

Russel Williams Open Meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008, 3 Grosvenor Square, Sale, Manchester.

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- P2 Does the tree of life connect with Judaism?
- RW Yes
- P2 Those intersections, what do they represent?
- P1 Well, 22 paths of enlightenment apparently. Each one is associated to one of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. The most important part is the ten Sephiroth, the ten circles, they connect to form the tree, because they are the ten important principles of life.
- The tree can be placed on any situation, if you like.
- So there are trees which represent the names of God, there are trees which represent Angels, there are trees which represent scientific functions.
- It is a template that can be used to organise and understand any thing or any system.
- P3 Right. Sephiroth means container doesn't it?
- P1 It means a number of things, but yes container is as good as anything, receptacle.
- P2 I've come across names like Jesod.
- P1 On the psychological tree 'Jesod' is the ego, the identity, the persona.
- The paths obviously show relationships between the different functions, because obviously some are not linked up directly, so that tells you something about the functionality within it.
- P4 I understood that it came into the light in about the 12th century.
- P1 It's interesting because, I mean, pictures of the tree itself perhaps go back to that kind of time, but the basis of it, the 10 and the 22 and the 4 levels etc, go back thousands of years. So although it was perhaps only expressed in that particular geometrical form, the whole structure goes back a long way, obviously.
- <Break>.
- RW I wonder if there's kind of a link between the Kabbalah tree and the Greek triangle. Mathematically drawing them as such. You can use them to work out almost anything.
- One of the things that appears to come out of that of course, in the latter few hundred years at least, are the models of the Buddha, established on the triangular form of the Greek, not of the old Indian.
- P1 So in fact, on the tree, they talk of triads because there are 16 triangles and triads.
- RW We always come back to the 3's don't we.
- P3 Interestingly enough, I think I heard for the first time a few days ago the theory that Pythagoras and the Buddha actually met.
- RW Whether they did or not, I don't know.
- P3 It was definitely the same era.
- RW They were the same era, yes it would go without saying, and it is possible that they met in thought rather than physically. Thought of course in different expressions.
- P6 There were trade links I understand between the two countries at the time, as there was also with China.
- P1 There was a big Buddhist community in Alexandria.
- <Break>

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RW *(Laughs)*

Number 3 pops up all over the place, even in Buddhism, the three jewels, Buddha, Sangha, whatever.

P6 It's back to the three's isn't it.

P1 The trinity in Christianity obviously is very important.

RW Yes.

P9 The 3 wise men.

P1 Yep, loads of them. Tons of it, yes, assertive threes...

P2 Fundamental three's I reckon, father & son, father & child that goes back to the origins.

RW I believe that period got the triangulations, aspects of measurement.

P1 It comes really from splitting unity.

RW Yes.

P1 I mean, if you had a thing, and you split it, you've got 3 things. You've got the 2 half's, and a relationship of them. So, it's always viewed like that.

RW But you also need a minimum of 3 to make it stand up

*(Laughs)*.

<Break>

RW If you ponder these things, you begin to see why the Buddha taught the way he did. He pretty obviously saw the Holy Spirit, as that which knows, and there were a few people with a little dust in their eyes, and very few people able to see it. So he stuck to what they could see, and how to eliminate things that blinded their eyes, and showed them how to remove it, so that they could then see for themselves.

Very intelligent man: these are the hindrances and this is how we see them and how we come to eliminate them; and he left them to see for themselves.

Because even today it's a thing which is debated about right, left and centre isn't it, the reality of the spirit. It is a fact isn't it. The intelligentsia can spend hours and hours and hours pondering these things but never experience it.

To experience it and know it is a different matter altogether but then you can't tell it to anybody can you? You get inklings of it as you go along, as you get a bit closer, you sort of get a whiff of it. But even then you've still got a way to go to pick it up.

The intangible becomes very tangible as you might say, in the sense that it's more concrete and yet you can't show it to anybody, it's still invisible.

*(Laughs)*

Daft isn't it.

It's not surprising really that it's an area which is virtually taboo or totally unknown because when we come to look at it, the very lives each one of us lives in the mundane world, we sort of skate along, like a fly on a bit of ice, or something like that, and not really knowing the nature of it, and haven't a clue of the nature of the world in which we live, or even of ourselves, never mind anything beyond that, have we?

So if we start examining what we apparently are, we might begin to find something which lies a little beyond it. That's what the Buddha was doing wasn't it?

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I mean when we come down to it, this “who am I” business, it’s a good way to follow, to some degree, this “what am I”, “who am I”, whatever, the very nature of what appears to be ourselves, and as we examine it we find that there isn’t any ‘me’ at all in it.

The ‘me’ is something of a totally different nature, and not physical at all.

This is where we begin to get some inkling of what the spirit really is. Because it does appear to be an ‘I’. Unconditioned one that’s true, you find there isn’t one in the conditions but you do appreciate the fact there’s still that which sees, therefore, ‘I’.

But no way can you say it is this, that, or something else. It has to be of a different nature. Different direction.

So, it’s worth exploring and trying to find out. Nobody can tell you what it’s like but you can find out for yourself, very easily, by your own experience.

When you begin to realise, when you begin, like looking at a table or anything else, it’s not me, every part of the body, you find that’s not me either.

