all the parts of what you're doing is still to rely on a mind that works in a linear fashion and at a single level of consciousness. There are *levels* of internal states in beings. For example, once I was in danger—a near automobile acccident—and time changed; time passed much more slowly and I saw my thoughts in front of me as if they were written on a screen. So I was quite aware that there's a difference between awareness and thought. At the same moment I was aware of the thousand things going on inside me with a global awareness, with a center of attention that was in touch with all the parts at the same time. You can speak of this as a kind of internal bootstrap. To speak of the bootstrap theory as a concept to be applied to external things can't go very far unless you are looking also for an internal wholeness or relatedness that is about a new attention: an awareness of the whole of myself. What I felt in the near-accident—in another two seconds I might be dead—this kind of moment appears in every great scientist sooner or later. If one could have more access to those states, science would be quite different. One's vision of the universe would be quite different.

I was struck by your saying that space-time is not the principal medium. You were speaking of Cartesianism as a kind of legacy we're trying to shake off. I think of the distinction which was Descartes's main contribution: between consciousness and the world. But surely the whole must include consciousness?

G.C. Absolutely.

J.N. How does this come into physics?

G.C. I'm writing a book right now and in it there's a footnote to the chapter which deals with what I think is the most promising approach to linking ordinary Cartesian ideas to quantum ideas. The footnote states my opinion that consciousness is related to "soft" photons—photons of extremely small energy. Part of the chapter deals with the notion of "gentle quantum events" associated with photons—quanta of light. It's an attempt to understand how the Cartesian world can achieve significance at the same time as can quantum rules.

J.N. So the relationship between the world

"The photon, because it has no mass, has the capacity for having one foot on each side of the line."
G.C.

of ordinary reality and the world of the quantum physicist isn't merely one of statistics?

G.C. The photon, because it has no mass, has capacity for having one foot on each side of the line. It can be in the quantum world as well as the Cartesian-Newtonian world, and I suspect also in the world of consciousness.

J.N. It sounds a bit like Descartes's pineal gland, where he thought the mysterious interaction of consciousness and matter took place. Here you're saying that there is something which is in both worlds. Not that one is necessarily the world of consciousness, but the photon seems to have attributes which places it in two worlds that seem otherwise disparate.

No mass? That doesn't mean that it's not material; or does it?

G.C. What do you mean by "material"? The photon has energy and in many ways obeys similar rules to other particles, but the fact that it is massless gives it its special capabilities.

J.N. It has no mass and it has energy.

G.C. No rest mass. To put it more precisely, you can't bring it to rest. It doesn't matter how little energy it has, it's always moving at the same velocity.

J.N. It goes on forever?

G.C. A photon can be created and destroyed, but so long as it's there, so to speak, it moves at the same velocity.

J.N. This is a concept which is not new, but this interpretation is a bit different. I keep thinking of $E=mc^2$. You say it has no rest mass.

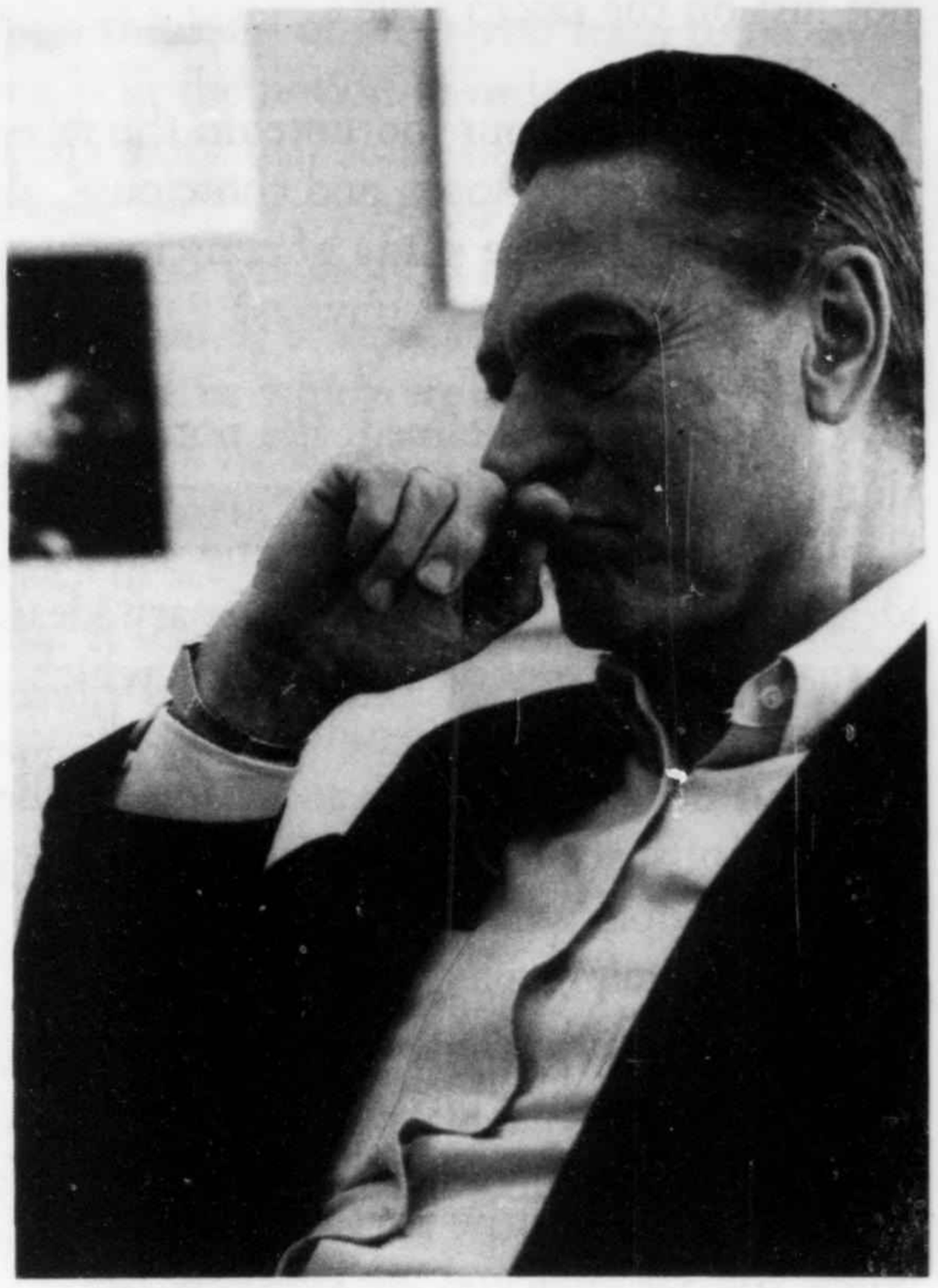
G.C. For a particle with nonzero rest mass m, $E = \frac{mc^2}{\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}}$, so $E = mc^2$ if the velocity v is zero. But it doesn't work this way with the photon, because with the photon v is always equal to c, so the denominator is zero. That doesn't make any sense so you have to start over again and say, "There is an energy for the photon even though there is no rest mass." You can write other equations that make sense.

"A gentle event is a wonderful expression for what the traditions have understood as a kind of reconciling principle between two opposing or contradictory forces."
J.N.

J.N. Are you saying that the photon is a kind of analogue of what we mean when we think of consciousness?

G.C. I wouldn't say it's an analogue, I'd say it's an ingredient. I think it's almost surely a major ingredient in whatever consciousness amounts to. The photon has many remarkable qualities, one of which I'd like to focus on: the notion of a "gentle event." In quantum theory, you don't have a gradual transition from before to after. There is a sudden transition. If a neutron decides to disintegrate and turn into a proton, it doesn't do so gradually. It's a neutron and then it's not a neutron. That's the essence of the quantum idea. In classical thinking, we think of everything as continuous, a process. The central problem in understanding the connection between the ordinary Cartesian-Newtonian world and the quantum world is, "How, starting with the idea that all events are discrete, do we develop the continuous sense that we have about the ordinary world?" Without continuity our sense of Cartesian reality wouldn't be there. You're looking at me and you see me as a continuously meaningful entity. But I'm not the same, really. Photons are flying back and forth, you're communicating with me via photons, and every one of those photons does something to me. I change suddenly with each photon. But I don't change very much, so you continue to recognize me as an "individual." The question is, "Why don't these photons change me very much?" Most quantum events are catastrophic. How does continuity arise? Where are you going to get anything continuous? A photon, because it has zero mass, and because of certain other special properties, has the capacity of mediating events in which one particle moving into the future is almost a continuation of another particle coming from the past. The photon does *almost nothing* to it, so putting together a big collection of these gentle events you can approximate the idea of continuity.

J.N. What's marvelously interesting about modern physics is that it seems to have brought something new to our thinking: that there is a kind of place for chance and hazard and discontinuity. The whole idea of determinism, the effect being totally contained in the cause, is now open to



question. And in human life, too. If one begins to look at one's life, one begins to see discontinuities and the tendency to want to fill them in with some imagined transition. Maybe it is a law of nature that in every process there comes a discontinuity. When we speak of discontinuity, we have something going along, and then something takes place and the material or events at T2 cannot be accounted for by analysis of everything at T1.

G. C. I would urge you to appreciate that in a bootstrap approach the meaning of T2 and T1 has to be somehow established through the event-structure itself. You don't start with the meaning of time; the meaning of time has to come from the relationship between events. That's one of the reasons why graphical language is so effective. A graph doesn't give significance to the distance between events; it's simply the notion of points connected by lines. So you can have a notion of before or after, but there's no significance in the length of time between events. Recently one of my colleagues, Henry Stapp, made a mathematical discovery in connection with gentle photon events which I think with further development is going to produce deep understanding of what space-time means. He showed that the problem of summing up many, many of these gentle events requires a certain transformation—a coherence of soft photons—which in effect gives a meaning to ordinary space-time.

J.N. The relationship of the gentle events would be a meaning of space-time?

G.C. Yes.

J.N. What you're speaking about has echoes in my studies. A gentle event is a wonderful expression for what the traditions have understood as a kind of reconciling principle between two opposing or contradictory forces. In the Hindu tradition, in all the great traditions, there is the idea that events are analyzable always into three forces; the third force is, I think, comparable to this gentle, mediating factor between two otherwise disparate events. Without trying to force any connections here, it encourages me that there may be a law that relates what you are discovering here with my ordinary experience; that this gentle event can take place on many scales,

not just on the micro scale.

L.B. Regarding your footnote on the relation between the photon and consciousness, I wonder if the study of consciousness is part of the domain of physics?

G.C. As currently defined, it's not. But I think it will eventually become part of it. Right now physicists are working with ideas which tamper with the ordinary ideas of space-time. They do it in a spirit which they think true to the Newtonian tradition, but nevertheless they are changing the meaning of space-time. And I believe that even the people who believe they're doing absolutely straight physics are going to come up against this soft photon question. Now, it sounds like physics because photons are part of physics—and gentle events, why shouldn't that be part of physics? But when you say that you are studying the significance of measurement, then you're doing something which is absolutely revolutionary from the point of view of physics, because physics accepts the idea of measurement *a priori*. The notion of reproducible experiment is the basis. If you don't start with that assumption, you haven't got physics. That's the essence. And the idea of reproducibility depends on our sense of a continuous space-time. But what is an experiment? It's something carried out with soft photons. If you examine any experiment, it's always done using soft photons. Why is it that an experiment can be reproducible? It's because photons are so gentle. It's because the probe you use when you look at something doesn't disturb that thing very much. But it does disturb it! There always has to be some agent which transmits a signal from the observer to that which is being observed. The miracle is that an agent can be so gentle that we can pretend there isn't any influence. When you try to connect the nature of space-time to photons and to the meaning of observation, you go beyond the bounds of ordinary physics (where a photon is merely one more object to be observed).

Now when you start talking about the deeper meaning of what an observer is, and what observation is, you're not very far from consciousness. The next question is going to be, "What causes some more or less permanent record of the observation to be left?" Physics distinguishes an observer from the thing he's observing, but they're both made of the same stuff, and somehow these soft photons are allowing communication. Soft photons do something to what's called the observer to make him develop what's called "consciousness of the observation."

J.N. That leads ultimately to the question of consciousness itself as a form of energy.

When I speak to my classes we very often talk about the problem of mind/matter which Descartes left us, and I say, "If I just said to you, 'Will to move that ashtray,' you probably wouldn't expect it to move. And if it did move, you'd think it was a trick." Intrinsically, mind, as Descartes defined it, is totally incompatible with matter. He called it a different substance. So there's no way to account for the interaction between the two. I tell my students to concentrate on moving the ashtray. And they try, they really try—in California you can believe in anything—and then I say, "All right, I'm going to do this thing. Watch closely, here it goes. Are you ready? At the count of three I'm going to do this miracle: one, two, three." (*Lifts arm.*) I wished to move it and it moved. From the Cartesian point of view this is an inexplicable miracle happening by the billions every second we live.

L.B. I was struck earlier by the way you spoke of the "ordinary world" and the "real world." This comes back to the question raised originally of science and religion, in the sense that the traditions have man living in two worlds. I wonder if the physics of today isn't perhaps coming back to that very sense. Do you find in yourself an awareness that there are in fact at least two worlds?

G.C. That to me is perhaps the central mystery: to try to understand how these two worlds can co-exist. They seem to be so separate.

J.N. In the traditions, it is a little different. In the ancient teachings, there are two kinds of movement in the universe: one is a movement from what they would call the source, where, to use their language, highly conscious, purposeful concentrated energy, which they call the Absolute or the First Principle, moves inevitably out and down. I'm using ordinary language; they use myth and symbol very often, which in their terms functions very much as mathematics does in physics. This movement goes out and down, diffusing, dispersing outward and away from the source. It loses energy in a certain sense of the term. There's another movement, of return: back to concentration, simplicity. The return to the source. So there is an expansionary principle and an evolutionary principle back. These two currents of involution out and down and evolution back and up interact in a certain way through the mediation of a third principle. In Taoism and the Chinese system this is the origin of the "Ten Thousand Things": the interaction of these two kinds of movements through the mediation of this third force, which in the ying/yang is symbolized by the whole, whereas the black and the white is each a different movement. So there are two worlds in that sense, in that there are two kinds of current, and when you speak of these events, as soon as we get into the realm of consciousness, it leads to the question of accumulations and dispersions of energy that are observed in the natural world. This also must be taking place in the world of consciousness. When we say consciousness in the ancient teachings, we are not speaking of one kind of thing but of many levels, just as when you say material energy, you're not speaking just of one kind or degree of energy but of different kinds or levels of energy. So this gentle event, is this a movement of energy dispersing? Or is it developing or gathering? Is this important for you to know? I'm looking for a bridge here. Because as soon as you enter the world of consciousness you're entering into the questions of states of consciousness, levels of consciousness.

G.C. The closest analogue I can find in my own thinking of what you seem to be saying is in the notion of order and disorder. The theory that some of my colleagues and I have been working on for several years with these graphs is in conjunction with the notion of complication. There is a precise sense in which we characterize how complex a collection of graphs is. I believe that the arrow of time—time differs from space in several ways; one important way is that it seems to have a direction—will ultimately be understood in terms of the development of complication.

J.N. Not more random, but more complicated.

G.C. That's a tricky point, because *our* notion of complexity applies to the quantum world. We are describing phenomena on the basis of discrete events which generate growing complexity. But it's also clear that quantum complexity develops Cartesian-Newtonian simplicity. The Cartesian notion of an object is a standard example. There is something simple about a Cartesian object which maintains its integrity, but from the point of view of quantum physics it is an enormously complex thing. Meaning for the shape of an object, for example, arises through complexity. Between the quantum domain and the domain of Cartesian objective reality, the meaning of simplicity and complexity becomes inverted. As things get more complicated in the quantum domain, they become simpler in the objective Cartesian world.

J.N. And complication always seems to imply a sort of unifying principle. A kind of integrity. It would seem that items or the aspects of items can be regarded as complications only in relation to a universal principle that is binding them together. Items which are not related at all wouldn't be complications of anything. These are complications because they seem to be many, many aspects of something which is being held together. ■

The Search for Being

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAULINE DE DAMPIERRE

Much has been written about a certain spot in Paris where a kind of inner fire was kept burning throughout the dark days and nights of the German occupation. In a small and crowded apartment in the rue des Colonels Renard, a strangely assorted group of people met nightly to listen with absorbed attention to an Armenian Greek named Gurdjieff, to eat the amazing meals he cooked for them, and to hear read aloud the still-unpublished Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson.

Pauline de Dampierre was one of the circle. She was a young attorney who turned journalist after the war was over; but like many another of the gifted young, she was not destined to follow either of the careers she had originally chosen for herself. Her meeting with Gurdjieff was definitive. After it, her professional work continued only as a means for living and a ground for self-study. After Gurdjieff's death in 1949 and until the present, she has continued, in company with others of that same circle, the process of work on his teaching, for herself, and with the many new people who have come asking to know more about the enigmatic Master and the ideas he expressed.

—D.M. Dooling

D.M. Dooling I understand that Gurdjieff had a complete cosmological system, so in relation to our subject of wholeness, there would be interesting aspects of his teaching on a cosmic scale. But we would rather ask you about it in relation to the human being: what did Gurdjieff consider a *whole man*, a fully developed person? And by the way, I'd like to make clear from the start that when we talk about "whole man" or "real man," we use the word *man* in the generic sense of *human being*, not as *man* differentiated from *woman*. I suppose Gurdjieff also meant that?

Pauline de Dampierre Of course. He said very specifically that men and women have equal possibilities of inner development. He insisted on the difference in their types of natural energy, and the roles to be played in outer life in order to be in tune with them. But the work on oneself is the same for all; there is no difference.

D.M.D. I have been very much interested in the definition at the end of the Introduction to his book, *Meetings with Remarkable Men.* He says, "He can be called a remarkable man who stands out from those

around him by the resourcefulness of his mind, and who knows how to be restrained in the manifestations which proceed from his nature, at the same time conducting himself justly and tolerantly towards the weaknesses of others.''

P.de D. Yes. He can be *just* in front of the weakness of the other, because by having learned to contain his own manifestations, he knows what he is; and he knows what the difficulty is. There is a Zen story that I think illustrates this very well. A blind man was listening to a conversation going on near him, and suddenly he cried out: ''Oh, what an extraordinary man! I have never heard anything like it!'' When he was asked what he had heard that was so remarkable, he explained: ''You know that blind people always develop a very fine sense of hearing. Now, in my entire life, I have never heard someone congratulate another for some good fortune without hearing in his voice at the same time a note of jealousy; and I have never heard anyone sympathize with a misfortune without hearing in his voice a shade of superiority or of satisfaction because he himself was spared. But in the voice of this man who just spoke, when he spoke of happiness I heard only happiness, and when he expressed sorrow, I heard nothing but sorrow . . .''

The man he had listened to was in fact a monk, a great Buddhist saint. Maybe you could say he was a ''whole man.''

D.M.D. It's a very striking story.

P. de D. But I don't mean by this to say that only people who reach this degree should be called ''real''; because between the fully realized man who has attained the greatest development possible, and the ordinary contemporary man—''a slave entirely at the disposal of tendencies which have nothing to do with his true individuality''—there is room for another category of mankind: those who search for a way toward truth. In other words, one might say that these are people who have discovered a truth in the words of the blind man that goes far beyond a mere clever observation, which concerns them very deeply. They have seen that these almost unconscious states of feeling into which they let them-

"This 'something else' which should be the aim of every thinking man, and which is the only thing that can make a man happy, is 'being' . . ."

selves fall are just one aspect of a much more serious problem—a fundamental problem basic to their whole life. So they have decided to put everything they have into confronting it.

D.M.D. You mean that this fundamental problem has to do with the slavery you spoke of?

P. de D. Yes—it has to do with slavery, and its opposite: that is, one's possible liberation.

But to come to the definition of a "whole man," or as one could say, a "real man," one who has turned toward what is real in himself—two definitions could be given. On one hand, there is the developed man, as he has appeared at exceptional moments in humanity's history: the man described by Gurdjieff as having acquired his own "I" with all its attributes of conscience, of objective thought and feeling; and on a more modest level, there are people such as the "remarkable men" that Gurdjieff speaks of in his book, who are on the way. These are people of very diverse backgrounds; you find among them a priest, a Russian prince, a street vendor, an archeologist, an alcoholic, a young musician. Some of them enter monasteries, others remain lay people, but what they have in common is that they are all moved, with the same ardor and the same determination, by the conviction expressed at the end of the book by one of them, old professor Skridlov, that "apart from the vanities of life, there exists a 'something else' which must be the aim and ideal of every more or less thinking man, and that it is only this 'something else' which may make a man really happy and give him real values, instead of the illusory 'goods' with which in ordinary life he is always and in everything full."

Of course, this "something else" is what is presented as fundamental and unique by all the great traditions and religions which have appeared in the course of human history. And Gurdjieff brings to it a new vision, which conforms to the changes and the possibilities of understanding peculiar to our time: a vision of extraordinary force and extraordinary scope, because while it enters into the smallest details of our modern situation, it also extends into the cosmic plane, into the very process of the creation of the world. Yet it has to do with something simple. This "something else" which should be the aim of every thinking man, and which is the only thing that can make a man happy, is "*being,*" the real being of a person, which has been placed in him as a seed and which is called upon to grow and to play a role in the

universe. But contemporary man has degenerated; he has lost contact with his real essence, his consciousness of himself; he "*is not.*" His thought, his feeling, and his organism have developed in a kind of anarchy, full of contradictions, continually wasting his energies without any connection with his true individuality. He is only an automaton; Gurdjieff insisted very much on the automatism of our life, the human mechanicalness which makes us obedient to an illusory scale of values, and makes us incapable of fulfilling what he called our "being-duty."

D.M.D. Now you come to an idea that I think is very hard to grasp. You speak of "being" and of "being-duty." Can you explain what he meant by these terms?

P. de D. I would have to explain it from two different points of view. The first is theoretical. Man's nature is double; in a sense, he was created for two different purposes. For one, he is animated by nature exactly in the same way as plants and animals, and even his ordinary thoughts and ideas are only a supplementary development of this kind of creation that exists for a certain purpose. One sees very well that plants and animals serve a certain chain of existence, and perhaps mankind also serves such a chain, but this is a natural creation that doesn't really concern his own *being,* a life to which he responds. But in contradistinction to the plants and animals, which can only be exactly what they are, the human being has received another possibility, to develop and to acquire a real individuality.

To explain in a more practical way: the difficulty, in understanding what our *being* really is, is that we experience it only mixed with something else; we know ourselves thinking, or in an emotion, or in movement; but these thoughts and emotions and movements are all transitory, temporary. The question is, does man have something in him that is really *himself,* that exists in himself, not attached to something changing; which doesn't come from something outside his control? Can he be present, have the feeling, the consciousness of his being, of a being that is independent of all these surrounding conditions? A person who is on the road to truth is one who has begun to open his eyes to his situation, to feel that he is always pulled out of himself, to see his poverty, his weakness. And after having struggled, been sincere, worked on himself, tried to remember himself and be present to himself, then he begins to enter into contact with his true nature, and he discovers the greatness of the potential that has been given him. At the same time, he sees how strong the automatisms are that continually turn him away from this potential, and finds that with his ordinary means he is powerless. In order to open to his being, he needs to open to these higher influences from which he has been cut off until now.

Then he understands better this ideal that Professor Skridlov talks about, that every thinking man should have: to become a conscious, responsible being, capable of doing—which means to act from one's own initiative, an initiative that doesn't come from the suggestions and appetites of ordinary life, but from his being: a being which calls him to allow these influences from a higher level to operate in him. This is what his "being-duty" is; and

it concerns not only himself, but the whole world, because if a man doesn't recognize these influences and open to them, they can have no action in the world.

D.M.D. I think it's hard for many people to believe that they are in such a bad way as Gurdjieff says—to accept, for instance, that they can't "act of their own initiative," or indeed that there is any other way to be than the way they are.

P. de D. We think in that way until we begin to see how we live our lives. Gurdjieff spoke of the necessity to know oneself; we do not know ourselves. But in order to know oneself, he said, one must first study oneself, and we cannot even do that, until we begin to observe ourselves. He was very insistent on this point with all his pupils; he told them just to watch, to catch themselves—as it were, take snapshots of themselves.

In *Beelzebub's Tales* there is a vivid description of what such a series of snapshots can show. Gurdjieff chose as an example a clever, respected, successful man whose will power and self-control would seem to be enviable. This man gets up one morning in a bad mood. While he is brushing his hair he makes an awkward move and drops his hairbrush; he picks it up even more clumsily and it flies out of his hand and breaks the mirror. This puts him into an even worse temper and he is cross with his servant who hasn't brought him the paper with his morning coffee. In a very irritated state, he leaves the house to go to a business appointment. It is a beautiful day, really lovely, and outdoors he feels better. He sees a street accident, but his thoughts hurry on because a face in the crowd reminds him of something—a birthday party where he ate a delicious meringue. He is just passing a café where he often goes; why not stop and finish his breakfast? He sits down; there is a woman at a nearby table, a charming woman, who looks at him with evident interest. They enter into conversation, and his mood changes as if by magic. Suddenly he remembers the appointment he was supposed to be going to, and he decides to telephone; several times in succession he gets the wrong number. Once again his irritation appears . . .

The description ends, but it could have gone on indefinitely. These insignificant things have taken over the day for this "free" man, without his even being aware of it; he has been completely enslaved by them.

The story illustrates an idea that Gurdjieff emphasized: that of different "I's." A person is constantly saying "I"—but this "I" doesn't represent what he really is. He is always the prey of partial, superficial, changing "I's" to which he gives in, instead of having a stable "I" in which he could recognize his whole self.

As for the notion that our situation cannot be changed—Gurdjieff says very emphatically that such as he is, a man is absolutely incapable of changing anything; he is completely enslaved by all his impulses and all his associations, unless he begins to awaken to what he is; that is, to become aware of the way in which he is continually dragged along by his impulses which are formed in spite of him so that he doesn't even know when he is taken by them; and in the action of returning to himself, of presence to himself, he begins to find the possibility of developing his being.

". . . in the action of returning to himself, of presence to himself, he begins to find the possibility of developing his being."

D.M.D. You said that there were three categories of people: the completely unconscious, ordinary man whose vagaries are described in your story; then the one who is awake to the facts and begins to try to change; but what about the accomplished man, the real man? Is there actually such a thing?

P. de D. You see, there are also degrees even within these categories. Gurdjieff spoke of the real man as one who has gone to the end of his possible development. Naturally, from the point of view of a man on the way, it can never really be said if a man has reached the end or not; there is no measure for that. But I knew Gurdjieff, and I can say that it is he who comes closest in my experience to what I can call a real man. So in the light of this experience with him, I can describe to you how I conceive of the real, whole man.

One of the first characteristics is a natural authority, which has a kind of grandeur and power; and at the same time, it is associated with a physical presence that is human and free to manifest itself on every plane, even the most down-to-earth. In the "whole man" the harmonious development of his nature keeps pace with the interior development. He must have the power to make "the wolf and the sheep" (this was an expression Gurdjieff used) live together in him, each keeping its proper place. It is on this condition that his freedom depends. So he can show himself open and friendly, or formidable—but always, beyond all conventions. And each person feels himself measured in relation to that presence—for each one, it is the measure of his limits and his most hidden weaknesses. The exchange between the "whole man" and an ordinary one may quite well remain on this life-plane: it is like a lesson in life, like a game between someone of great force and great development and someone with less—almost a contest. For some people, this is hard or even impossible to accept; in others, it arouses gratitude and affection. But when this authority, this grandeur, makes itself felt, it is a kind of event. People who witness it receive an unforgettable impression—partly because it is accompanied by something very human, a kindness, which restores the role of father to its rightful place.

D.M.D. That's interesting; because I don't think the usual image of Gurdjieff is one of fatherliness, or benevolence; in fact, his teaching has been accused of being "harsh" and "without love." How did this kindness you speak of show itself in him?

P. de D. I think to show that, and to show also how there can be such misunderstandings of the nature of his teaching, I have to speak first of another characteristic of the "real man," which is an immense *knowledge*—a detailed knowledge, reaching back into the darkness of time; it would be truer to say, into the *light* of time, to those remote epochs in which true knowledge

appeared, knowledge of what Tradition calls the Law, which is the law of the formation of the universe, with man's place in it. This law speaks of the meaning of man's life, the weight of his heritage, and the hope which is always open to him of the place he might occupy.

So I would say that behind the alert look, attentive to every detail, with which the "real man" regards the world around him, there is this knowledge: a lived knowledge, because the "real man" is the place where this law operates, and at every moment it is passing through him. His kindness is impregnated with this knowledge of what is in people and what is necessary for them; and this kindness takes on many different aspects also. With Gurdjieff, for instance, contrary to many things that have been said about him, it didn't at all exclude charity to the poor; quite the contrary. Certain people were surprised to discover how much he did for others—this was during the war, and there were many people in real need whom he took care of; but this was always done secretly, not in the open. In other cases, his generosity took the form of a transmission. An exercise that he gave might help in understanding that. It was an exercise accompanied by slow, rhythmic movements, and in doing it, the pupil had to represent to himself the presence of his father on his right, and that of his son on his left. And as the exercise went on, he would begin to feel that he was simply an intermediary through whom passed an existence that came from elsewhere—his father—and went toward someone else—his son; a transitory existence.

D.M.D. What do you think is the place, the function in life, of the "real man"? Is he necessarily a teacher?

P. de D. He is not necessarily a teacher, a Master, but he is inevitably a *transmitter*, a transmitter of this higher influence. He plays the role of *man*, which it has been said before is to be open to energies, influences, that come from a higher level, and which need to have the human being open to them, someone through whom they can be known, in order to have their action on the world. Even in the desert, he is a transmitter. He doesn't necessarily play the role of teacher, in this sense, but by the fact that he has been open to these influences and has allowed them to pass through him, by his conscious effort, and to have an action by which other people have benefited —in that way, one can say he is a "father." But sometimes he takes on himself in a more direct way the task of helping others so that they also may play this part. In this moment, he takes on the role of teacher.

D.M.D. Then, what does that imply? What must he do?

P. de D. Help them understand the truth; support them where he feels that they are weak; guide them, even perhaps undertake to live with them, because by his presence they will learn certain things that they couldn't understand without a living example. But his action has a limit: he cannot do anything *in the pupil's place*; he cannot make their effort for them. In that sense, he depends on them.

". . . the role of man . . . *is to be open to energies, influences, that come from a higher level, and which need to have the human being open to them, someone through whom they can be known, in order to have their action on the world."*

It sometimes happens that with his help the pupil reaches a certain level of inner work; and the experience is so precious that nothing else in life seems to equal it. I remember during the war the acrobatics each of us had to perform, in the midst of our professional and private obligations, in order never to miss such an event, and to arrive on time at Gurdjieff's apartment. It was the strict rule never to be late; but for several weeks I was in a situation so truly impossible and so painful for me that, as a great exception, I had received permission to arrive in the middle of the meeting. After pedaling halfway across Paris on my bicycle as fast as I possibly could, I entered the room which I knew so well, where the meeting was being held, like all the others I had attended . . . The impression was arresting: I felt literally at the doorway of something whose atmosphere was so special, it had a light and a force which could not be penetrated—the feeling and thinking of the people in the room had been so kindled during the three-quarters of an hour of exchange which I had missed. So when I heard Gurdjieff say to me, "Too late!" I never considered reminding him that he had given me permission—it was so clear that what he said was true.

In order to put the pupil in front of the reality of what he has, what he can expect, what is possible for him, the obstacles, and so forth, the teacher will use all sorts of means. He may be very demanding; perhaps he will show himself as severe, hard, perhaps he will provoke public scenes; and many people will not understand that, but the teacher knows the price that has to be paid, he knows what the pupil has to go through in order to understand; and if one can see through this apparent hardness, there is always a "maybe" to soften the outburst and help him endure it. Or the relation may take the form of a private conversation, and in spite of the importance of the situation, it may be quite down-to-earth, familiar. The pupil may feel himself completely recognized and accepted, even chosen, by the teacher. And there is a reason for that, because he is taking part in a relation he has never known before: a relation of being to being; although the teacher has had to hide himself behind a language that the pupil can understand. Really no one knows what the teacher has to demand of himself so that the pupil will understand something. An anecdote which Kathryn Hulme tells, in her book, *Undiscovered Country*, may give some idea:

". . . it's no longer possible to lean on the great theological virtues of faith, hope, and love; they have degenerated too much in contemporary man. However, one quality has remained intact in him: his conscience."

We were aware how often his seemingly jocose remarks lifted suddenly to another level of understanding and listened attentively to his tale of a brand new car he might be able to get with no down payment whatsoever—a deal so unique that he thought he should have some help to see it through. He asked if any of us had a special saint to whom he might burn a candle, looking first to Miss Gordon, our senior, for a suggestion. She named a saint noted for granting requests, but the master shook his head. He knew all about that one. "No," he said, "It must be a saint who would be indulgent for *one of us*." One of us in the Work . . . you, me . . . Canary, Thin One . . . his eyes searched our blank faces, then he shrugged.

"If you cannot suggest such a one," he said, "I could just as well take my own saint—Saint George. But he is a very *expensive* saint. He is not interested in money, or in merchandise like candles. He wishes *suffering* for merchandise, an *inner-world* thing. He is interested only when I *make something* for my inner world; he *always* knows. But . . . such suffering is expensive . . ."*

D.M.D. That seems a wonderful example of what I have often heard about the indirect way in which Gurdjieff was able to show something to a pupil. I suppose, though, that he sometimes did speak very directly, and I wonder if he gave any clear definitions of what he considered a "real man."

P. de D. In *Beelzebub's Tales* he gives one very clear definition, which is that "a man is a being who can do, and 'to do' means to act consciously and by one's own initiative." And on almost every page, he evokes the huge difference between the real man and what he calls the pseudo-man, the man in quotation marks. Although he makes it clear that both are slaves of Great Nature, the first, taking a conscious attitude toward his slavery, has accomplished the task given him to work for the development of his being, of his conscience, and of his objective feeling and thought. He has acquired "imperishable being." The other, who refuses to open his eyes and who remains the prisoner of his illusions, remains for the whole of his life merely "a thing." He has allowed his possibilities to "beat their wings in vain."

D.M.D. What more can you say about those who have seen something, heard a call and tried to follow the way a teacher gives them? What sort of people are they,

*Kathryn Hulme, *Undiscovered Country: In Search of Gurdjieff* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972).

and how must they show themselves?

P. de D. That is such a big question and includes so many different aspects and degrees that is would be impossible to answer it in a few words. But I think an essential element of the answer is to be found in a passage of *Beelzebub's Tales* which is at the end of the book. He says that it must be everyone's aim to become a *master*; not because of his power or his riches, but because he "acquires in himself that *something*" which makes him recognized and respected by those about him.

This passage takes us back again to the words of old Professor Skridlov that I quoted at the beginning of our talk, to this "something" which is the only thing that can bring real happiness instead of the illusory values which life provides.

D.M.D. What is at the beginning of a search for this "something," which you defined as real being?

P. de D. On talking with people who have a real inner search, it seems that most often what was at the beginning of it was a decisive encounter with someone, and that what touched them more than the ideas or doctrines they were told about was "something" they felt in this person—something tangible, something alive, something they could trust, and which they hadn't met with before in the ordinary course of life. And this "something" they felt in the person speaking with them came from the contact which had begun to be established in him with his real being—the beginning of the ability to *be* which he had acquired, and which, whatever his faults and weaknesses, acted on him as a guide and a source of harmony between his body, his feeling, and his thought.

Of all the qualities which Gurdjieff fostered in people, there was one to which he attached a special importance, and he returned to it constantly. It is the counterbalance to this habitual world of illusions with all their accompanying vanities and boasts and pretentions. It is an "active being-thought"—*active* because it is always awake, *being* because it is independent of all suggestion and relies entirely on the conscience. So, the "real man" has an objective judgment, an objective aim, and the strength to struggle in himself against what could turn him away from them.

D.M.D. You speak of conscience; I would be very much interested to hear what was Gurdjieff's teaching about that.

