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P1 Awareness in the group is heightened.

RW It is heightened way beyond the normal capacity. That is what brings people along, you move one along and you bring everybody along, it is amazing.

P1 Often somebody will come out with an experience, or something, and you may recognize it from an experience you have had, or you may not, yet still you recognize what the person is saying.

RW It is as if you experience it in the moment. It is surprising how these things work, it is not like transferring knowledge, which some can pick up and some cannot, in the group everybody gets something out of it. There is no explanation for this.

(Laughs)

P1 There are times at meetings when my attention is on the feeling and I am not listening to the words. It still feels like I am participating.

RW You do not need to listen to the words, you "sense feel" them, which is better than understanding them.

(Laughs)

This is something I spoke about a few weeks ago, about people learning to listen, not with their heads but with their body, it is wordless, it is what you experience rather than the head trying to understand a sentence, then another sentence. It is surprising isn't it, you get the gist of things but there is no way you can put it into words again.

P2 It is a different way of being.

RW That is right.

<Break>

P1 Fear of death and our attitudes to death is a strange thing.

RW We see today people brainwashed to blow themselves up for the sake of hatred who don't seem to fear death, and yet it is bravado covering up the reality; underneath they do really fear death.

P3 Most people have a terror of death.

RW Yes they do, but I wonder is it terror of death or the manner of dying, and there is another possibility I am not sure about ; is it an innate fear not so much of death but the rebirth that follows. People think birth is a wonderful thing, but they do not remember the experience of birth, and I do. Getting born is a tremendous experience. The strange thing is these feelings are felt and known without any thought whatsoever: here you have

a consciousness that dawns in a dark place in a warmth, in a place that is caressing , with the blood flow and the pulse, this is absolute comfort, and then for no reason there is pressure squeezing you in, imagine a boa constrictor trying to constrict you, and turning you around and upside down and God knows what , and eventually squeezing you through a narrow tube , putting a one foot ball through a six inch pipe. So, there is this kind of pressure, and then of course you are breathing as a fish with gills, liquid, and you come out all wet, into a cold atmosphere after being in nice warm water out of the cold wind, and then light after the dark, and noise which has been muffled, but now suddenly somebody drops something onto a tin plate and clang, (*laughs*) , oh there is plenty to coming alive, and it's all at the same time, and somebody grabs you by the feet and yanks you up and slaps your backside, and pulls the liquid out of you so that you breathe cold air into a warm lung, you know when you get cold air first thing in the morning, it's painful. The whole process of birth is pain. And they say it is a wonderful thing. Maybe people have an innate memory of it. I remember it very clearly.

P3 The womb must be such a warm safe place.

RW Yes. Out here you are totally exposed. It is a hostile world and it is not doing nice things to you.

(*Laughs*)

So, I wonder if that is part of the fear of death, that it leads to this rebirth. But of course this memory is innate and people don't really know it consciously, it is the deeper levels of consciousness that will know it. And it is the deeper levels of consciousness we are finding out about ourselves today, isn't it? It is not somewhere else.

P2 I've been observing that I don't know, with the foreground consciousness, everything that is going on in me. Things are produced, reactions, experiences

RW It is very interesting to observe these things, as you get more alert you begin to see more and more things you didn't know about and you follow them and track them around.

P2 It is as if there is a deeper being

RW You find that most of them are physical, which is strange isn't it,

P2 It is as if you have some compass inside that takes you here and takes you there but it is not visible

RW Yes it is there, the point about it is when you really experience it, although you have gone inside to find it, but when you are in it, is it really inside or outside, or both? Interesting isn't it? It is both isn't it? So it seems to go beyond the body

P2 It struck me there is a kind of uprightness to it.

RW Uprightness is a way of explaining honesty, if you go down into this uprightness, suddenly you find it is out here, it does not have any measure, and it is bigger than the void.

P2 It is an axis

RW Yes that is right. When you look at that it is not physical at all

P2 The word that came to mind is spirit.

RW Yes that is the only word you can put on it. To explain it you use the word spirit which is that mysterious so called substance that isn't a substance.