Yet very subtly you sense-feel that there is a me, yet it’s nothing to do with those things. So it’s got to be separate hasn’t it? And it’s very practical when you think about it, you try to think and make something of me, but you can’t. But you know very well it’s there.

Obviously you can’t think about it because all thinking is about the material world, and it’s not material, so therefore you can’t think about it. But you can experience it and know it, and the more you experience it, the more clearly it comes as something real, which makes the unreality of the conditioned. So somewhere along the line, the two have to diverge, don’t they?

P4 You used the words, in the past, “subtle feelings”.

RW Yes very subtle feelings.

P4 It seems to be in that area.

RW Yes. Extremely subtle feelings. Nothing to do with emotion or physicality whatsoever.

Very intangible isn’t it? And yet real. You can’t put your finger on it and say it’s this, this or this, and yet you know it very very clearly. Even if it’s involved with somebody else or something else, it’s still there. But you can’t...

P4 It seems to alter the nature of the world in some way.

RW Mmm.

P4 Makes it...

RW You see, it’s that different dimension that has no words. That’s our problem; we can’t pass it one to another except experience it. And when we can experience a similar thing and get a rapport with other people, we find we’re all experiencing the same thing as though it’s not, altogether individual.

Which brings us to another point, we have to ask the question, who is it? If there is a who. Or is it just an ‘is-ness’?

Is that possible? If it is an ‘is-ness’, how am I experiencing it? Or you?

Difficult isn’t it.

Strangely, we begin to get some idea of knowing by accepting the fact of the ‘is-ness’ and the ‘not’, the ‘is’ and the ‘isn’t’ as a single thing.

The yes and no-thing both together, not this, but not other than this.

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It's a strange one that, isn't it? It's a sort of paradoxical thing but it's not a paradox. If you look from the right you see this, if you look from the left you see that, and it's the same thing. Bit of a joke isn't it.

*(Laughs)*

P5 The words that keep going through my mind are, "in the knowledge and love that was in Christ Jesus".

Yes, that means a lot to me. It's much wider than the words say.

RW Exactly, quite right, quite right.

P5 When people say they're doing it in the name of Jesus, doing it in the knowledge and spirit that was in Christ Jesus, or is in Jesus, Christ Jesus, that's when people want to argue with you. About whether you're a heathen or not.

<Silence>

Yes, and you get all these different sub personalities, you know, the wicked witch, or the kindly fairy, all these different attributes, the loving mother. They are all parts of our personalities, some of them, in different degrees. We've to know them, and see their strengths and what they are and then they become clean and wholesome, as we know them. As I see it, like a picture of them meeting in the middle and then they can go straight up. To the spiritual, the everything, the all or nothing. There's the meeting first, and I'm sure there must be some word for it in Buddhism? I don't know it, but this meeting together so that we're comfortable within ourselves, know ourselves. And then this line going straight up to..., what? Infinity.

RW So we move into clarity. Absolute clarity. Which you might call, Nibbana.

<Silence>

All divisions gone, all fragmentation gone, and just the wholesomeness.

P5 Yes.

RW Quite well put actually, quite well put. Well done.

P5 Thank you Russel.

RW And within it of course, even though it's not there *all* the time, *most* of the time, there's comfort.

P5 Yes

RW Isn't it, no desire for that or aversion to this, just...

P5 ...the is-ness, mmm.

RW That's right, exactly.

Nice isn't it. Leaving the world behind, as you might say. That's good.

P5 As you say, it's simple. But it's not easy, getting the balance.

RW It's not easy by any means, oh no! In fact, I've said the opposite about that many times. It's the most difficult thing that anyone attempted to do in the whole history of the world. To seek the true nature underlying everything, and yet the simplest.

*(Laughs)*

Doesn't make it easy. But it is possible you see. It is possible! Providing one has a little stroke, a little touch, of humility, it's possible. But without it, no.

*(Laughs)*

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Well done. Well done indeed!

P5 But with all these sub personalities (how could) someone not be humble?

RW But the point about it is, are you now the person that was, you are.

P5 You are you see.

RW You're not the same person as you were, or you consider yourself to be.

P5 A bit like the chicken breaking out of the egg.

RW That's right, you become something different. As in each experience you become something different. You're always becoming. You can't be the same one and acquiring more. You are changing as you go along. The thing that remains constant is that every point along the way it was normal. That's why we never saw the change until we got there.

It hides a lot this normality, doesn't it?

*(Laughs).*

A changing one of course.

P2 Humility is a very funny business you know, because without humility, you can't be open....

RW ...no

P2 ...it's necessary.

RW ...that's the whole point. Unless you're open, you can't receive.

P2 ...you can't receive, can you?

RW ...no.

Interesting isn't it. If you see the very nature of humility, it has nothing to do with selfishness whatsoever.

P2 In fact humility (is) really coming to the absence of self.

RW It's the negation of self isn't it, is humility.

P2 The seat of I am, diminished...

RW --mmm, and it's not something you can make yourself either.

*(Laughs)*

P2 No.

RW The more you try, the more you miss it.

*(Laughs)*

P2 I came across a saying, a few years ago, a very simple one; a lot of people may well know it: "The word is not that to which it refers".