P. de D. The idea of conscience is a central one in Gurdjieff's teaching. In *Beelzebub's Tales*, he explains that for what could awaken man to his reality, it's no longer possible to lean on the great theological virtues of faith, hope, and love; they have degenerated too much in contemporary man. However, one quality has remained intact in him: his conscience. And what must he understand by that? As always, Gurdjieff presents this idea in several ways, and with each, he wishes to touch a different facet of the person he is addressing. In *Beelzebub's Tales*, he presents it in its highest, theological aspect: speaking of the highest degree of consciousness, "objective conscience," he calls it a "divine impulse" which must be served by the struggle between the functioning of the physical body and that of the being, which strives to perfect and develop itself.

"Between this sleep and that highest possible degree of consciousness we have spoken of, there are intermediate stages, and these we need to know. They are accessible to our observation; they depend on us."

Elsewhere, he speaks of it as a person's grasp of an immediate and total awareness of *everything that he is*; and as each part has a contradictory feeling, and these feelings range from a deep impression of powerlessness, or even nothingness, to the most high-flown notions of oneself, to feel all that simultaneously would be unbearable. That is why conscience is always covered up in the ordinary person. It's only gradually, and to the degree that a person can make contact with his real being and have a relation with an inner life, that at the same time conscience begins to open and one begins to recognize what it is in which hope and confidence can really be placed. So it is only by a gradual process that Gurdjieff tries to make a person come little by little to feel his contradictions and the need to change. We've already spoken of the series of snapshots taken in the course of the day which show these insignificant "I's" which succeed each other in us, without leaving behind the faintest memory of the real "I" which can exist and which would represent us more fully.

D.M.D. One often hears the idea of man's plurality—"man is legion," and so on—but there is not so often a clarity about his possibility of wholeness, of unity; of bringing these many "I's" into some sort of organization, under some kind of government.

P. de D. In order to explain the action of these limited, powerless "I's" and this possibility of a better organization that you speak of, Gurdjieff made use of an ancient allegory. Man is represented by an equipage in which the coachman corresponds to thought, the carriage to the body, and the horse to feeling. At first sight the whole thing looks very fine. The coachman wears a superb top hat, and the carriage has a brand new body with a famous trademark. But you shouldn't look too closely. The rest of the coachman's get-up is in a pitiable condition, and he himself is a nobody; he is lazy, greedy for cheap pleasures, and he takes no interest in the rest of the equipage—he is only a hired driver. As for the carriage, under the new body, the wheels and undercarriage are dirty and worn out almost beyond repair. It has become completely unfit for the use it was really made for. And last and above all, there is the horse—the poor horse, who suffers because nobody pays attention to him. No one has thought about educating him, or providing him with the kind of food he needs. He's deprived of all interest or incentive; he lives in a sort of limbo, neglected, like an orphan, closed in on himself, ready to let himself be seduced by anyone who shows any interest in him.

The equipage is in this state because it has no master. It is a hackney cab, at the disposition of chance passengers—these authoritarian "I's" who appear and are soon replaced by others just as dictatorial and as changeable.

This allegory needs to be expanded on at length to be thoroughly understood, and there isn't time for that now. At first sight, the image may seem exaggerated. But that's because we usually know only the most obvious of all our thoughts, feelings, and bodily movements—our capacity to reflect, to conduct our affairs successfully, make physical efforts, be fond of certain people. But behind this facade, we know nothing of these unstable "I's" and their continually shifting movements—the dreams, the preconceived judgments, the organic rigidity which closes us into our automatism, this skin-deep sensibility which in fact—unless a central, essential aspiration touches our consciousness—determines the orientation of our whole lives.

D.M.D. It sounds like rather a hopeless picture . . .

P. de D. No, it's not hopeless—on the contrary; because in fact, the real Master is not far off. He is in the carriage, but helpless—like a prisoner. He has no way of making himself heard, but he is there, within. And in his heart, the coachman knows that quite well, because when a difficulty or a danger arises and the carriage goes into a ditch, he turns toward the Master and calls him. As soon as the problem is solved, he forgets again. But it's not impossible to talk to the coachman and persuade him to shake off his dream and listen for that voice. What the Master has to communicate comes from very high, and it is bound to have an action on him and on the rest of the equipage. The coachman is capable of understanding, of making efforts, of centering his attention, of looking toward the future, and of seeing through those who want to impose on him.

To put this image into another form, it could be said that there are several states, several degrees, of consciousness. The one we ordinarily live in has been called a state of sleep. Between this sleep and that highest possible degree of consciousness we have spoken of, there are intermediate stages, and these we need to know. They are accessible to our observation; they depend on us. A person can try to come out of his dream and remember the meaning of his existence; he can try to be present to himself, to be aware of what he is and of this real "I" which is in him. It is a long apprenticeship. But when he opens fully to what it is in him that needs his service, at that moment his functions are in tune with this wish: they change tempo, they harmonize. The thought is vigilant, the body lets go of its resistance and relaxes, and in the feeling, a joy arises which lends a warmth to support this mutual understanding. At that moment, there is unity; the true Master makes his appearance.

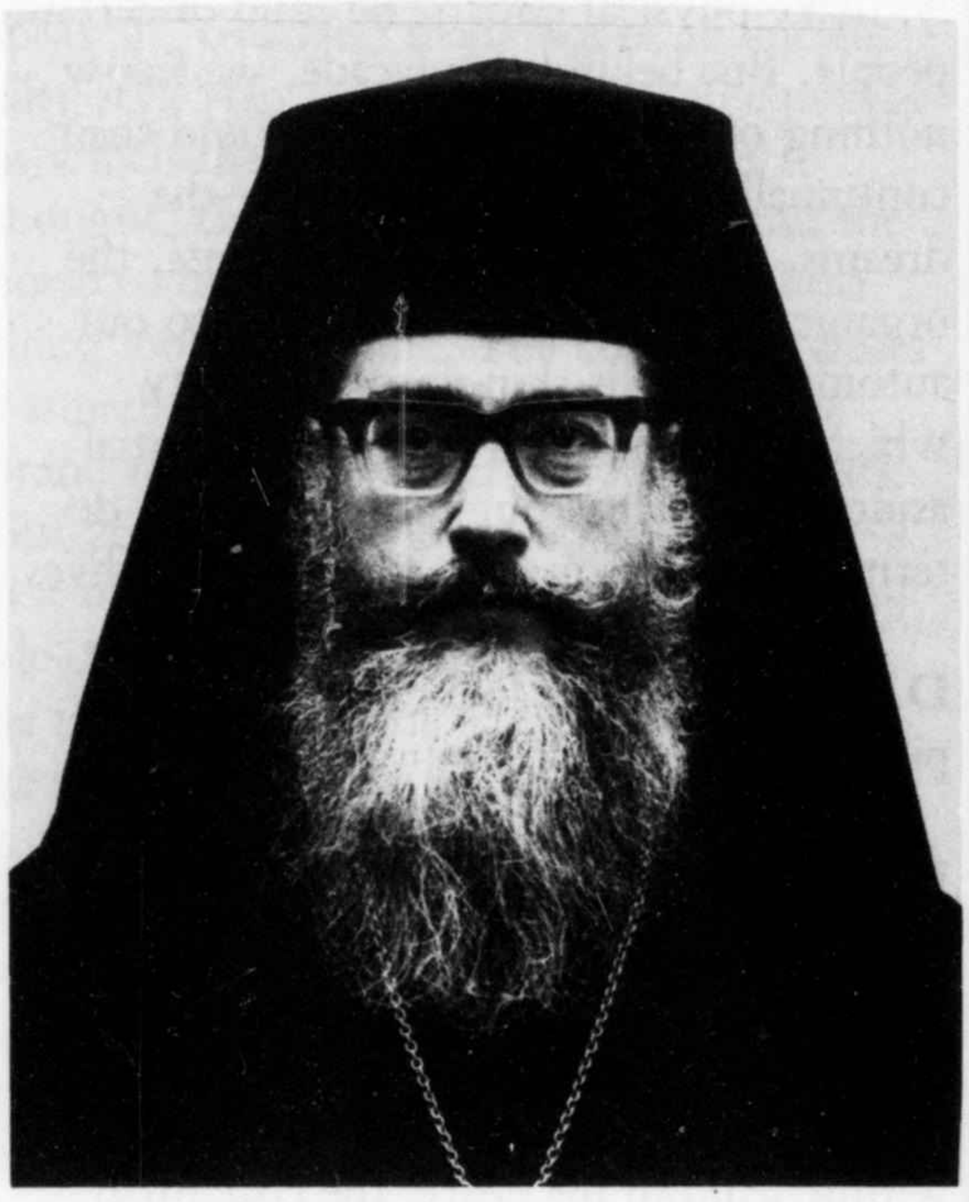
D.M.D. He makes his appearance; but what then?

P. de D. There is a lot to do, a lot to demand of oneself, before he can remain present. That is why I said to you at the beginning of this conversation that it was quite natural for these remarkable men, such as Gurdjieff depicted them, to show themselves indulgent toward the weaknesses of others. One must have verified in oneself the astonishing truth of the image of the hackney cab before one can make room for that which "every bearer of the name of Man should have": the true I, the real, whole individuality. ■

Image and Likeness

AN INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP KALLISTOS WARE

I am greeted at the door of his leaf-covered house on a quiet Oxford street by the man I know as Father Kallistos, who is now Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia. I have not seen him for a while, but he is one of those people who do not really change; he has become more himself. His welcome is friendly. We go into his study that acts as office and retreat—and probably tutorial room; he is Spalding Lecturer on Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford University. The room is full of books, some written by him: The Orthodox Church *(Pelican Books, 1983),* The Orthodox Way *(Mowbrays, 1979), and the translation (with Palmer and Sherard) of the complete* Philokalia *(Faber & Faber, 1981). By the wealth of books, one is made aware that had this man not converted to Orthodoxy, he would have fulfilled a more limited pattern of intellectual brilliance. The ikons in the room speak of a different light, and it is that light which has increased in the years I have known him. Now the intellect serves that light but does not usurp it.*



He is attached to the Greek Orthodox monastery of St. John the Divine on the Island of Patmos, where he spends the non-academic part of the year. His theme is that to be a whole person does not really mean "getting oneself together"; wholeness results from what we really do *with our heart in our living of life: keep it, or offer it to God and the world.*

—James Moran

James Moran The definition of the whole person that PARABOLA has suggested is: "one who has in his or her being, to a very high degree, freedom, consciousness, unity, and will." What do you think?

Kallistos Ware All four of these qualities are indeed very important for our understanding of the person. We are free, in the sense that we are capable of making moral choices in a way that the animals do not make moral choices. We are one, in the sense that we are a unity of body and soul. The whole person is not just the soul on its own, not just the body on its own, but the two considered as an integrated unit. Consciousness: this too is essential to personhood. We do not just act in the world, we understand that we are acting, and the greater our understanding, the more truly we are personal. Will: that surely is another aspect of freedom. But there are other things to be added to our definition of the whole person.

J.M. What would these be?

K.W. In particular, I would add two closely linked ideas: openness and love. The whole person is not just a self-contained, self-centered unity. The whole person is a person who is on the one side open to God, and on the other side open to other human persons. The human being without God is not truly human. We were created to enter into a relationship with God, to be in dialogue with Him, and if that relationship is not present something essential is lacking from our personhood. Equally, we are created to relate to other human persons. It has been said that there is no true man unless there are two men entering into communication with one another. The isolated individual is not a real person. A real person is one who lives in and for others. And the more personal relationships we form with others, the more truly we realize ourselves as persons. This idea of openness to God, openness to other persons, could be summed up under the word "love." We become truly personal by loving God and by loving other humans. By love, I don't mean merely an emotional feeling, but a fundamental attitude. In its deepest sense, love is the life, the energy, of God Himself in us.

J.M. The Greek word for personhood is "hypostasis." Could you tell us what this word means?

K.W. Literally, hypostasis means that which stands under, that which possesses independent existence and is in some sense complete in itself: something which possesses real existence, as opposed to that which merely changes, a transient appearance. If we say that a human person is a hypostasis, we mean that there is an element of continuity, an element of unity, behind all the passing experiences we have during our life. We also mean that the human person is a subject capable of making decisions, of initiating something new.

J.M. An agent.

K.W. Yes. The human person is that in which new beginnings are made. We do not just react, we act. But when we say that hypostasis means "that which is complete in itself, which possesses independent existence," we have to qualify, because we believe that the human person depends on God, and apart from God we are not truly human or truly person. There's another word in Greek used for person: that is the word "prosopon." Literally, it means "face." This second word for person helps us to understand what was said just now: that we are not truly personal as long as we are turned in on ourselves, isolated from others. We only become personal if we face other persons, relate to them.

J.M. Does hypostasis also say something about our uniqueness as persons, and the fact that a person called into existence by God is called eternally into existence?

K.W. When applied to humans, the term "hypostasis" has exactly that sense. We have a beginning as persons; we do not

have an end. God calls us into being for all eternity.

J.M. Do you think the whole person is one who lives, as it were, in two worlds at once?

K.W. We can make a series of contrasts. We can say that the human person is both material and spiritual; that there is in the human person both something visible—the body—and something invisible—the soul. We might also make contrast between the natural and the supernatural. The human person has a natural existence in this world, but a more than natural life relating to God. I am not very happy about these contrasts, if they are made in a sharp manner, because the human person is a unity: the material and the spiritual are a single unity, not two parts making up a composite whole. These are two aspects of that which is, in reality, one and undivided. The same with the visible and the invisible: the body is not a component of the human person, part of the whole; the body is the whole person. It is a mode of existence for the total person, though the body does not exhaust the meaning of the person. Yet the body is the whole person acting, and looked at from a particular point of view. So it seems to me that the two worlds are in reality one world.

J.M. Is the whole person there, intact in everyone, or does it exist only in potential, as a seed which must grow?

K.W. I prefer, from a Christian point of view, to say that there is a seed of the fully whole being within each one of us. But it needs to grow. In the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, it is said that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God. In Hebrew, probably the words "image" and "likeness" meant the same. They were intended to be parallel. But many of the Greek Fathers saw a contrast between the image and the likeness. They understood the image to be the original qualities conferred on us from our first creation, which make us human, while the likeness

"We do not really know what it means to be a person. This is a mystery. We do not know what are the limits of personhood."

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represents the true use of those qualities, developed to the utmost. So image represents potentiality, likeness represents realization. Image represents innocence, likeness represents wholeness. Thus it could be said that as human persons we are on a journey from the image—that is our starting point—to the likeness, which is our final goal. We are not created perfect. We are created innocent and capable of perfection. So I prefer the image of a seed—the idea of a seed which needs to grow. To grow partly through our own efforts, but also through the grace of God.

When speaking of the image, there's another point to be added: we Christians believe that God is Trinity. God is One, but at the same time God is Three in One. God is not just one person dwelling alone in isolation, God is not just the monad; God is a triad of three Persons dwelling in one another by mutual love. There is a perpetual movement of love passing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is not just Unity, He is also Communion. Now, if the human person is made in the image of God, that means in the image of God the Trinity, and that means we are intended to live in a movement of love with other human persons. We are intended to reproduce on earth the mystery of the Trinity in Heaven. We are to reproduce in our own human life the pattern of interpersonal relationships that exist also in God. So the image doctrine links up with what I said earlier: to be a person means to be open, in love, to other persons.

J.M. So human beings, as they are, are unfinished, would you say?

K.W. Many Christians would say, and I agree with them, that human beings are unfinished, in the sense that they have lim-

itless possibilities. Other creatures in this world, in the animal world, have a specific nature, and they act by instinct within the limits of that nature. But man's distinctive character is that he is not limited by his nature, that he has free choice. Therefore, that he has limitless possibilities. We do not really know what it means to be a person. This is a mystery. We do not know what are the limits of personhood. We cannot say in words exactly what are the highest and fullest potentialities of being a person. In this way, for me, personhood means openness to the unexpected, to the new. Every achievement is only a step on a journey which then becomes the beginning of some fresh progress. Personhood as I understand it involves infinite progress. God is infinite; the human being

this is the word "theosis," which could be translated literally as "divinization." We are called to become like God. We spoke earlier of the likeness as being our final goal. We are called to share in God's life, in His Glory. We remain human, we remain created, but we are truly and fully united with God in His divine energies. And these energies transform us, so while we remain human we also share in the divine life. That is our final aim. Saint Basil says, "The human person is a creature that has received the commandment to become God."

J.M. You've already stated what it means to be open, but what does it mean to be free? In Orthodoxy sometimes the word "royalness" is used to speak of the freedom

made in God's image is made to have communion with God. We shall never learn all there is to know about God, so in our fellowship with God, we shall never cease to grow.

J.M. What is it that must be achieved for a person to be "whole"?

K.W. We have already used the words "love" and "wholeness." There's also another word that is important; in Greek,

of the human agent. What do you feel about that?

K.W. Yes, indeed. In the Bible, already in the first chapter of Genesis, there is clearly the idea that the human being is the king of creation, the ruler. There is the idea that the human person in a special way represents God on earth. God has appointed us as persons to rule over the world. Other living creatures exist in the world; they alter their environment—ants construct ant

"Hell is not a place where God puts us; it's a place where we put ourselves. The doors of Hell, insofar as they have locks, have locks on the inside."

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heaps; beavers build dams—but only to a very limited degree. We humans have been given freedom; we have been given consciousness; and therefore we do not only exist in the world, we make choices and these choices alter the world in which we live. This is what is implied in the idea of our royal character. It places a very great responsibility upon us. We can achieve much for good, but equally much for evil. We can transfigure the material creation. We can make the material creation articulate in praise of God. We can give it new beauty and meaning. But we can also use the material creation for destruction. The making of an atom bomb, and our contemporary problem of the pollution of the environment—the deserts and dustbowls that we have produced in this twentieth century—all this shows how human persons can also use their freedom negatively. But that is our particular challenge. The greater our power for good, the greater also our potentiality for evil. Freedom means the possibility of great good, but also of tragic harm.

J.M. Would you say that freedom in a sense is the flaw in creation from the point of view of anyone who hopes for some kind of mechanical, guaranteed, assured road to holiness? That freedom means that there is something truly open-ended in life, and that in a sense a human being has the terrifying power to affect things differently? That there is a sense that the world, at least partly, is in our hands?

K.W. There is indeed a sense in which the world is partly in our hands. Speaking in metaphorical terms, we might put it this way: when God created the human person in his own image, and gave freedom to human beings, He took a risk; because God is love, and He wished love also to be the highest principle of His creation. And, as we have said, where there is love there needs also to be freedom. God could have created robots which would have automatically done always exactly what He wished. But the one thing a robot, acting mechanically, cannot do is love. God wished to have in His world not just mechanical forces, He wished to have free persons, made in His image: persons who would have freedom after the likeness of the Divine Freedom. His freedom is infinite and unconditioned; our freedom is created and limited, but nonetheless real. This was what God wanted: creatures who would freely love each other and freely respond to Him with love. In a sense, God had to take that risk. If He wanted there to be love, He had to give us freedom. And by giving us freedom, He gave us the possibility of rejecting His love. Freedom therefore implies the possibility of doing evil. The world was not created evil. But God took the risk because He wished there to be love. This is the true meaning of the Christian doctrine of Hell, which is so widely misunderstood. God does not condemn us to Hell; God wishes all humans to be saved. He will love us to all eternity but there will exist the possibility that we do not accept that love and do not respond to it. And the refusal to accept love, the refusal to respond to it, that precisely is the meaning of Hell. Hell is not a place where God puts us; it's a place where we put ourselves. The doors of Hell, insofar as they have locks, have locks on the inside.

J.M. What kind of effort is required to unlock those doors, and what prevents us? What gets in the way, and what helps?

K.W. We live in a fallen world. We drag each other down. Each of us from the moment of his or her birth exists in an environment in which it is easy to do evil and hard to do good, in which it is easy to hurt others and hard to win their trust. If I know somebody very well, in ten minutes, if I set my mind to it, I could perhaps say

to them things so cruel, so destructive, that they would never forget them for the rest of their life. But could I in ten minutes say things so beautiful, so creative, that they would never forget them? It is easier to speak words of bitterness, of hatred, than to speak in a memorable way words of love. That is part of what is meant by saying we live in a fallen world. The world is fallen, but we still have freedom. The image in the human person has been clouded over, covered with dirt, but it's not been obliterated totally. But we are dragged down by the influence of sin. Our own past sins, and also all the other wrongdoing that has happened in the world over many generations.

What helps us? The Grace of God: which means the Love of God in action. Everywhere in the world there are present the Divine Energies. God is not distant. Though He is above and beyond all things, He is also within all things and within all persons, and this active, fiery, creative Love of God is present everywhere. That is what we mean by grace. That is our fullest support. This grace works with our human freedom. With God's help, we can then become whole persons. We can not become whole persons by ourselves. We need help. Though God expects us, with our freedom, to play a part.

J.M. So the effort involves both cooperation with God and making efforts that show that we actually do rely upon this help.

K.W. Yes. It is the convergence of God's initiative and our response. Divine grace and human freedom. What God does is incomparably more important than what we do. But what we do is also essential. The will of man is an essential precondition, for without it God does nothing.

J.M. There's an image of Christ in Revelation, in the Apocalypse, in which He speaks of conquering and overcoming the world, and implies that we have to do that, and that we also have to conquer and overcome ourselves in order to do that.

What is the Christian meaning of conquering or overcoming the world?

K.W. The term "the world" is used in two different ways in scripture. On the one side, by "world" we mean that which God has created: the real world. And this is good. As it says in the Bible, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." In this sense, we are not called to conquer God's world, we are called to live in it and to realize its potentialities. But on other occasions the term "world" is used to mean the fallen world, the world turned away from God. And in this sense of "world," we are called to conquer the world. The term "self" also has a double meaning. It can mean the real person created in the image of God, but it can also mean our fallen self, what with our limited understanding and our sinful outlook we imagine to be our true self but which is not our true self at all. So in this second sense we are called to conquer or overcome ourselves. But properly understood, the self is good. Christ told us to love our neighbor as ourselves. This means we are not to hate ourselves. The true self has been created by God and we are not to hate what God has created. But we are to see that the true self which is within me, that God has created, exists also in others. And we are to love them, therefore, as we love and honor the Divine Image in ourselves. The desert Fathers sometimes said, "Know yourself and forget yourself."

J.M. Is "conquering and overcoming ourselves" a process of purification or of transformation? Must lower energies be eliminated, or changed?

K.W. Properly understood, purification means the same as transformation, though there is a slight difference of emphasis. When you speak of purifying something you mean removing that which disfigures it, so that it becomes truly itself. If you speak of transforming it, you see the nature of that thing as something dynamic, capable of growth. Certainly I do not understand purification in the sense of removing something. When you remove something you don't purify it, you abolish it.

". . . nothing in ourselves is to be abolished, or mortified in the sense of being destroyed."

The human person is to be seen as a diversity in unity, an integrated whole with many aspects, with all these aspects interconnected. Therefore nothing in ourselves is to be abolished, or mortified in the sense of being destroyed. But it is to be purified, to be transformed or transfigured. For example: we have in our nature a desire for food and drink. If this is misused, then we suffer from gluttony and from alcoholism. But the desire is not to be abolished. God has given us food and drink, and we are to enjoy these things, although not to be dominated by them. The same can be applied to the question of our sexual energies. These are implanted in us by God. They can be misused, and then they take the form of lust. The essence of lust is the loss of personal relationship. But the sexual energies are not in themselves evil. And they are capable of being transfigured. Even those who have chosen the life of celibacy or of virginity are not called to deny their sexual energies—if they do, they may find themselves in great difficulties—but they are called to transform and purify those energies, to direct them towards God. Eros, understood as physical, sexual love, is an important aspect of Christian love. We shouldn't make a sharp contrast between eros, meaning sexual love, and agape, meaning Christian love. Eros and agape are two aspects of a single reality.

J.M. What is the right attitude toward suffering? Can we learn to suffer creatively—and how?

K.W. Suffering remains a mystery. We cannot fully understand why it is that in a world created by a God of love there is suffering. Insofar as suffering can be re-

lieved, it should be relieved. That applies to others as well as to myself. If I have a toothache, then I should go see the dentist and have it put right. Unnecessary suffering is not good. What are we to do, however, with unavoidable suffering? Suffering itself is an evil. God did not create us to suffer. God does not want us to suffer; He may permit it, but He does not want it. Suffering, however, is something that can be used. The vital point is: what is your attitude towards suffering? You can be destroyed by it, embittered, called to darkness and despair. Or you perhaps can be transformed by it. Perhaps through suffering you can become a whole person in a far deeper sense than you would have been able to do if you had never suffered.

How can we learn to suffer creatively? There is no easy answer, but one way in is this: we can relate our sufferings to the sufferings of others, first of all to the sufferings of Christ Himself on the Cross. If we suffer, then Christ, who is God, has suffered before us, and He is suffering with us. Our suffering is united with His. Also, we can see our suffering as joined to the suffering of all other humans. So the way foward is through solidarity. If I can offer up my sufferings on behalf of others, in unity with Christ, they can be creative and not destructive.

J.M. What do you think is the major difference between someone who really wishes for wholeness and has begun to look for it, and one who ignores the possibility?

K.W. In the Orthodox spiritual tradition, one word that occurs very frequently is "nepsis." This means sobriety, wakefulness, vigilance; the opposite to the state of one who is in a drunken stupor. One who ignores the possibility of starting on the journey towards wholeness is, as it were, asleep. One who has started on the journey is awake. Perhaps the first thing to say to people is "Wake up! Look, listen, open your outer eyes, open your inner eyes." That is said not only in Christianity, but in perhaps all the great spiritual traditions.

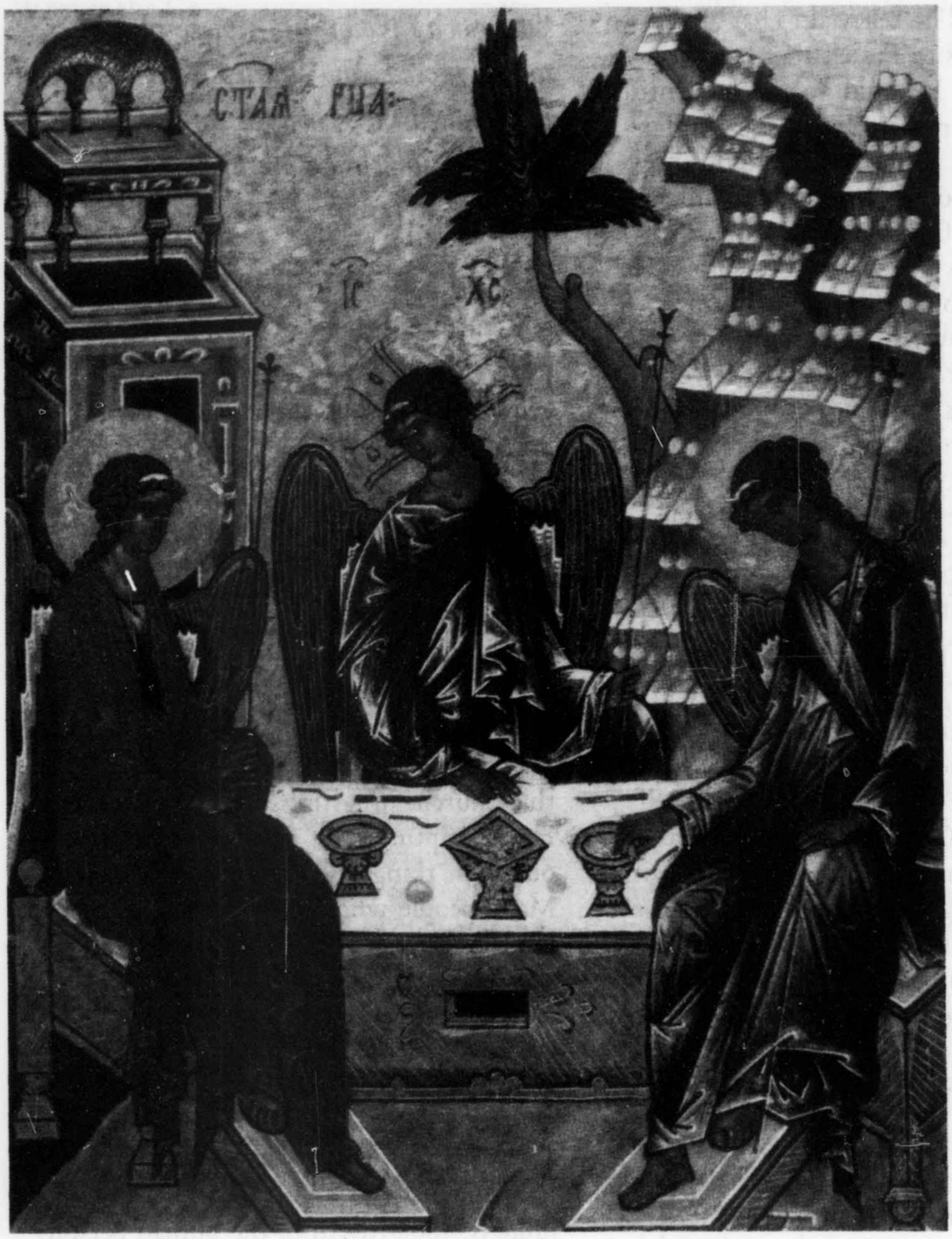
"The body is not just a piece of matter to be ignored, and still less something evil to be hated. The body is an aspect of ourselves which we are to live to the full."

J.M. Can there be a waking up and a growth of being without a religious practice?

K.W. For me, as an Orthodox Christian, the journey towards wholeness involves prayer, in the sense of personal, private prayer, standing in silence before God; but also in the sense of communal prayer, sharing in the services of the Church, sharing in the Sacraments. It involves, beyond prayer, joining in all the other practices of the Church: in fasting, in the reading of Holy Scripture. Is it possible to grow without these things? God is very generous. Many people who have no religious practice do grow in self-understanding, do show creative love towards others. They are open to their fellow humans. And there are many people who are open towards God who do not belong to any particular church. I do not wish to judge them. I accept the authenticity and integrity of their inner life. Yet, I believe that in its fullness, the growth of the human person towards wholeness is intended by God to take place within church life.

J.M. There are so many religious traditions being taught in the world today, that a lot of people find it confusing and take bits from here and there in a sort of patchwork combination. What do you think about that?

K.W. Let me use here a familiar image: the image of climbing a mountain. A mountain has only one top, though there may be many paths up towards the top of the mountain. As a Christian, I believe the fullness of the truth exists only in Christianity, only in faith in Jesus Christ. But I



believe that God speaks in the hearts of all humankind, and therefore I believe that there is a true revelation of God, incomplete but genuine, in the other great religions. So I believe that they too are following a path that will lead them to the top of the mountain. And since the mountain has only one top, we shall all meet there if we are faithful to our vocation, if we respond to the light that is given to us. What is dangerous is exactly what is mentioned in this question: if instead of following one path with integrity, we try to combine a number of different paths. If you try to hop from one path to another, you will make no progress at all. You will fall into thorn bushes and disagreeable ravines. So my counsel is: follow the way on which you are, with integrity.

J.M. What other counsel would you give to someone who is beginning to look for a way?

K.W. I would give one particular piece of advice: try to find a guide, a spiritual father or spiritual mother, a person endowed with discernment and love who can help you on the way. If you are going up a

mountain for the first time, you need to have someone with you who knows the way. We can learn many things from books, and many things from the inner light of our own conscience, but it is easy to misunderstand what is written in books—perhaps it is true but it is not written for *us*, or not for us at this moment—and it is easy to confuse the advice of the conscience with our own wishful thinking. If we have an experienced guide, an elder, that is an enormous assistance on the way. The truth is not so much taught as caught; caught through personal contact. Things can be learned through living with another person which can never be learned just from verbal statement. The truth is caught and the spiritual father or mother is the infectious person. In the Christian tradition very often the spiritual father is a priest-monk. But he needn't necessarily be a priest, he needn't necessarily be a monk, needn't necessarily be a man. Any human may be given this gift. The same person cannot act as guide to everybody. It is a personal relationship. But if we look around us, perhaps in the persons whom we meet we can discover one who is able to give us the help we need.

J.M. Today there are many gurus around who are selling themselves as spiritual fathers and mothers, and some of them seem to be bogus, dangerous. Are there any criteria in religious tradition to help people look out for those who might have gifts and powers, but who are in fact Satanic in their use of these gifts and powers?

K.W. The problem you mention is a real one. There are many false guides. There is no automatic way of discovering a true guide, but there are certain criteria. First, the spiritual father, if genuine, does not usually impose himself. He doesn't necessarily hide, but he waits for the others to come. The true spiritual father helps us to develop our own freedom. He does not impose his way on us, but helps us to discover our own way. The true spiritual guide does not promise instant success. In the spiritual life there are occasionally shortcuts, but ones provided by God. In general, what is asked of us is fidelity and the willingness to go deep. Those spiritual teachers who claim to offer us the higher gifts of contemplation through a few simple exercises should be treated with great caution.

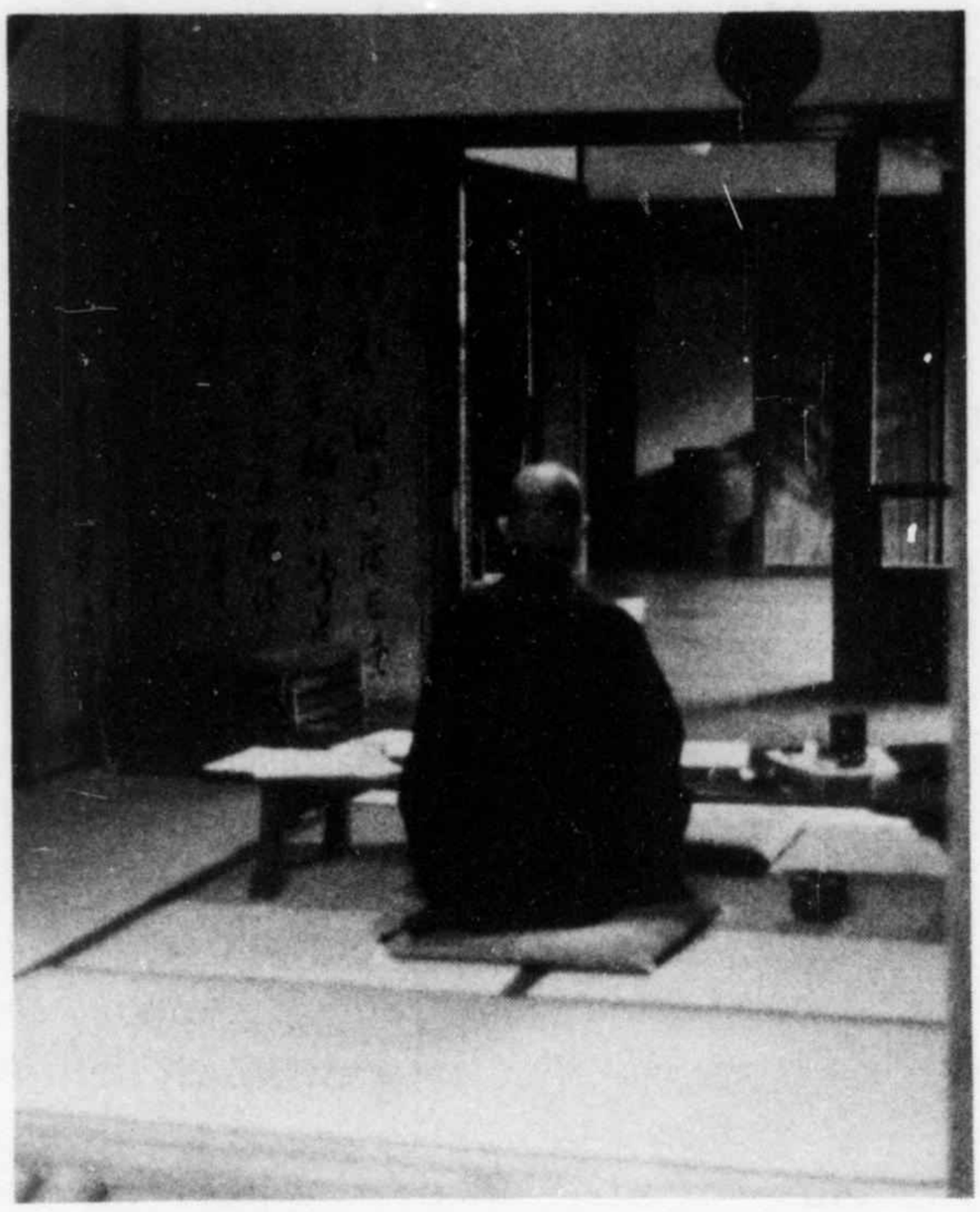
J.M. We speak of the "whole person," but doesn't that imply a relationship of his parts—a relationship of knowledge to feeling, and also to the part the body plays?