(*Laughs*)

It is not physical and yet still is, very much so. This is what we might call a presence for want of a better term.

P2 It interpenetrates.

RW Oh yes, this you see is where we are looking back to the unconditioned, unborn, unmanifest in Buddhist terms, but when you come to weigh it up it is as big as the Universe itself. Consciousness is what it is, it is a spirit thing, not a physical thing, it is not a brain that is doing it but it is operating through its physicality. When we begin to appreciate it for what it really is then you find it is nothing to do with the body whatsoever, though it is in some fashion attached to a physical body within this world for some unknown reason, but only attached to it, it is never part of that physical body at all, and it operates outside the body as well as inside the body. Normally whilst we are within the body we sense things inside the body which are outside the body, that sounds daft I know, particularly somebody you are close to, it may be a cat or a dog, whatever the case may be, sometimes you get a feeling that something is not too good so you go and check into it and find that it's true. How do you know? It might be Aunt Fanny in Australia, but you know. How do you know? Do they reach out to you, or do you reach out to them, or are you both the one? You can't define it but obviously since the sensation is there and it is proven to be true then consciousness knows it, even though we have to translate it into our terms in words.

So, what is the nature of consciousness, this is the unmanifest area and that is why it is in everything and can know everything, and that is what people call God, and have done for years. They say God made the world, but I disagree with that whole-heartedly. We can put the word God on the true consciousness, Universal consciousness. Call it God if you wish, I don't mind, but God is not an entity, it is not a superhuman or anything of that nature, merely consciousness. Now if everything has emanated out of that, there is every reason why consciousness can be known from any part to another part, be it animate or inanimate it can still be known within consciousness because it is the manifestation of consciousness itself. I have said this a few times. I encountered this one four or five years ago and realised the Biblical saying, "not a bird falls from the bush that the Father is not aware of", the father being God or the Universal Spirit. Then it dawned on me, if he created it then he could not know it, it would be separate from him. Therefore it is that he had to manifest himself as the tree, in which there was a branch, on which the bird sat, from which it fell. He was the bird, and the air through which it fell, and the ground. There was nothing but God, or.... consciousness, obviously the same thing, it is a manifesting of that being, but the manifestation, in that sense, doesn't know;

only the consciousness knows. That is where you think, "who am I", and you don't know, because you are consciousness, you are not this (body), this shell, like a crab's shell you might say.

P2 Normal consciousness is only dimly aware.

RW That is right, it is far more than it appears to be, so in actual fact I am part of you, it's what we are sharing at the moment, we are sharing this experience, how can you or I be separate, other than physically, so there is a manifestation here, and the bit in between us is the bit that manifested and that is the bit that is experiencing.

(Laughs)

P2 Yet this is very ordinary.

RW Oh this is perfectly ordinary, yes, this is happening all the time with everybody, and they don't even know it. This is a different level of consciousness that sees it, than the normal so called world consciousness that would never see it, too dumb, thick as planks.

P1 I was considering, you said a while ago, that one never feels a particular age.

RW That is a good point, now, that is a good point. The boy is still alive and to a degree wonders why the body is a different age to what it is itself, because we are universally young and becoming, not getting old and dying, though the body is ageing

P2 Is there a point at which the personality congeals or sets?

RW It might do for some people who cling wholly to the physical, then they might feel they are dying, otherwise, you find the body is dying, it is ageing, it is getting weaker and obviously will reach a point where it will pass on and go, but the consciousness is still young, it is not bothered, it is not afraid. To a degree it knows it will be released from it when it happens.

P1 I was looking at my hands and the wrinkly skin and thinking this is getting old but it is not me, the awareness is nothing to do with this.

RW Let's face it, from the point of being born into the world the body starts ageing and replacing itself all the time, the nails, the hair, the skin cells sloughing off all the time, so there is a physical death, rebirth process going on; the body now is not that the same thing that came into the world, or even what it was 10 years ago.