So we can talk about humility, but the experience that the word points at is so difficult.

Pointing from the word. That's the problem, all of these things the same kind of problem, having the word, to get to its origin, the source. Even the word like Nibbana you see can be speculated about, contemplated, thought about, and in doing so, it just disappears.

RW Interesting point, that anything of reality, in life, is of a subtle nature and not a marked one, consequently, it requires a special kind of consciousness to be able to appreciate it.

But you can't push it. You can't go seeking it because every time you do you push it further away..., and you sort of..., every moment..., you see those moments..., where at odd moments, you sort of let go and it might arise and be seen.

When we can train ourselves to let go then more and more gets seen.

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Though it's almost as though we have to accept..., it is almost as though there is another self within, which is straining to show itself but can't because our self prevents it. If we can only step aside then that one will arise and show itself.

It's almost like that.

A little tricky isn't it, and dare we trust it to come through?

*(Laughs)*

P2 The trouble is, they can't both be present at the same time.

RW I will, if you promise...,no promises.

*(Laughs)*

P7 I was telling X earlier on, we have a Dean and he is 25 years older than me, born in 1929, and he is one person who everyone respects, whatever they are, and everybody describes that he is very holy, and things like that, but the one quality I always notice more than anything is humility. He is a very humble self effacing person and is very keen on service, and things like that. But he is one of those people who nobody ever criticises, you know, but that humility is really really strong in him, I'm sure that is karmic, I am sure a lot of that is..., he has lived a long time, he is eighty next year, improving. But I'm sure some of that is a naturally karmic thing that has come from a previous life, and he is obviously in a right job for him, but he is very very strong and everyone responds to it and I have never heard anybody saying anything critical about him at all.

RW He probably lives as he speaks.

P7 Exactly, yes...

RW ... and there's no problem, you know where you stand.

P7 Yes...,yes exactly he's a wonderful person.

RW It's the ones that tell you one thing and do another, that's the problem.

P2 I bet at the same time he has strong words, when it needs to happen.

P7 Oh yes, yes. He knows what is right and wrong. You would not be able to persuade him to do anything if he felt it was wrong. I said he was 25 year older than me, and I'm not a Christian, when I was very ill he came round to see me and drove me around almost every week so he can bless me, and things like that.

<Break>

P2 Humility hasn't got a very good name socially at the moment, has it?

P7 We live in a different area. I mean it's all traditional where we live.

P2 Socially, it is linked with weakness, socially, I think, in general. As a general view of things.

P7 I personally think that Father X is an exceptional person.

P1 It's a natural state of the absence of the ego, isn't it, really, I mean. That element of ourselves, shall we say, that is the ego, always wants something, or doesn't want something, or is expressing itself in some way. When that's not there, there's nothing really, is there, that wants to push forward, and by nature humility, if you like, is the state.

P2 Well the word disappears really. It just becomes a way of being, really. But it is linked strongly to self-less-ness.

RW It becomes respondent to need.

P1 Not what I want...

RW It doesn't have any wants of it's own, but if there is a need, it will respond. It's sort of drawn out of itself. A sort of spontaneity as much as anything.

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- P2 It's interesting. Ego is still there.
- RW Oh, yes.
- P2 Ego as a central part.
- RW The central 'I' is still there, yes, and it will be, forever.
- P2 But the ego self, identity, structure, around that is ...
- RW But 'I' and 'Ego' are not necessarily the same thing.
- P2 No.
- RW One is conditioned, the other is not.
- And incidentally, that is an interesting point about the Buddha as such. He never said that there was no self. He said there was no conditioned self.
- He didn't say there was an unconditioned one, or not, as the case may be, but it's there, it is known.
- As I say, it only responds to the needs of the moment and only responds spontaneously, without any thought or idea or motivation. It has no motivation of its own anyway because it doesn't need anything it is content within itself.
- P2 That's right.
- RW In the main it just goes through life on a habitual basis without any necessary motivation. It's been habitually doing this and it will do that; it will go to sleep at night, and it will wake up and have breakfast, or whatever the case may be, because it's a habit, rather than because it wants it.
- So in a sense, it more or less drifts with the flow, as it were, rather than fights against it.
- P2 It's exactly the opposite of planning and structure...
- RW ...of course where there is a need, it meets a need, it just responds because that's what the need draws out of it. It becomes the source to meet the need as you might say.
- P2 I always look to the natural world for the best examples of this. Where every living thing is just being.
- RW That's right, exactly. Yes, but..., is just being not necessary in it's own right?  
So this is being and that is being but we've both, the being. As you might say.
- P5 Yes, this meeting real needs, is effortless.
- RW Yes.
- P5 Sometimes people are wanting, me, you, to fulfil needs, but you can't. They need to work on themselves. But other times you can actually meet a need, and that's a wonderful feeling.
- RW In fact, this is where..., it's only at this point do you find the eightfold path is met. Right effort, no effort. Understanding, no understanding, so you go right through the lot. It just is! There's no question of doing, it just is, and there's the completion. Interesting isn't it?
- P2 That makes the word right, a very important word...
- RW It's got to be right, not wrong, and so on and so forth, it just "is" period, and that is all there is. It is just effortless because that is the state of being, and it will respond where necessary, but not where it's not necessary, it doesn't have any idea for itself, to do, or not want
- And yet,...., strangely, it is not inert. In fact if anything quite energetic. There's a sort of effervescence there that maintains it, but it doesn't need to do anything unless required.
- Difficult to talk about the 'Is-ness' isn't it. It's just being isn't it.
- (Laughs)*

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<Silence>

And strangely, I mean..., one of the main things about the conditioned world is the factor of loneliness, and the difficulty of overcoming it.