K.W. In the Orthodox spiritual tradition we often use the word "heart." By heart we mean not just the emotions or feelings but the deep center, the true self. Our aim is to discover the place of the heart, to unite the brain with its knowledge to the heart; and in the heart also feeling is found. Our aim, then, is to integrate them on the level of the deep heart. And the body is also involved in this, because the body is not a piece of clothing but our integral self. The body plays its part through ascetic effort, by which I don't mean just self-denial, but self-control. It plays its part through symbolic actions. There are ways also in which the rhythms of the body, the rhythm of the breathing, for example, can be used in prayer and meditation. The body is not just a piece of matter to be ignored, and still less something evil to be hated. The body is an aspect of ourself which we are to live to the full.

In the Greek Christian tradition, the person is often described as being at the center of creation, at the crossroads. The human person is seen as a microcosm reflecting the whole creation, both material and spiritual. In this way, the human person is the bond of creation, the bridge—the marriage song of creation. The human person is called to be the mediator. We are called to unite. We are called to take material things and make them spiritual. Though they still remain material, we raise them to a higher level. And because we are made in the Image of God, it is the task of each one of us to be the priest of creation, to take the creation and to offer it back to God. ■

The Ripening Persimmon

AN INTERVIEW WITH KOBORI NANREI ROSHI



Of the great Eastern traditions, perhaps the one to receive the most publicity and to be most distorted in the West is Zen Buddhism. The word "Zen" has entered our vocabulary and has come to mean, in the inevitable devaluation of common coinage, anything from "indirect" to "eccentric." In order to catch a glimpse of the authentic nature of Zen Buddhism and its teachings about wholeness, PARABOLA *asked Mihoko Okamura-Bekku, secretary-companion for fourteen years to the great Buddhist scholar Daisetz Suzuki, and currently on the Editorial Board of Kyoto's* The Eastern Buddhist, *to interview her friend of twenty-eight years, Kobori Nanrei Roshi.*

Born in 1918 in Kyoto, Kobori Roshi graduated in 1949 from Otani University and then began Zen training under the guidance of Master Shimada Kikusen of Kokei Sōdo of the Gifu Prefecture. Twenty-one years later he became Head Priest of the Ryōkō-in Sub-Temple of the Daitokuji Monastery in Kyoto, where he continues to reside while attending to his many duties, including acting as the Honorary President of the First Zen Institute of America in Japan, and while pursuing the crafts of pottery, painting, calligraphy, and poetry.

Equipped with questions formulated by PARABOLA, *Ms. Okamura-Bekku met with Kobori Roshi on a warm late-summer's day in a room at the Sub-Temple. We wish to thank her for her willingness to conduct the interview for us, and for her care in translating and editing Kobori Roshi's responses.*

—The Editors

PARABOLA I have heard the term "true man" used in the Zen tradition. I suppose that means the whole human being, the whole that is possible for a human being. Does it mean that this person lives simultaneously in two worlds?

Kobori Nanrei Roshi I suppose by "two worlds" you mean the worlds of the finite and the infinite, the form and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the physical and the metaphysical, and so on. For the "true man," the two worlds work as one. Finite is infinite, infinite finite; the finite working in the infinite, the infinite working in the finite.

Actually, Buddhists do not like to talk about "two" or "one"; for "two" may remain "two" and yet be one; to speak of "one" already presupposes "two," "three," "four," and so on, and therefore can never be simply "one." So the finite and infinite are two and yet not-two.

As regards my own view of the experience: When the "true man" is realized in the state of so-called identity, the finite and the infinite, nothing "religious" can come from it. This is why Zen, which emphasizes the identity aspect, often appears irreligious or totally anti-religious at times. On the other hand, when one sees this same experience in the light of the infinity aspect, or when one can move away and look upon infinity objectively, so to speak, one is filled with a heightened sense of thankfulness, which develops into a deeper and fuller understanding of *karuna* (love, compassion) and *pranidhana* (prayer). This is the finite seen working in the infinite, and I would say that religious life in its truest sense begins here.

A recent trip I made to China brought home to me again how very much Zen stems from the Taoist traditions of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. Even the term "true man," which the Chinese Zen Master Rinzai first used so effectively in the Zen tradition, was a borrowing from Taoism. This was natural. Buddhist thought was a latecomer that had to plant itself in native Taoist soil. Zen is, so to speak, a strange dragon with a Taoist torso, Confucian feet, and the Buddhist enlightenment-experience for its eyes. The ideal for the Taoists was to experience immortality in the literal sense; they conceived of three types of Immortals, the second of which was called the "true man."

P. Are human beings, then, in any way unfinished, incomplete?

K. I would say that the "true man" is constantly in the process of ripening. It is often said that *prajna* (enlightenment, wisdom) has another face called *karuna* (love, compassion), that the two are different sides of a coin; or that they are one and the same thing, *prajna* is *karuna, karuna* is *prajna.* But in actual practice, I have found that the two are not immediately identified. Before *prajna* can begin to develop into the *karuna* aspect, one must go through considerable maturing. It is like a persimmon, sharp and astringent at first, but warmed by the autumn sun it begins to sweeten. Even its coloring gradually mellows. When still high on a branch, hard and green, it can benefit no one. But once it falls to the ground and disinte-

Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

grates, other lives can partake of it, while its seeds go on to take new life.

But it takes a long time for a human being to mature in such a way. It may very well be an eternal task. From the Buddhist point of view, the human task of self-perfecting will never be completed until all beings have become *prajna-karuna* existences.

P. How would you describe the "realization" of the "fully-developed" person?

K. The "realization" in Zen would be the awakening of the "true man" in oneself. This is the self that experiences a complete and thorough baptism of *samadhi,* or *ku* (emptiness). It lies in the nature of *samadhi* to dissolve or melt away the ego and any or all conceptual and obstructive elements. Once this happens a fresh ego replaces the old. This fresh ego opens out a whole new dimension known as *karuna* (love, compassion).

This is the start of a complete new outlook in which "I am the other, and the other is myself." The barriers—which were really not there from the start—fall away. It is a world in which exclusivism is rendered meaningless, and wars unthinkable. A general feeling of affirmation and support, of acceptance of differences becomes second nature—a natural and effortless attitude. It is a spirit of "If you don't have, let me give you mine." One puts one's own interests aside and considers the other's benefit first. This is the "true man" in action. He is not an Immortal, which is what the term "true man" would signify in Taoism, for example, or a god.

"Zen is, so to speak, a strange dragon with a Taoist torso, Confucian feet, and the Buddhist enlightenment-experience for its eyes."

He is a bodhisattva, an enlightened being. He is not a buddha yet. You don't want to become a buddha—then you just sit back and do nothing all day!

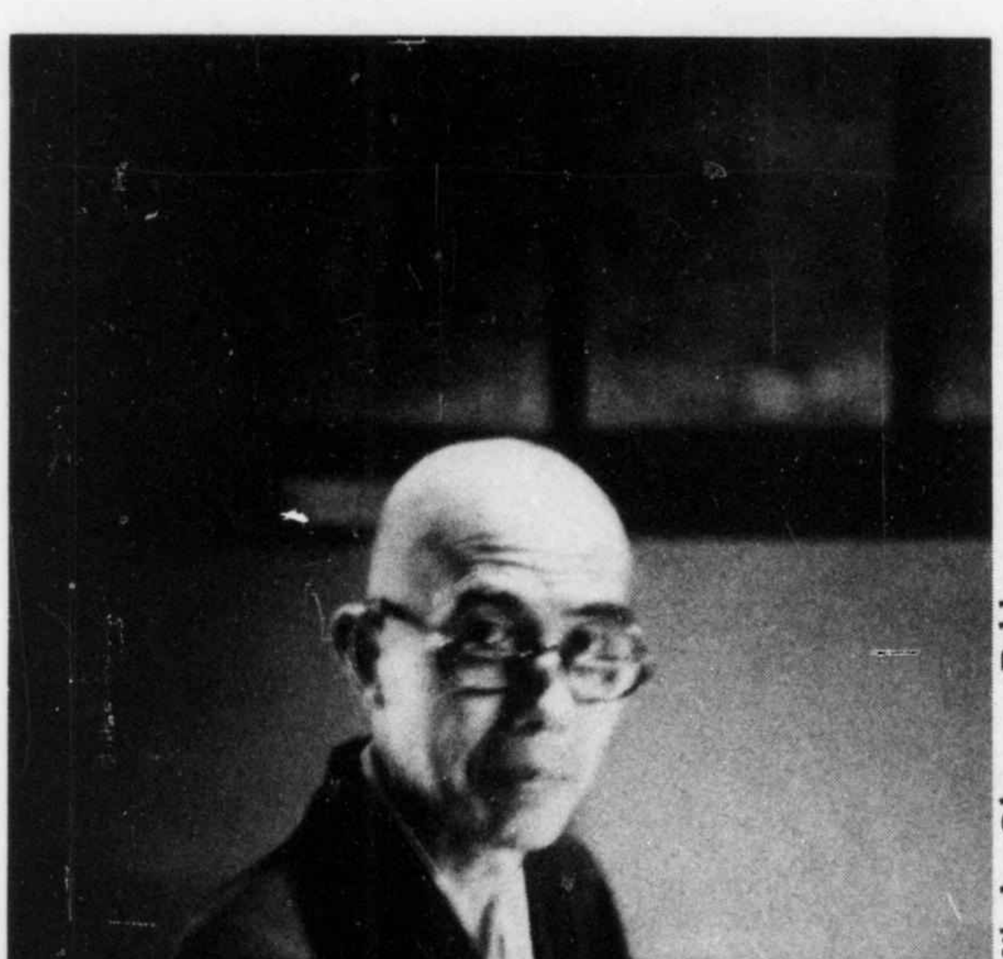
P. Does the experience of *samadhi* open a person, free him once for all from the ego?

K. As I said before, it is essential in Buddhism for one's whole being to be totally immersed in *samadhi* or *ku*.

In Buddhism the ego is the main culprit. It insists on setting itself up against others, creating barriers and obstacles, oppositions and contradictions. Conflict and strife are all rooted in the ego. It is therefore all important that this ego undergo the most radical immersion in the sea of *samadhi* where obstructive, contradictory concepts are washed away. Yet to stop at this point would be to dwell in *nirvana*. Out of this *samadhi* a fresh and new self emerges. Compassion is born from here. Such a self can be described as "free and open."

P. Does "openness" mean the non-obstruction of life forces in oneself?

K. I'm not sure I understand this question correctly, but if I can speak of a "life force" in the context of what I have been talking about so far, it would be the force of the ego dashing itself against other egos or obstacles in an attempt to overcome and conquer. Strangely enough, this very same force or energy is also what enables the ego to steer itself towards the "true man" as it aspires to be purified. Without the ego there would be no life force or movement; there would only be stillness.



Photographs by Mihoko Okamura-Bekku

If we must give this force a name we might call it "compassion-*prajna.*" Like the power of Buddha's Will or Prayer, this vital impulse presses us forward in the direction of purity, and will not cease to do its work until all things have been thoroughly purified.

We may wonder why *prajna* (enlightenment, wisdom) takes *karuna* (compassion) as an indispensable partner. This is because *prajna* in itself is not a force. The *karuna* element must come into play in order for the two working together as one to be a living force. Once the ego is relieved of its dualistic nature it moves freely in an open and unobstructed field.

P. The expression often used in Zen of "effortless effort" is often misunderstood, at least by outsiders, to mean passivity. But surely, even if the "Buddha nature" is inherent in everyone, there must be an active inner effort necessary for this "true man" in oneself to be liberated and to manifest itself.

K. The term "effortless effort" is another example of a Taoist expression appropriated by Zen. Originally in ancient China, the term meant simply naturalism. In the Zen context, this would be a mistake.

You know the wonderful story about a little boy who went outdoors to play. At the end of the day his mother, noticing his soiled clothes, asked, "Where did you go?" "Out," said the boy. "And what did you do?" "Nothing," he replied. Here is a delightful example of "effortless effort" at work. The little boy's day was obviously quite filled with many interesting

activities. Yet as far as he was concerned it was all nothing.

As to the inner effort necessary, I would say, first of all, that you must have a firm faith or trust in your original self, or Buddha nature, or "true man." From this beginning you can work out your own development towards the awakening experience. A factor of utmost importance in this quest, however, is what is called in Zen "the great doubt." This is a persistent and a most urgent desire on the part of the seeker to come in direct contact with his original self, or the "true man." He would not rest until emancipation had been achieved. The "great doubt" is like a "thorn sticking in the heart," crying out to be removed. Without this "inner effort" no amount of quiet sitting in *dhyana* or *samadhi* will be fruitful.

As I have repeatedly stated, it is a necessary part of this effort to immerse your total self in *samadhi*; without *samadhi*, Buddhism cannot be actualized. You do it in order to purify or wash away all traces of the so-called "colors" that you have hitherto dyed yourself in—a sort of spiritual bleaching. It must be done in a most thoroughgoing manner. You may think you have come as close to pure white as you possibly can. But "white" too is a color and must be done away with. Even the Buddha, white as he may be, is an obstacle here. When you have reached this point, with everything washed away in emptiness, there is no room left to assert this or that about anything. Out of this your original, untainted self emerges, the Buddha nature in you which in itself has no form, no title, or color.

The chief obstacle in this pursuit is usually one's own mind; it refuses to acknowledge that the intellect is not omniscient or omnipotent. Since the intellect's function is to divide and to discriminate it is therefore a totally unsuitable instrument for perceiving the whole.

One's greatest support in this endeavor are the many patriarchs and enlightened beings, both past and present. They are living examples for us to emulate. Buddhists talk very much about having the good karma of encountering such beings, or even of hearing of them—it is the greatest blessing one can hope for—for how else can we hope to be delivered?

P. What then is the proper role of the mind? There must be some relationship of knowledge to feeling in one's search for wholeness. And what role does the body play in this search?

K. I am not really concerned about dividing knowledge and feeling. The important thing is to take your whole being—feeling, knowledge, body, mind, all of it—immerse it totally in *samadhi,* and have it purified. This should bring the usual functions of your mind to a standstill, so to speak. It also works to disentangle and liberate the involuntary nervous system, which controls our breathing, heartbeat, and so on. Once the balance of the involuntary nervous system has been sufficiently restored, then we may think about being analytical.

P. Is part of the effort of development directed toward subduing the lower energies natural to the human being? Are they to

be eliminated entirely, or can they be transformed and become part of a higher force?

K. As to the question of "lower" or "higher" forces or energies, Buddhists refrain from making such distinctions. They are all one energy at work. I might add that in Buddhist training what may be considered man's "higher forces" are often more troublesome to deal with than his so-called lower ones. Usually speaking, the higher energies are imagined to belong to the realm of sophisticated thought, the realm in which man distinguishes himself above all the other living creatures. But it is just here, in the midst of his most characteristic activity, that the root cause of human disorder is best observable. The remedy often involves a painstaking process, as all "thinking" is structured on dualistic grounds. To extricate himself from the maze of contradictions arising out of his own thought world is no mean feat.

The lower forces are less complicated and serious as they are aspects inherent in man's instinctive nature. As to how lower forces can be of help, well, these energies are mostly needed to stay alive. We could not go, for instance, without filling our stomach when we are hungry.

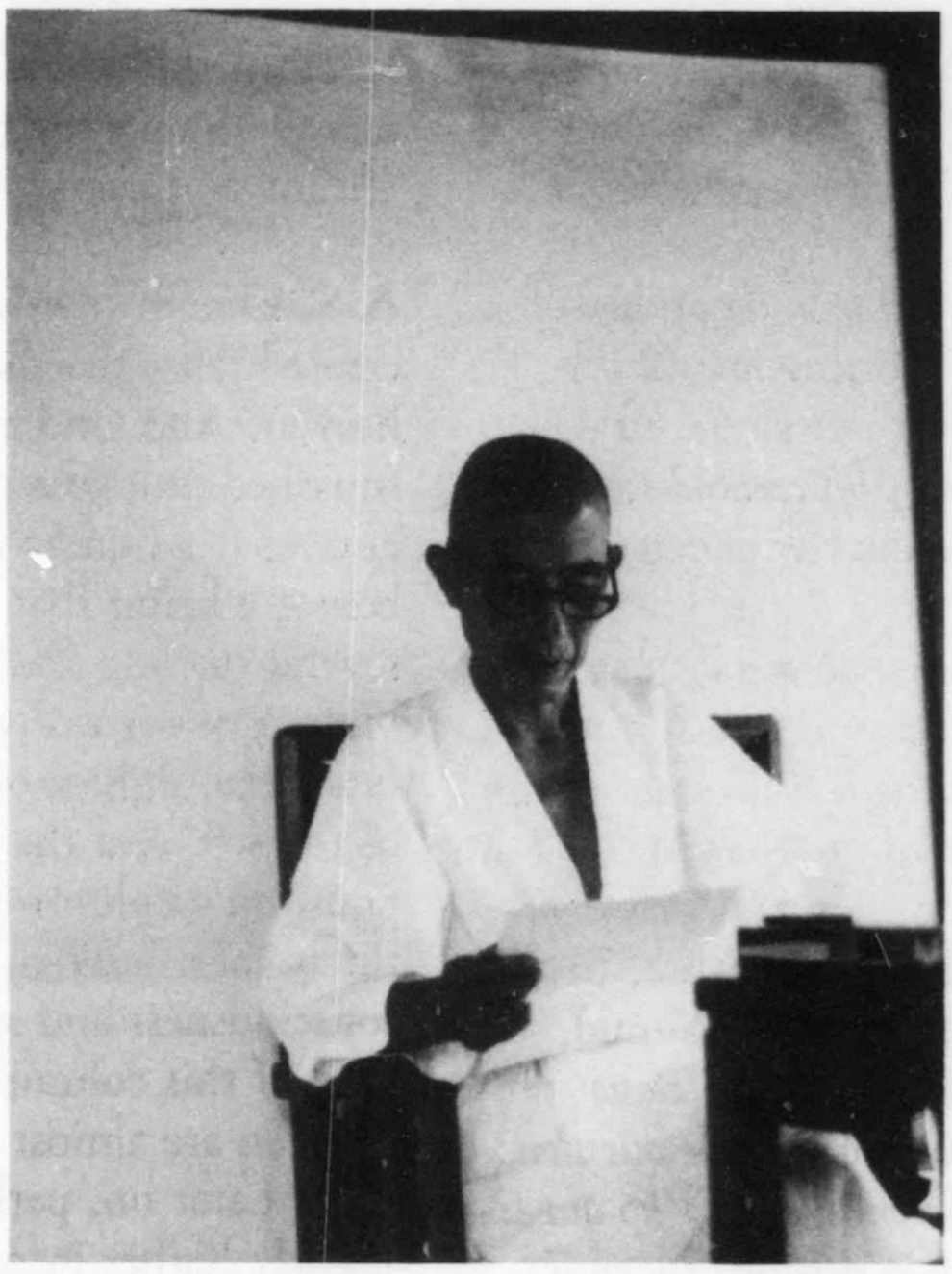
As far as Buddhism is concerned, the main thing is the crushing of the ego; and one is to go about it with all one's forces—irrespective of higher or lower.

P. Yet there are things in myself, for instance, that I would like to change. What should my attitude be toward them? Should I hate them, study them, try to eliminate them, learn to accept them? Or can they be transformed into something of a higher nature?

K. A right attitude to have is to believe in the possibility of the "true man" in yourself, and diligently apply yourself to the task of awakening to it.

Once more the question wishes to divide good from bad, love from hate, high from low. But no such divisions can be made. All such differentiations are artificially set up by the intellectual mind. It is in the nature of the intellect to divide things. The mind is a convenient but treacherous instrument. The pitfalls of intellectual activity are constant and many. Be sure that the "true man" does not carry a divided image.

Certainly, religious life is spent in regulating and moderating one's daily thoughts and behavior. Care is taken that cravings or desires be kept to a minimum. Long established rules teach that excess or overindulgence of any sort will upset the balance of a healthful mind and body which is requisite to awakening the "true man" in oneself. Desires are accepted as being life-sustaining instincts, but having made the affirmation, moderation is practiced. We are creatures of habit. It is not always easy to rid ourselves of undesirable habits. Sometimes we may find ourselves spending the rest of our days trying to improve our ways. An orderly and regulated life is important for one's inner development. A sporadic attempt will not do. If you live in a temple, as I do, you rise early in the morning. You attend to your garden and



do other menial tasks. These moments provide an excellent opportunity for gaining a deeper insight into yourself.

As for "transforming into something higher," if by this you mean some spiritual realm as opposed to a physical and material realm, the two aspects are inseparable; they are in fact one and the same reality.

P. What is the major difference between one who has begun the journey towards realization and one who ignores this possibility?

K. I suppose the real difference lies in the quality of life as it is lived from moment to moment. The difference may not be apparent. One may appear healthy and cheerful, secure in one's job and surrounded by material comfort. But all worldly things being relative, we must assume that the opposite conditions of life are equally immanent. Frequently, behind the happy face lurks the shadow of deep fears and anxiety. One can choose, on the other hand, to set oneself free of such fears by resolving the dualistic situation and living in greater contentment. Qualitatively, I might say, it is the difference between pure gold and gold plate. ■

The Vertical Adventure

AN INTERVIEW WITH RABBI ADIN STEINSALTZ

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz seems to speak from a different frame of reference than other men, from a source which comes from very high. Two separate worlds, olam haze *and* olam haba, *appear as one in him. He is forty-seven years old and has been an old Jewish wise man for the last twenty years.*

Born in Jerusalem and brought up in a secular family, he found his way into Orthodoxy at the young age of fourteen. In his early twenties he was speaking with certitude to scholars and students about the worlds within worlds of Jewish theology.

His work in Israel and abroad as a teacher, translator, writer, and lecturer is rooted in traditional ideas expressed through the ancient Jewish sources and the Wisdom of the Fathers. Reading his books—four have been translated from Hebrew: The Thirteen Petalled Rose, Beggars and Prayers, The Essential Talmud, *and, most recently,* Biblical Images *(Basic Books)—one is called back to a single question, which he phrases in different ways: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What for? When Steinsaltz asks "What for?" his answer is always the same.*

—Jean Sulzberger

Jean Sulzberger It says in the Zohar, "The Holy One, blessed be He, created man in the likeness of the All." Does this mean that the wholeness possible for man is on the scale of the universe?

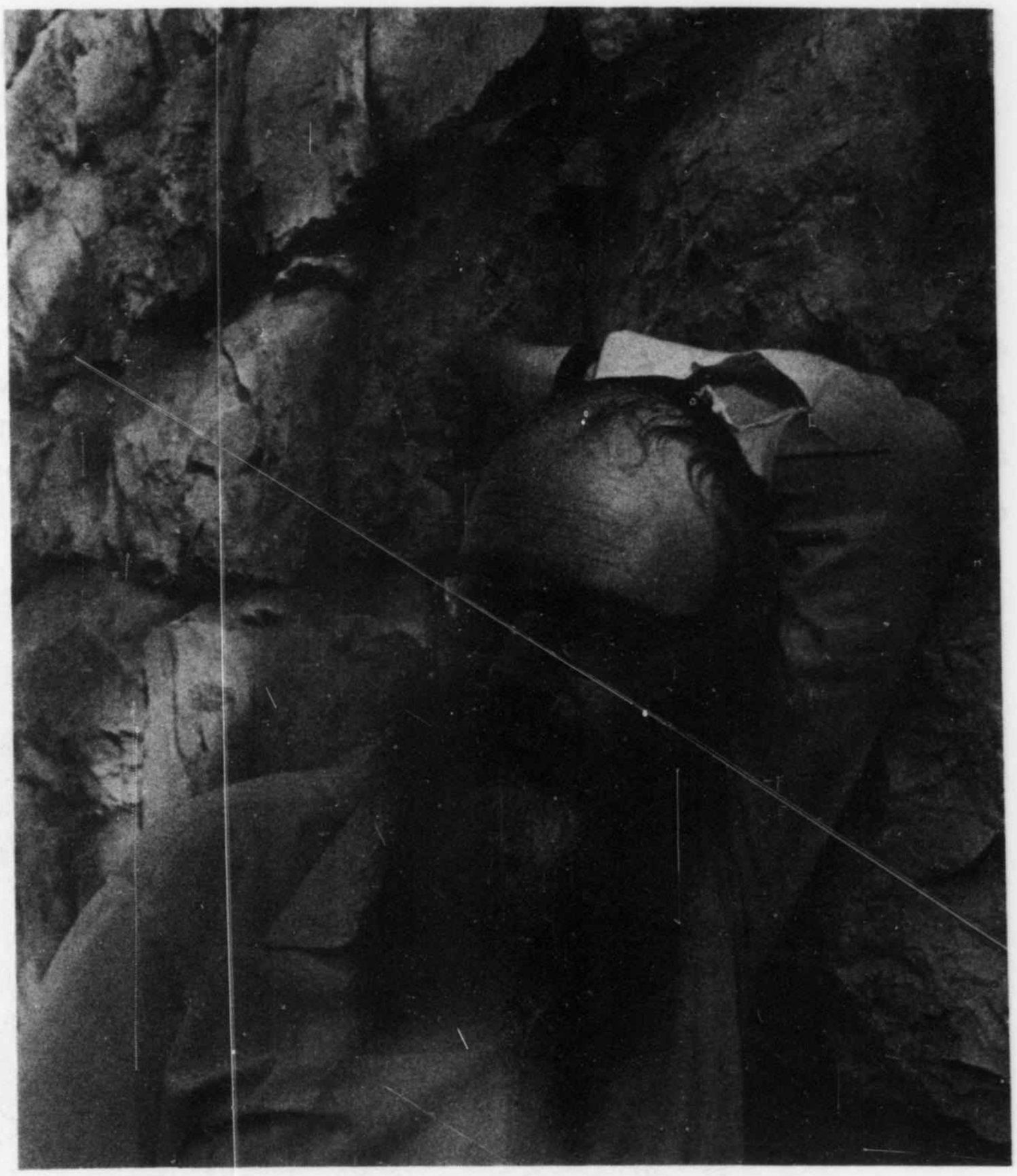
Adin Steinsaltz It is said that God created man in His own image. The only way that can be understood is that man was created on the same scale and on the same level. The same idea is expressed when it is said that God turned to all of creation and said, "Let us create man." Let *us* create man. He turned to the whole universe and said, "Let us all participate," and each of the parts of the whole gave something of itself to create man.

J.S. But the whole universe—what does it mean? We are taught that there are worlds within worlds.

A.S. One of the stories is that Adam was created tall—that he reached from earth to heaven. And God put his hand on him and squashed him to a certain size. We do believe that a human being is a multi-leveled being, a being that is made of, so to say, several stories, one above the other. The highest one is really identical with the Godhead: the highest one. But there is a point of the self, and the point of the self is the point on a column that goes from earth to the highest heaven. I would say that self-consciousness and self-image are at a certain level of this column. Perhaps very small children are almost entirely on the physical level. Later on, perhaps a person may move slightly higher into something that is less corporeal or not entirely corporeal. The column itself can become higher and higher still, which means that the self can reach to higher and higher levels.

Now, when the self is on a particular level, a man can understand only that one level. The words and the notions he can speak about are connected solely with the images and notions of that level. Because humanity as a whole is usually on more or less the same level, one of the problems of every kind of prophet is that even when he sees, he cannot tell. There are no words to describe what he perceives. These perceptions don't have words, so they have to be translated into images which are symbolic.

J.S. Would you describe a whole man as one who can see, indeed *be*, in more than one world?



Photographs by Ricki Rosen

A.S. Every human being lives in more than one world. We are living in the world of emotion, the world of thought, and so on. In some ways we are always living in more than one world, almost by definition. More than that, some of us at least have a grasp, to a greater or lesser extent, of some existence that is beyond the purely mental plane of existence, and occasionally find a way to a world or worlds above us. But usually for most people, existence is just the "amphibian" state between the purely material and the mental-emotional. There are people who can achieve a state beyond this more perfectly, but it is perhaps only once in a generation that someone like this may appear. It is as though he doesn't really belong to this existence—not that he doesn't have a physical body, but his physical body is just what it should be: only a small part of his whole being. As it is, it's as though I inherited a skyscraper and I'm living only on the first story, or sometimes even below, in the basement.

J.S. Are you saying that most men have only physical bodies?

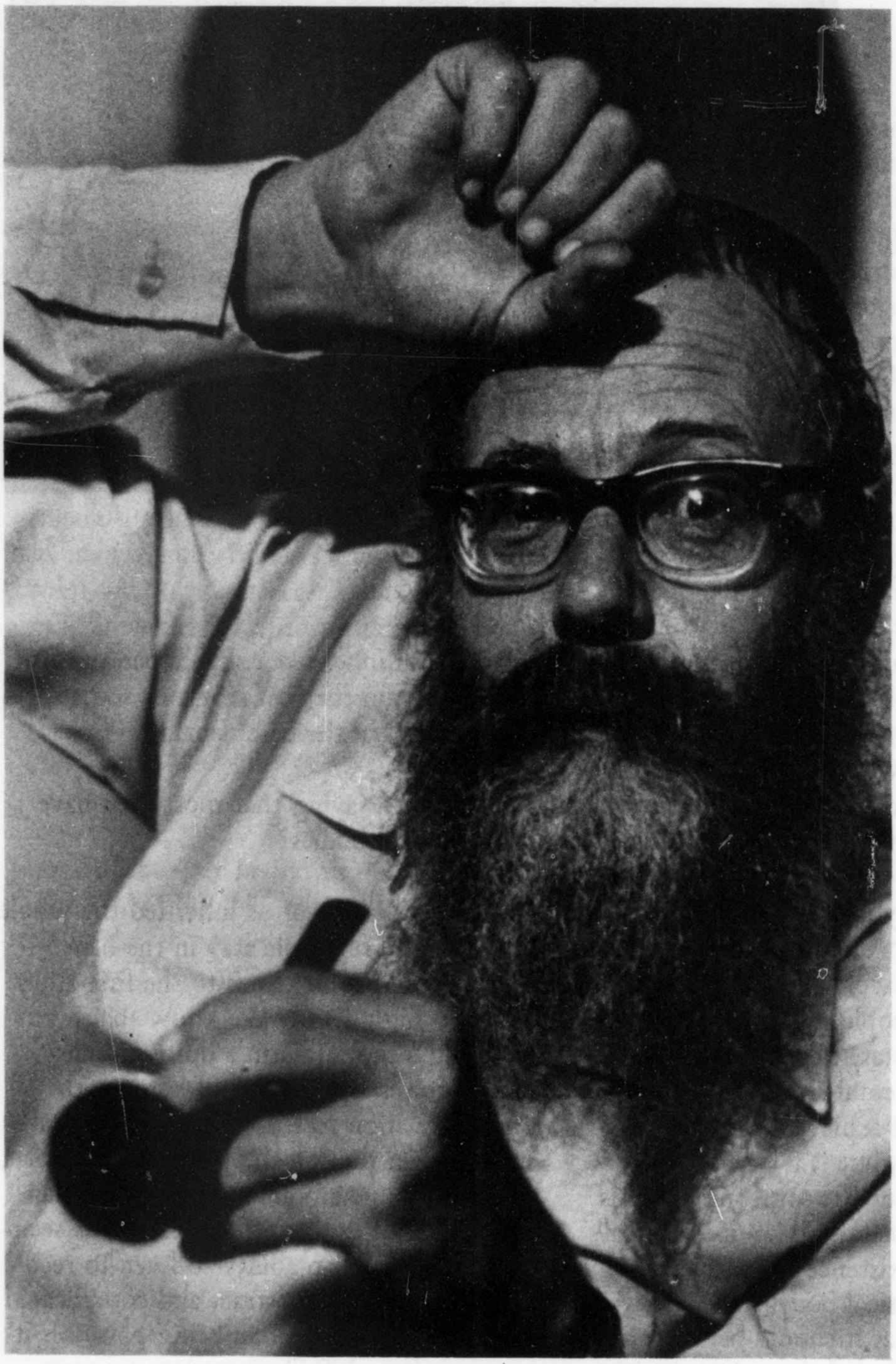
A.S. I think each of us inherited the whole building. Most people stay in the basement, some people climb to the first story, some go higher still. We know that even climbing a mountain in a quite ordinary way requires a great deal of hard work. And in relation to the climb we are speaking of, even though the potential is inborn, it needs a huge amount of training. In another kind of example, human beings seem to have the inborn ability to learn to read and write—a very abstract and complicated ability, but every human being possesses it to some degree. Still, there is a necessary

"The higher a person aspires, the stronger the forces below draw him. For every move in the direction of good, there is a natural balancing power that reacts and drives towards evil in one form or another."

period of turning this potential into practical ability, even though there is the capability inherent which makes it possible.

J.S. Can a person move from the basement to the next story through his own efforts, or does he need a guide, a teacher?

A.S. A teacher is always a great help. We would have to say that this climb is theoretically possible almost independently, because it is the individual's heritage, but



practically speaking for most people it is impossible without help. Some people have living teachers, some have dead teachers, but they still have teachers. How many people learn to read and write on their own?

J.S. So most of us need a guide.

A.S. We need someone who has gone a part of the way and who can show how it is to be be done and what can be done. There are people who have an inborn aptitude for this climb; for others it is necessary to work harder. Though there are guidelines which may be more or less true for everyone, each person has an individual form of growth. We are not identical—unless we would reach the highest point of our being, in which, possibly, we are entirely identical.

J.S. What is the Jewish method for moving up in the building? There are many Jews who search, but who can't find a method. So many Jews go into Zen Buddhism or Sufism because there seems to be no one within our own tradition to tell us how we can grow.

A.S. There are two reasons for this. The first is practical and historical. For many years, the number of people wishing for this was very limited. Most people, if they want adventure, want horizontal adventures. Those who had a deep desire were always very few. The many disruptions in the history of the Jews caused many of the teachers and their pupils to disappear along with many other things. So this is historical. And it is also true that there are always places where such teachers exist, but you cannot find them listed in a telephone directory.

The second reason is far deeper. The major part of Jewish tradition holds that while there are methods to achieve many great and even holy powers on many levels, the question is, what use is it? Clairvoyance, levitation, "second sight"—it was a firm belief that all these are possible on a certain way of development. The question is, should there be what is called a systematic, well-taught way of spiritual growth *per se?* What is the aim? Let's say that I grow twice or three or ten times bigger in a spiritual way. The only thing that makes this worthwhile is the worship of God and not spiritual growth. The spiritual growth may be an outcome.

J.S. Worship doesn't seem to be enough. We can worship to the end of our days and say the Psalms to the end of our days and come no closer to God.

A.S. We reach here a basic theological point. We believe that God is infinite in such a way that the human being of whatever size and whatever growth can never reach Him. The greatest, highest human soul is still separated from God by an impassable gap. There is an impassable gap between the Creator and the created. Now, this impassable gap can only be passed on one side, on God's side. He can, so to say, give a hand to the people on the other side, to pass, to cross. I can grow as tall as I want and I am still almost at the same distance away: unless He gives me a hand I will never be able—because whatever I become I am still a creature. Even the highest man stands on the brink of an impassable gap. The main question therefore becomes, how do I jump over? From that point of view, whatever I am as a person becomes only a personal query, because the real question is, how do I make this jump? And the size I have achieved is not always entirely helpful at this point. It has been said many times that you cannot have growth only in one direction. It is as certain as Newton's law of reaction. There is always some kind of danger with growth—they go together. The higher a person aspires, the stronger the forces below draw him. For every move in the direction of good, there is a natural balancing power that reacts and drives toward evil in one form or another. One of the sages of the last century put it in a very beautiful way. He said, "In a diamond, you have what is called the diamond part and the plain stone, which is the carrier of the dia-

mond." Now, if you have a huge diamond, it is bigger as a diamond, but the stone is also much bigger. That is why there are stories in all literature about the simple, the ignorant, the innocent sometimes making this jump while higher people who had really great souls could not overcome their own problems, the problems that come, I would say, from the size of their own personalities. So the question is, what can we do to achieve the one, the only great achievement?