P4 I have noticed with people who are on the path, if you like, and have come to a certain place, it is almost as if the physical body has changed as well, it seems not to age so badly, though it ages of course. I look at you and you seem not to have aged much since I first met you thirty years ago

RW The point is it is inevitable that all that comes to be will also fade away, the Buddha was right in this, and sentient life has a shorter life span than that which is insentient, obviously. The average person is not aware, they assume the ageing of the body is the ageing of themselves but when you awaken the consciousness a bit, it can see that consciousness is not the body, then you see a different story, yes the body is ageing,

and ultimately will fade away, but that which is observing, the conscious entity, knows it will not die. It is eternal, there is no death for that, death is only for the physical, which is an interesting point, and is why people who have had some experience of things of a spiritual nature are not afraid of dying because they know it gives release from the imprisonment of the physical body, and it is a prison, you are stuck with it until you die. You can reach a higher level of consciousness which doesn't need to come back to the physical to learn any lessons through it

P3 That doesn't mean that being in the body is a negative experience, it's not, there is something wonderful about it too.

RW This is the funny part about it all, in terms of communication from one to another, it has to be through the physical. There is not one thing of spirit you can tell me about yourself or anybody else, though you can tell of your physical experiences, or semi-physical experiences, which is interesting, because if you go past that you have no identity to talk about, therefore no separation, so there has to be a degree of manifestation and separation in order for us to communicate from one to another, and you can only communicate that which any could experience, but, if there is nobody there experiencing things how can it be communicated?

P2 No problem.

RW There is nobody to communicate and nobody there to communicate to either.

P2 The point about not feeling different as we age, I seem to identify something in me that is still there from the earliest I remember, and it is to do with me feeling a kind of perplexity about what I am to do with all this, the same attitude still seems to be there, though different, more relaxed, but it is as still as if I am a problem that needs to be solved.

RW There is no point solving any problem with this, because all you do is create another one, the thing is to get rid of the problem, and then you have no problem.

P2 I suppose that was complicated way of saying it feels the same for me now as it has done all the way through.

RW Let's try another track, shall we, this sort of feel we have of being me, it's not physical is it?

P2 No

RW And it is not other than physical

P2 I want to say it is an emotional stance or attitude

RW What gives emotion, but the body which changes it's chemistry, it heats up or cools down, but, does it affect me? Have you ever experienced anger building up until you feel you could murder somebody, and yet you are quietly sitting there thinking, what the hell is this that's going on here, it's not me, it is a conditioned happening, and we have lots of conditioning going on which we identify as so called self which isn't there. Because this is happening there must be somebody doing it, self, ego, a burden. The truth is when we

realise consciousness is what I am then all these things, this is conditioning, then so what! It doesn't lead anywhere, just let it go and it will die out, and so it does, so we are more, what shall we say, peaceful.

P2 Yes

RW *(Laughs)* Because that is the nature of consciousness, it never gets upset, it just finds it reveals facets of itself to itself by virtue of these things and it sees them as conditioning

P2 Is it right to say the conditioning has deep roots?

RW This is where the roots of physical existence start, you see, by which we have identified ourselves, and then we have to disqualify that, and see this is just conditioning taking place, and it's not me, just a manifestation of something in a manner which it should not be.

It is interesting as you go on and see these things yourself. The trouble is you try to understand it, and you can't, you try to put it into "word" understanding and it won't fit. Forget the understanding, just know, this is the way things are. Period. It's OK. Just accept that.

P5 Can I chuck something in here? Over the last couple of years, if I am interpreting it right, something around this area is becoming clearer for me and the issue I have found is that there is a last little bit of your thinking and feeling formations that is to do with a lot of what has driven you, and before you latch onto something that can just observe that and have confidence in that something, and what has driven you has been very important, and it has got you through, or brought you back, like a compass, all the way through your life to an interest in this kind of thing, and it keeps going for a while, and you have always considered that one of the deepest bits, but really it's the same as everything else, just a set of thoughts and feelings, and when you are mindful of that, you are in that other place, and that's what is breaking up. Does that make sense, is it relevant?

P2 Yes, there is the familiar sense of self which seems to have deep roots, but there these other moments when that is just not present.