And then you find that you see things in a totally different light, and realise that, whilst there's only one, it's not lonely.

Because in some strange fashion it's linked to everything, as everything rather..., so it's complete, rather than something missing.

That's right isn't it?

P5 Oh yes!

RW Wholly complete, no fragmented parts, which it was thinking it was before.

P5 Yes.

RW And yet since there's only one, it's still not lonely. Interesting isn't it?

P5 Sometimes people intrude on your loneliness.

*(Laughs)*

RW Well it's a fact, that's why people draw together in company, and they still don't know the person next to them, for what they really are. That's what loneliness is, knowing that other people don't know you, as you would know yourself.

Strangely, that disappears, because you see, whilst they don't understand you, you understand them. You know them, therefore there's not that loneliness anymore, and to some degree, they're not lonely in your company.

Interesting isn't it?

<Break>

P1 That's the irony isn't it, that any experience of loneliness is..., is really an experience of not being able to be with yourself as it were.

RW That's right, you don't feel you are complete.

P1 Which is odd really...

RW Because there's something missing and I've got to have it, draw it to me.

P1 And it seems that it comes out for people as missing others...

RW That's right.

P1 ...whereas it is missing oneself really.

RW ... it is missing oneself.

P1 ... quite strange.

<Break>

P5 What was Dr Jill saying? (Dr Jill Bolte Taylor, Ted Talk)

P1 It's a link, I haven't watched it yet. I've kept the link. X sent a link around, he will explain.

P4 She had a stroke and she describes how the brain is in two visible halves with little connections. One half does your thinking and your speaking, and your future and your past, the other half doesn't, the other half is permanently in the now, and it is connected.

So with the stroke she lost..., it kept going from one to the other.



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She had a very powerful experience of being completely in the now, and feeling connected to everything, and everybody. Feeling she just was a receiver of energy from everything. That's what she was.

P5 She could write as well, could she?

P4 It took her 8 years to recover from the stroke.

She was a brain scientist, so she was very interested to observe from the inside what was happening in the brain. But, her concluding thoughts are, she is telling us, in this lecture, that we're all connected in a loving way.

RW That's right.

P4 Yes, and that we should all try and find this connection.

RW That's right, find a link. That's right, I agree with that. Again that's coming from a primal source.

P4 Yes! And a lot of what she says maps on to what we hear here.

RW Exactly.

P4 And what we find elsewhere, in the world of Buddhism. It's good isn't it?

RW You get confirmation from different areas.

P4 Exactly.

<Break>

P1 It's interesting though isn't it, because there's a difference between men and women actually. The connections between the two sides of the brain are much richer in women than they are in men. It's one of the fundamental physical differences between men & women.

So women have a natural enrichment of links across, than us poor chaps.

P7 Well you're there to carry heavy shopping.

*(Laughs)*

P1 Oh yes, obviously.

Well it will be interesting to hear that actually, because it sounds to me, funnily enough, that she's talking about something else. Although, you know, rather than experiencing from one side to the other, that she's experiencing from one side to the whole of mind if you like.

P8 That's what she says.

P1 Oh right.

P8 She experienced some sort of cosmic consciousness, and she was, you know, words like cosmic consciousness, and she didn't have any jargon like that before the experience. Afterwards, she was not spiritual as such...

P1 Yes.

P8 ...she was a brain scientist. She had a catholic background and she was not into that at all, because there wasn't the spiritual dimension, so it never, you know, interested her so much. So, she was very much into science, and then that happened.

The way she explains it in the book is very interesting, because she was a brain scientist and she knows perfectly how it works, the cognitions, the thoughts, the emotions. Before that she would see a brain like a big library with a lot of drawers where you need that, you need to go there, and she knows every single area of the brain, she knows the functions.

What's amazing with the stroke is that in real time she would observe her brain deteriorating and when the arm was dropping she said..., first she had a shower, and she could feel every

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single drop, and all the sounds ere amplified so there was something wrong with her and she thought, "What's going on?"

So she went to a particular spot in her apartment and thought it will pass, I need to pump some blood into the brain, and then it got worse, the arm stopped and she realised "I am having a stroke."

What's amazing is that she could observe every single stage of the process of the brain shutting down, and she was not afraid. She tried to find information, she didn't have a clue what her phone number was, and she was trying to contact someone. She could not even recognise the number, she knew where it was, but she couldn't connect to it.

P9 She said she's looking, she knows she's got this card index, but she's flowing from rationally trying to find it to the next minute she's thinking "wow ...this is fantastic, wow" and she's just getting..., every cell of her body is integrating with every part of the world, and she's just floating and feeling wonderful, and then she comes back.

P8 She trusted the experience. She experienced that she was free. That every single cell of her body, the atoms, and... she couldn't tell what was her and (what was) the rest of the universe.

P5 How long was she paralysed for?