J.S. The jump is a process, isn't it?

A.S. It is, but in a very real sense it is irrational—it is above any type of reasoning process. Because of that we have to do it, we have to do it every day—possibly every minute. It is almost impossible for a person who did it not to achieve greatness as a kind of by-product. But some people are using their whole powers without knowing what they are doing, while others who have far more knowledge of it never manage to do it. It comes back to the separation at the beginning. You can be of the highest size, you can be made in the image of God, but you are not immune to sin.

J.S. The mystery is still how. To be whole we must begin with a kind of unity in ourselves. And if one sees that the mind is going in one direction and the body is going in another and the emotions in yet another, then how to bring them together? It's a work, isn't it?

A.S. Oh, that's a work. Here is one of the basic differences among spiritual formulas, or paths. Many of the Far East traditions, for example Zen Buddhism that you mentioned, one may call a kind of secular spiritualism, because they are so very much interested in the growth of man, in the enlightenment of man. There are very many similarities, but one of the basic differences is that it represents a kind of anthropocentric spirituality. In Judaism some of the great masters put far more stress on the basic man-God relationship than on what man is. As I have said, it has been a

Moses speaking with the Lord

debate whether a systematic form and method of growth will end in something more than just the growth of the human being.

J.S. Sitting here listening to you, I feel a little more collected, as though my head and body were not so separated. With that comes more of a feeling of presence. What is that process?

A.S. These two parts are not basically enemies. We speak about them as the informed and uninformed parts, and one of the problems is, how do you inform someone that is in a way stupid? The body—and not only the body, we can call it the simple animal spirit, and the soul—have the problem of coming to a mutual understanding. The example of riding a dumb animal has been used many times. At first there may be no communication—not enmity, but lack of understanding. Later, rider and animal can become so very close that they begin to understand one another.

With a good horseman, the horse does not have to be beaten—they have become, so to say, almost a unit. When the soul and the body and every part of it become a unit, then they in fact help each other. The rider will never achieve the same thing without the horse. The soul needs the body because the body has tremendous powers that reinforce it. If we take the parable of the building again, the body is the foundation, and it is very powerful because it has to support the whole structure.

J.S. What is man's part? It is God who has to bring down His hand, you said. What is our part?

A.S. First of all, one of the first conditions is to listen. He is speaking all the time. The Baal Shem said, "The voice inside me never stopped speaking." The voice doesn't stop. We just stopped hearing it. It isn't a phenomenon in time, but a phenomenon in eternity. It is our work to be ready to do the listening.

There are moments when a person is given a gift. Sometimes it is for a minute, sometimes it can last for a day or for months. Usually it is not a permanent change—just a gift, so to say, a loan. To use entirely different symbols: it is like giving someone a million-dollar check on the condition that it be returned after a certain time. The real question is, what use can he make of it in the meantime? Sometimes we get such a big "check" and it will have to be returned.

Sometimes there is a beginner's gift. At that stage I told one of my teachers about my experiences and he said, "Well, you have to know that these things will only last a certain time—you don't know how much time, but they will pass. The only significant thing you can do is make use of them. If you don't make use of them, they will disappear and leave you in the same position that you were before." So many times as a beginner you receive so much more than you do after you work for years, and sometimes you wish again for the days when you could achieve things so much more easily.

"In a practical and spiritual way, the less I am motivated by my ego in every way, in every form, the more I am able to become a receptacle, a vessel for receiving what is there."

We don't know why or when a person is given such a gift, but again, it is only a loan, which is given for a certain period of time. On a different level, Maimonides speaks about the prophets. He says, "Humanity should be seen as a group of people being in the darkest night. From time to time there is a flash of lightning and then you get your bearings and you see everything, but it disappears after a moment. That is prophecy." That is his symbol of prophecy. On a lesser level, almost everyone gets such a gift. Sometimes it's once in a lifetime, sometimes it is far more frequent—but that is something exceptional. There is no way of ensuring that it will ever come, or come again, and sometimes it is very disappointing. One is waiting and preparing for that. . . .

J.S. Is the most important thing, then, just to try to be open?

A.S. It helps up to a certain point, but whether it comes or it doesn't come—there are many Jewish ways, as one called it, of becoming a "vessel." Another called it becoming a violin that can be played upon. I have to do all the tuning of the violin and only then will it be fit to play. What can one get from an imperfectly prepared instrument? Some people say that the whole of what Judaism is about is a way of preparing body and soul for having this ability.

Some things are repeated again and again in our tradition as well as in others. One that was very much stressed is that the biggest and most terrible danger is thinking about oneself. This was considered almost a definition of evil, being self-centered. In a practical and spiritual way, the less I am motivated by my ego in every way, in every form, the more I am able to become a receptacle, a vessel, for receiving what is there. It is there. It is something in the air. I have to have an instrument that can pick it up. We have a soul—we have it *all* in us. We make too much noise. If I am always listening to myself, I cannot listen to any other thing that passes through me. That is a part of it. Part of it is the relation of the individual and others.

More than that, sometimes I may be doing something that in itself is good, but it is not a thing that *I* should do. Sometimes I am trying very hard to do something which is not necessary for me while neglecting to do something which is necessary. I am speaking about instruments. You see one person is a violin, another is a cello.

J.S. What has the perfected man attained?

A.S. I would say he has attained his whole stature. That means he is able to move on all the scales of all the worlds that correspond to his soul, to all the levels of his soul. The idea of the perfect man is that he can move on this ladder—in his lifetime, during his existence—that he can move from the physical to the highest heaven and he can understand every level with his own images, with his own ideas. He is going from one heaven to another, or from earth to heaven, and he is at home in all of them. He has a consciousness that attains, I would say, in theory, the whole universe—not just the horizontal. Perfection is not just attaining a certain level, say, the level of an angel. It is the ability to have a double, treble, five or tenfold mode of existence, of understanding. It's a multilayered existence.

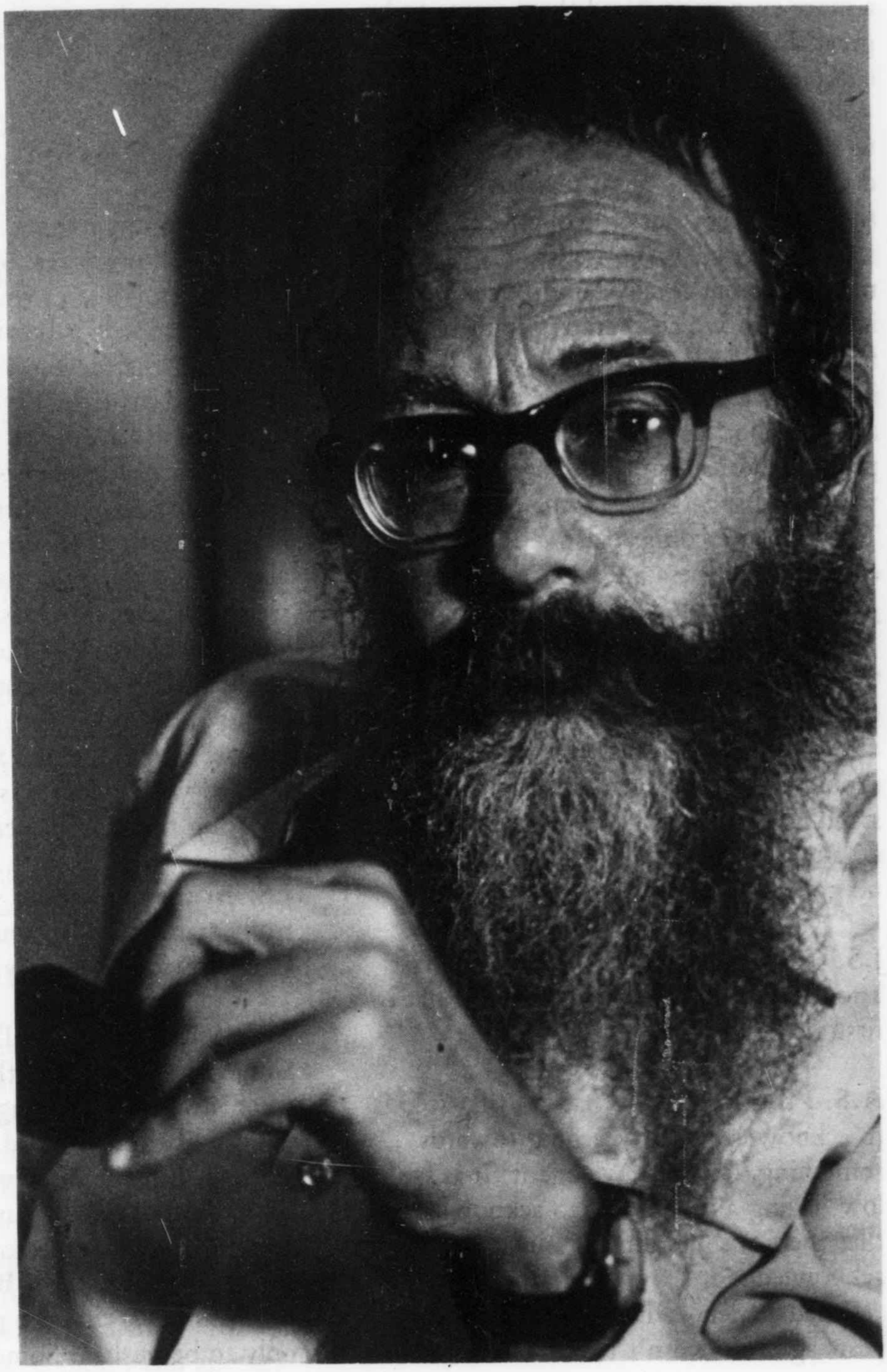
It won't do any harm to tell a story. It is told about two great men, a father and a son. They were great leaders, both of them, and the father was possibly one of the outstanding people of his time. He was passing through his son's home one day and he heard a baby crying. He looked and found the baby, and his son sitting near the cradle immersed in meditation. The father soothed the baby and then he shook his son and said to him, "My son, I didn't know you had such a little mind, because when I am in the deepest meditation I can still hear a fly moving about."

J.S. Does God need perfection from us? Is God in search of man? In a time when everything seems to be going downhill, is there at this moment, which could almost

be called the "end of days," a need for conscious men? A cosmic need?

A.S. A definition of our times is complex. In one way things are becoming worse—in another, many more people are conscious about it. What's more, it seems that they used to say that each period has different souls, different sizes of souls, that behave in a different way in each period. It seems that we are living in a time in which there

"As it is, it's as though I inherited a skyscraper and I'm living only on the first floor, or sometimes even below, in the basement."



is a possibility for extreme changes. The extreme changes we can see from one direction to another didn't seem possible thirty or forty years ago. People moved in these directions much more slowly. So it seems that the movement—or the ability—has become accelerated.

The search for man is constant. God is searching for man—the saints and the evildoers alike. The need *vis-a-vis* God is the same as it ever was. The need in the world is perhaps greater. There were times when it seemed that humanity was distributed in a more even way. Now there seems to be great diversity of levels and great complexity.

There is certainly a need for the teachers to be greater. In an enlightened age you don't need such a great teacher, even though it seems just the opposite. As I said, perfection is the ability to operate on many different levels. Now, we are living in a time in which there are souls scattered from every level one can imagine. They are interconnected, not only socially, because an age is not just a random mingling of people who happen to be together, who were born together by some mischance. They are interconnected. And in complicated times like these a teacher must be very great.

A teacher needs two things—perhaps three things. He should understand the subject that he wants to teach. He should know methods of teaching it. And he should understand the level and understanding of the pupil. If he is not able to do any of these things, or all of them, he is no good.

J.S. Could it be said that we must first know ourselves as we are? Would that be a first step?

A.S. I sometimes say that the first step is to acknowledge our yearning towards something. To acknowledge it. It is far below having a desire, but to acknowledge that there is something in ourselves, just to acknowledge it.

I had a friend who passed away many years ago. He wasn't troubled in a personal way, but he was troubled about his spirit. We used to meet many times for years off and on, and I once asked him what was it that made him go on, because it was obvious he was a person who was troubled for years, surely more than twenty years. He said that there was a sentence in the Book of Job that was the key sentence for his life. Job is speaking to the Lord and saying, "You are yearning for your handiwork." And my friend said, "If God is yearning for me, how can I say no?" And that was pursuing him, as I say, for twenty very troubled years, and possibly toward the end of his life that was the main point. . . .

J.S. What is the mark of a real teacher?

A.S. One thing that is always a clear mark and true of every real teacher is humility. The reason is a very simple one. It is not a moral reason. It is because the greater a person is, the greater he feels his insignificance and his lack. By definition, a great teacher will have great humility. Another mark of a real teacher is the feeling of responsibility. It is essential for a teacher and is also a mark of the personality. Sometimes you can look at two teachers and you don't see the difference. Outside they may look very much alike. One of the ways to find out is when you look at their disciples, and then you see what was in the teacher. It appears in the disciples in a far more marked way and so it is a good way of assessing the kind of person the teacher is.

J.S. At the same time, what can a teacher really transmit? Can unity be transmitted? Can consciousness or will be transmitted?

A.S. Seemingly, partially it can. Partially. Sometimes you feel in the presence of someone that something is transmitted beyond whatever was said, something very definite. But the main work of a teacher is as a teacher. Quite a number of people are capable, to one degree or another, of giving somebody else a push. But the real demand on a teacher is that the pupil doesn't want only to be pushed. Sometimes a person can

Moses as judge of his people

become just a puppet. Whatever he has is the handiwork of someone else. The person becomes a kind of implant, or transplant. You can transplant something in a person, but it really isn't his. It works, but it isn't his and he can't do anything with it.

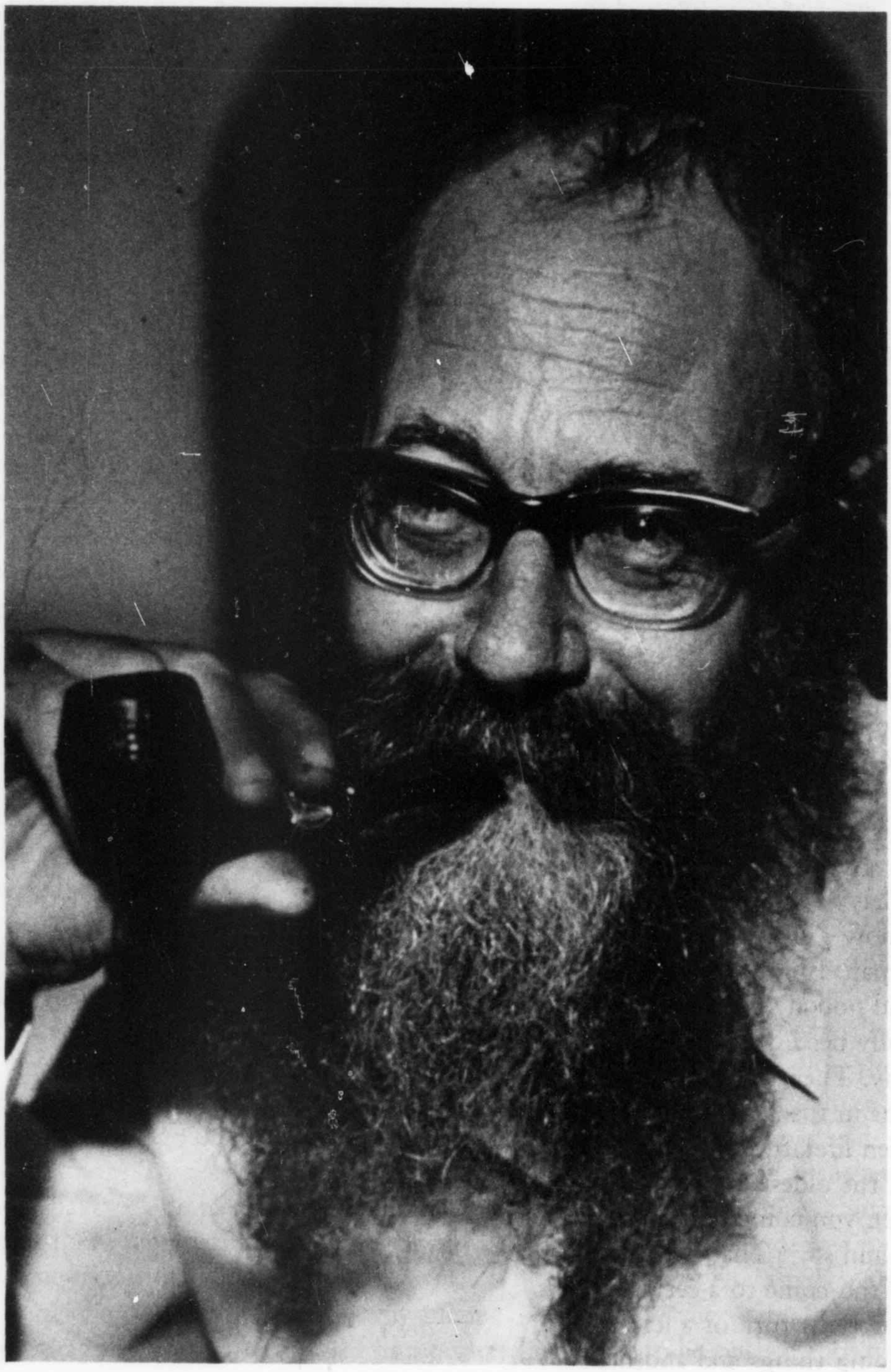
What a teacher has to transmit, if he is really a teacher, is how I can utilize myself. They are giving a map. I have my own road to walk on and nobody can walk it for me. What I really need is for someone to show me the way. There are very few mystical descriptions in the Talmud—it is traditionally a hidden literature—but in one place Rabbi Akiva, the oldest of a certain group, says, "When you come to a certain place, don't say so and so." That is the work of a teacher. You come to a certain pathway, you have a right turn or a left turn, one way of doing things and another

". . . an age is not just a random mingling of people who happen to be together, who were born together by some mischance. They are interconnected."

way. Someone can tell you the right direction and then you have to walk on. He can't walk instead of you. You walk on. Then you get to something else.

J.S. What do you think is the real question about wholeness?

A.S. I would say that the big question about it is the question of defining it. The basic question is that wholeness, completeness, may mean so many different things,



and can be understood in so many partial ways. And misleading ways. Sometimes achievement is taken for it, or attainment, or talent, or even fame. These things may be good things or not but they are different from wholeness.

J.S. Doesn't the definition depend on the level on which it is being defined?

A.S. The problem is that the best definitions are the least useful. The best definition is that man is made in the image of God—that image is wholeness. That image is perfection. I'm saying that is the best definition. It is also the least useful one. It is the least useful one because there is the same danger of being misled, and perhaps in an even worse way. A definition closer to the measurable world would be a harmonious relationship between the different parts. That is not on the same level—it is a far lower level—but one can deal with it better. I think that wholeness is a kind of standard by which almost everything can be judged. The degree to which something is whole can help evaluate it—not how big it is but how far it has become harmonious and proportioned. This is true whether it is an apple, a glass, or a human being. A blemish, by this standard, would mean that there is something lacking, or something out of proportion, inharmonious. In many cases a lack is indicated by the fact that there is something which could function perfectly which is not functioning.

Here we come to one of the problems of a person who has achieved what could be called this perfection. Actually it is not a problem for them so much as for others. Such people sometimes do not want to be moved, don't want to disturb their harmony. Sometimes they don't care for others. Caring for others is the problem of every great teacher, because when he gets in contact with other people he is destroying his own balance. You see, if you make a connection with someone else then you become, at least for the time being, a unit with that person. But this new unit is not balanced, and to try to balance this new unit requires a very, very different effort on the part of the person who is by himself and on his own a balanced person. That is why so many people, including most of the prophets, did not want to be teachers—not because they were blemished, but because they did not want to destroy their balance. The story of Moses and the Burning Bush, his repeated refusal to be the Redeemer, is not just caused by humility. He is being asked to take an interest in other people, to be involved with people, some of whom are perhaps, so to say, nasty people. And you cannot work with a person or speak with a person without having contact and having, at least, his image imprinted on you. So there is a great sacrifice involved for the harmonious person to agree to be connected with others.

So as I said this wholeness requires harmony, and other people entering disturb it constantly. The deeper his connection with others, the more his balance has to become a kind of moving balance. If he succeeds, of course, he gains—he is able to incorporate all the others into a greater wholeness. So he is growing enormously. This is true of a figure such as Moses, of any true and real leader of the people: everything is magnified a hundredfold, a thousandfold. The individual becomes like a powerful lens in which forces from below are focused and transformed. ■

Answering Back

NOTES ON A DEVELOPING THEME

We've been thinking and talking about this Tenth Anniversary issue over the course of the past year or so—a process which has included many of our oldest friends and contributors. Last summer we invited a number of them to respond to several questions related to our theme: Does the search ever end? Is there an aim beyond the achievement of the heroic quest? In what direction does wholeness lie?

Their replies follow, celebrating the voices and approaches that inform every issue of PARABOLA.

—The Editors

Lucifer

Yes, without doubt, I outshone them all. But what, among archangels, is an extra shimmer? It would have been a thing of naught had I not boasted of it; so bragged, vaunted and dominated, so strutted before the Supernal Eye, that, taking away his angel name, they seized the rebel by the heel and flung him into space.

From morn
Till noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve
A summer's day. And at the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star.*

Yet, for all that, I was not lost. Heaven has its husbandry. There is nothing that is not made use of.

And You, Artificer, had need of me—even, perhaps, designed my fall—so that You should have a nether pole, a necessary antagonist, to sustain Your creation's tension. The opposites yearning towards each other, forever striving to blend together—each being a part of each—must forever be thrust apart. Planets must keep their appointed stations, the wandering stars their lawful courses by the tug between concord and discord; and men, to sustain themselves as men, must encounter the denying spirit to wake in them that which affirms.

So, setting me up against Yourself, tossing me forth from light to darkness, from the blessed land to a place of travail, You deputed me Prince of this world, a potentate to be feared and hated, friendless except for a four-footed thing sent out into the wilderness with a burden of sins on its back.

To speak of me is to bring misfortune. My name is craftily obscured by those of earth under blandishments such as Old Nick, the Other One, or Clootie. In their minds I am a monstrous image, fitted out with horns and a tail and a pair of cloven hooves. They cross their fingers and swiftly spit over their shoulders as charms against my evil eye. Dangerous places are named for me—the Devil's Dyke, the Devil's Leap, even the Devil's Punchbowl; and the four of clubs, a card that is held to be unlucky, is known as the Devil's Bedstead. When the wind blows wild they bar the doors, believing it not to be the wind but myself horsed upon the air, my hounds howling about me.

I am palpable or invisible according to their moods and needs. In their hearts and minds and secret parts, they encounter me inwardly. But some will insist they see me plain and kneel to swear allegiance to me, offering up their immortal souls if I will give them what they lust for. Yet, when I fulfil their utmost wish, they fall away, satiated, and go ululating for the World of Mothers or, as a last resort, Yourself. And

*Milton, *Paradise Lost*

You are always there. Oh, hidden, as under the dove's wing, in the convolutions of all treacherous flesh, Your imprint indelibly is there, do what I will to erase it.

A man will follow me all his days and at his last breath, when I think I have him, betrays me and calls upon Heaven.

"Deny!" I cry to the unbeliever and something within him, hearing the word, turns on itself and begins to question.

"Despair!" I whisper to the despairing and at that moment, in the abyss, they find the seed of hope.

"Curse God!" I advise the afflicted ones. "Curse God and die!" And I wait to seize them. But a rebel spirit takes strength from their woes and bids them accept and live.

I urge the fool to persist in his folly and straightway he becomes wise and sups with me with a long-handled spoon.

As adversary I invoke the hero that each man, even the coward soul, has woven into his sinews, expose himself to every mortal danger and danger itself spreads a covering wing and fosters the rescuing power.

"Sleep on!" I encourage him who sleeps and he stirs uneasily in his dream, sensing the need to wake.

In truth, Lord, as Remembrancer, I have served You well. Not one of those who enter Your courts, especially Your perfected ones, but has wrestled with me till the break of day and gone hence halting upon his thigh, seared and scarred with my brand. And the choir of angels, who know no sin, cast down their crowns before them.

What is man that, against all hope, he should find hope at his side?

What is man that, between the stirrup and the ground, he should ask for, and be given mercy?

What is man that, outfacing the two contending forces—Your constant yes, my constant no, he should receive—as balm to the wound, as dew to the leaf—the power that reconciles them?

P.L. Travers

Now What?

Sakyamuni sat down under the bodhi tree. He sat there for a good while, then he got up. What got up? The Buddha. "Budd" means "to know." The entity that got up knew. Knew what? He knew Why. He knew the first cause and the last effect. He knew what suffering is all about. He knew the meaning of life, the purpose of the quest, he had solved the great doubt. Was he at the end? A disciple asked him that question later and the Buddha replied that the end is the beginning.

But now what?

We've all experienced achievement. One moment we had to walk and then we could buy a bicycle. One moment we weren't too well off and then, suddenly, we were provided with a bonus, an inheritance, a winning ticket of some sort. Or, deliberately, we fantasized a goal and then we realized that goal. The others congratulated and envied us. We felt great, then what?

There's always the next step. There is one step that makes us Adam, and then, after a lot of trouble, with pleasure in between, there'll be the next step that makes us Adam II.

Adam II knows, which means that he no longer doubts. His mind is at peace, the mind that, Zen masters claim, never existed at all. "Show me your original mind."

"I can't find it," the disciple will finally have to admit.

"Now your mind is at rest," the Zen master replies and the disciple is enlightened. All of a sudden he is there.

Yes, but where is he? Is it there? Not there? Or is it somewhere that is neither here not there? Does such a place exist? We must assume it exists if we want to avoid senseless depression that will slow down the quest or turn it around so that it

bites its own tail. We must believe that Sakyamuni, when he got up under the Bodhi tree, knew. We must, not because of an outside force that tells us either/or, but because of the innate light that we cannot douse, switch off, destroy. By what authority do we believe? By the same authority that the Buddha claimed, when he put his hand on the ground and evoked all life to strengthen his purpose so that the demon of doubt would falter and fall.

The living ground that holds us down, the pain that hurts us, the very doubt that makes us squirm, those are the forces that will deliver us to freedom. Doubt, eventually, destroys doubt. Freedom? Free of what? There will be, we believe, a total upsurge of light that burns the forces away that kept us down. The cock of pride, the snake of jealousy, the pig of greed, the powers that keep us within the wheel, that make us live the lives of Adam I, again and again, will be no more. So then, how do we feel?

A little dizzy, like that time we got the bicycle, or the check.

There'll be no more need to carry our identity for we can carry any name we like. "What's your name?"

"Adam Two." That's a good name, it'll fill in a form. As Mr. Two we can pay taxes, get a job and introduce ourselves to the neighbors. But there's nothing there, really, for Two is the magic figure that stands for any number, including Zero that absorbs all the others. What a relief it will be not to have to look out for number One anymore.

Shall we take off? The Buddha didn't. His body did, at the proper time, because of bad pork.

Where did he go? Ask the master within and he'll get up and bow to the spot where you are. "You Buddha."

And there, at that spot, the answer rests.

Or, rather, *moves*. I beg your pardon.

Janwillem van de Wetering

The Price of Wholeness

Wholeness has intrigued me ever since we boys built sand castles on the beach. You built a perfect world. You surrounded it with a moat. You looked up, and there was some incongruous beach chair, a blanket, or simply somebody's leg, out of scale and totally out of context. No way to bring this out-of-bounds reality into your wholeness. So I learned the lesson early on: Wholeness is not truly whole until it is all-inclusive.

Later, this insight gave me a key to the Ten Oxherding Pictures in Zen; to the last two of them, to be precise. Up to number eight all is clear. Oxherding is a misnomer. But when we know that the series depicts the taming of a wild buffalo, the first seven frames make sense. And once we realize that this metaphor stands for the path to inner wholeness, number eight falls into place, too. What could express wholeness better than this circle, perfect and perfectly empty?

As long as this question remains merely rhetorical, the series ends there. And for a long time it did so, I am told. Then someone raised the question in earnest. Is there a wholeness that goes beyond the point where the Buddha enters nirvana? The answer took shape in the Bodhisattva, who at this point turns and vows not to enter, but to labor till the last of all beings has reached nirvana.

Now, two more frames were added to the series. Number nine shows the other side, as it were, of number eight: The empty circle is filled. In no other frame does the imagery vary more widely. But the meaning is always exuberant fullness. In my favorite version the circle holds an abundance of blossoms. The great death is revealed as life, the great emptiness as fullness. The final frame shows the Bodhisatt-

va in the market place. A beggar with beggars, with fishmongers, with whores: the one who realized our original wholeness feasting and bellylaughing with outcasts. ("A friend of sinners," they called Jesus.)

How different, this all-embracing wholeness of the Boddhisattva from the hero who finds wholeness by passing through hell and then lives happily ever after! But is this really what the hero myth tells? Where the myth remains intact, the hero returns to a community, returns as bringer of life for many. Only in a classic Western does he ride off into the sunset, alone. (Any anthropologist will wonder what warped culture produced so warped a version of the hero myth.)

Rilke uncovers wholeness even in the violent end of Orpheus. Did the maenads in their madness tear him limb from limb? They distributed him, Rilke claims, as bread is broken and distributed: a holy communion. Scattered, he keeps singing in every song that sounds. "Take, eat, this is my body given for you." But eating of this bread takes courage, courage to become in one's own turn bread for the world.

No wonder Jesus asks before he heals, "Do you *want* to be made whole?" We know the price of wholeness. Are we willing to become bread in a world where each new sunrise sees the corpses of 50,000 starved children? Wholeness must be all embracing. Do *you* want to become whole?

Brother David F.K. Steindl-Rast

The Speaking of Rainbows

Friends meet in middle age and inquire about a mutual acquaintance: "I wonder what became of her?" And from the other end of the spectrum, parents place upon their children, either overtly or subtly, their natural expectation: "What are you going to be—what are you going to become?"

What is inferred, of course, is that we, as we move along the course of life, "become." We emerge from one particular state of being into another—from childhood to adulthood, from dependency to independency, from ignorance to knowing. There is, in our intellectual understanding of "being," a sense that "becoming" has something to do with the development of life in general—the seed in the ground becomes a tree, the afternoon becomes the night, the rain falls and becomes a puddle. We assume that "becoming" is a natural constant, despite the fact that much of the time we are not always aware or do not wish to acknowledge the change taking place in ourselves or what we are indeed "becoming." We also assume that for something to change, it must shed something of what it was. In our own case, we equate becoming mature and adult with giving up particular aspects of the child we were. This is certainly true—but the danger here is that we might give up something of childhood which, because of societal and attitudinal pressures, might be pivotal to change and "becoming" as we get older.

This was brought home to me when a friend of mine, who is a teacher, gave me a drawing of a rainbow by a seven-year-old child named Rachel. What was exceptional was not so much the rainbow Rachel drew, but what she had written, boldly, across the top half of the picture: "A Secret Language is a Rainbow."

Thinking about this thought of Rachel's, a number of things come to mind: She had exemplified, at least to me, what is "heroic" in childhood, namely, the innate ability to see deeply into things. This is not an attribute that is taught to children, but the intuitive gift accompanying the growth of childhood. This ability to see "deeply"—the awareness of children to perceive the spectrum of possibilities within something—in Rachel's case is the ease with which she links "speaking" (and language-

making) with the speaking of a rainbow. It is a kind of sensory and intellectual immersion into the rainbow that allows her to experience the rainbow, not so much as a material object, but as a living and reacting being, somehow a part of herself. In her "becoming" she has identified herself with the "becoming" of a rainbow. And it becomes *her* rainbow when she tells us simply that the rainbow is "a secret language." Does she know the secret? Or is the secret her, and our own, search for what lies behind the wonderment and meaning of what is alive?

In the transformation of the child into the adult what Rachel has heard should not be lost. As we, as humans, grow and become something different, we should bring to our growing the sense of Rachel's rainbow. Our technical skills are astounding, and in themselves are certainly wondrous to behold. But these heroic accomplishments of our mechanical sensibility should not blind us to the need and necessity of retaining, in our "becoming," the childhood of our knowing. Perhaps our historic desire to nurture the poetic, mythic, and artistic capacities in ourselves is, as has been often suggested, the human longing to keep alive the child's playfulness and imaginative energy beyond childhood's formal ending. Now, more than ever, the balance must be struck. While we might invent, however presumptuously, the definitive light bulb, the ultimate weapon, or the state of the art sound—happily for us, we will never complete the knowledge of our awe, of our curiosity, somehow, to communicate the extraordinary vibrancy of what is alive. For as many rainbows as there will always be, there will be untold numbers of children looking at them, and in one crucial intensity of understanding, these children will feel the rainbow speaking a language, whose secret must always be the lingering amazement of our being here.

Richard Lewis

Nothing Special

The Zen master Shunryu Suzuki was a fully accomplished man. He taught in America during the 1960s, when the world—or at least California—was full of apprentice Heroes, wayfarers of every stripe thirsting for finally transcendent experience, enraptured and tortured by fantasies that America then could so easily support. But Suzuki-roshi went his way calmly and in good humor, amidst this hungry and dreamy spiritual bazaar, teaching the "sitting-quietly-doing-nothing" *zazen* meditation of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs.

"If you continue this simple practice every day you will obtain a wonderful power," he said in one of his lectures. "Before you attain it, it is something wonderful, but after you obtain it, it is nothing special. It is just you yourself, nothing special. As a Chinese poem says, 'I went and I returned. It was nothing special. Rozan famous for its misty mountains; Sekko for its water.' People think it must be wonderful to see the famous range of mountains covered by mists, and the water said to cover all the earth. But if you go there you will just see water and mountains. Nothing special."*

Another time, in a lecture at Zenshinji monastery (Tassajara Springs), he said to his students, "Your lives are very exciting now. You are seeking enlightenment and have many ideas. But actually, enlightenment is quite boring. Maybe you wouldn't like it?"

Thomas Buckley

*Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind.* New York and Tokyo: Walker/Weatherhill, 1970. P. 43.

The Seventh Beggar

On one level, the answers to your questions are simple. After the hero comes the noble. The hero is the person who has overcome himself, who has been victorious in many of the inner and the outer battles in the path; he has consciously aligned himself with the powers of good and light in the world, and against the powers of evil and of sleep. Nevertheless, there is still something confrontational in the hero; he is too attached to the success of his endeavors. The noble fights fewer battles. He combines detachment with generosity, and knows that the need for victory is another trap. He has surrendered his will to a higher will. But there is resignation in the noble, a sense of self-containment which can lead to a very subtle and dangerous kind of despair. And so beyond the noble is the saint, who lives simultaneously in the vertical and horizontal dimensions of his being. The saint's existence within this world is informed by a passionate yearning for the Other. The saint knows that he is beloved by the Divine, and that he can shelter in and be protected by the Divine Presence.

But at another level this response is unsatisfactory, for it seems to ignore the difficulty that is implicit in your questions. One can just as well ask, is the quest at an end when sainthood is attained? I think that here the answer is that there is discontinuity in the path. There is a point at which we enter a realm of agnosticism. The principles that have informed us so far can take us no further. In this realm, we can no longer talk of quest, or process, or transformation. Another logic is at work, and it is a logic that we lesser souls cannot apprehend. Let us look, for example, at a station that is assumed to be higher than that of sainthood: prophecy. A prophet is generally a person who has attained a level of saintliness, and who is able to perceive details of the Divine plan far beyond the limits of his life experience. But prophecy is not attained, it is given; furthermore, it is not awarded according to human perceptions of merit. Whereas, theoretically, any person can reach a level of sainthood, a prophet is chosen. No amount of work can bring about the transformation from saint to prophet.