RW It is a question of seeing it as a paradox, and putting the two sides of the paradox together as one, look at it this way or that way but accept both; not this as opposed to that, but this and that, which begins with from where you look.

P2 It seems experience is what I am and it just keeps going on.

RW Whether it is the left or the right in the paradoxical situation both are equally right at their own level, but that which sees it is in the middle and is neither one nor the other. It does not take sides any more, for it can accept both

P4 It sees things and the habitual patterns coming out, the conditioned memory, something is in the memory and therefore I get that feeling in the particular instance because that is my memory of it, but this thing can see that and can let go of the feeling.

RW Yes, memory is interesting, we learn to ride a bike, or swim, or drive a car, and say you do not do it for ten years, but you are given a bike and what do you do, do you think about it or remember it, or does it just know? It just knows what to do. Interesting, it is neither memory, nor recollection, it just knows. So there is knowing taking place without any thoughts or ideas or possession, it just happens. It's a joke isn't it?

(Laughs)

P1 One of the difficulties of this, just going back to my hand and realising I wasn't this body, in that moment you are thrown back to "so what". But the perception of that isn't anything, and there isn't anybody perceiving it, it is just an emptiness.

RW That is right. All you are looking at is conditioning, that is all. Ageing or getting younger, change is taking place, it is becoming something other than what it is, it is always in the process of becoming, and that goes for every level of consciousness in the conditioned area.

P6 *(Arrives)*

Hello everybody.

P4 You say there is this shared consciousness and it is why we can pick up things

RW Yes but in the sharing we find it is sort of compartmentalised, to you, or me, or somebody else, and you may pick it up at a different level to someone else, and attach it to your conditioning which is different to mine, and therefore it will appear to be different. But if you regard it as a different thing altogether, as you might say as a light, that sees all these things, it would be unchanging, though it would see mine, it would see yours, it would recognise in this one it is this, in that one it is that, and it would see all these things, but it would not try to mix them up. The light is there to see, and we individually see our own, but we don't see someone else's, and it is truly the one, and consciousness never thinks, it is impossible for it to think, therefore it can never identify, it cannot therefore be individual in the sense of this or that, it has always got to be universal in that sense, but in our limited situation, because the body is a dense material through which it is working, it is like looking through a thick blanket, you can't see very much light and we are stuck with our own experiences and we believe that to be the reality, but the light sees it all and when we can achieve with another person a complete rapport, and the self doesn't exist and there is only the other one, then it can act both ways at the same time and there is no person there and you find you are experiencing the same as the other one.

This is the most interesting part of the whole process, learning the nature of consciousness itself which only knows through both the crudest and the most subtle areas of feeling, it doesn't think, it doesn't identify, it just knows by experience, therefore it doesn't know time, it only knows now, what is going on now is all, it doesn't have to think about it, the now is constantly moving on, so it does not carry memories.

P6 Sometimes I know what is going on for someone else.

- RW This is a possibility. This can be observed from time to time, it is a particular level of consciousness which is not the norm.
- P6 I have known once or twice when something has been happening for someone else, and then found out I was right subsequently.
- RW Yes exactly
- P6 That would be psychic would it?
- RW It could well be yes.
- (Silence)*
- RW One of the things about this is, scent, smells, we can have very coarse ones or very fine ones, all of different natures, but it would very difficult to quantify the range of scents you can pick up from time to time, some are very faint, almost non-existent, yet still we pick them up, and if you are familiar you can identify them, if not you wonder of course, I don't know what that one is. But it is all in the very sensitive areas of feel, you feel in the experience. Similarly consciousness will pick up all kinds of things, and you may not even be aware of them, it even operates beyond the range of the physical, that's how it communicates, by feel, we feel things are good, we feel things are bad, but where in the body do we feel them, if anywhere, or do you feel them in the body? Or in space within the body? Ah, now that is a different thing, space within the body, not an organ, now that is strange because this now is not the body experiencing but consciousness, some things it does through the body, other things without the body, in the sensitive areas it does without the body, in the coarser areas it does with the body, so it would appear the nature of the consciousness itself is mainly in the finer aspects rather than the coarser because it needs the physical body to know the the coarser. It would appear so, though whether it is true or false I am not too sure, it is only an observation, but then you can see it for yourselves if you look.
- P2 What you say about a space within the body...
- RW That is more likely
- P2 ... It is like, well a plug hole doesn't sound very good, but it is like there is something open
- RW It doesn't have to be big, it can be as big as a pin head, and be quite adequate because it equals with a whole universe of space anyway, it is of the same nature it is communicating with.
- P2 It is as if space is leaking into the body, somehow.
- RW A strange thing about being in the physical body, probably the most important aspect is the blood, would you agree? Without it the body cannot maintain itself, but what is it the blood brings around as it services the body?
- P2 The breath.