P8 She took 2 hours I think also to get to the hospital, and she got operated on the next morning I think. They removed a blood clot the size of a golf ball. But before that she said, everything was fluid and she knew she was a spirit and she was saying, 'My spirit was so big, I didn't know how I could go back into my body'.

RW (Laughs)

P8 That's how she explains, she couldn't tell the difference, there was no boundary, so how could she re-create her own individual boundary. It took her ages to come back to that basically.

It's quite amazing what she experienced... what else?

P9 When she was trying to speak on the phone, she realised that her voice one minute she wasn't there and the next there was this mumble. She had no conception of what she was saying. She knew obviously she had to do something, at the same time, she didn't care.

P8 Yes, she felt so blissful, so wonderful, that, you know, to come back to be an individual, what motivation would she have to go back to that mundane life, she felt so great, and then she realised I've got to tell everybody what's going on because she could still observe that and she said, "I've got to go back and tell them that it's wonderful, and it's just a matter of shutting down your chatter box."

That's what she realised, and that's where, Eckhart Tolle, where he writes about the universe, she read it and said it's exactly, you know, she understood everything from a spiritual point of view why you want to dwell into silence and emptiness, because you want to silence that part of the brain. She can understand that.

She says now she can jump back into that peaceful state at will. She couldn't see three dimensions anymore so she couldn't tell what was, there was no outside and inside.

RW That's right.

P8 What amazed me is that, with her mother, she couldn't see in three dimensions so she couldn't see the steps, but because her mother would say, "mind the step", and she would trust her mother, suddenly she would see the step. That's something that's really, "how come?" What was going on there, and then because a connection came back into her brain and she could, so that's how she started recognising shapes, trusting her mother, and feeling things, guided by her mother.

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<Break>

RW That's better.

Interesting when different peoples' experiences all confirm the same thing isn't it, in different ways.

Surprising what's hidden within us and we don't even know it, isn't there.

*(Laughs)*

P3 Interesting actually, I've not been here for two weeks and I've kind of fallen asleep. Do you know what I mean, and then within about ten minutes, I'm kind of, 'Oh I remember'.

RW Well that's alright.

*(Laughs)*

P1 It's easy to get immersed in the world isn't it?

P3 Absolutely yes.

P1 Makes a point of the importance of taking a bit of time for yourself each day. Stealing that time isn't it. I know for myself, very much.

P3 It was quite interesting actually. X and I were walking, and we talked. X was talking about his experience and for about 150 yards, and by the end of 150 yards, I had kind of woken up...

RW Yes.

P3 ... or something was beginning to wake up, you know, just listening to X talking.

RW Yes.

*(Laughs)*

P3 It ties in with what you were talking about earlier, you know.

P4 I must talk more often.

*(Laughs)*

P3 Go back earlier to what you were saying. One of the things that suddenly struck me was, the Buddha always talked about the five aggregates, you know, like body, and feeling, and...

RW That's right.

P3 ...that we're not...

RW ...we're not these things at all...

P3 ... and that somehow, probably I got the idea in my head, that we should discard these things.

RW But you don't have to.

P3 But you don't have to. We can't, for a kick off.

RW They do it themselves.

P3 Yes. But whatever it is includes those things.

RW Exactly.

P3 Do you see what I mean...

RW Yes.

P3 I don't know where I got this idea that somehow they must be shunned.

RW In fact they're all concomitant parts of the whole, as you might say. Even the dissolution; it's the same thing.

P3 Well in the Buddha's teaching, he calls them the five 'Heaps'.

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What he does is, he basically analyses this thing called 'US' into five separate bits.

P5 Yes.

P3 Like there's the physical matter. There's the range of feelings that are to do with, "Oh I like this", or "I don't like this", or "I feel neutral about this". There's the machinations of thought and the sense impressions, the raw data, and then there's the thing that recognises bits of the world, like I recognise X sat over there, and we identify with all these things...

RW All arises as a whole, with me.

P3 Yes, they make up our world. Us, and this thing we call us.

P5 Yes.

P3 And what the Buddha says, we're none of these things.

P5 Yes.

P3 Really, you know.

RW What he did, he described, as they come together and begin to act, then they produced, the illusion of self.

Which is ego.

P3 Yes. Because I've got a body. Because I've decided I'm going to have another biscuit.

RW That's right.

P3 Because I like the taste of the biscuit. That shows that I'm real, I'm alive.

RW Because I can see these things, I'm not these other people either  
(Laughs).

Therefore, I am.

P7 What he also says, that even Arhats, even enlightened people, have aggregates.....

But they're not aggregates of grasping. The difference between Arhats and others is that we grasp at them, they don't.

P3 Yes.

RW But the interesting point is, when you can meet moments when there's no grasping or aversion, just a neutrality, you are part of the whole. And there's nothing which isn't you. Which is a strange thing isn't it?

P3 In fact, the aggregates are parts of the whole.

RW That's right, once they're stood aside you've got something totally different.

P3 It's like this body. This body isn't anything separate from all the other stuff.

RW That's right, all these other things are the same...

P3 Same stuff isn't it.

P1 It's a problem isn't it, in one sense because, I mean, I've seen it myself a lot over the years, is you get into the belief that these things should be rejected.