Furthermore, there are other ranks, higher than sainthood, but not equal to prophecy. These are special manifestations of holiness, and are also apparently conferred by divine grace. Are they a reward, and if so, for what?

This principle of "spiritual agnosticism" is dramatically illustrated in Rabbi Nachman's tale of the Seven Beggars. In this allegory of initiation and transformation, each successive beggar is the bearer of an ever more exalted state of wisdom. But the story ends after the sixth beggar. The seventh beggar simply does not appear. Everybody is waiting for him but he does not arrive. Does this mean that the stage of the seventh beggar is inaccessible, or that it does not exist? I think that it means, rather, that the world of the seventh beggar cannot be described in the language of the previous six.

And so another answer to your questions is that we do not know.

Jonathan Omer-Man

Quest and Question

"This consciousness of dignity lasts me more than three days, and not until the fourth or fifth day do I come to my senses and know where I am." Socrates (*Menexenus* 235C) is describing the influence of a gifted orator who in praising a fallen warrior persuades his listeners of their own heroism. Yet Socrates was a hero: his tireless search for understanding, his willingness to share his search with others, his fidelity to his inner voice, his gentle mastery of his death are hero's traits. His words lead to the distinction between illusory and authentic heroism and the question of heroism in daily life.

In fairy tales and legends, the curtain falls discreetly at the conclusion of events. The hero recognizes his or her task, confronts it through resourceful action, often in obedience to a higher voice, and gains not only immediate rewards but happiness ever after. In daily life, it is otherwise: the heroes of Entebbe return home to plainer duties, Olympic athletes twirl down from the high bar and resume their training. The same is true of unsung heroes—those who care for the elderly and ill with reliable kindness, those who pass up opportunities to be angry, who give to others in innumerable ways with unstudied blindness to their own comfort. They too go from day to day. Perhaps the word *dedication* has wider application than *heroism*; it evokes the days and months of unclimactic concentration between climactic incidents.

Much the same can be said of meditators. From a Napoleonic point of view, nothing is less heroic than the man or woman seated on a cushion or kneeling at a prayer stall, striving invisibly to admit the inner experiences promised by their traditions. Yet religious texts from earliest times have stressed the heroism of such apparent inaction. "If a man were to conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and another conquers one, himself, he indeed is the greatest of conquerors" (*Dhammapada* 8.4). But self-conquest too, for most of us, is eternally unfinished; it goes from day to day, flawed. Many who retire in the evening with lotus-like minds awaken the next morning in a weed patch.

I suspect that the quest for wisdom and energy cannot be wholly fulfilled by many of us. I saw a friend whom I hadn't seen in some years, a seeker whose path had diverged from my own poorly mapped route in life. Driving past, I caught sight of her from behind, walking slowly, somewhat uncertainly, on the sidewalk. She was wearing shorts—it was a summer evening—and carrying a heavy shopping bag. And my mind began to drivel about her apparent condition: her legs heavy and old, her step hardly triumphant. I wondered how she was faring, feared the worst, but there was no opportunity to park and speak with her. I continued by and saw her face: bright and unchanged, eyes still innocent like a bird's. As I moved well past her on the avenue, she entered a bookstore.

PARABOLA has asked where the search ends. I don't know and even find the question irritating; I prefer to be asked about things I know. The traditional answers to the question are nourishing for one who doesn't know: it ends in the bosom of Abraham; in plenitude of being; with a post in the Celestial Hierarchy; in dust; in hell; in incomparably good company. The search seems to end "now," and to begin "now." The fact and experience of "now" have been exploited in pop culture, justifying every sort of carelessness. Still, when asked where the search ends, I find myself remembering where it begins. Words such as heroism and dedication cling to one. One can hardly dress in the morning, so much is already being worn. But at moments, "I come to my senses and know where I am."

Roger Lipsey

When the Ten Thousand things
are seen in their Oneness, we return
to the Origins and remain where
we have always been

Sen T'sen

Frederick Franck

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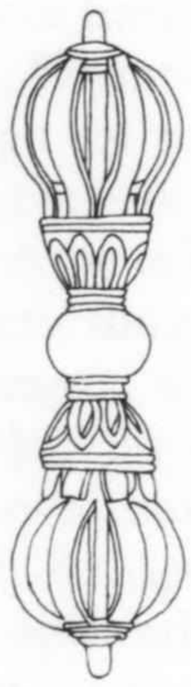
EPICYCLES

Nirvana/Tibetan



At the time when these words were being fulfilled, there was a very rich and influential lama named Geshe Tsakpūhwa who lived at Drin. At first, he made a show of honoring the Master. But later, succumbing to envy and wanting to embarrass the Master before the crowd of his benefactors, he pretended to be troubled by doubts and asked him many questions.

During the first month of autumn in the year of the Wood Tiger, the Master had been invited to preside at a wedding feast at Drin. Geshe Tsakpūhwa also attended. He prostrated himself, hoping that the Master would return his prostration in the presence of the gathering. The Master had never prostrated himself before anyone, nor returned anyone's prostration except in the case of his lama, and, following his custom, he did not return the prostration.

The geshe thought, "What! A Master as learned as myself paying homage to an ignorant fool and receiving no homage in return! I shall make him pay for my embarrassment." And, handing him a text on Buddhist logic, he said, "Master, would you be kind enough to clear up my uncertainty and explain this to me, word by word?"

The Master replied, "You know very well the conceptual meaning of this text. But real spiritual meaning is found in abandoning the Eight Worldly Reactions and the personal ego, through destroying false perceptions of reality by realizing the single flavor of samsara and nirvana, and through meditating in mountain solitude. Apart from that, arguing over words, and pointing out what comes after what, is totally useless if one does not practice the Dharma. I have never studied logic. I know nothing about it and if I ever did, I have forgotten it now. I will tell you why. Listen to this song:

I prostrate myself before Marpa the Translator
May he bless me and keep me from dispute.

The blessing of my lama penetrated my mind.
I have never been overcome by distractions.

Having meditated on love and compassion,
I forgot the difference between myself and others.

Having meditated on my lama,
I forgot those who are influential and powerful.

Having meditated constantly on my yidam,
I forgot the coarse world of the senses.

Having meditated on the instruction of the secret tradition,
I forgot the books of dialectic.

Having maintained pure awareness,
I forgot the illusions of ignorance.

Having meditated on the essential nature of mind as Trikaya,
I forgot my hopes and fears.

Having meditated on this life and the life beyond,
I forgot the fear of birth and death.

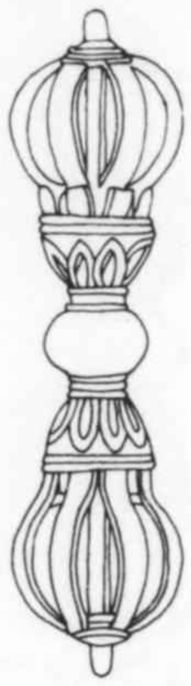
Having tasted the joys of solitude,
I forgot the need to please my relatives and friends.

Having assimilated the teaching in the stream of my consciousness,
I forgot to engage in doctrinal polemics.

Having meditated on that which is non-arising, non-ceasing, and non-abiding,
I disregarded all conventional forms.

Having meditated on the perception of phenomena as the Dharmakaya,
I forgot all conceptual forms of meditation.

Having dwelt in the unaltered state of naturalness,
I forgot the ways of hypocrisy.



Having lived in humility in body and mind,
I forgot the disdain and arrogance of the great.

Having made a monastery within my body,
I forgot the monastery outside.

Having embraced the spirit rather than the letter,
I forgot how to play with words.

As you are a Master, explain the treatise yourself.''
Thus he spoke.

The geshe continued, ''This may be the hermit's way, but if I were to challenge it with my learned arguments, your discourses would go no further. I had hoped you were a noble man. That is why I prostrated myself before you.''

These words did not please the benefactors. With one voice they said to him, ''Master Geshe, however learned you may be, there are many more like you on earth. You are not equal to the Master, not even to a pore of the skin of his body. Just preside and be silent. Increase your wealth as much as you can, since you do not possess even the smell of religion.''

In spite of his growing irritation, the geshe could not protest since everyone supported Milarepa. His face darkened and he thought, ''Milarepa acts and jests like a madman who knows nothing. Through his lies and imposture he is degrading the teaching of the Buddha, and living on gifts obtained by deceit. I, who have got so much knowledge and am the richest and most influential man in this region, now count for less than a dog in religious matters. I must do something about this.''

Then he mixed some poison with curdled milk. Promising his concubine the gift of a large turquoise, he sent her with the poison to Drin Cave, where the Master was staying.

The Master knew that his foremost disciples were already enlightened and that, even if he were not to take the poison, his time to die had come. He knew also that, unless the woman were given the turquoise before he drank the poison, she would never get it. So he said to her, ''I shall not drink this now. Bring it back later, and then I will drink it.''

Wondering if the Master suspected her, the woman, worried and ashamed, went back to Geshe Tsakpūhwa.

''Because of his clairvoyance,'' she said, ''the Master suspected me and refused to drink.''

The geshe replied, ''If he really had clairvoyance, he would not have told you to bring it back. He would have told you to drink it yourself. Since he did not, that proves he does not possess clairvoyance. Take this turquoise. Go find the Master and make sure he drinks the poison.''

He gave her the turquoise, and she answered, ''Everyone believes he is clairvoyant, so it must be true. That is why he did not take the drink in the first place, and I am sure he will not take it now. What's more, I am too afraid to do it. I will not go! I do not want your turquoise.''

The geshe answered, "Laymen believe he is clairvoyant because they have not read the scriptures, and because they have been led astray by his lies. In my books, men gifted with clairvoyance are not like that. I assure you that he is not clairvoyant. Once I have seen proof that you have given him the drink, we shall be married. We have been living together for a long time and, as they say, there is not much to choose between eating a little garlic or a lot. Besides having this turquoise, you will be entrusted with the care of all my possessions, both within my household and without, and we will share all our joys and sorrows and be one family. So do your best."

Hoping that these promises would be fulfilled, she then mixed some poison with curds and took it to the Master, who was now staying at Trode Tashigang. The Master smiled and took the vessel in his hands. She thought, "The geshe is right, he does not seem to have clairvoyance." Even while she was thinking this, the Master said to her, "So you have been given the turquoise for the deed you are carrying out?"

Overwhelmed with confusion, she prostrated herself, and said in a weeping and trembling voice, "I do have the turquoise, but I beg you, do not take the drink. Give it back to me. I am a thoughtless evil-doer."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"I myself will drink it since I am guilty."

The Master continued:

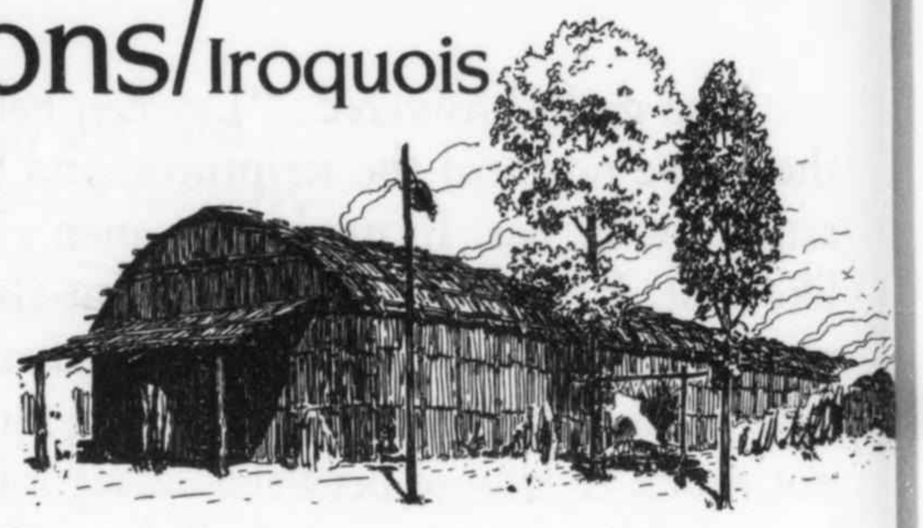
"First of all, I have too much compassion to let you drink it. It would violate the essence of the Bodhisattva precepts and would bring with it grave spiritual consequences. My mission is complete and my life is coming to an end. My time has come to go to another realm. By itself the drink could not harm me in the least. It does not matter whether I drink it or not. But if I had drunk it the first time, you would not have received the turquoise as payment for your crime. Now that the turquoise is in your hands, I will drink, both to satisfy the geshe's desire and to be sure that you earn the turquoise.

"As for the geshe's other promises, they will not be fulfilled. He said many things about my behavior. There is no truth in what he said, so both of you will experience terrible remorse. When this happens, in order to purify yourself, strive toward self-realization in this life. Even to save your life, do not commit any similar crimes. Call upon me and my spiritual sons with a sincere heart. Both you and the geshe have always cut yourselves off from happiness and sought out sorrow. This time I will see if I can purify you of your evil karma. Speak to no one of this while I am alive. Afterward, everyone will hear about it. Although you have neither seen with your eyes nor heard with your ears the truth of my previous sayings, keep well in mind these words I speak now. The moment will come when you will see that they are true."

Having thus spoken, he drank the poison.

From Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, *The Life of Milarepa* (Boulder and London: Shambhala Publications, 1984).

The Mother of Nations/Iroquois



Long ago there was a woman whose longhouse stood to the west at Oniagara. Her people, whom she led, were those known as The Cultivators, the Hadiyent-togeo-no, and they were cousins to the Ongwe-oweh. It was said that this woman was the direct descendant of the woman who fell from the sky. Her name was Jigonsahseh, The Lynx. Her longhouse stood by the warriors' path which ran from east to west. Though she was unable to stop the continual war which tore apart the nations in those days, still her words were respected. She always fed those who passed her door and she was called by many "The Great Mother."

When The Peacemaker, who brought the great message from The Master of Life, set out into the world, he went first to the land of The Cultivators. He crossed Sganya-dai-yo, The Great Beautiful Lake, in his canoe made of white stone. He saw that there were no cornfields planted because of the continual warfare. The towns were stockaded and filled with people who were hungry and quarrelling.

The Peacemaker went to the house of Jigonsahseh. She welcomed him and placed food before him. When he had finished eating she spoke.

"You have come to bring a message," she said. "My mind is open to it. I wish to hear."

Then The Peacemaker spoke. He told her he was acting as the messenger of The Maker of Life. He said that his message was to bring justice, peace and good laws for the people. The wars between the Ongwe-oweh, the True Human Beings, would cease.

"This message is good," said Jigonsahseh. "What form shall it take among the People?"

Then The Peacemaker explained. It would take the form of the Longhouse. There would be many fires within the Longhouse, many families. But all would live together under the guidance of a wise Clan Mother. The five nations of the Ongwe-oweh would become of one mind and be known as the People of the Longhouse. Together they would seek the way of Peace which would be open to all the nations.

"My hands are open to this message. I reach out and grasp it," said Jigonsahseh.

Then it was decided that, since a woman was the first to accept this new way, from that day on the women would possess the titles to be given to the men who would speak for their nations in the Longhouse. These women would name from their clans the men who would serve the people. The Clan Mothers would give them the horns of office and if they did not do their jobs well the women could take back their titles. From that day on, the Longhouse of Jigonsahseh would be known as the Peace House. All would now

call her the Yegowaneh, "The Mother of Nations." In the land of her people there would be no war. The Cultivators would now be known as the Attiwendaronk, "The Neutral Nation."

So it came to be that in the land of the Yegowaneh, The Mother of Nations, there was no war. Her name was passed down from mother to eldest daughter. When it was necessary for the People of the Longhouse to deal with other nations who had not joined the League of Peace or when there were disputes between nations, the War Captains would always pass first through her land and deliver Peace Belts to the Yegowaneh. She would give them food, as had been the custom of all those who carried the name of Jigonsahseh and were descended from the woman who fell from the sky. Then The Mother of Nations would exhort them to seek peace and accept war only as a last resort. So it is said among the People of the Longhouse that the path of war runs through the House of Peace.

—Retold by Joseph Bruchac

Portrait of Moses/Haggadah

The whole world was shaken and enthralled by the miracle of the Exodus. The name of Moses was on everyone's lips. Tidings of the great miracle reached also the wise king of Arabistan. The king summoned to him his best painter and bade him go to Moses, to paint his portrait and bring it back to him. When the painter returned the king gathered together all his sages, wise in the science of physiognomics, and asked them to define by the portrait the character of Moses, his qualities, inclinations, habits and the source of his miraculous power.

"King," answered the sages, "this is the portrait of a man cruel, haughty, greedy of gain, possessed by desire for power and by all the vices which exist in the world."

These words roused the king's indignation.

"How can it be possible," he exclaimed, "that a man whose marvellous deeds ring through the whole world should be of such a kind?"

A dispute began between the painter and the sages. The painter affirmed that the portrait of Moses had been painted by him quite

accurately, while the sages maintained that Moses' character had been unerringly determined by them according to the portrait.

The wise king of Arabistan decided to verify which of the disputing parties was right, and he himself set off for the camp of Israel.

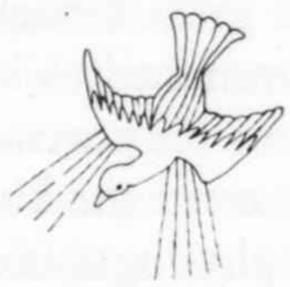
At the first glance the king became convinced that the face of Moses had been faultlessly portrayed by the painter. On entering the tent of the man of God he knelt down, bowed to the ground and told Moses of the dispute between the artist and the sages.

"At first, until I saw thy face," said the king, "I thought it must be that the artist had painted thy image badly, for my sages are men very much experienced in the science of physiognomics. Now I am convinced that they are quite worthless men and that their wisdom is vain and worthless."

"No," answered Moses, "it is not so; both the painter and the physiognomists are men highly skilled, and both parties are right. Be it known to thee that all the vices of which the sages spoke have indeed been assigned to me by nature and perhaps to an even higher degree than was found by them from my portrait. But I struggled with my vices by long and intense efforts of the will and gradually overcame and suppressed them in myself until all opposed to them became my second nature. And in this lies my greatest pride."

From P.D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1934).

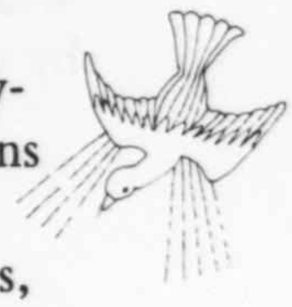
The Marriage of the Virgin/Apocrypha



But the Virgin of the Lord, as she advanced in years, increased also in perfections, and according to the saying of the Psalmist, her father and mother forsook her, but the Lord took care of her. For she every day had the conversation of angels, and every day received visitors from God, which preserved her from all sorts of evil, and caused her to abound with all good things; so that when at length she arrived to her fourteenth year, as the wicked could not lay anything to her charge worthy of reproof, so all good persons, who were acquainted with her, admired her life and conversation.

At that time the high priest made a public order. That all the virgins who had public settlements in the temple, and were come to

this age, should return home, and, as they were now of a proper maturity, should, according to the custom of their country, endeavour to be married. To which command, though all the other virgins readily yielded obedience, Mary the Virgin of the Lord alone answered, that she could not comply with it. Assigning these reasons, that both she and her parents had devoted her to the service of the Lord; and besides, that she had vowed virginity to the Lord, which vow she was resolved never to break through by lying with a man.



The high priest being hereby brought into a difficulty, seeing he durst neither on the one hand dissolve the vow, and disobey the Scripture, which says, Vow and pay, nor on the other hand introduce a custom to which the people were strangers, commanded that at the approaching feast all the principal persons both of Jerusalem and the neighbouring places should meet together, that he might have their advice, how he had best proceed in so difficult a case. When they were accordingly met, they unanimously agreed to seek the Lord, and ask counsel from him on this matter. And when they were all engaged in prayer, the high priest, according to the usual way, went to consult God.

And immediately there was a voice from the ark, and the mercy seat, which all present heard, that it must be inquired or sought out by a prophecy of Isaiah to whom the Virgin should be given and be betrothed; for Isaiah saith, there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall spring out of its root, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and Piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him. Then, according to this prophecy, he appointed, that all the men of the house and family of David, who were marriageable, and not married, should bring their several rods to the altar, and out of whatsoever person's rod after it was brought, a flower should bud forth, and on the top of it the Spirit of the Lord should sit in the appearance of a dove, he should be the man to whom the Virgin should be given and be betrothed.

Among the rest there was a man named Joseph, of the house and family of David, and a person very far advanced in years, who drew back his rod, when every one besides presented his. So that when nothing appeared agreeable to the heavenly voice, the high priest judged it proper to consult God again, who answered that he to whom the Virgin was to be betrothed was the only person of those who were brought together, who had not brought his rod.

Joseph therefore was betrayed. For, when he did bring his rod, and a dove coming from Heaven pitched upon the top of it, every one plainly saw, that the Virgin was to be betrothed to him. Accordingly, the usual ceremonies of betrothing being over, he returned to his own city of Bethlehem, to set his house in order, and make the needful provisions for the marriage. But the Virgin of the Lord, Mary, with seven other virgins of the same age, who had been

weaned at the same time, and who had been appointed to attend her by the priest, returned to her parents' house in Galilee.

Now at this time of her first coming into Galilee, the angel Gabriel was sent to her from God, to declare to her the conception of our Saviour, and the manner and way of her conceiving him. Accordingly going in to her, he filled the chamber where she was with a prodigious light, and in a most courteous manner saluting her, he said, Hail, Mary! Virgin of the Lord most acceptable! O Virgin full of Grace! The Lord is with you, you are blessed above all women, you are blessed above all men, that have been hitherto born.

But the Virgin, who had before been well acquainted with the countenances of angels, and to whom such light from heaven was no uncommon thing, was neither terrified with the vision of the angel, nor astonished at the greatness of the light, but only troubled about the angel's words and began to consider what so extraordinary a salutation should mean, what it did portend, or what sort of end it would have.

To this thought the angel, divinely inspired, replied, Fear not, Mary, as though I intended anything inconsistent with your chastity in this salutation: For you have found favour with the Lord, because you made virginity your choice. Therefore while you are a Virgin, you shall conceive without sin, and bring forth a son. He shall be great, because he shall reign from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. And he shall be called the Son of the Highest; for he who is born in a mean state on earth reigns in an exalted one in heaven. And the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. For he is the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, and his throne is for ever and ever.

To this discourse of the angel the Virgin replied, not as though she were unbelieving, but willing to know the manner of it. She said, How can that be? For seeing, according to my vow, I have never known any man, how can I bear a child without the addition of a man's seed?

To this the angel replied and said, Think not, Mary, that you shall conceive in the ordinary way. For, without lying with a man, while a Virgin, you shall conceive; while a Virgin, you shall bring forth; and while a Virgin shall give suck. For the Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you, without any of the heats of lust. So that which shall be born of you shall be only holy, because it only is conceived without sin, and being born, shall be called the Son of God.

Then Mary stretching forth her hands, and lifting her eyes to heaven, said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be unto me according to thy word.

Joseph therefore went from Judaea to Galilee, with intention to marry the Virgin who was betrothed to him: For it was now near

three months since she was betrothed to him. At length it plainly appeared she was with child, and it could not be hid from Joseph: For going to the Virgin in a free manner, as one espoused, and talking familiarly with her, he perceived her to be with child, and thereupon began to be uneasy and doubtful, not knowing what course it would be best to take; for being a just man, he was not willing to expose her, nor defame her by the suspicion of being a whore, since he was an honest man. He purposed therefore privately to put an end to their agreement, and as privately to put her away.

But while he was meditating these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, and said, Joseph, son of David, fear not; be not willing to entertain any suspicion of the Virgin's being guilty of fornication, or to think any thing amiss of her, neither be afraid to take her to wife; for that which is begotten in her and now distresses your mind, is not the work of man, but the Holy Ghost. For she of all women is that only Virgin who shall bring forth the Son of God, and you shall call his name Jesus, that is, Saviour: for he will save his people from their sins.

Joseph thereupon, according to the command of the angel, married the Virgin, and did not know her, but kept her in chastity.

And now the ninth month from her conception drew near, when Joseph took his wife and what other things were necessary to Bethlehem, the city from whence he came. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her bringing forth. And she brought forth her firstborn son, as the holy Evangelists have taught, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, lives and reigns to everlasting ages.

From "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary," in *The Lost Books of The Bible*, (Alpha House, Inc., 1927).

The Bringing to Life of Osiris/Egyptian

Isis the mighty, Isis the clear of command, Isis, whose words are never-failing, after long searching found the marvelous tamarisk tree, and inside it the coffer containing the body of Osiris. Bathing the body in tears, she laid the coffer in a boat and sailed with it back to Egypt. There, thinking to conceal it from Set the Enemy, Set the murderer of Osiris, she hid the coffer on an island in the swamps.

But one night, by the strong light of the full moon, Set was out hunting a wild boar. Chasing the boar, he ranged far out into the swamps, and onto the island where the coffer lay. At once he knew the coffer, knew what body lay there. Raging, wishing to destroy Osiris forever, he tore the body into fourteen pieces, and the pieces he scattered far and wide.

Isis, returning, set out to search for Osiris. She and her sister Nepthys sailed through the marshes in a boat of papyrus. One by one, they found the parts of the body. "We have found him," they said each time. "We rejoice!" And at each place where a part was found, Isis had a temple built for Osiris. They found every part of Osiris except the phallus, devoured by fishes. So Isis fashioned a phallus of clay.

They brought the pieces of Osiris's body to a floating island, and there Isis assembled them, and again the body was whole, but lifeless.

Then Isis and Nepthys lamented. They lamented together. "I call after you, Osiris, and weep," they grieved. "My cry is heard to heaven."

The sun god Ra, in pity of such sorrow, sent Anubis, the jackal-headed god, Lord of the Mummy-wrappings, to help them. And Thoth the moon god, the Lord of Divine Words, came. Together Isis and Nepthys, Anubis and Thoth, anointed the body with perfumes, saying:

O Osiris
you have received the perfume
that will make your body perfect
You receive the source of life
You receive the oil of the cedar
Ra rises upon you
We place your backbone in the holy oil
Gold, silver, lapis lazuli we bring
turquoise, to lighten your face
carnelian, to strengthen your steps
O Osiris, receive your nails of gold
your fingers of gold
You are made perfect in gold

So saying, they laid the bandage of Nekheb on the forehead, the bandage of Hathor on the face, and they wrapped all of the body. Then Isis, in the form of a bird, Isis, who gave shade to the body with her feathers and with her wings beat the air, fanned the body of Osiris. Her wings brought the breath of life to him. Osiris lived again, in the Underworld. As Lord of the Underworld, he lives and reigns.

—Retold by Anne Twitty

The Merton Enigma

EDWARD RICE

The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton
By Michael C. Mott. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984. Pp. 672. $24.95.

The long-awaited "official biography" of the Trappist monk and writer Thomas Merton has finally appeared, a work awaited with anticipation and (among certain of Merton's old friends) also with some trepidation. There is justification for both feelings. This long (and long-winded) biography by Michael Mott, a poet, novelist, and teacher, tells us as much and more of Merton as we are likely to want to know until the last twelve years of his private journals are released on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death. Mott fills in many gaps in the common knowledge: still, one wonders about the supposed secrets of the withheld papers, and the details Mott reveals are often excruciatingly boring. Need we be told, for example, that Merton arrived "in Santa Barbara on United Flight 899 at 10 A.M." and on the next page that he wrote back to his monastery on "Mother Myriam's Olivetti," and that he discussed Zen with someone "during a thunderstorm"? It would be more interesting to know what he reported back to his community, and what he said about Zen.

The official biography was begun by John Howard Griffin in 1969, a year after Merton's still mysterious death in Bangkok. Griffin, who closely identified himself with Merton, received the assignment from the Thomas Merton Legacy Trust and was given full access to Merton's papers. After nine years, Griffin, in ill health and apparently not making much progress with the writing, was removed from the project by the Trustees—he was "devastated"—and the assignment turned over to Mott. Griffin died in 1980. He left behind his *Hermitage Journal* (Andrews and McMeel, 1981), kept while working on the research, and *Follow the Ecstasy* (JHG/Latitudes Press,

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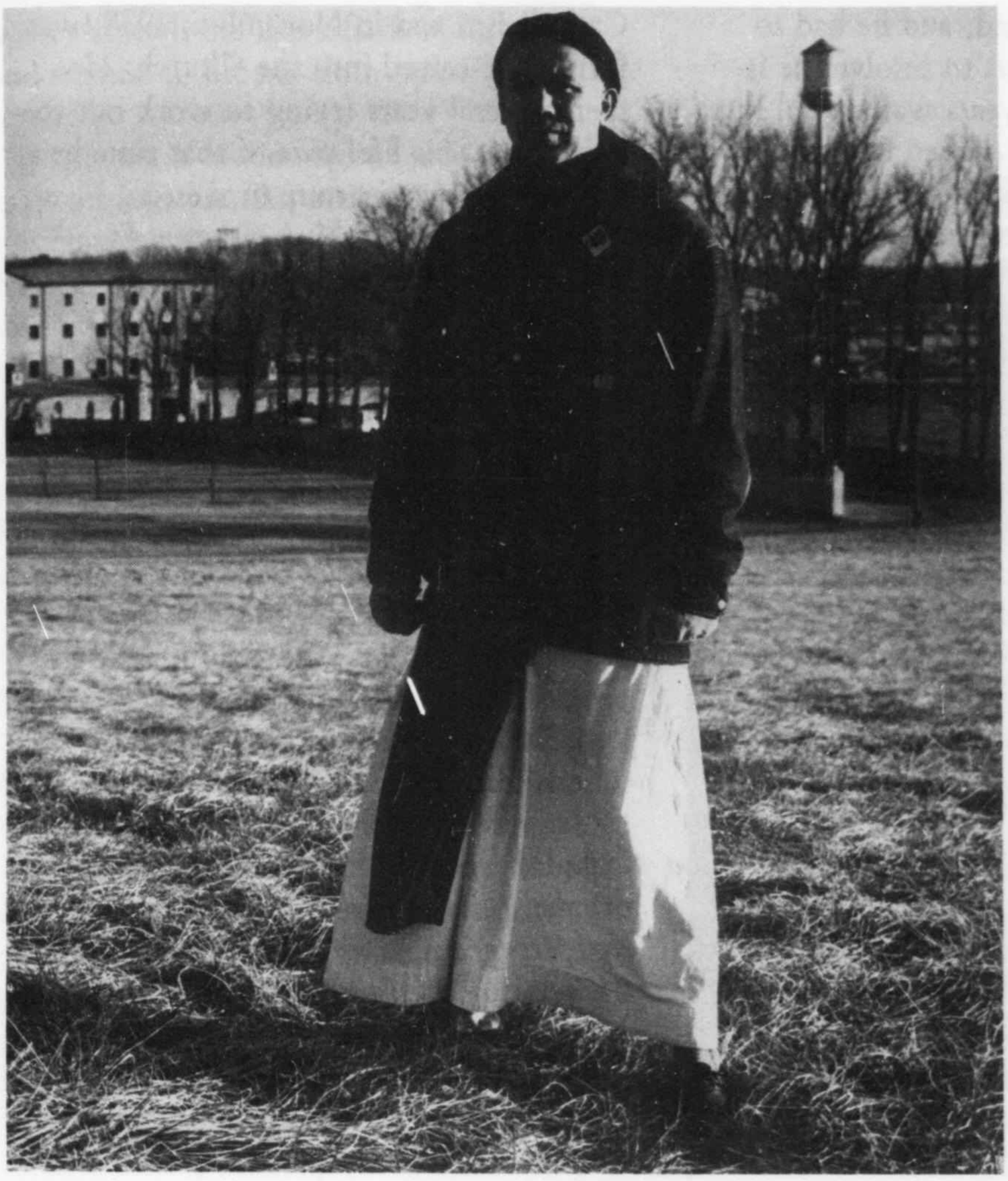
1983), the only completed portion of the biography and dealing with the last three years of Merton's life, 1965–68.

From the evidence of the two Griffin books it is fortunate that Mott took over, despite his many faults. Griffin was clearly turning out an inept, marshmallow biography, protective and worshipful not only of Merton but of the Trappists, and failing to come to terms with his most complex and demanding subject. But Mott must not be overrated. He is a far better writer than Griffin, and he does a fair job in assembling the facts; aside from the Trustees and Griffin he was the only outsider to have full access to Merton's private papers and confidential journals. He got from the Trustees a letter confirming that the interpretations in his biography were to be his own. To the monastery's credit there is material here that might be called "sensitive." Still, there are numerous difficulties with Mott, as with Griffin, and also with the earlier biography by the English writer Monica Furlong, entitled *Merton* (Harper & Row, 1980). Mott's title, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, imposes an artificial structure on the book; Mott has found a mountain of some type or other to serve as a symbol of and a background to various passages in his subject's life; the device does nothing to sharpen the unfocused narrative, with its endless amassing of details and smattering of psychological interpretations that confuse but rarely explain. Merton might have indulged in one of his frequent attacks of spleen over the fake and the fraudulent if he had been alive to see the publisher's ad, which centers on "one of the great crises of Merton's life—when he fell in love with a young woman and was forced to choose between her and his vocation as a priest." Or he may merely have laughed, in the knowledge that this is the way the outside world operates and that is a reason for having left it. The Episcopal Book Club edition of Furlong's *Merton* is almost as shady, asking on its dust jacket, "Anglican turned Trappist? More truly, says the author, Trappist turned Anglican!" Merton had a devastating wit for such nonsense.

But the issues are more serious than shady advertising. Both Mott and Furlong (and to some extent Griffin) contain numerous minor errors which need not have been made, particularly inexcusable in the official biography; the informed and cautious reader feels that he is entering onto shaky ground in both works. As a participant in a few of the events mentioned in all three books, I am quite familiar with certain periods in Merton's life. The errors in the parts I know of personally make me quite wary of the rest. However, there is interesting material in both Mott and Furlong, despite nagging doubts as to general veracity.

To get to the newly revealed Merton. His parents were Owen Merton, a New Zealander, and Ruth Jenkins, whose family came from Ohio. Both were artists, they met in Paris, fell in love, and were married in April, 1914. Their son Tom (not Thomas—that came later) was born on January 31, 1915 when the Mertons were living in southern France. A second son, John Paul, was born in November, 1918. Owen Merton was relaxed and easy-going, but Ruth was strict, a firm disciplinarian: the reader can make what he or she will of this. Ruth Merton died of cancer in the fall of 1921, and Owen Merton of a brain tumor ten years later. Young Tom was taken over by his godfather, Tom Bennett, also a New Zealander, who was then practicing as a physician in London. Owen Merton had placed Tom in French and English boarding schools (John Paul was raised by the Jenkins family in Douglaston, N.Y.), and Bennett sent him to Clare College, Cambridge. Merton had already shown signs of rebellion and independent thinking. He had expressed interest in oriental religions, and when Mahatma Gandhi came to England to petition for India's freedom, Tom argued in his favor, an unusual position to take among his very conservative and tradition-minded peers and friends. His guardian's family told him frequently that he must "run with the pack," that the proper Englishman would stick with his own kind; Bennett had hoped that Tom would enter the British diplomatic service, but all



Photographs by Edward Rice

of that was soon dashed. At Cambridge in 1934 Merton was clearly more promiscuous than most students. He had once told me that his first sexual experience was with a beautiful Viennese prostitute he had picked up in Hyde Park. Mott overlooks this. Merton told at least one friend at Cambridge that one of his girls (we hear of girls named Joan and Sylvia) was pregnant, and he thought he was the father. At Columbia College the next year after he had been banished from England by his outraged guardian, Merton spoke openly and casually about the woman and her child, his son. There had been some kind of "paternity suit" and a legal settlement in England, the other party's name unknown (at least in Mott). Mott implies, but not forcefully, that perhaps Merton might have invented the incident, but those who knew him at Columbia and afterwards never thought he was the type to boast of such a relation-

ship; it was on his mind, and he had to talk about it. Mott fails to resolve the issue, which for many years was crucial in Merton's life. In 1944, when Merton became a professed monk, he left part of his estate to Bennett to be paid by him "to that person mentioned to him in my letters, if that person can be contacted." Unfortunately, by this time Bennett and Merton were mutually estranged and had not been in touch with each other for several years, and Bennett died in 1945. There is a mystery—at least Mott offers no clues—about what happened later. However, the common supposition among Merton's friends, on the basis of whatever he eventually told them in private, was that the woman and his son were killed during the German air raids on England early in World War II.