RW The breath, so in actual fact we are putting a gas around in a liquefied form, and is not a gas a closest to the emptiness, so this (*the body*) is just a gasbag, and how could it not know the emptiness if it is filled with gas, with space. They say the body is 90% water and what is water but H₂O, two gases. So, the body is something and nothing and why do we give it such importance, we don't, rather we place importance on the activities that take place within it, which is a different thing altogether. The living aspect is not physical at all, it is in some way the interplay between this and other things that is important, so if I am in interplay with that tree or that house or that chimney pot over there, am I here or over there, in consciousness, am I here or over there in your consciousness? It is a fair question, and could you not know? Interesting isn't it.

P2 Very interesting.

RW Intriguing too, because there is an element of yes, and no, in it, isn't there, it is and it isn't.

P2 Yes

RW So what can we really be sure about? Not a lot, and if we just accept it as it appears, OK no problem, but if we try to analyse it we are in trouble, so why not just accept, for this moment we are as one, leave it, now what has changed, the situation changes, experience changes, this is one of those little aspects of experience that happen for a moment, and you cannot deny your experience because that is your reality, so be careful what you experience, it is your only truth. Words are not true, they can be disproved, but you cannot disprove this any more than you can prove it to be true.

(Laughs)

It does not go away, because you cannot stop the world.

(Laughs)

P2 I suppose it is the condition reasserting itself and taking you away from that...

RW That's right exactly, it is trying to stop the world so you can understand it, but the world is already moving on.

You are moving into areas which are bordering on no thoughts and thoughts, experiencing feeling, knowing, and trying to understand it, in between there somewhere, and not quite making it. You can almost see yourself doing it in actual fact.

(Laughs)

It's a joke.

P3 When I try to observe what and who I am, it is as if there are different levels, thoughts, a superficial level, and then there are concepts of my past and who I think I am in relation to my family.

RW Yes, and constantly things are saying it's not, it's not this, it's not this, it's not this. Why don't you believe that? It is telling you the truth, it is not me. I am not a self.

P3 But these concepts...

RW If I am to cling to something there has got to be a self otherwise there is nothing else.

P3 Occasionally I get moments of non-conceptuality, free of stories of who I am.

RW The point is you are looking with duality rather than singularly at these aspects. If you give full attention to any one aspect there is only that. Give me full attention and where has yourself gone? You know this now, because there is only this, so if I give you attention there is only you and not me, if mind is full of "that" there is no me looking, and that is the true experience, is it possible that consciousness and experience exist together and other than that there is nothing, which is a question, not a statement.

P2 It chimes with the speculation that things have got to be as they are now

RW When you say as they are now it has already gone past.

(Laughs)

P2 If you are not hanging on

RW Then they slowly pass by. Maybe you stand still and everything passes you by, or everything is stationary and you pass it by. I don't know.

It is like a vehicle going down the road at whatever speed you like, but there is always that stationary bit which is in contact with the road, otherwise it would be skidding. But it is so rapid you don't notice and make assumptions about it. But there is always that still moment in relation to it, and that is that moment of contact, of experience. The now, and if you can live in that now you've got no problems; no maybes, no maybe nots, only now.

In these stupid illustrations we can learn about all sorts of conceptual problems. If we are going along in a car at sixty miles an hour and one bit is stationary here and that bit going over the top of the tyre is going at 120 miles an hour in relation to something else but it isn't true is it, it's all revolving at the same speed in relation to itself. We get into problems running two concepts together. One the revolution of the wheel, the other the stationary aspect of the road. You can make peculiar things out of it if you are not careful.