P3 Yes.

P1 And of course, the act of rejecting those things, is an act of separating.

RW That's right yes, and this is where fragmentation occurs.

P1 Yes.

(Laughs)

RW Therefore something is now missing.

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- P7 It's not the aggregates that are the problem; it's the grasping that's the problem.
- RW Yes, but you could not grasp unless there was something to grasp at, which is separate. Once it realises that there isn't anything separate, it can't grasp, because there's nothing to grasp at anyway.
- P1 Well you've got it already anyway haven't you?
- RW It's there. It doesn't need it because it 'is'. That's the beauty of the whole thing, and that's where the total delusion comes in, the impossibility that it is one, and it isn't, because everything is separate, apparently.
- You know, that was a strange thing. For years I lived with this, I never quite realised what was what.
- There's a sort of a 'no thing' and all these things, it is all one, that was ok, that's fine, but I didn't realise that it was some kind of entity in its own right.
- That's when I told you about the bird in the bush, and I realised that, "oh that's the bit where I couldn't quite cope," "this is that." it is a 'something', as you might say, even though it's a 'No thing.'
- Because I was in the 'no thing' all these years, and it suddenly became a 'Something.'
- Interesting isn't it?
- Because it's one of those things that you experience, without it being properly described.
- P1 Well it's kind of paradoxical...
- RW Yes it is. It's the yes/no thing again. The 'is' and the 'isn't'.
- P1 It's like experiencing a sort of a nothing.
- RW It suddenly became wholly alive, it was part alive, and suddenly it become fully alive on that one.
- The Holy Ghost, so the Holy Spirit suddenly became...,was..., the Holy Spirit, and not just a part of it.
- That's all these years, funny that!
- P5 I remember coming down from Altrincham on my motor scooter, full of this love, and I saw this down and out man going around looking really miserable and unloved, and I loved him...
- RW Yes of course...
- P5 ... and it was expanding and I was nearly bursting with this love. I had this great big grin on my face,  
(laughs)
- I do wonder now if there was a bit of ego, that I actually cast all this love, embracing him in this love...
- RW There with the recognition is the reality of the Metta Sutta, you don't do it, it is!  
It's just natural. That is the reality of that.  
<Break>
- P1 Strange thing is, between those two different states of experience...
- RW Yes.
- P1 ... there's hardly a fag paper is there, you know.

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- RW I've said that many a time, the difference between one and the other is about as big as a cigarette paper.  
*(Laughs)*
- P1 It's strange. Last weekend, I was just staring out of the kitchen window, and I suddenly realised, you know, the mind was obviously quite open, and I suddenly realised that, "I am free".
- RW That's right.
- P1 But, everybody is free.
- RW Yes, but you know it, the others don't.
- P1 But I realised that, that little world that's manufactured, is purely a choice.
- RW It is a choice.
- P1 You make that little world, and you get up in the morning, and you open that door and you close it behind you.
- RW That's right.
- P1 Throughout the day, you may leave occasionally, but you walk back in, and you close the door. There's nobody else doing it.
- P1 But the natural state, the normal state is really genuinely free.
- RW This is the ignorance in the matter you see.
- P1 It is, that's the thing.
- RW That's totally free, and in fact they make their own prison, by clinging to it.
- P7 There are obviously exceptional people, like Ramana Maharshi who could just see this. But for most people, it takes decades of some kind of looking and trying...
- RW Oh yes.
- P7 People like Ramana who could just see it immediately are one in five hundred million.
- P1 And maybe, in his past life he was like us, you know.
- P7 Absolutely.
- P1 So it's a journey isn't it, that everybody goes on. That's quite true.
- RW But it's essential that somewhere along the line, you have to stop, and slow down, instead of being push push push, you've got to have a moment of rest, somewhere or other, in order that one can begin to assimilate things.  
Things can settle down in other words, it's like dirty water. Unless you leave it to still for a little while, and the sediment goes to the bottom and you get it clear. It's the same..., unless you stop somewhere and allow it to settle, there's no way you're going to see it, or even any way out.
- P1 It's the nature of the world isn't it.
- RW It is the nature of it. Agitation, agitation, agitation, agitation, chaos. Until somewhere you get a little stop sometimes, something forces you to stop for a while and then perhaps you can see. Maybe you get ill or something, have an accident, that sort of slows you down and then you begin to realise something more.
- P3 When you do stop, you know, these five aggregates again... I find this difficult to describe. You can then penetrate them.
- RW Yes.
- P3 You actually see them.