Sadly, Mott fails to come to terms with this most significant and sensitive event in Merton's early life. If Merton did father a child, and mother and son were alive during the period when he was at Columbia and during his early monastic life, this was a tremendous burden for a young man to carry, especially one so sensitive to personal cruelty, callousness, and wrongdoing as Merton was. At Columbia, in exile, Merton settled down to hard work; he quickly became a Big Man on Campus. Religious interests, Mott says, had long preoccupied him, despite seeming indifference expressed in his autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*. Merton read about and absorbed, or rejected, various types of Christianity—he was a relentless reader: he seemed to be skeptical of and even offended by Roman Catholicism. He was also exposed to various oriental influences. He had already read some Buddhist texts in French and knew of D.T. Suzuki's writings on Zen.

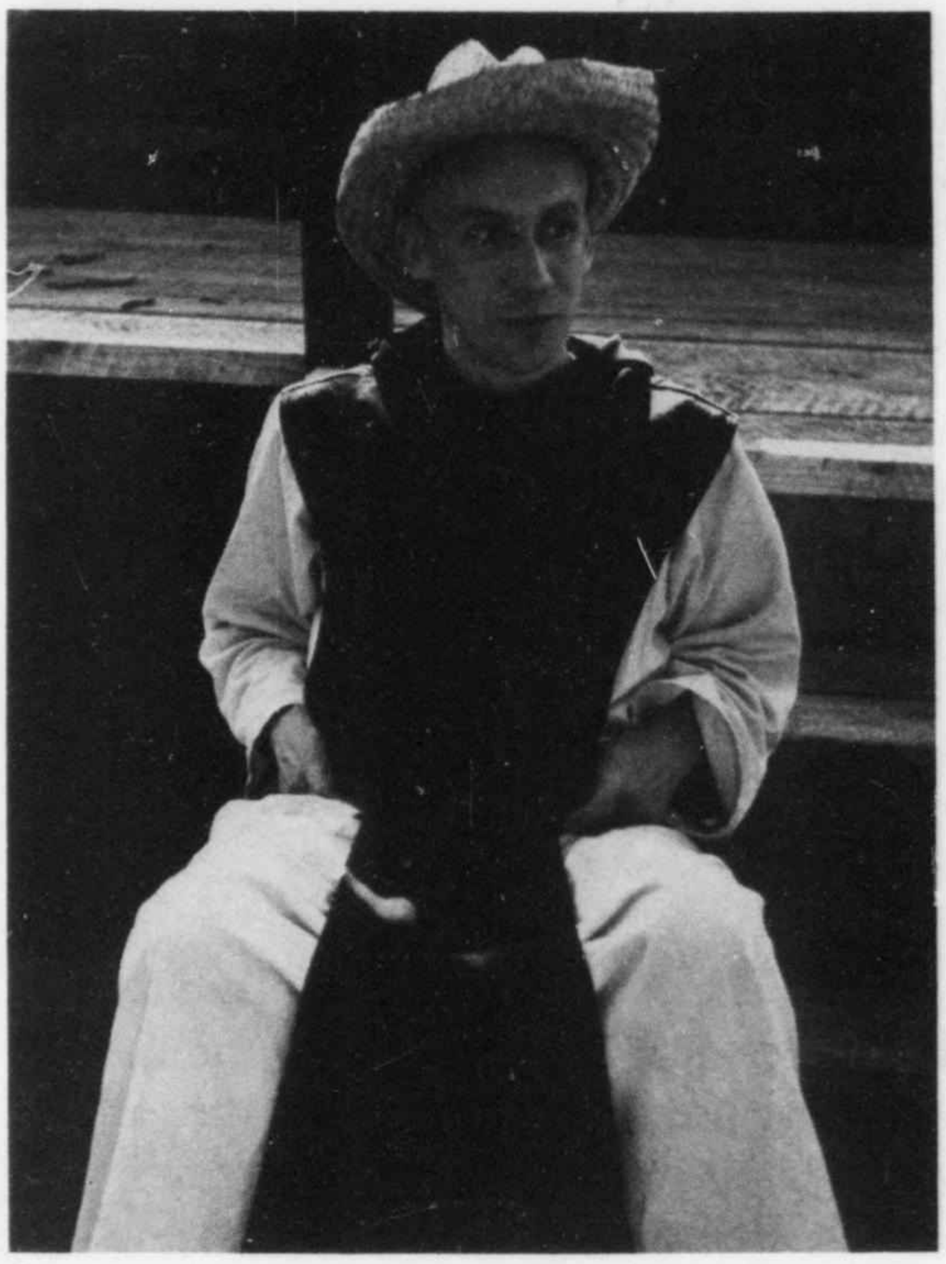
But the environment was not by any means religious or mystical. Overshadowing everything was the world crisis. The Great Depression, the rise of Hitler and Mussolini, the Spanish Civil War, and the radicals' flirtation with Soviet Russia were more important preoccupations. Merton, overcoming earlier prejudices, turned to Catholicism and in November, 1938, was formally received into the Church. He spent several years trying to work out the direction of his life, part of that time in a kind of pre-hippy group in western New York state, and teaching either at St. Bonaventure's College near Olean or at Columbia.

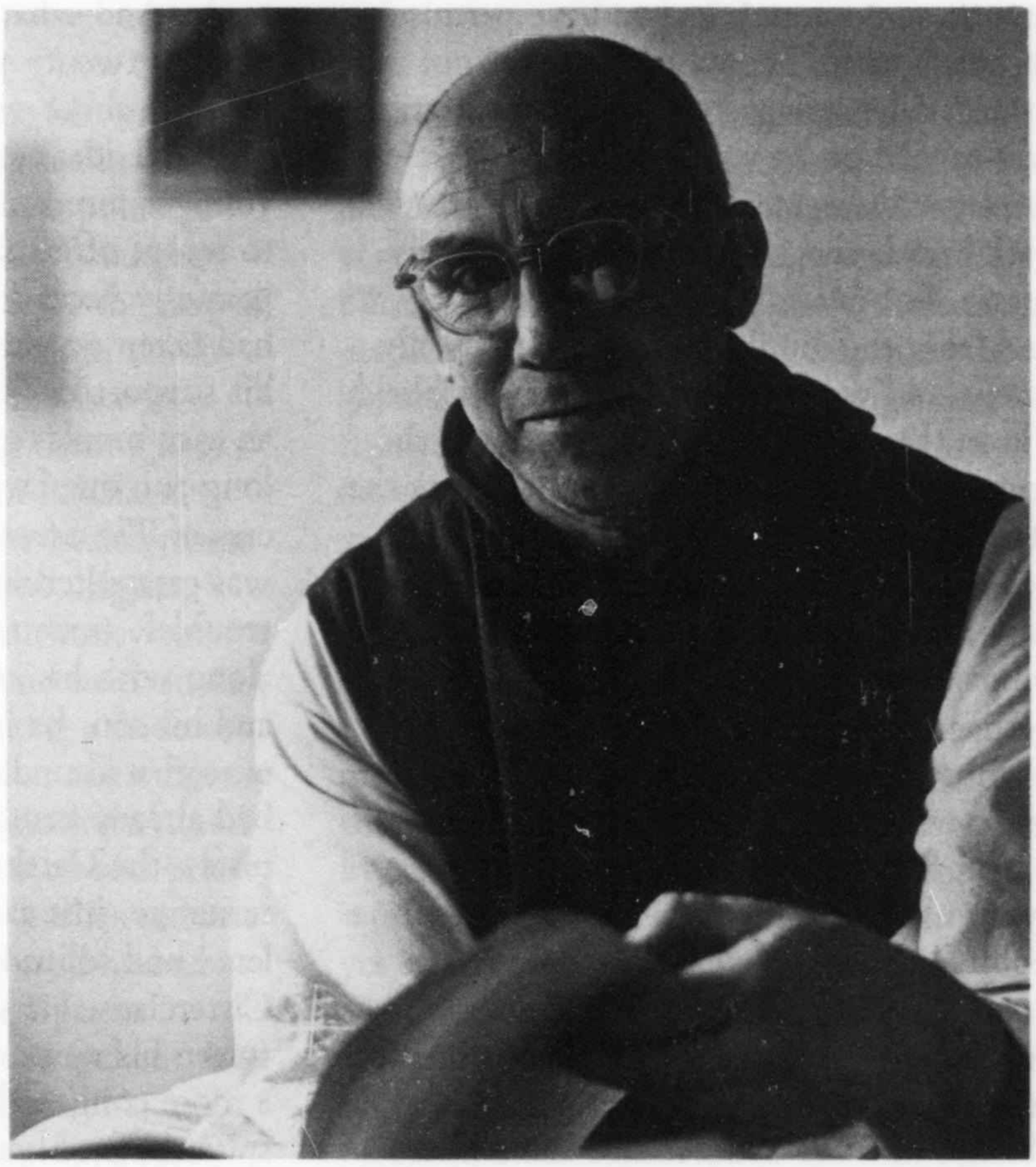
Throughout this period in Merton's life—that is, from the end of Cambridge to his entry into the Trappist Order in 1941—Mott often seems off the mark. Mott was born in 1930 in England, and his understanding of the thirties and the following decade in America is far from accurate. He postulates a "group" at Columbia of "in" people whom Merton wanted to, and did, join. But there was no such group (it sounds like some kind of fraternity in Mott, and if it had existed it would have included thirty or forty people, not eight or ten). Minor errors proliferate in Mott's text, from misnaming night spots to misinterpretation of Merton's thoughts, acts, and motivations. Shadowing all that Merton did or thought was the burden of the woman and child left at Cambridge. Merton, now a sincerely practicing Catholic, was worried about his responsibilities, and above all, about his "sinfulness." (If we only had some better insight into his mind!) Most but not all of Merton's journals and letters from this period were destroyed when he joined the Trappists. However, some fragments of the journals (later published as *The Secular Journals of Thomas Merton*) have survived, along with one early novel and parts of others. In these works we find not only some slight clues to his inner turmoil, but, surprisingly, to an inner spiritual life of great significance. A particularly striking passage is that recorded during an Easter trip to Cuba in 1940. In a simple parish church in Havana, he wrote that "Something went off inside me like a thunderclap and without saying anything or apprehending anything extraordinary through any of my senses. . . ." He had a sense of the presence of "God in all His Essence . . . God in Himself. . . . ." The experience, he wrote, "struck me like a thunderbolt and

went through me like a flash of lightning and seemed to lift me clean up off the earth."

Merton was soon led to seek the formal religious life. An attempt at entering the Franciscans failed. When they turned him down at the final interview, he went into a nearby church to pray and collapsed into tears, one of the few occasions of such extreme emotion. Unless the Franciscans open their confidential files, we are unlikely to know the reason for the rejection except by surmise, that the woman and the child were impediments.

However, there is other, fairly straightforward confirmation for the rejection from Merton himself. In a letter of November 10, 1941 to Baroness Catherine de Hueck Doherty, the founder of the famous Friendship House in Harlem, where Merton then was seriously thinking of working, he put forward his doubts about his qualifications, stressing above all "an impediment." "I got into some trouble once which I don't particularly want to tell anybody about," he wrote (the letter is quoted in Furlong



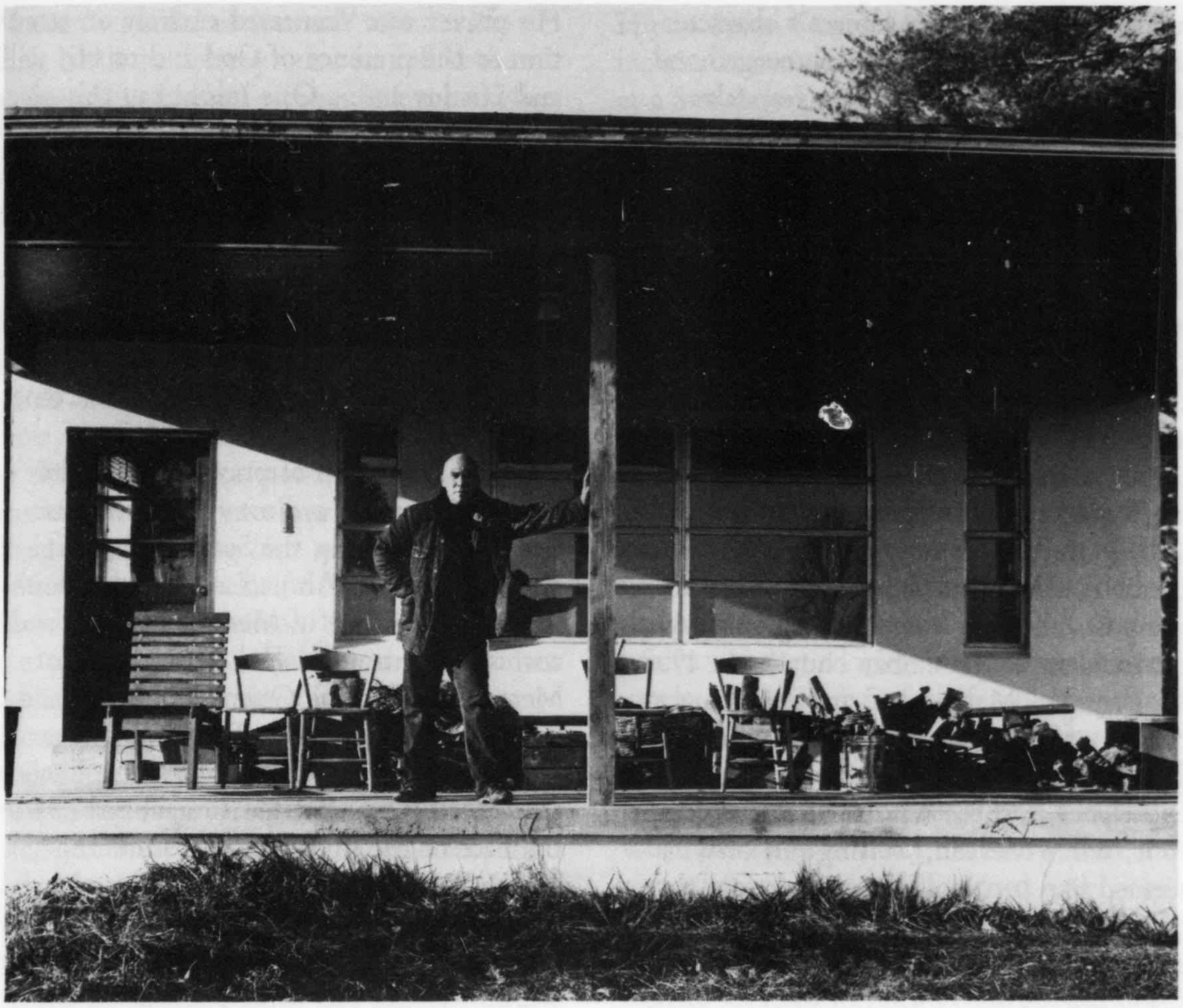


but not in Mott), though he did offer to tell the Baroness in private. It was trouble "enough to be an impediment to my becoming a priest." Significantly, "It is something that demands a whole life of penance and absolute self-sacrifice, so that if I thought the Trappists would take me I think I would want to go to them." It was not in fact an entertaining thought: "But do I have to do penance?" he asked.

When he approached the Trappists of Our Lady of Gethsemani at Bardstown, Kentucky, shortly after that, there were no problems with impediments. The Trappists accepted him and on December 10, 1941, three days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he entered as a postulant seeking silence and solitude in the privacy of a very penitential life of prayer and meditation. So far as anyone knew that was the end of Thomas Merton.

The Trappists were then a primitive—that word must be emphasized—monastic order that had altered little since the early Middle Ages except to be made more rigorous. The monks changed their robes twice a year; work clothes were washed once a month, and a monk had to have permission to take a bath. The monastery was not heated. Silence was imposed—conversation was carried on by sign language. The diet was strictly vegetarian—homemade cheese, dark bread, and vegetables, and was very sparse. Long fasts were frequent. Letters to and from the monks were permitted only rarely, and were censored or even withheld. Flu in the winter regularly devastated the community. Gethsemani was known as the strictest of all the Trappists' houses.

And the solitude and the silence? In a way they were a joke. This was a communal life, the monks were huddled together like cattle, and the monastery seemed to function in lock step. Manual labor with primitive tools and canonical prayer five times a day were the rule; the system had once worked very well, especially for simple medieval French peasant boys of a religious bent. But Merton was an educated, modern, well-traveled intellectual of not very rugged physique, and though he tried to submerge himself in Trappist life and atone for his sins and the sins of others, he was soon chafing against what he had embraced so willingly at first. We find in Mott and Furlong reasonable treatments of this period. Merton's mind began to be flooded with unreligious thoughts—advertising slogans, ideas for movies, novels, cartoons. The abbot, Frederic Dunne, had been a printer and bookbinder in secular life, and to him we must credit the sensitivity for understanding that Merton was a most unusual monk, and a most unusual individual. Instead of quashing Merton's unavoidable literary enthusiasms, Dunne encouraged him to write. Soon Merton was publishing religious poetry with the abbot's consent. Then in 1948 came the famous autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which became a best seller. Dunne died the same year and the new abbot, James Fox, a graduate of Harvard Business School, turned the monastery about, replacing the old medieval ways with modern techniques. The work was mechanized—no more plowhorses in the fields—the cheese and bread were turned into profitable businesses but now machine-made. And what of Merton? There then began a twenty year struggle between two men, an abbot who saw his own often inflexible ideas as "God's will" for the younger monk, and a Merton who sought to accept often arbitrary decisions as being painfully necessary under the strict vows he had taken on entering Gethsemani. Fox has his supporters—no doubt Merton was not an easy monk to cope with—but in the long run one favors Merton. With the success of *The Seven Storey Mountain* Merton was catapulted into world fame. Whatever troubles, anxieties, worries, and problems, along with his early guilt over the woman and his son, he had experienced were now exacerbated under Abbot James. Merton had already considered leaving the Trappists—the Carthusians were his favored alternative, just as strict but offering the silence and solitude he had expected from the Cistercians. He was constantly torn between his vows of stability and his need for a more congenial home. Abbot James, despite the problems, allowed and even en-



couraged Merton to continue his writing and his studies, now ranging far in a multitude of subjects, though at one point he thought Merton was seriously deranged and tried to have him put under the care of a psychiatrist. During this period, the fifties and sixties, Merton, in the face of numerous handicaps, among them a heavy work load (he was Master of Scholastics and Master of Novices), poor health (some of it of obvious psychosomatic origins), censorship, struggles with authority that went as far as the Vatican, and inadequate time for writing, still produced a wide variety of articles and books that are amazing in their extent, complexity, authority, and scholarship. After his ordination as a priest in 1949, he had renewed his earlier interest in oriental religions (for a period he had been quite condemnatory of "pagan" beliefs), now reading the texts and corresponding with Hindu and Buddhist, and later Sufi, masters, producing up to the time of his death an impressive number of short but cogent and valuable works, primarily on Zen, without compromising his very deep and sincere commitment to Christianity. In the sixties came the famous involvement in the issues of war and peace, expressed specifically by his outrage over the war in Vietnam. Often his writings on war and peace, and on social issues, were delayed or even forbidden by various censors (the Vatican again!) on the grounds that it was "inappropriate" for a cloistered monk to discuss these questions.

Nuclear war, Vietnam, peace movements, race and poverty, arguments with the abbot, the effort to get a hermitage and live as a recluse, and especially the long whispered-about relationship with the young woman so dear to the publisher's advertising department, are tangible, "easy" subjects for a biographer to cope with. But the truly sensitive and perceptive biographer finds and delves into the other,

underlying strata of a subject's character and life, the areas that lie submerged and hidden, unstirred in some secret, calm ocean of the soul.

Merton's biographers have failed to explore the mysterious depths of their subject. Mott and Furlong inadvertently offer clues to Merton's other sides, but there is no probing, no exploration or speculation. One of the most important questions is that of Merton's "mysticism." He has often been referred to as a "mystic" but there the matter ends. (One of his friends has remarked that "Merton is a mystical iceberg and we see only the tip.") The theme is left untouched though there are signposts all along the way, beginning with the incident in the Cuban church. In 1958, for example, Merton had an interesting exchange of letters with Aldous Huxley, who favored the use of drugs to lead to mystical experience in those who were already open to it, while Merton, writing out of what seemed like personal knowledge, said that "a fully mystical experience has in its very essence some note of a direct spiritual *contact of two liberties*, a kind of flash or spark which ignites an intuition of all that has been said above [in the beginning of the letter], *plus* something much more which I can only describe as 'personal,' in which God is known not as an 'object' or as 'in up there' or 'Him in everything' but as—the Biblical expression—I AM, or simply AM. . . . It is a presence of a Person and *depends on the liberty of that Person*. . . ." He also spoke of "an experience of 'oneness' within oneself . . . a flash of awareness of the transcendent Reality that is within all that is real. . . ." A few years later (in *The New Man*, 1961) he spoke of "the clear inebriation of mysticism," a tantalizing statement that should have been followed up by a responsible biographer. But there is much more, and within reach if the biographer so willed. Almost by accident Mott drops into his narrative of Merton's day-by-day life a letter written to an Algerian Sufi, Aziz Shaykh Abdul, in which he takes the rare step of talking about his own spiritual practices ("I do not ordinarily write about such things," he remarked). His prayer was "centered entirely on attention to the presence of God and to His will and His love. . . . One might say this gives my meditation the character described by the Prophet [Muhammad] as 'being before God as if you saw Him'. . . . My prayer tends very much to what you [the Sufis] call *fana*." Merton is not "thinking about" anything, but his prayer is "a direct seeking of the Face of the Invisible. Which cannot be found unless we become lost in Him who is invisible."

Such a method of prayer and meditation is unusual in ordinary monastic practice but not among the Sufis. The great Algerian master, Ahmad al-'Alawi, whose namesake was one of Merton's friends and correspondents, preached especially what Merton sought, the Oneness of being and meditation on the Holy Face, a doctrine found often in the Qur'an. It seems likely that Merton was by that time absorbed in the Face of the Invisible—encountering God in a most intense, all-encompassing form.

There were also other Sufis with whom Merton had some connection either in person or by letter, Algerians, who recognized in him a soul "on the verge of some important spiritual union." Sidi Abdeslam, who counseled Merton that "What is best is what is not said [about spiritual matters]," predicted that Abbot James would either die or retire in 1968 and that Merton would be able to travel. The younger Ahmad al-'Alawi offered Merton a refuge in Algeria—"It seems I have a living place in a living and secret tradition," noted Merton. (The term "secret" is an interesting qualification, for by now Merton seems to have entered a kind of "gnostic" involvement.)

With these clues before him the biographer should have ransacked the journals and letters for further insights. But it was not only Sufism that drew Merton. His interest in Zen was long known, but the scholars and biographers have treated the matter with caution if not disdain. We would like some kind of analysis in Mott of Merton's Zen, which seems in retrospect an effort to "get the self out of the Self."

Merton's published journals reveal a lifelong battle to destroy what he called the "phony" in himself—the monk who wore "golf trousers under his cowl." His Zen writings indicate a steady stripping down of the layers of self.

James Fox retired as abbot early in 1968. The new abbot, Flavian Burns, had been a novice under Merton; he now brought radical changes at Gethsemani, and an air of freedom and openness. The monastery was "modernized" in the best sense of the word. It was now possible for Merton to attend a conference of monks in Bangkok, allowing him an excuse by which he could seek out the roots of Buddhism at its sources. His first important meeting was early in November, when he had three discussions with the Dalai Lama at Dharamsala in northern India about meditation and mystical ecstasy (one of Merton's irreverent friends said Merton went to confession to the Tibetan leader). Like the Algerians, the Tibetans recognized Merton as someone in an advanced spiritual state, calling him a "ranjung Sangay," a natural Buddha. One of the Tibetans told Merton that he was "*on the edge* of great realization." In isolation later in the mountains outside of Darjeeling, again among Tibetans, Merton seems to have had some kind of mystical encounter, details unknown. His journals record strange dreams at this time, one of himself returning to Gethsemani dressed as a Tibetan, "a kind of Zen monk and Gelugpa [Yellow Hat, a major sect] together." In another dream, this about the great Himalayan peak Kanchenjunga, a voice told him, "There is another side to the mountain," meaning (he thought) that he should see the world from the Tibetan point of view. A young Australian who met Merton shortly after that remarked that "He had that 'washed' face only those people usually have who have just been through an L.S.D. experience of some major mystic dimension. . . . he [had] that clearer than clean, serenely open, quite halo-like face that I only saw on people after a deeply moving psychedelic experience. . . . " In south India a visit to the great shrine of Mahablipuram, a kind of Hindu Seven Storey Mountain, brought an interior experience that was vaguely hinted at a few days later in his journal, after he had visited the Buddhist shrine at Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka. Here he had an encounter that he described in terms quite reminiscent of those in which he had written of the church in Havana, almost three decades earlier. He approached the Buddhas "barefoot and undisturbed, my feet in wet grass, wet sand," he wrote. "Then the silence of the extraordinary faces. The great smiles. Huge and yet subtle. Filled with every possibility, questioning nothing, knowing everything, rejecting nothing. . . . Looking at these figures I was suddenly, almost forcibly, jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things, and an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves, became evident and obvious. . . . I know and have seen what I was obscurely looking for. I don't know what else remains but I have now seen and pierced through the surface and have gotten beyond the shadow and the disguise."

A few days later he was dead, after having addressed a conference of religious at Bangkok. His death is still a mystery, perhaps more so today. There had been many rumors at the time—suicide, assassination (Merton's involvement in the anti-Vietnam movement had brought him many enemies), or, as most preferred to believe, an accident after touching a faulty electric fan with wet hands. Mott is ambiguous. He eliminates suicide; however "Murder cannot easily be ruled out," though he concludes it is not a plausible explanation. That leaves a "heart attack" or an accident, and no one answer seems satisfactory. Thus we are left with still another mystery in the life of this very popular but ever mysterious human being who will always puzzle us. ■

Edward Rice is the author of The Man in the Sycamore Tree: The Good Times and Hard Life of Thomas Merton *(Doubleday, 1970), to be reissued in a revised edition in 1985 by Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.*

Effective Knowledge

PAUL JORDAN-SMITH

Multiple States of Being
By René Guénon. Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1984.
Pp. 140. $13.95. Paper $9.95.

Since Descartes and more sharply since the rise of utilitarianism, Western philosophy has ceased to pursue metaphysical thought, relying instead on sciences dominated by quantitative methods for a description of reality. This state of affairs is what René Guénon has called, in perhaps his best-known work, "the reign of quantity." Without attempting to recapitulate what Guénon says in his book by that title, it suffices simply to point to the schism that occurred in sacred sciences during the Renaissance, the emergence of theology, philosophy, and science as distinct, increasingly divergent, and fragmented disciplines, and the diminution of each in significance and relevance to the human condition. It is as if a great river, arising from the snows of Helicon, and increased along its course by converging tributaries, were at some cataclysmic point to break up into a thousand trivial streams, and each stream into myriad rivulets, now polluted and incapable of irrigating the meanest garden plot.

Above the cataclysm, the lands lie fallow and undercultivated, scarcely inhabited, and virtually inaccessible to the populace below. It is no wonder that Westerners are regarded as spiritual starvelings.

It is to just this poverty of Western thought that Guénon addressed his work. Difficult though his style as well as the content of his books may be, they bear reading and re-reading by whomever would seek to develop the process of mentation, especially with regard to an understanding of the widening gap between modern and traditional thought. That Guénon couched his description of this gulf in terms of East and West, taken together with the indisputable fact of the not-so-gradual assimilation of Western culture by various Eastern peoples, may lead some to consider his observations dated and inapplicable. Guénon was not speaking of the geographical East as such, nor do historical or sociological considerations have any bearing on the fundamental distinction which he elaborates. He speaks rather of the spiritual chasm that separates two modes of thought. One of these modes, which has dominated Western thought, especially since Descartes, can be characterized as philosophical (though perhaps not in the same manner as one would characterize the work of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and the early Scholastics as philosophical). The other mode, which can be called metaphysical, was once central to Western thought, but has not occupied a significant place in Western philosophy since Kant. In the East, a broad, all-inclusive metaphysic characterizes virtually every teaching. A metaphysic is not simply one of many theories which seek to encompass the Whole, as it is taken in the West. It is Guénon's view that there can only be one metaphysic, namely, that of truth. Any doctrine not compatible with truth cannot be included in a metaphysic. It is for this reason that Eastern teachings find themselves mutually compatible, a situation which frankly baffles the Occidental mind, accustomed as it is to Western religious thought, whose sects repeatedly quarrel over points considered indispensable to doctrine. That such a situation can occur may be taken as evidence of how alienated Western religions have become from the fundamental teachings of their founders.

It is not Guénon's ultimate purpose, however, simply to elaborate the division between traditional thought and the reign of quantity, despite the repetition of this theme in virtually every one of his works. Although he published several other books throughout the period from 1921 to 1932, there is a discernible series of related works, beginning with *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrine* (1921), followed (both in time and logically) by *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta* (1925), *The Symbolism of the Cross* (1931), and culminating in the present work, first published in French in 1932. The titles mentioned constitute as it were a course of study, not so much of Eastern teachings (despite his reliance on Hindu doctrine, especially the Vedanta) as of metaphysical thought itself. Through the traditional method of asking

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that the student submit the processes under consideration (in this instance, mentation) entirely to the guidance of the teacher (that is, rejecting, so far as possible, all extraneous thoughts that might arise either spontaneously or by association—what might be described as "holding one's mental breath") he takes the reader through the stages of theoretical understanding which, as he explicitly states in the present work, "constitutes an indispensable preparation for the acquisition of that effective knowledge by which, and by which alone, the realization of the total being comes to pass." He is at pains to explain that it is not theoretical knowledge alone which can bring about such a realization, but only a true and immediate knowledge, i.e., one that is not mediated by anything, but is constituted rather by a direct reciprocity of relationship between the knower and the known.

In the first two works of the series, Guénon concentrated on Hindu doctrine and the Vedanta not from any wish to convince or convert the reader to those teachings, but from the need to elaborate the principles of esoterism and metaphysics, using Hindu doctrine as both paradigm and exemplar. With his work on the symbolism of the cross, a new element is introduced in the form of developing a rigorous approach to understanding a universal symbol. The intellectual impartiality of this approach, which avoids aligning itself with any specific doctrine (including the Christian) has probably done much to incur the charges of excessive intellectuality. This is perhaps because Western culture considers Christianity to have assimilated to itself virtually every conceivable aspect of cross-symbolism. As Guénon demonstrates (to anyone familiar with Christian symbolism) the cross as a symbol is universal, both in a historical as well as a metaphysical sense.

With the present work, Guénon embarks on yet another method, one even more demanding than all his previous works. Staying within a very tight terminological framework, he guides the reader through a progression of ideas, beginning with that of "possibilities," or elaborations of universal Possibility within the scope of a given world-order. Metaphysical concepts such as Being and Non-Being, the Infinite, the Whole, Existence, etc., are then each developed within a carefully limited domain which refrains from all specificity, whether in the realms of the sacred or profane. The first five chapters are so closely confined to the purely theoretical as to bear repeated reading in order to properly assimilate the thread of ideas running through them. One emerges from this section, finally, with an understanding of the concepts of non-quantitative multiplicity, simultaneity (as opposed to a temporality or lineality), and manifestation characterized by transitoriness, and therefore non-manifested possibilities as the only legitimate sphere of ideas from which one can draw a definition of any particular being.

From this point on, the discussion broadens and becomes markedly easier to follow—but only, one must add, if the reader has submitted to the intense concen-

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tration which is expected in the first five chapters. Beginning with a discussion of the dream state as a universally experienced particular example of multiple states of being, Guénon shows how it is precisely because of the simultaneity of multiple states that the realization of total being is possible.

This idea is explicitly developed in the chapter "The Realization of the Being through Knowledge." It bears repeating that the knowledge of which he speaks is immediate and direct, an "assimilation of the object by the subject." Mediate knowledge has only a symbolic value, and theoretical knowledge, while a necessary preparation for immediate knowledge, cannot lead to the realization of which he speaks:

> We must insist particularly, whenever occasion arises, upon this realization of the being through knowledge, because it is altogether foreign to modern Western conceptions, which refuse to go beyond theoretical knowledge, or more exactly a small part of it, and which artificially oppose "knowledge" and "being" as if they were not the two inseparable sides of one and the same reality. There can be no true metaphysics for anyone who does not really understand that the being is realized through knowledge, and can be realized only in that fashion.

A subsequent chapter on "Necessity and Contingence" raises the classical question of "sufficient reason" underlying all manifested being. Guénon is careful to stipulate that the relationship between manifestation and its necessitating principle is not reciprocal. As far as contingence is concerned,

> ...that is contingent which does not contain in itself its sufficient reason. Thus one can see that every contingent thing is nonetheless necessary, in the sense that it is necessitated by its sufficient reason—since, in order to exist, it must have one.

This leads to a discussion of destiny, which has often been confused in Western thought with determinism. In Guénon's view, determinism is "another of those questions, so numerous in modern Western philosophy, which only exist because they are wrongly put." Consideration of this confusion leads to the final chapter, "The Metaphysical Idea of Freedom." Here, Guénon points out that "since the unity of Being is the principle of freedom...a being will be free to the degree to which it participates in this unity. In other words, it will be the more free as it has more unity in itself, or as it is more 'one.' " For individual beings there is but relative freedom, since absolute freedom can be a characteristic only of the being who is entirely "liberated from the conditions of manifested existence." Guénon indicates that such a state is not at all beyond the realm of human possibility; indeed, it is this state which he regards as the ultimate destiny of human existence. Because this state can be realized, and moreover because it is just this state which constitutes the "principial origin and ...final destiny" of the human being, it may be taken as that which in fact

defines us as human. To the extent that we actively undertake the realization of ourselves as human, we are free; that point at which we draw the limit of our pursuit of unity of being, whether in the individual sense or as the product of a social rationale, becomes thereby the limit also of our freedom. Since it is the corporeal state in which we find ourselves, it is from this state that the quest for perfection, in the sense of realizing the total being, must commence; nor can there be any doubt that despite the apparently overwhelming obstacles confronting us, progress towards "liberation in life" (the *jivan-mukta* of Hindu doctrine) is possible.

It must be said that Guénon did not write for everyone. Indeed, his style, which is informed with Gallic intellectuality and tends to be prolix and dense at the same time, is often so difficult as to become an obstacle, rather than an aid, to a clear understanding. This seems, upon closer inspection, to have been deliberate. Guénon appears not to have been much concerned about how limited his audience might become: in fact, he might have desired an even stricter limitation. A very great demand is placed upon the reader, one of intense intellectual concentration, a disciplining of the mental faculties to pay close attention to the flow of thought, inasmuch as each point made is indispensable to a correct understanding of subsequent ideas.

The difficulty in reading Guénon is due only in part to his style; to a much greater degree it is due to the nature of the material, and his method of treating it. Were these ideas expressed in the language of myth, or in the poetry of such works as the Upanishads, we should probably imagine ourselves as grasping them more easily. This may be due to a trust of sentimental affirmation arising from a "recognition" of the symbols employed. However, this affirmation is not an act of *cognition* in any rigorous sense, and is not the same thing as understanding, though the two are by no means mutually exclusive (indeed, one may say that they are co-necessities, appearing as reciprocal but qualitatively different forms of energy). A real understanding can only come through a knowledge of, as distinct from mere information about, the ideas which the symbols express. In turn, this requires a thorough grounding in metaphysical theory, which as it were prepares the mind to receive an effective knowledge.