(Laughs)

The mind plays games with itself trying to be clever, and now you are in trouble.

(Laughs)

You can use these instances to see how the mind can confuse itself deliberately.

P4 How is it some people are able to pass on, verbally or by feeling, this sort of knowledge?

RW Just the nature of themselves, I suppose, and again it depends if they consider it important enough to bother with it, or whether they feel they can do it accurately enough. You can experience a lot of thing you couldn't explain to another, or even to yourself half the time, never mind to someone else.

This is the very thing that makes the Buddha outstanding in history, the manner in which he has been able to observe within himself aspects of grasping, jealousy, hatred, you name it all these things, and to explain where they come from, how you deal with them. When you see these things arise within yourself how are you to explain them to someone else. How you feel about things, how do you explain that, even to yourself, it's difficult. This is what makes the Buddha so outstanding, he was able to elucidate absolutely clearly and precisely what he is talking about, a very rare customer indeed, and quite unique in history, and yes others have come after, to a degree, but nothing like that.

You asked a question, well some people have the ability to translate between different realms, which others cannot do. To some degree I cannot do that though I do reasonably well in giving you the experience so that you can see it, but I couldn't explain it in words as the Buddha did. I can bring about a rapport and a feeling so that you can begin to appreciate what it means, but it is not the same as explaining it by rote, and I certainly could not do it to anybody just like that, it takes a little time to work round to it. It is the nature of people I suppose.

P5 As you read various books, not the history of Buddhism, but about the lives of various teachers, my observation is that the better ones seem to operate much like this.

RW Yes I think a transmission takes place from experience to experience, but it is not the same as giving it by rote. The Buddha explained things so well it could be put down in books and people could read them. I could not do that, not a chance, I have no academia in me.

(Laughs)

But I find I can draw people together and produce a situation where they can sense and understand things and appreciate it in their own experience, which is the only real way I can communicate. So it is experience talking to experience, rather than word to word, or intellect to intellect. And so transmission does take place and sometimes more rapidly than you might think, but then it is only occasionally, it is not deliberate, it just happens.

P5 It strikes me, if people were not of the same order, the same structure, there could be no communication.

RW It could not happen, no. There needs to be things in common to get on the same wavelength.

P5 Not only that it seems to be that sometimes you might know a person for a while, and you seem to develop along with them almost, the same things are going on for them as

for you, and then it might be someone else, or another group, or whatever, and it is not that anything is being taught or interpreted.

RW As we pick up certain things from one another, it might be certain sayings or language, and you pick them up because you are familiar with who you are dealing with, and the same things will happen at a deeper level through association

P5 It strikes me as an independent thing that is happening, it is not a conditioned thing, rather it is a reflection of what is going on.

RW That's right, and it is whether one is able to absorb it or not.

P5 So the Sangha is important

RW Well this in truth , what you are talking about, is Sangha, that is what Sangha is, to achieve a rapport in certain aspects, and to come to a level together, which means communication is there without words

P1 People teach others don't they? Over the years there has been a whole range of people, sometimes very accidentally. Everybody in this room, I'm sure, has taught me something at some time.

RW Anybody who has begun to stir the consciousness aspects within themselves in any way at all will be able to notice or pick quite a number of things from incidents that happen around them and will begin to appreciate them directly without any form of understanding, but it needs you to open up the consciousness that little bit more than it normally would, and it could be accidental or it could be deliberate.

P1 In this context we are talking about it is more deliberate

RW Yes, where it is deliberate then it does tend to open up the consciousness that little bit more, and that is carried over to other situations, and then you may begin to see more, in depth, and that is where you can keep it.

With all of this so much goes on superficially, skating on thin ice, and that is the reality to some people, but there is no depth to it at all, and when they look a little deeper, and realise how shallow it normally is, they begin to realise there is something more, and they can appreciate more in their own experience that makes life worthwhile, and their values change from the superficial to those of depth.