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- RW You see them for what they really are.  
And then you will definitely see them as other than yourself.
- P3 Yes.
- RW No doubt about it. In the same way as you look at your own thought. Normally you don't, you are in it.
- P3 Yes, you are in it.
- RW Then you suddenly discover, that, "I don't like to be thinking what I'm thinking about".  
Then you realise that you're separate from it.
- P1 It's also true of feeling isn't it...
- RW Yes that's right.
- P1 ... and emotions. But in fact, emotions are creatures of the body.
- RW That's right. Exactly. They are nothing to do with you what-so-ever. Other than the fact that they are a communication factor.
- P3 Earlier you gave the kind of simile that, I think it was a fly on a cube of ice.
- RW Yes
- P3 What I was relating to then when you talked about that, was this...,that when you do stop, you cut into the ice...
- RW That's right.
- P3 You actually see. It's the same like say, the body's like a lump of ice.
- RW Exactly.
- P3 You stop, and you can penetrate it.
- RW You begin to realise, it's not as solid as it looks, it's quite transparent, and you know how to look...
- P3 ...and it's constantly...
- RW And of course it has a life all of its own, which is not yours.
- P3 Yes. It regulates itself.
- RW Yes, that's right.  
Each little part has it's own consciousness, joined to the next one, and so on. It's a conglomeration of little bits of life all stuck together to make a big one.  
Like I have said many times, a big problem is nothing more than a lot of little one's all stuck together.  
*(Laughs)*  
This is what this is ... and it is a big problem.  
*(Laughs)*
- P1 Because there's lots of little one's!
- P5 And mine is bigger than yours.  
*(Laughs)*
- RW Each one shouting out to be recognised  
*(Laughs)*

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- P7 It's also like X said, grasping at the aggregates, because you grasp at one, you then grasp at the others. You get that 'dependent origination cycle', ( *buddhist teaching of Prat tyasamutp dā* you don't just grasp at one thing, you grasp at a package.
- RW You have to see grasping as an entity in it's own right. It just wants to keep on grasping, as you might say. It is its very nature.
- P9 So, if you watch the grasping, what will happen?
- RW When you observe the true nature of grasping, it will disappear.
- P9 Because every morning, for a few weeks now, I wake up, and I'm not unhappy, I can remember this happening when I was very very unhappy, when I would wake up, that second, you see you are in a nice calm state and then, 'puff', you are back into sorrow. Now, that was when I was in a very painful state, a few times, I have seen that. But I am not unhappy now...
- RW No...
- P9 But what happens is, I wake up every morning and for a few seconds, 'I am not'. If you understand?, and then I tick over, and I've got to watch a pattern of, not unhappiness, but, unsatisfactoriness starts to..., I see it, like a motor, and unsatisfactoriness starts to occur every morning, in degrees, and even though I'm watching it, I'm powerless.
- I see the difference, because sometimes these seconds before it happens are quite long. Enough for me to be aware of "I don't quite like this. . But because I'm not unhappy, mega unhappy, it's subtle, but it's poisonous in that I feel it coming and I just feel miserable. I see how even in my not unhappy state, I'm miserable, if that makes sense.
- But I can't stop this engine of grasping occurring. So do I keep just watching this?
- RW I think you'll find that..., you've come out of a state of a different dimension in which all things were fine, comfortable, and you've brought that comfort with you. But thought mind begins to tick over, because it is habitual.
- And it's got to re-establish the world so it will grasp at it, to bring it back into the world.
- Previously, in the comfortable state, unity, now you're grasping at separation, and taking yourself into fragmentation and this is where in fact the sadness comes in, and the misery, because you know it's going to be more misery. Yes?
- P9 Yes.
- RW Now, the thing, where it is possible, is to just observe quietly, don't try to ignore it. Just observe it quietly, as a friend...
- P9 Right.
- RW And observe the very nature of this grasping...
- P9 Right.
- RW And then you'll see, it will disappear, and the world becomes neutral, and not unhappy at all.
- P9 Right. So I've got to watch it as a friend.
- RW Yes.
- Once you see the nature of it, it cannot stand the light of your consciousness.
- No aspects of the conditioned world can stand the light of your consciousness. It will all have to disappear, and merely be seen for what it truly is, not attractive or unattractive, but just that. And after a while when you live with it, in that state, you begin to see, it is you! It's not separate from you.



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But, there's one little snag about this, which of course you get used to as you go along anyway, and that is there is 'no me', there's no identity. The 'I' that is, is no identity as a separate thing.

You look at anything, a chair, a table, and that is "I" as well as this.

So that in a sense the one thing that we have in common, is void of entity 'here', in the conditioned sense. The same way as 'that' is void of entity, as everything else is void of entity, and that is the thing that holds you all together, and it is that.

Because it's only a shadow, in its manifestation, as your shadow when a light casts on it, the shadow of the unmanifest, which is spirit, and which is what you are, that one Spirit is the same as I am, or anything else.

That's the bit that..., the biblical bit, the 'bird falling from the bush', in the biblical sense. "Not a bird falls from the bush that the Father isn't aware", and of course, it is the Father in every part of its aspect.

In other words, everything is made of the spirit.

And this is included. That's why it is separate from the physical body. It is not.

Incidentally, it never was the body, it was never born in the body.

It was never born at all.

An aspect of the consciousness became attached to the body, but was never born with it.

I think you know that too, don't you?

It never was born in a manifest form. The spirit of consciousness.

It experiences through physicality, yes, but it never was born there, and in that sense, the Bible is correct, coming from the Garden of Eden, which was a spiritual state, not a physical one, into the land of Nod, and taking on the garb of an animal. In other words, it wasn't born an animal.

It merely took on the form of one, and that is more or less the truth. So it becomes attached to that, and uses it to see through it in the physical sense. That's why it hides itself in its spiritual form.

But it's still, even within that, as your story, this lady who had the stroke, was able, and that part of the brain, to tune in to the reality of the spirit, to explain it in physical terms.