It is towards this effective knowledge, and its concomitant realization of the totality of being, that Guénon directs his thoughts and those of the reader, and one must be grateful for the efforts rendered through this and other works. The charge of extreme intellectuality has often been levelled at Guénon (he has been called, among other things, "an eye without a heart"). It is hard to deny the charge, and the somewhat bloodless, and certainly ruthless, exercise of thought must leave many a reader wondering whether the voyage across the ocean of his thought is worth the mental effort he exacts. It is a question well worth the asking, if only because it raises yet another area of investigation. If such a mental rigor is necessary in order to

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prepare the mind for the acquisition of knowledge, what other discipline might not also be applicable to the human state? If the practices of the ascetics come to mind, it is not without reason. Yet bodily privations are not the only form of discipline which may be applied to our corporeality. One is also reminded of those monastic rules by which human feelings were brought into an order more conducive to union with God (or what might also be called the realization of a higher state of being as an aspect of the sacred immanent within the human frame).

If it is only by implication that Guénon refers to these other modes of human self-experiencing, one suspects it is because he is well aware of the dangers inherent in attempting any explication of disciplines and methods of developing specific states of being. Inasmuch as only a direct relationship between master and disciple can ever provide a real basis for communicating such methods, it is a subject best omitted from all discussion, and Guénon gives not the slightest hint of any specific practices or disciplines. Even his discussions of the various *darshanas* in the *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrine* avoids any mention of religious or psychic techniques, concentrating instead on the metaphysical theory underlying each *darshana*. What he attempts throughout his work is a clarification of the real issues underlying search, without in any way limiting the realization of that search to a specific teaching. In the final analysis, however, he maintained that only through traditional teachings are realization, and liberation, truly possible in life. It is the requisite intellectual preparation for a real search which Guénon sees as lacking in the West, and his work was devoted to providing that preparation. Since, in his view, only the intellectual dimension could be safely discussed in writing, one can hardly criticize the care he took to eschew all references to spiritual practice. These could not be intelligently transmitted by writing, and it would be fruitless even to attempt to express the inexpressible. In the words of Wittgenstein, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof must one remain silent."

Paul Jordan-Smith is a freelance writer and storyteller and a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.

BOOK REVIEWS

American Indian Myths and Legends
By Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. Pp. 504. $19.95.

Reviewed by Joseph Bruchac

One might say that there are three types of collections of Native American myths and legends. The first type is that made by the professional ethnologist, who collects and then translates the stories into English. Such collections have sometimes preserved the only existing versions of stories now changed or forgotten and are especially useful when published in a bilingual format. They may also be told so stiffly as to make them neither enjoyable nor an accurate representation of the literary quality of the original material. In some cases, too, because they wished to protect sacred material or did not trust the ethnologist, "informants" have deliberately told inaccurate, incomplete, or even fabricated stories.

The second type has been done by writers with little or no training as ethnologists but with an artist's sympathy for the culture and the people. Such retellings (seldom primary translations) are easier to read and often closer to the poetry of the original. However, in order to make a story "work better," people unfamiliar with a culture may be tempted to change things around, not realizing how crucial certain details are. (In a non-Indian's retelling of the story of Gluskabi I found reference to his *three* dogs, one black, one brown, and one yellow. But Gluskabi had two dogs, which were wolves. One was black and one was white because they were also Day and Night.) Further, there are a number of "legends" (usually having to do with "Indian Princesses") which have been composed entirely out of the imaginations of such literary interpreters, only inserting a convenient Indian name here and there to make things sound authentic.

The third type, which I find most interesting, is the collection of stories from a particular native culture written down by a literate person from that culture itself—not just "as told to." One of my favorites of this type is *Tales of the Iroquois*, by Tenanetorens. A discussion of such collections, which in recent years has included such tribal collaborations as the Nez Perce's *Nu Mee Poom Tit Wah Tit* and *The Zunis Self-Portrayals*, deserves far more space than can be given in this review.

American Indian Myth and Legends is an interesting combination of all three approaches. A collaboration, it brings togeth-

er (to quote from the jacket copy) "a master storyteller" and "an eminent anthropologist." (It is somewhat amusing to me, by the way, that the storyteller should be a European from Vienna and the anthropologist a Pueblo Indian.) Although I like this book, I have some problems with it. Since the publication of *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions,* Richard Erdoes has enjoyed a well-deserved reputation as a popularizer of Sioux traditional ways. That more than one quarter of the 120 stories in the book come from the Western Plains is evidence of his long loyalty to the Lakota. The stories are good, but some barely qualify as myth or legend, especially those which recount the actual deeds of historical figures. Since the body of American Indian myths and legends is so vast—with thousands of stories collected over the past hundred years and many more (more than many think) still existing only in the memories and the spoken words of the people—it is impossible to include all of the most important stories in a book of only 500 pages. Yet that there should be thiry-two stories from the Sioux with only five from the Iroquois, three from the Cherokee, and not even one from the largest group of contemporary Native Americans, the Navajo, is a serious imbalance. I also find it strange that Erdoes makes references to the "wasichus" (the Sioux term for whites) in headnotes to stories from non-Sioux peoples. Since every native people had their own name for the European, why choose one name over all the others?

Further, although the book is ostensibly a collaboration, Ortiz's contribution is not as obvious as that of Erdoes. His presence seems almost an afterthought. The author of the landmark volume *The Tewa World*, Ortiz is justly honored for his ability to express traditional knowledge in a scholarly fashion, especially considering the fact that he has done so about the Pueblo people—who are well-known for their protectiveness and their hostility towards disclosure. I am grateful for those elements of Pueblo life which Ortiz manages to convey in the few stories from the Pueblos included in this volume. I wish there were more of them. I also like the tales which show that legends are alive and growing today—the White Mountain Apache "Coyote Gets Rich off the White Man" and the White River Sioux "Coyote, Iktome and the Rock." (An older version of Coyote and the Rock may be found in Stith Thompson's 1929 *Tales of the American Indian,* entitled "The Offended Rolling Stone.") It is unfortunate, however, that the stories from the part of the American Indian world I am most familiar with—the Eastern Woodlands—seem less alive than those just mentioned. I don't feel as much the presence of an authentic native voice. This is probably because those whom Erdoes and Ortiz have relied upon are (aside from the Tuscarora, J.N.B. Hewitt) non-native writers from the nineteenth century such as Leland and Schoolcraft or (as in their retelling of "Hiawatha the Unifier") "Victorian sources." There are better, *living* versions still existing east of the Mississippi.

Still, this is an enjoyable book. I appreciate the way original sources are credited at the end of each tale and I find the headnotes to the stories helpful. The collection is wide-ranging (despite imbalances and omissions), well-structured, and loving in its treatment. The thematic arrangement, beginning with tales of human creation and

ending with visions of the end of things seems to work well, though the classification of some of the stories is questionable. Most of the tales are well-told and should appeal to a general audience. Those new to Native American traditional stories will find this a good starting point and those of us who have grown up with these traditions will find much that is familiar and some that is new.

Joseph Bruchac is founding editor of The Greenfield Review *and is the author of many books of poetry, fiction, and Native American folktales, including* Ancestry, The Road to Black Mountain, *and* Turkey Brothers and Other Iroquois Folk Stories.

The Life of Milarepa
Translated by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa. Boulder and London: Shambhala Publications, 1984. Pp. xxxii + 220. Paper $8.95.

Reviewed by Janwillem van de Wetering

The life of a sage—the idea is not a novelty, in the Christian tradition alone there must be thousands of Holy Lives in print, and the core of the idea is What We Could Do if Only We Tried. They're Positive-Thinking stuff, Eggers-On.

Sages, as shown in religious literature, are beyond us; the truth will dawn in the end, or, rather, before the end, when we've penetrated into middle age and guilt has been, partly, replaced by cynicism. The holy ones wear loincloths and hide in caves, while they starve, at the best on a diet of honey and nuts. We, ordinary folks, have trouble even with the comforts of life well provided. So the Lives of the Saints are tucked away on higher shelves, where we can't reach them, as we never could, and we indulge in easier literature where we can identify with more realistic images, with heroes that fail, fall, pick themselves up again and shuffle on, on an uncertain path that may lead somewhere, apart from death.

Even so, some of the Saints are not so bad, meaning they are bad, have quirks, a shadow-side, a sense of humor. I read *The Life of Milarepa* many years ago, in the 1927 translation of Evans-Wentz and his Tibetan scholar friend Dawa-Samdup. I didn't want to but a fellow-seeker in Japan pushed the book on me, weakening the pill by assuring me (I'm sure he was wrong) that Evans-Wentz was known for his womanizing and the venerable lama as a hopeless alcoholic. So I tried, and became fascinated, for this Milarepa, indeed, is a most remarkable example of What We All Could Be, if only. Milarepa is listed in our present collective memory as having lived from 1040 to 1123, in Tibet. That's long ago and far away enough to make any checking impossible. Once enlightened the lama could fly, we are told, and did so, frightening the locals, and performed magic, such as multiplication of his body (enabling him to preach in many places at once). We can all fly now and we can all multiply ourselves, in jetplanes and on video cassettes. The feats are hardly impressive. They didn't endear Milarepa to me, when I met him at first. So why did I like

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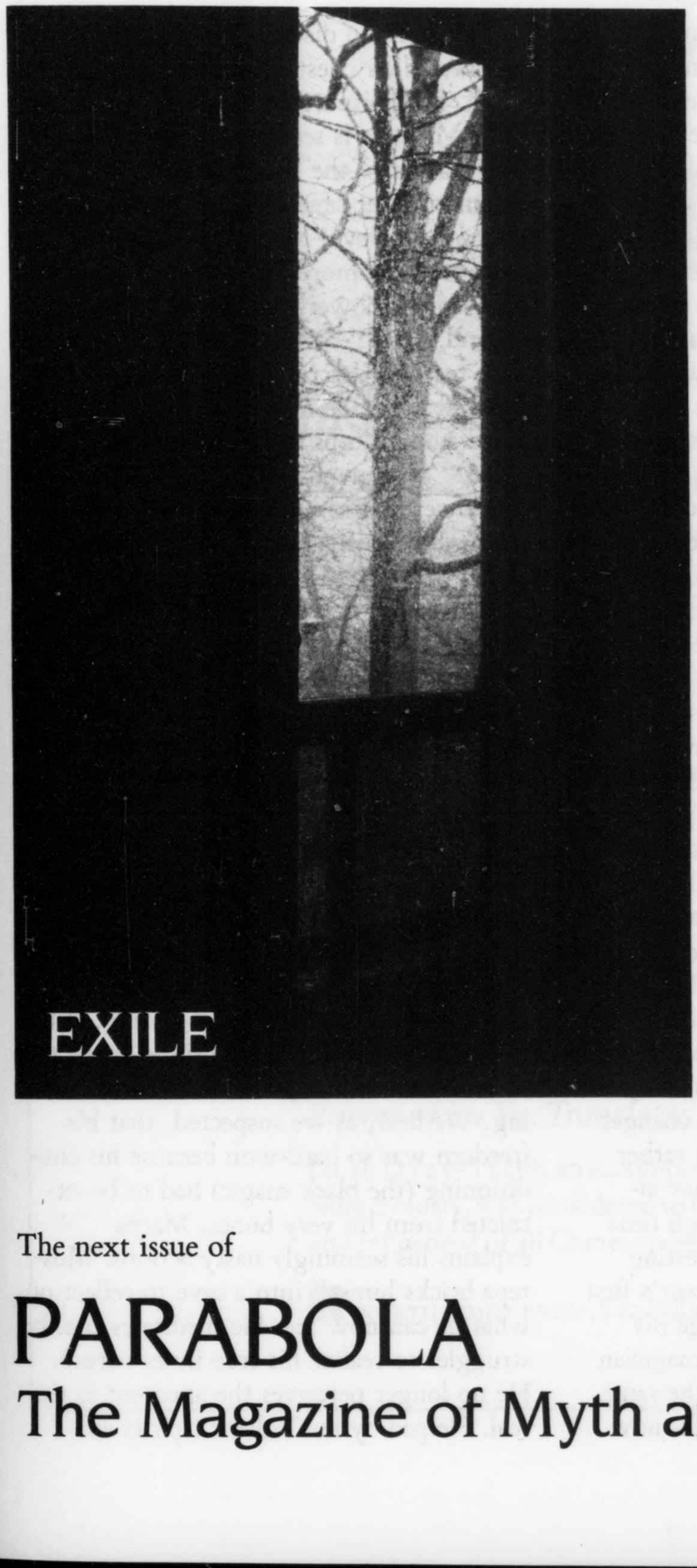

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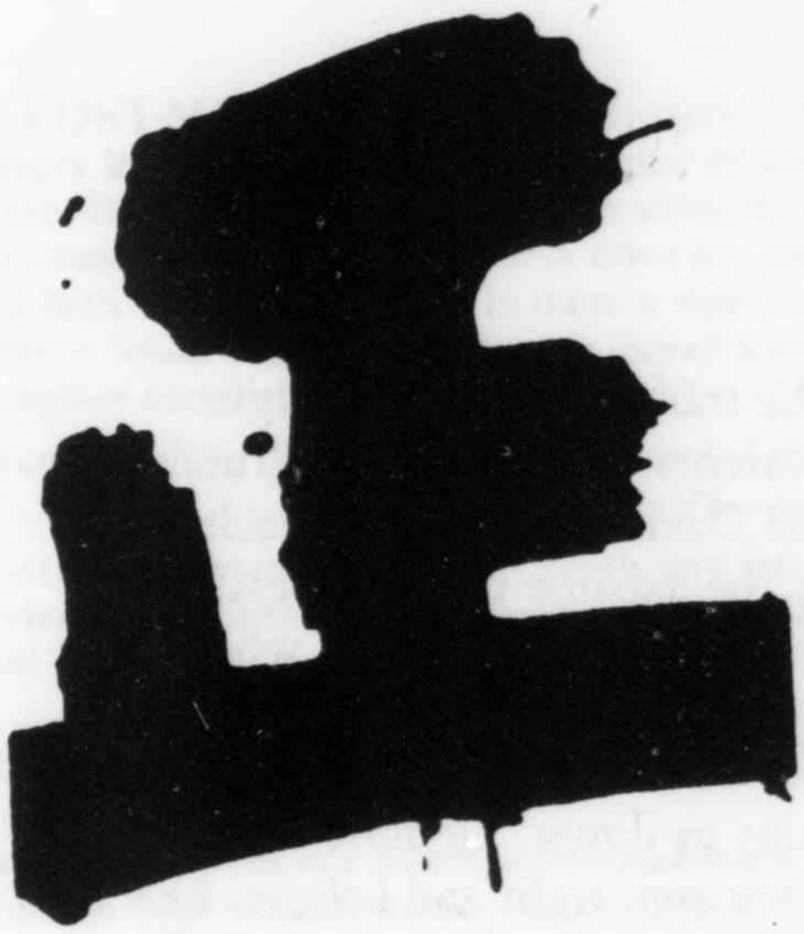
him so much, to the point of having the book bound in leather, and carrying it around with me until (*all composite things are impermanent*, see page 41 of the present edition) the borrowing thief manifested his evil presence? I liked Milarepa because he had an interesting start in life. Here's a young man born from wealthy landowning parents, with turquoise hair and a handsome countenance. Then karma catches up and his father dies; an uncle and aunt take over and reduce the poor boy to a slave. Milarepa's mother and lovely young sister are servants to the wicked uncle, they're beaten and starved. Clearly the proper balance is destroyed. In order to recreate justice the mother grooms her son as a future black magician. Milarepa escapes from the clutches of his uncle and aunt. He becomes the disciple of a necromancer. His energy and intelligence enable him to learn spells in no time at all and he wreaks havoc, killing all the bad people (except the uncle and aunt so that their misery may be prolonged) by timely hailstorms and other "natural" calamities. So all is well?

I doubted that when I was reading the book, in my own remote past, and not only because I had been told that Milarepa would become a saint. I read on and, aha, there's some fresh insight. The necromancer grows old and reflects on the misery he has wrought. Evil begets evil. He changes his course, deciding to help others rather than making things worse than they already are, but he doesn't have much time left. He turns to his student, requesting help. Milarepa is the old witchdoctor's first disciple. Milarepa had better change his ways too, for if not, as the black magician points out cleverly, he will reach the same awful position where the old man is now.

Master and disciple are sorry, they cry and beat their chests, and meditate on lofty truth, Buddhist truth, evoked by compassion. Milarepa is sent off to find the very best teacher of the land, the lama ("la" means transcendent wisdom, "ma" refers to motherly love) Marpa, and now the tale becomes even more interesting, for Milarepa's sadistic powers have to be turned around. How? By troubles. Marpa is a terrible teacher, described as a fat man who likes his beer. He makes Milarepa build towers on hilltops and keeps changing his mind. "Not on that hilltop, Milarepa, take the tower down, build it again on that hill over there." Milarepa slaves as he has never slaved before. He has sores on his back, that become infected. Still the tower is not in the right place. Marpa's wife, a qualified spiritual teacher too, cannot understand her husband's cruelty. The good lady tries to initiate Milarepa in her own way but fails. Other lamas, disciples of Marpa, fare no better and Marpa rants and raves. "Down with the tower, up with the tower." Milarepa threatens to commit suicide. He cries and has tantrums. The master cracks his whip. Eventually the final tower is built (this must be truth for the book shows a photograph of an imposing building, still around apparently if the Chinese haven't razed it) and Milarepa receives the teaching. We hear, as we suspected, that his freedom was so hard-won because his conditioning (the black magic) had to be extracted from his very bones. Marpa explains his seemingly nasty actions. Milarepa bricks himself into a cave to reflect on what he can now see. He meditates, i.e. he struggles to realize his true inner nature. He no longer perceives the apparent as the real. Helped by his Yidams (spirits em-



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bodying the transmission of the highest level of awareness) and his other "tutelary deities" the Dakinis (the lovely maidens who enjoy the expanse of Emptiness) he rises to the "point of nowhere" where the hidden unity of all forms is plain for enlightened eyes to see and the false ego no longer chains us down. He now becomes a teacher in his own right and behaves like a crazy old man who keeps giving from his limitless expanse, he becomes a poet who sings "in a strong melodious voice" and whose music penetrates the dense ignorance of the most stubborn audience, he wears no clothes, he dwells in caves, if he isn't flying about to preach, and he dies because he drinks the poisoned beverage a jealous lama sends him. Milarepa knew the drink to be lethal but what does it matter? He's old now and has to go. Thus ends "the life."

A great tale, even in the biblical language Evans-Wentz applied in his translation from the fifteenth century original in Tibetan, and now available in modern plain American, sounding more acceptable, even if the tale is still tall. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have Milarepas around, or Zen madmen such as the equally legendary adepts Han-shan and Shih-te who did little else except run about, hand in hand, in forest glades where they got drunk on good rice wine yet they never worked or begged? They also liked to sleep with tigers. Complete liberty, the final goal. But how to get there?

The translator of the now available edition, Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, explains the way a little, in his scholarly introduction. He urges us to appreciate "that Emptiness and the ultimate non-substantiality of all relative realities is what opens up their dynamic possibilities in the evolutionary, counter-cosmic stream of spiritual release." He describes himself as one of the last exponents of the Tibetan teacher class and we may be grateful to him for supplying us with a classical example of a wise man who managed, by diligence and self-earned good fortune, to escape from the ever trundling wheel of lower life.

Janwillem van de Wetering has written two books about Zen Buddhism, A Glimpse of Nothingness *and* The Empty Mirror, *as well as a series of well-known mystery novels.*

Seven Nights
By Jorge Luis Borges. Translated by Eliot Weinberger. Introduction by Alastair Reid. New York: New Directions, 1984. Pp. 121. $14.00. Paper $5.95.

Reviewed by Kelly Cherry

I have been lucky enough to hear the Argentinian Borges lecture twice. The first time was in New York City, some seventeen years ago; the second was last October, in Wisconsin. An odyssey of my own seemed compressed into a single day between those two evenings' talks; this was the odd effect his presence had. It was as if he had always existed, in exactly that form—as blind and old as Homer, preceding all literature, and changeless. He might almost be said to be, in himself, the *idea* of literature, the Platonic form of literature

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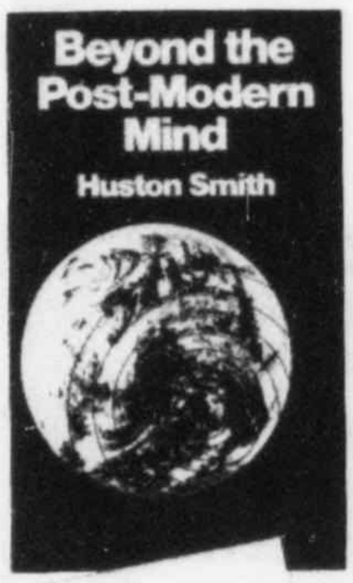

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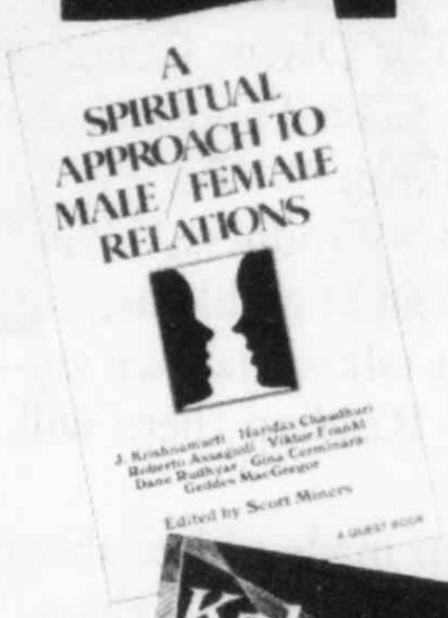

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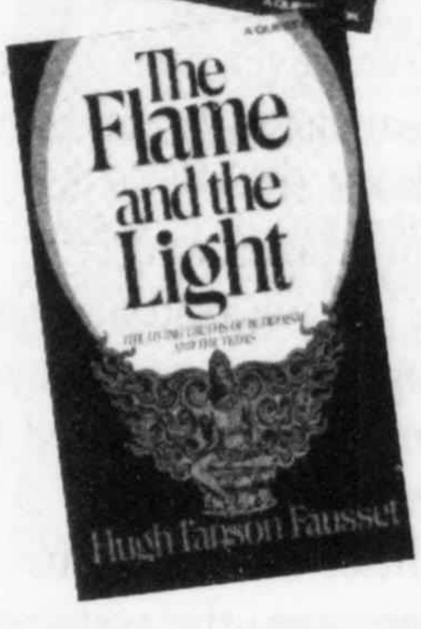

THE FLAME AND THE LIGHT–H. I'anson Fausset

YOUR BOOK BUYER'S BONUS. This quality Quest book free with your order until April 30, 1985. The title is based on the ancient Vedic myths that narrate the ascent of man's soul (the Light) toward spirit (the Flame). Fausset, author of *The Lost Dimension,* interprets the basic truths of Vedanta and Buddhism in an intimate and intuitive way, the result of personal discovery as he moved away from the fundamental dogma of Christianity. Not necessarily a completely systematic approach. Fausset's work is recommended particularly for the reader inclined toward the poetical and metaphorical. Some of the chapters: *Two Birds on One Tree, Doing and Knowing, Beyond the Moods, The Need to be Nothing, Faith's Awakening, Mindfulness and No-Mind.* 232p.

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other writers seek to embody in their various works. I think it is a notion that would amuse him.

He would of course modestly deny it; but in fact, Borges, whose fiction, it is surprising to realize, became known to North Americans only in 1962, has been intensely influential on postmodernist literature everywhere. To borrow an extraordinary—not sly—phrase he applies to another writer, Borges has "a wonderfully inventive memory." With his fictional, Alexandrine libraries, his sinister, willful mirrors and dreams and tigers and allusive jokes, his stories re-created the history of literature for writers the world over. "The work of Jorge Luis Borges," wrote Anthony Kerrigan in the Introduction to the 1962 English translation of *Ficciones*, "is a species of international literary metaphor." I keep my inscribed copy on my shelf; it has made its own odyssey.

Now, in these seven lectures, which were first delivered in Buenos Aires in 1977, the idea of a literary odyssey recurs. Borges quotes from the *Odyssey*: "The gods weave misfortunes for men, so that the generations to come will have something to sing about." The citation crops up in passing; it is a kind of detour—except that, for Borges, the shortest distance between any two points is always what a less *observant* writer might dismiss as a detour. He proceeds by allusion and association, and so, in discussing Dante's *Divine Comedy*, he refers to Homer's *Odyssey* and to the oral nature of poetry, and how poetry, which is song, is also a singing-about, so that the next step is to write that "we are made for art, we are made for memory, we are made for poetry, or perhaps we are made for oblivion. But something remains, and that something is history or poetry, which are not essentially different." This complex of ideas, and the movement among them, unifies these seven lectures. The talks are titled "The Divine Comedy," "Nightmares," "The Thousand and One Nights," "Buddhism," "Poetry," "The Kabbalah," and "Blindness," but the titles should be taken as emblems, not as signs or limits; each talk—shall we say—remembers the world. Reading them will take you everywhere.

Much ado has been made of late about criticism as a creative literature. To think that criticism has ever been anything else reveals, I think, a funny academic gullibility, as if Aristotle, to take an instance, had not been making up the rules of the game as he went along. Borges has always seen—or never forgotten—that what is important about literature is how it makes you feel. "Personally," he notes, "I am a hedonistic reader; I have never read a book merely because it was ancient. I read books for the aesthetic emotions they offer me, and I ignore the commentaries and criticism." For example, "I have read almost all of Croce, and though I am not always in agreement with him, I am enchanted by him. Enchantment, as Stevenson said, is one of the special qualities a writer must have. Without enchantment, the rest is useless."

These lectures are not criticism or commentary, though they are more learned than most of either ever is; rather, they are pure enchantment. They are like that invented memory Borges recounts, where De Quincey imagined that a "magician had put his ear to the ground and had heard the innumerable footsteps of men," Aladdin's among them. The enchantment is a proper-

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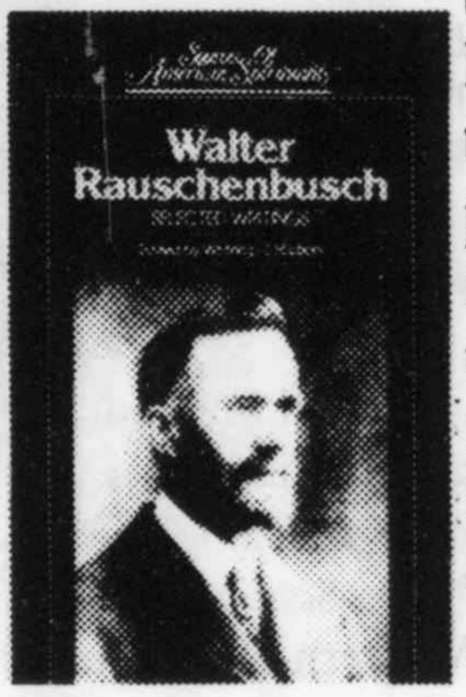

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ty of his astonishing, non-manipulative honesty, a candor so guileless that it is magical; thereby, fiction becomes truth, and nonfiction—even lectures—as beautiful as any story. Because he received as if it were something to sing about the particular misfortune the gods gave him—his blindness ("If a blind man thinks this way, he is saved. Blindness is a gift")—his work bears the hallmark of grace, which is the transformation of whatever is temporal and transient into something that is eternal. Enchantment like this returns us, finally, to the beginning—of our lives, the world, our adventure in creation. "All things go off, leaving us," he writes near the end—except that the right words, like these, bring everything back.

Kelly Cherry is Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She is the author of several books of fiction and poetry, including In the Wink of An Eye *and* The Lost Traveller's Dream *(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).*

Whispers from the Other Shore: A Spiritual Search—East and West
By Ravi Ravindra. Wheaton, Illinois; Madras, India; and London, England: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1984. A Quest Book. Pp. *xvi* + 139. Paper $6.50.

Reviewed by Martha Heyneman

Ravi Ravindra, Professor of Physics and Chairman of the Department of Religion at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has spent half of his life in the Western world and half in his native India. That one sentence contains two of the great dichotomies of our time—between science and religion, between West and East—and makes it evident that their resolution is of more than academic interest to Dr. Ravindra in his own search for wholeness of knowledge and of being. He has wrestled with the apparent conflict between science and religion in earlier writings,* and the fruits of those efforts are set forth with distilled clarity in the final chapter of the present book. His chief concern here, however, is with the divergence between expressions of the spiritual search in the great religions of East and West: Hinduism and Buddhism on the one hand, Judaism and Christianity on the other.

He distinguishes three levels at which it is useful to view religions: the quantitative (which might better have been called

*For example, "Experience and Experiment: A Critique of Modern Scientific Knowing," *Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 55, 1975–76, pp. 655–674; "Western Science and Technology and the Indian Intellectual Tradition," *Manthan*, Sept. 1978; and "Perception in Yoga and Physics," *Re-Vision*, Vol. 3, 1980, pp. 36–42.

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"institutional" or "conventional"), theological-philosophical, and experiential levels. The experiential level is the beginning and the end, of the book as of religions, beginning with the direct experience of the founders, saints, and sages, and ending, if all goes well, with the direct experience of the individual seeker.

As he says in his first chapter, "Central to spiritual life, East or West, is surrendering of the ego." A word of caution might have been inserted at this point, since before the ego can surrender, it must first be formed. We have seen too many disasters in the West, especially since the 1960s, not to insist that this prerequisite be emphasized early on in any discussion of spiritual search. This said, Dr. Ravindra's first chapter, with its wealth of quotations from many traditions, is of great value as a description of our condition and of the transition to an attitude of spiritual receptivity.

He then goes on to describe how a master's life and teachings become codified, formulated, and embodied in institutions which may lose touch altogether with the original aim of arriving at experience of the presence and reality of Spirit. "These forms—philosophies, dogmas, rituals—are what men try to possess, over which men quarrel and kill." According to Dr. Ravindra, "Religion is the most important force in the formation of our cultural filters through which we perceive reality." This is open to question for us in the West, unless materialism can be called a religion. Nevertheless, most of us have grown up surrounded by Judaism and Christianity, whether or not we have been conditioned by them, and have approached Hinduism and Buddhism only from the outside. It is

of great interest to follow Dr. Ravindra in his approach from the opposite direction.

He devotes one chapter to the Indian tradition and one to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and then, in "The Parting of the Ways," attempts to define their differences. This chapter is the least satisfactory, since one often feels he is comparing an experiential understanding of Indian religion with a conventional understanding of the Western religions. It may be that religion is like poetry, and one can never arrive at an essential understanding of a foreign religion, just as one can never hope to arrive at a complete understanding of all the nuances of poetry written in a foreign language. Or it may be that the Indian religions have always stayed close to direct spiritual experience, whereas in the West, as Dr. Ravindra points out, mystics have often been regarded with suspicion by the religious establishment. In attempting to establish that in the East God is regarded as being within, whereas in the West He is outside and above, Dr. Ravindra also keeps coming up against the example of Jesus Christ and his assertion that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you." He comes to the conclusion that Christ is a kind of exception in the Western tradition and "comes through as a combination of an upanishadic mystic sage and an incarnation (*avatara*) of Vishnu who descends for the sake of the world whenever there is need."

Although Dr. Ravindra's attempt to define the differences between the religions of East and West makes the reader say again and again "Yes, but . . . ," the fruitfulness of his intense study is revealed in the last chapter, where he has garnered the best of both traditions to enrich and balance his understanding of the basic

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search.

If I do not hear any "whispers from the other shore" in this book, I do hear the voice of a tenacious and passionate intellect that heretofore has refused to let go of a contradiction until it has resolved it to its own satisfaction. In this last chapter it is talking about the necessity for its own silence and acknowledging that "no amount of verbal trickery can get us off the hook of contradiction on which we squirm and flail." When discursive intellect has reached this point and falls silent, Dr. Ravindra hears the call of the flute from across the river. But if, as he tells us, "nirvana and samsara are one," the other shore must be right here, in silent attention to the small details of everyday life.

The old pond. A frog jumps in. The sound of the water.

Martha Heyneman is a poet and essayist and an editor of A Journal of Our Time.

Birthtimes: A Scientific Investigation of the Secrets of Astrology
By Michel Gauquelin. Translated by Sarah Matthews. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983. Pp. 224. $12.95. Paper $6.95.

Reviewed by Anne Doueihi

The aim of Michel Gauquelin's research into astrology has been, in his own words, "to winnow out truth from error and to separate what might be valid laws from wild ideas." *Birthtimes* gives a general introduction to Gauquelin's studies of astrological effects over thirty-five years, studies whose results seem to corroborate the astrological claim of a cosmic influence at birth.

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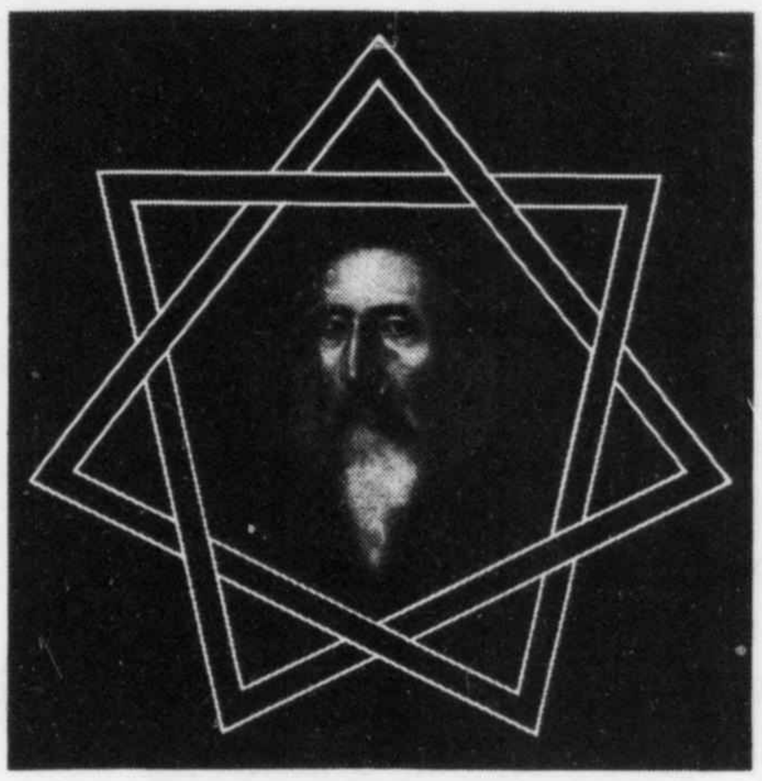

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birthdates of successful athletes and physicians, Gauquelin began his study of planetary effects with the demonstration of a marked correlation between the rise and culmination of Mars and Saturn and professional success in these fields. Outstanding physicians and athletes tended to "choose" to be born just after the rise or culmination of these particular planets. A further step in his research led to the correlation of personality traits with planets that had just risen or culminated. Using the London psychologist H.G. Eysenck's categories of personality, Gauquelin found that individuals having strong extrovert traits tend to be born when Jupiter has just risen or culminated, introverts when Saturn has just risen or culminated, and the "tough-minded" when Mars or Jupiter has risen or culminated. A third major area of Gauquelin's research presented in *Birthtimes* is what he calls "planetary heredity." Through the comparison of planetary positions at the birth of parents and their children, he found that children have a tendency to be born when a planet has just risen or culminated if that same planet was in the same region of the sky at the birth of either of the parents.

While statistical evidence as gathered by Gauquelin may indicate a correlation between planetary positions at birth and professional success, personality traits, and heredity, the nature of that correlation cannot be answered by statistics. Gauquelin addresses the question of *how* the planets can affect us in the later chapters of his book. Critical of the belief prevalent in astrological literature in a cosmic determinism impervious to the intrusion of accidental or external factors (such as, notably, labor-inducing obstetric techniques), Gauquelin also dismisses C.G. Jung's theory of synchronicity as a more elegant formulation of this same determinism. His own view tends toward a theory of causal influence and is based on the contributions of two scientists: the work of Professor Piccardi at the University of Florence on the possible correlation between cosmic phenomena such as sun spots and the behavior of chemical reactions carried out under strict laboratory conditions, and the research of Professor Frank A. Brown at Northwestern University on the hypothetical relation between variations in biological clocks and, among other things, changes in magnetic fields. Gauquelin, having eliminated the possibility of gravitational pull as an explanation for planetary influence, examined the connection between solar flares and sun spots, which affect the earth's magnetic field, and the planetary effects he had observed in his statistical studies. He

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found that during the periods of geomagnetic disturbance following this type of solar activity, the effect of planetary heredity was significantly greater than when there was no such disturbance of the earth's magnetic field.

This leads Gauquelin to suggest that the sun acts as a "motor" and the solar field as a medium of planetary influence. If solar flares and sun spots alter biochemical reactions and affect biological rhythms, the foetus itself could be affected by these same disturbances and its biological clock stimulated to trigger the activity which leads to birth. Planetary influences would affect the rhythm and timing of birth via solar activity and variations in the geomagnetic field. What still remains unformulated in this hypothesis is the manner in which planetary influences, and what kind of influences, are transmitted by solar and geomagnetic alterations. Oddly, there seems to be no correlation between variation in planetary size, mass, or matter and differences in statistically recorded effects; the only difference between planets that corresponds to variations in effect is their color as it appears to the naked eye. The foetus reacts to the same planets as the retina.

While to some extent corroborating the general astrological notion of cosmic influence at birth, Gauquelin's findings tend to contradict specific astrological doctrines. In his research, for instance, only the planets visible to the naked eye—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus—and the Moon are statistically significant. While this result disagrees with modern astrology which considers the outer planets, Neptune, Uranus, and Pluto, to also have an effect on the individual, it agrees with early Hellenistic astrology. The outer planets were of

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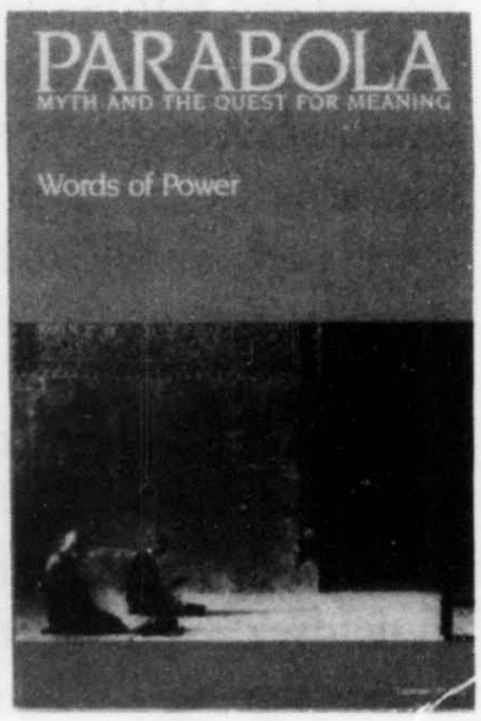

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course unknown at that time; but the astrological importance of the Sun, which was primarily an invention of the Renaissance, was far less emphasized than that of the Moon during the Hellenistic period in Greece. Thus, excepting his findings for the planet Mercury, Gauquelin's research may constitute a revindication of ancient rather than modern astrology.

There are other contradictions of traditional astrology; the significance of the period just after a planet's rise and culmination does not correlate with the emphasis placed by astrologers on the periods just *before* rise and culmination. Furthermore, Gauquelin found discrepancies between astrological symbolism of a particular planet and his own psychological statistics. Jupiter, for instance, had no correlation with "benevolence," nor Saturn with "malevolence," characteristics often cited by astrologers in connection with these planets.

While Gauquelin's skepticism of astrology favors an independent and critical perspective so necessary to scientific research, one might wish that this skepticism were tempered with a more subtle grasp of the extraordinary historical and interpretive complexities of what is so loosely called astrology. Statistics, no matter how scientific, require interpretation, and interpretation that is not sensitive to subtleties can result in inadvertent distortions. For example, Gauquelin's graphs show not only that extrovert personalities tend to be born just after the inferior and superior culmination of Jupiter, but also that Jupiter in the sectors *before* inferior culmination and before superior culmination corresponds markedly to introvert personality types. Gauquelin's conclusion, that Jupiter's effect is limited

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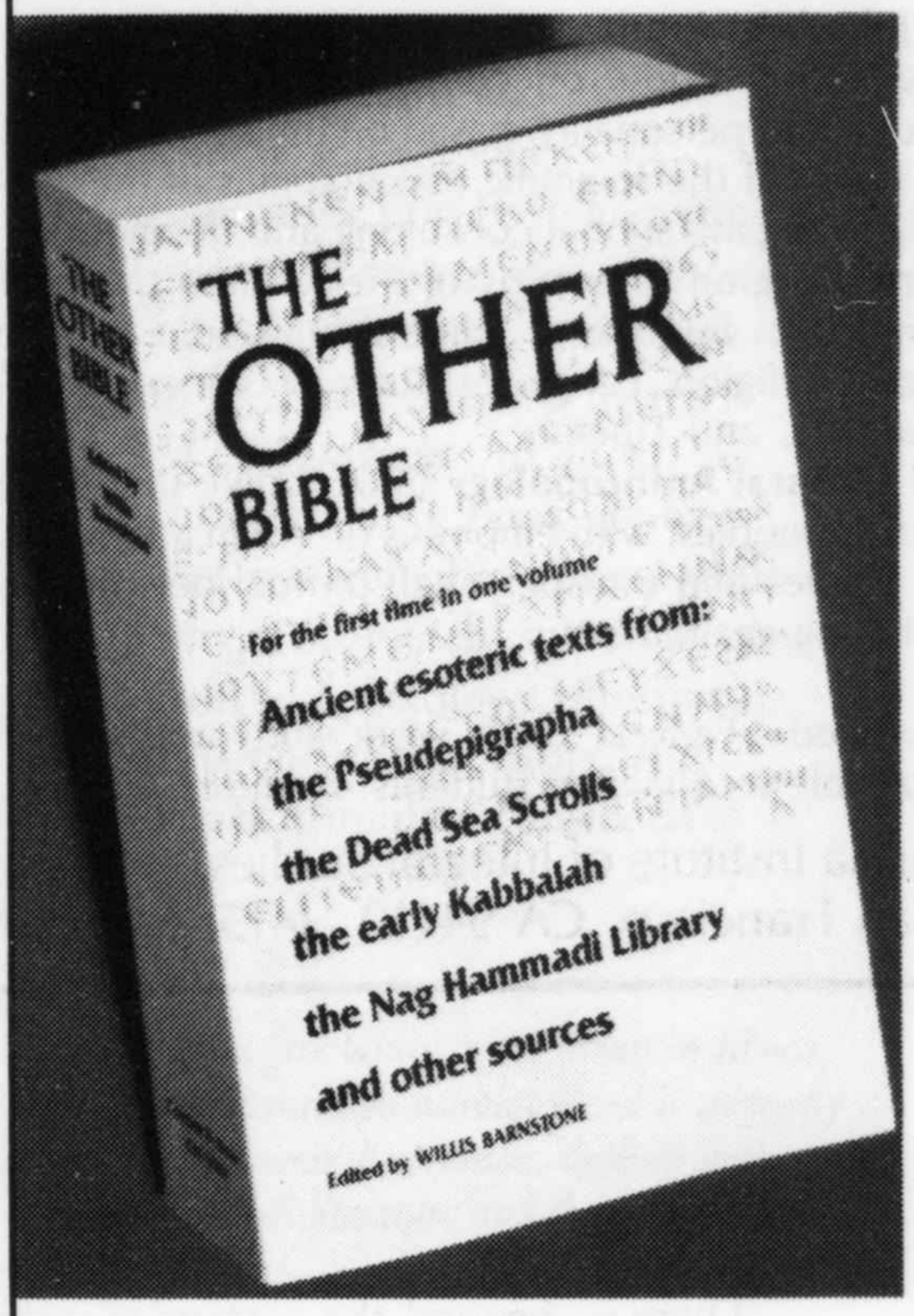

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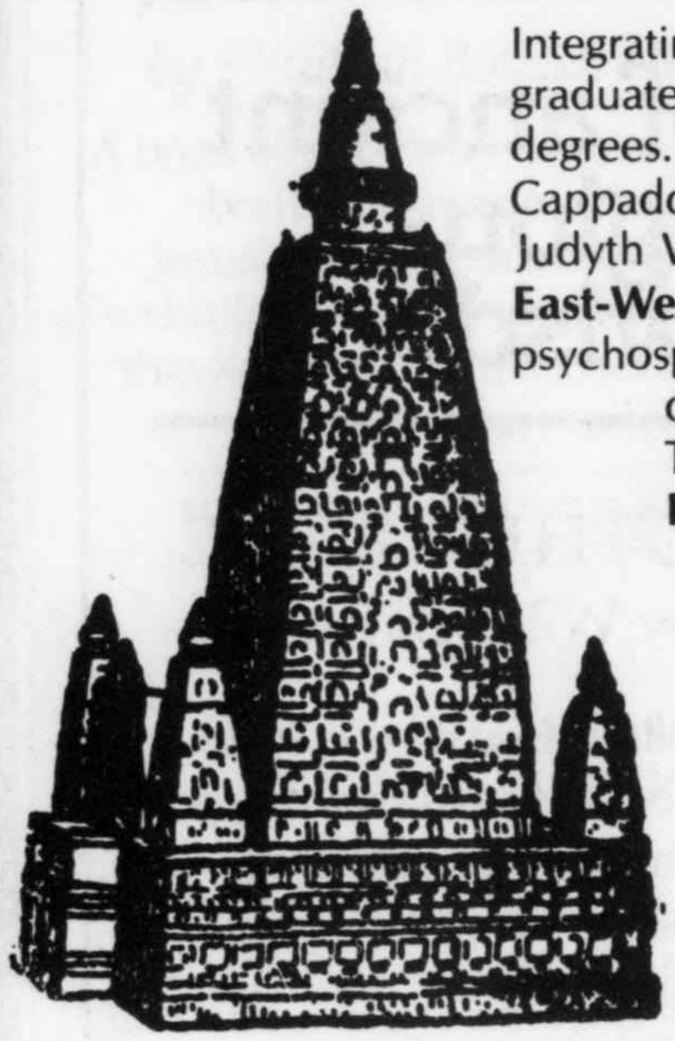

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to the indication of extrovert traits when in the positions just following rise and culmination, is an incomplete reading. Gauquelin's concentration on the planets' positions in the sectors following rise and culmination may be explained by the fact that only these positions are consistent among all the planets measured, but that does not justify ignoring other significant curves where they appear for a single planet. Furthermore, Gauquelin's failure to find significant statistics for the zodiacal signs, for "aspects" between planets, and possibly also for the Sun, may be due to overly simplistic or inappropriate methods of trying to test them. In traditional astrology, zodiacal signs show their influence via the planets (hence the complex system of "rulerships" and "exaltations" of planets in various signs). To be adequate to verify this doctrine, statistical tests would have to take such subtleties into account.

There is, beyond the particular statistical results of Gauquelin's tests, an issue of more general importance that *Birthtimes* addresses, namely the political and ideological investment of science. Gauquelin's findings have awakened such hostility among some groups of scientists that not only was his work for a long time ignored, but independently conducted tests confirming his results have been suppressed. This attitude, based on an *a priori* dismissal of astrology, is, as Carl Sagan has indicated, simply an authoritarian exercise of power. Its motive seems above all to be a blind commitment to the notion of progress which is so vitally threatened by the possibility that ancient Chaldean priests could have been right about a cosmic influence inexplicable to modern science, that the very idea is brushed aside as "absurd." Science, by thus dismissing what it can neither prove nor disprove, reveals an ideological investment

that defeats the very aims and methods of scientific thought and activity.

One might wish that both astrologers and scientists would take a more active interest in Gauquelin's research. *Birthtimes* is an invitation to them, but also to any open-minded lay(wo)man, to do so. A readable and entertaining book about a unique field of research, *Birthtimes*, while it does not perhaps ultimately solve the question of the truth of astrology, shows that the question is not unreasonable, and should no doubt stimulate considerable interest.

Anne Doueihi is a free-lance writer living in Ithaca, New York. She lectures on astrology and is currently at work on her doctoral dissertation, dealing with Hermetic astrological literature and the Platonic Dialogue Phaedrus.

Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth
Edited by Alan Dundes. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984. Pp. 256. $24.50. Paper $9.95.

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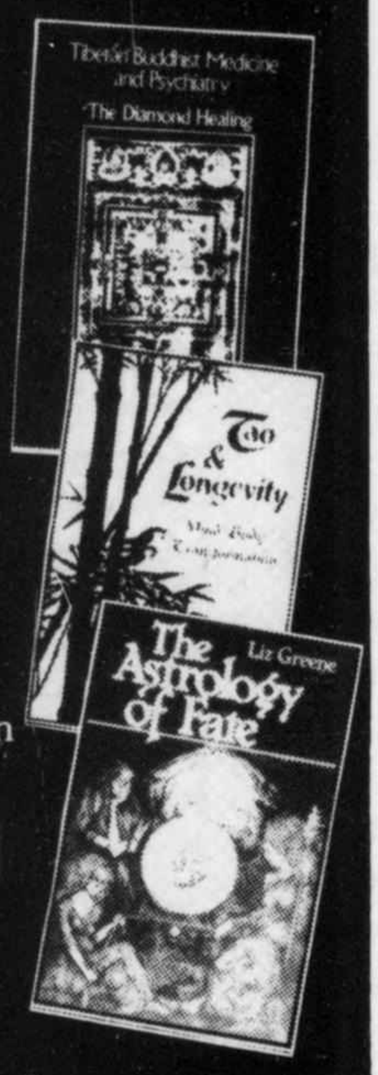

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inquiring mind. In fact, some of the best scholarly minds in the modern era have been convinced that unravelling their nature, meaning, and function would lead to a clearer vision of the nature of humankind. Myths seem to provide important clues about the way human beings organize and conduct their lives.

In any case, the interest in myths is unabated. Painters, poets, novelists, anthropologists, folklorists, and the general reading public continue to delve into these fascinating narratives. Unfortunately for the general reading public and for those academics who are not specialists in mythology, much of the inquiry into the nature, meaning, and function of myth is concealed in small scholarly journals—and often in foreign tongues! Alan Dundes has lifted the veil and set things right by collecting many of these important essays in one place. This is not the first anthology on theories of myth, but it certainly is the most comprehensive and adequate. It contains both classic and recent statements, both well-known and lesser-known scholars. Sir James George Frazer, Claude Levi-Strauss, Carl Gustave Jung and Bronislaw Malinowski make their appearance, as one has every right to expect. But so do William Bascom, K. Numazawa, Ake Hultkrantz and Sandor Erdesz. Not only is the range of scholars representative, but the anthology also makes clear that the interest in, and study of, myth is international and interdisciplinary in scope.

The anthology is superbly arranged. Dundes introduces each selection with a brief and lucid statement which clarifies both the intent and the context of the particular author. The early articles are devoted to the problem of identifying and defining myths, the later ones to interpreting and explaining them. It rapidly becomes clear that folklorists, comparative religionists, psychologists, and anthropologists, while having areas of agreement, also have sharp differences in definition, method, approach, and assumption.

After the excursion into definition, the anthology moves into the thick of it. Frazer's essay on the fall of man unintentionally demonstrates both the glories and the limitations of the comparative method. Pettazoni argues for the truth of myth, Gaster for its relationship to ritual. Eliade emphasizes the role of pattern in myth and its function as sacred history. Hultkrantz demonstrates its complex relationship to other conceptual systems in Shoshoni culture. Rooth tackles the intractable problem of classifying myths and tracking their geographical distribution. Numazawa mines them for a reflection of early forms of social organization. Malinowski denies their symbolic character and argues for their

expression of social organization. Firth and Van Baaren point to their plasticity, and Dardel to their seriousness. Jung relates them to the notion of the collective unconscious, and Dundes to Freudian concepts. Segal demonstrates that there are problems with Campbell's Jungian approach to myth. Levi-Strauss clarifies the sense in which myths can be said to have a transformational structure. Erdesz publishes a stunning interview with a Hungarian storyteller born in 1886 who has developed a very elaborate worldview, partly reflecting Hungarian traditions and partly novel. The anthology is valuable for this selection alone.

The volume concludes in a humorous vein with a parody of theories about myth by showing that George Washington was a mythological and not an historical figure. This lampoon is worth a snicker or two, and comes close to undermining the entire anthology. The book contains suggestions for further reading in the theory of myth. This could have been more comprehensive, for it undercuts the intent of the anthology

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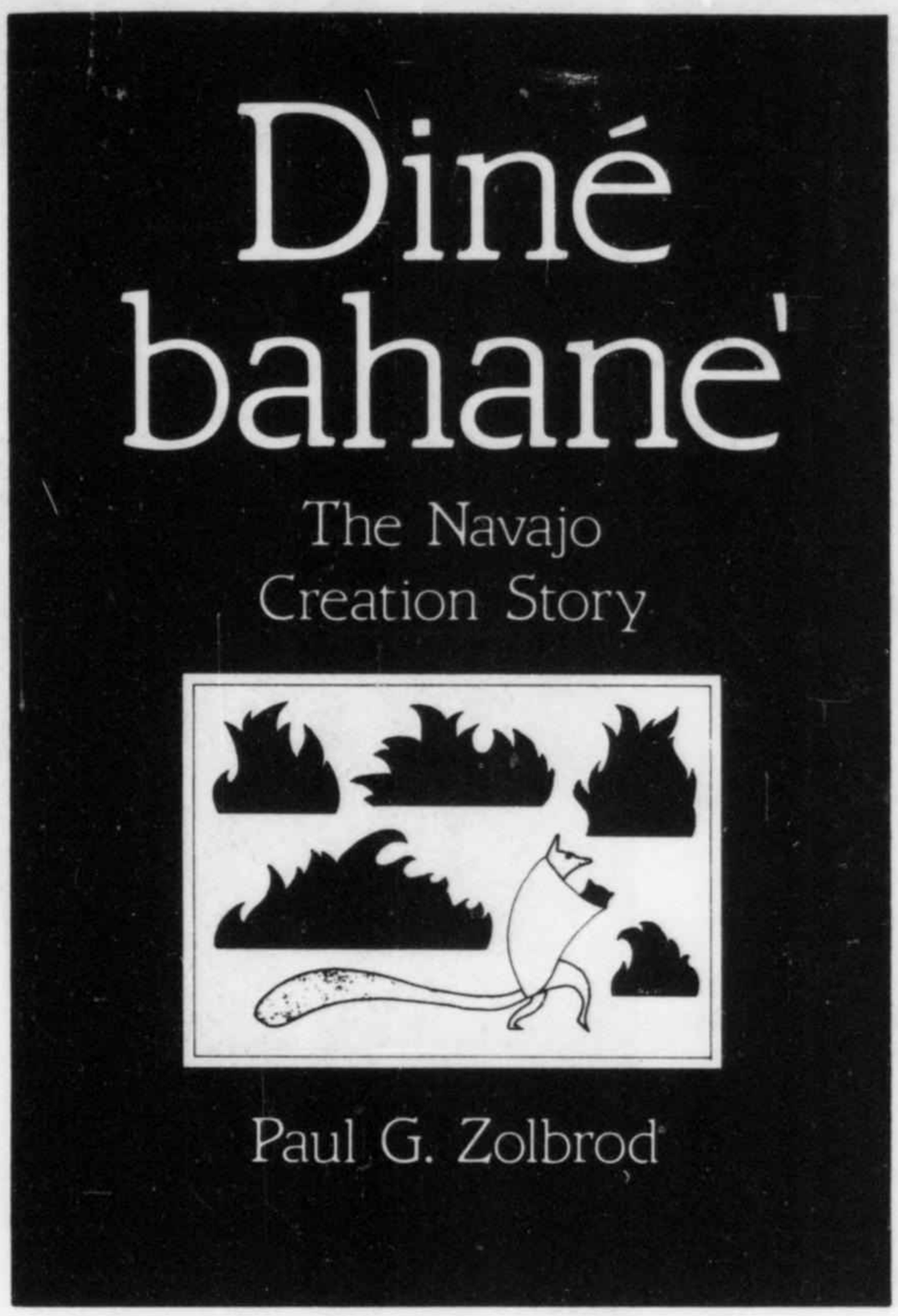
to strike out into partly charted waters. Both the general reading public and non-specialists need to be pointed toward the range of articles and books available to those willing to do a little digging.

To read through such an anthology is an exciting and disquieting experience. The excitement emerges from the experience of being exposed to a great variety of views and approaches to the study of myth. One gets a picture of how scholars in the various disciplines work and how a subject like myth gets them into gear. The disquietude comes from the growing conviction as one reads these essays spanning a long period of time that the human sciences are in trouble. With so many scholars in so many disciplines having a common interest, why do they not converse more with each other? Why do they not listen more? It is almost as if each scholar, in a veritable parody of a creation myth, feels called upon to recreate the entire fabric of inquiry, or to reinvent the wheel. A good dose of the philosophy of science would have gone a long way toward creating a structure of sustained discourse among these scholars hiding in their cubicles. While the line of demarcation between interpretation and explanation is not clear, there is surely some distinction between the two endeavors, and yet many of these scholars confuse the two. And quite explicitly, if these are supposed to be *theories* of myth then at least the more recent scholars ought to reflect some knowledge of the discussion of the nature of theory in their essays.

As we become clearer about what an inquiry into such an important topic is, there is hope that the clearer vision into the nature of humankind will be realized. If this is not done within the context of the human sciences, then the future lies with disciplines such as sociobiology, which are already convinced that the categories provided by the natural sciences in general and the life sciences in particular are more than adequate for both the explanation and interpretation of our traditional heritage. Our inquiries are in danger of preemption. Anyone who doubts this warning ought to read E. O. Wilson's *On Human Nature* and Alexander Rosenberg's *Sociobiology and the Preemption of Social Science*. But these critical comments about the contents of the essays should not detract from the exemplary job that Dundes has done in selecting them. It presents an honest picture of the state of the theoretical study of myth.

E. Thomas Lawson is a Professor of Religion and Head of the Department of Religion at Western Michigan University. Harper & Row has just published his Religions of Africa: Tradition in Transformation.



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Women of Wisdom
By Tsultrim Allione. London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. Pp. 275. Paper $10.95.

Reviewed by Anne C. Klein

According to Great Vehicle or Mahayana Buddhism, anyone can become an enlightened Buddha. Sex and social status are irrelevant. Moreover in Tibet, where Mahayana has been most vigorously maintained into the twentieth century, the pantheon is replete with spectacular female and male Buddhas. Some of the most important female deities featured in ritual and iconography are identified with Tibetan women who became known as religious adepts. Yet, while the literature on Buddhism generally and Tibetan Buddhism particularly grows each year, one could count on the fingers of a single hand works that focus on women religious figures or deal with the social realities and internal perspectives of female practitioners. Tsultrim Allione, an American with a Tibetan-Italian name, addresses herself most engagingly to these issues. She provides an extensive preface and introduction, as well as carefully translated accounts of six Tibetan women whose religious achievements span the eleventh through twentieth centuries.

A one-paragraph initial preface by Chogyam Trungpa praises Allione's work as "not mere feminism." The book is unquestionably not "mere" in any sense; however, as an opener to this particular volume, the comment comes as a shock. It apparently presumes in the reader a narrowly defined concept of feminism. If this is so, the theoretical and substantive compass of the book will certainly expand that notion.

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Allione's own preface and introduction offers a personal as well as philosophical perspective on the material. She admirably handles the challenge of drawing from these biographies (which are often highly mythic in content) instruction and support that can be meaningful for modern women, especially the women on a spiritual quest to whom the work is dedicated. Her special concern is for those who seek to integrate femaleness with spiritual development, rather than for those who use the latter to disengage it from the former. She writes of the emergence, in Tibetan tantra, "of female images which are sexual and spiritual, ecstatic and intelligent, wrathful and peaceful. How refreshing not to have to be chaste and peaceful with downcast eyes, in order to be spiritual." While she is certainly correct in contrasting the joyously ebullient, sensual image of deity with our own more somber images, the unwary reader might assume that the sensuality here is simply the *Cosmopolitan* ethos writ large. Allione could doubtless elucidate further. An explicit distinction between ordinary and spiritual emphasis on sexuality here would be most helpful; this would not only enhance understanding of the Tibetan tradition, it would refine the analysis of possible relationships between the spiritual and physical. Nevertheless, hers is the most creative and meticulous book-length speculation on connections between feminist spirituality and Buddhist materials to date.

Allione's openness regarding her own odyssey, her willingness to speak of trials as well as successes, though in the latter case never self-servingly, is refreshing in its directness. Her affection for the Tibetan tradition does not cloud her critical faculties. On the basis of her own experience and

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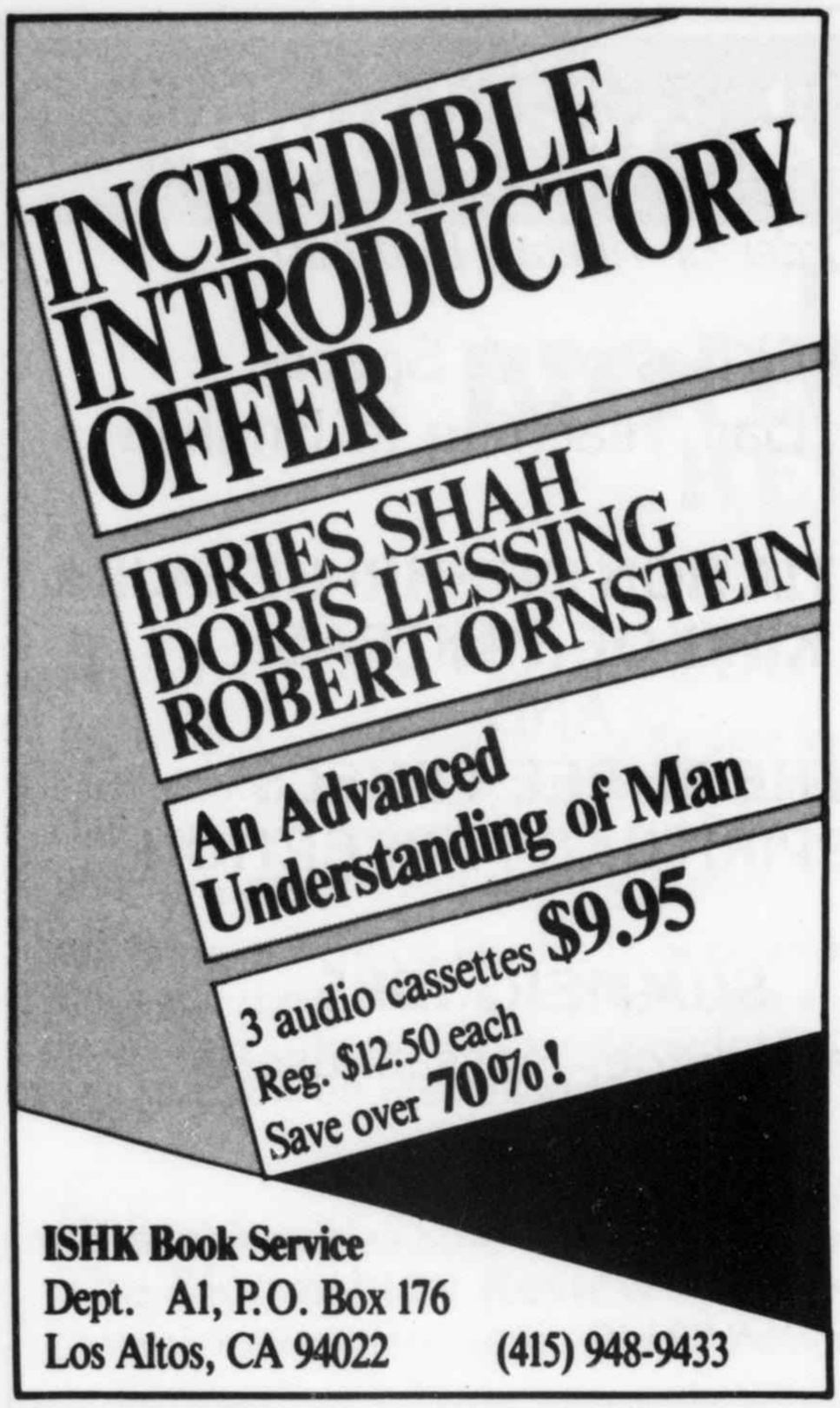
extensive contact with Tibetan Buddhist teachers, she is able to confront the tradition perceptively, raising questions regarding the possible different character of women's enlightenment and the need for a "spiritual path in which [women] do not have to remove themselves from their life rhythms in order to practice." She draws from a wide range of primary Tibetan sources, integrating these with material from modern scholarship on women and religion. This is an important feature that helps to bring home points to those not familiar with Buddhist traditions, for Allione indicates thematic similarities with the work of Carol Christ, Nor Hall, I.B. Horner, Judith Plaskow, Starhawk, and others. The line between her own and traditional Tibetan interpretations is usually but not always clear; for example, her statement that a wrathful *dakini* (*dakini* being typically defined as a female journeyer in a space-like wisdom) is "blocked energy" is of unclear origin. If she occasionally comes close to simply accepting age-old stereotypes of women, as in saying "women may be satisfied with 'being' and men have a desire to 'do,' " she more than makes up for it with her original, well-argued, and clear-headed analysis.

The body of the book gives the stories of six women whose insight, visionary experiences, and miraculous achievements stun the imagination with awe or disbelief. These are women who became legendary religious teachers through surmounting severe obstacles, many of which specifically related to their situation as females, wives, or mothers. Two lived in eleventh-century Tibet: Nangsa Obum, who came back from the dead, and the renowned Machig Lapdron, a wife, mother, and formulator



of the widely practiced meditative tradition known as Cutting Attachment (*gcod*). The very brief middle three biographies are of Jomo Memo, Machig Ongjo, and Drenchen Rema from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries respectively. The last story is that of the twentieth-century Ayu Khandro, who dictated her autobiography to a Tibetan *rDzogs chen* (Great Perfection) master presently living in Italy. At least two of these women—Machig Lapdron and the modern Ayu Khadro—have disciples or lines of practice that remain to the present. All serve as exemplars of spiritual accomplishment.

The versions of the stories used are taken from Tibetan texts here translated for the first time. Mythical, historical, and religious-philosophical elements are intertwined in the biographies and stimulating introduction, offering a multidimensional glimpse of the riches of Tibetan Buddhist traditions. For anyone interested in exploring new ground regarding either women and religion or Tantric Buddhist lore, this book is a treasure.

Anne C. Klein is a Lecturer in Religious Studies at Stanford University. Her books include Knowledge and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism *(forthcoming from Snow Lion Press), and* Tantric Practice in Nyingma *(with Jeffrey Hopkins).*

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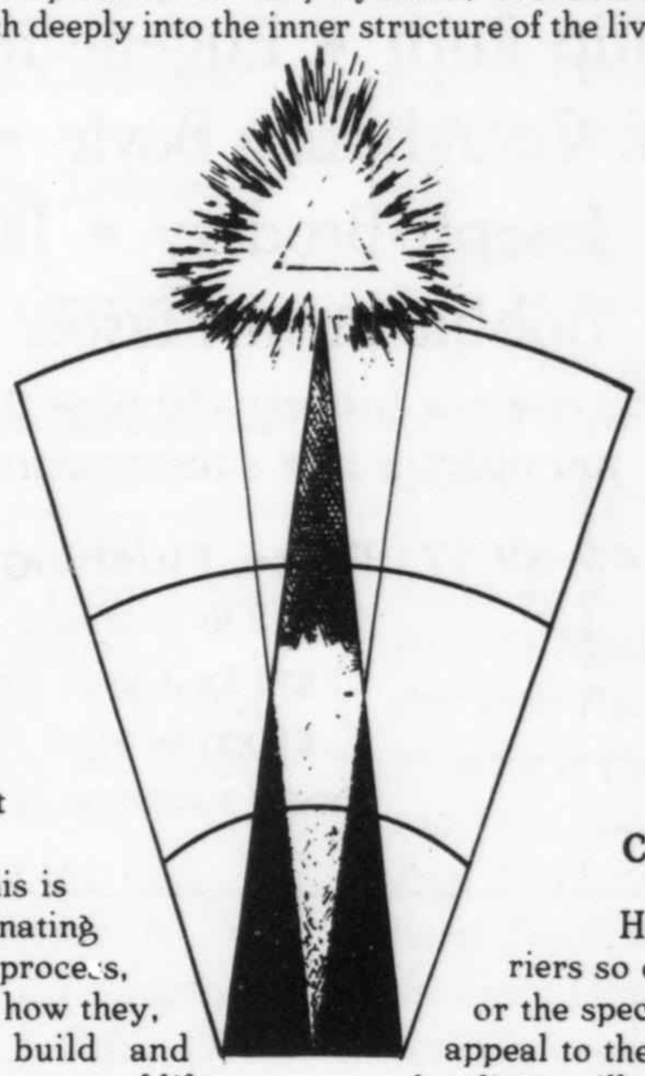

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cultivating intuition, but *stresses* the necessity of distinguishing "the difference between a mere impulse and a real intuition. . . . it is always needful to check or confirm or discipline it (an assumed intuition) by reasoning . . . ." He gives careful and precise advice on how to discover and apply these distinctions.

6. The claim of being a prophet does not "resound" through Brunton's writings. Among the 7,000 pages of material being prepared for posthumous publication, there are proportionately *very* few remarks by Brunton about himself at all. We highlighted a few of them because we thought they described his work more precisely than we ourselves might do.

We appreciate PARABOLA's friendship in allowing us this response, and we have accepted it not as evangelists for Brunton but in the spirit of the following quote from his p. 149: ". . . the Truth comes not from any person but from the Holy Spirit. It is from such a source that what is worthy in my writings has come; the errors however are mine. Let them therefore describe themselves as students of philosophy, not as followers of Brunton."

— Paul Cash
Director, Larson Publications

Tracy Cochran replies: I wish to thank Mr. Paul Cash for his keen interest in my review of *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*. I stand by the points raised in the review, and wish to add only that since Mr. Brunton's work is a significant contribution to the Western literature on inner search, it should be subject to the same close critical scrutiny that great works on the subject have long invited and withstood.

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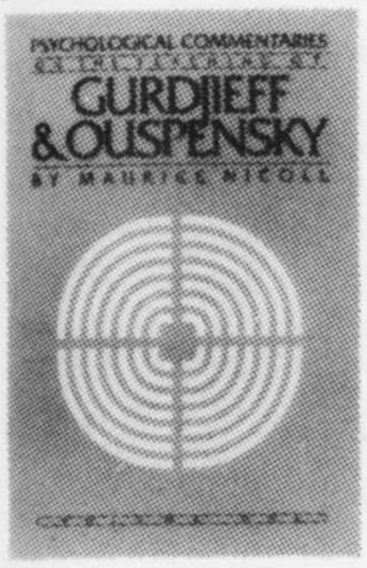

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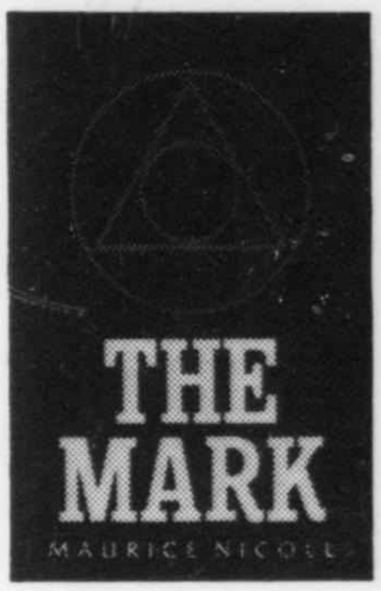

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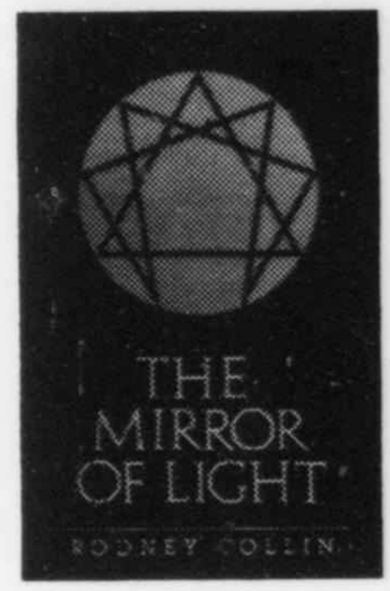

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