Because it never is physical, but since this is again, neither that or this, is a manifestation of the spirit, it can, under certain circumstances, realise its own origins as being, in that sense, Spirit.

Because that is where the activity comes from. In itself, it is inert. It has no life of its own other than that which the spirit gives it. That's why when death takes place, you look, and there's only a corpse, no life, no person. We say it's gone. The spirit has now moved on. If it were part of the body, it would not happen. It couldn't leave it, could it?

Interesting these things.

Interesting part about a lot of this is, I mean, as you have noticed over the years, you know one there maybe talks about something, you experience it for yourself, and know it.

You don't understand in terms of thought, but you actually experience and know by your own experience. Really what is being said, has triggered that 'something' deeper within you, and "I know what you mean".

But then I ask the question, could you, even with that experience, explain it to somebody else? You couldn't. Because it is a different dimension isn't it, which you begin to experience more and more, as you go on, as a different dimension.

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That's why you can't speak in physical terms. But the little things that can be said can trigger those things.

But it's always inert within your body, innate. It's an innate memory of its origins, like this woman, she's realised them. But it's of a spiritual nature, not a physical one.

That's why gradually we begin to experience it, in a sense of very subtle feeling rather than thinking.

So the feeling in these more subtle aspects is in truth a language of its own. Which is infinitely better than the alphabetical one. Because you know to the 'nth degree', don't you, which you couldn't do in thought.

Nice just to be attuned to that which is around you at any given point in time. Particularly of a more natural kind, rather than man-made, and begin to feel that rapport between you and all other living things, in particular.

And you begin to see that, "Ah, that's just another manifestation." You see a bird even and, "Mmm. I wish I could fly." But, "I am". It is me! It's not separate in its spirit. It is the same thing.

Surprising isn't it?

A tree, doesn't matter.

But you see, you only experienced these things when there's no thought or acceptance of a conditioned me, an ego. This is where the humility comes in, the not me, and experiencing the whole.

If it's me, I can't experience the whole.

If it's 'I', I am the whole. If it's 'me', I'm not.

*(Laughs)*

Funny isn't it.

<Break>

P4 There have been one or two instances with me, of what you're describing Russel. The word 'subtle feeling' came to mind a couple of times recently...

RW It is subtle.

P4 ...and it became like that.

RW Yes.

P4 It's in a way..., everything becomes softer, and you are interested in everything.

RW That's right. It's a natural interest, not a false one.

P4 Yes, and it's quite odd. It seems to bring some emotion in its wake, because the mind notices that you suddenly...

RW Well the point about it, because it's there, you see it, in some fashion or another, and it's interesting, and you take a deeper look as you might say, quietly..., and you know, for a moment you and that are as one. And the nature is known here, in that subtle feeling.

P4 Yes...

RW And this becomes the embodiment of that. Yes?

P4 Yes and, there's also, as a consequence, a little bit of confusion, because you're not sure where you are anymore.

RW Well of course not. That is the whole point. You don't need to know, do you.

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- P4 But, as well as that, there's something else which is, at other moments, there's a lot of recognition of, negativity, judgemental... that it's kind of almost disembodied, thoughts that come up automatically.
- RW Yes, well that's a good thing...Because what this is doing in actual fact, is bringing up what you might call your stored intellectual information, reviewing it, and letting it go.  
So it's unloading.  
All your previous understanding has to go. Your concepts and ideas have to go. In the experience, you see, it will relate to any part of those things that had previously been thought. Even though sort of only on the edges of it, and they come to be seen and then fall away. So emptying the mind, of all of its knowledge.  
This is why...you get enlightened people (saying), "I don't know anything. I have no knowledge." I haven't any knowledge, its all been unloaded.  
And there was only the moment. But clearly, the moment, because there's nothing to obscure it. And that's the process that you're going through. As easy as that, I think you've experienced some of that yourself, haven't you?  
Sometimes you wonder, "Oh where's this come from. I didn't know I had it." Then of course, its past and gone.
- P4 Yes.
- RW It's like having a rucksack and just taking stones out and chucking them away, sort of thing you know, until you've got an empty rucksack.  
(Laughs)
- P7 If they didn't come up, you couldn't let go of them.
- P4 No.
- P7 So only because they're coming up...
- RW You don't get rid of them, the fact that they've been seen, and seen for what they are, then they no longer exist. Because they are always delusory any way, so it's delusion gone, delusion gone, delusion gone.  
They were not seen as delusion in the first place mind you.  
(Laughs)  
So the old world of conditions disappears as delusion and you get a new world of a different nature all together.  
I think it has been described as the subliminal world as you might say. In other words, in no way can it harm you.  
But of course, it leaves you in a much better situation because as the consciousness gets that much brighter and clearer, it doesn't need any knowledge of any kind. But whatever arises, it can be met with the experience from within, not necessarily of this, but of the whole universe so that whatever is required is known in the moment of need. So it's a state of knowing without knowledge.  
It's an interesting one. So, you don't even know where it comes from, but you know the thing in the moment, what is required.  
This is the value of the Akashic record (*theosophical term for a compendium of all human events*) of which all things have been recorded, all thoughts, all deeds, whatever, have been recorded over the centuries, millennia, call it what you like, millions of years, and we have access to that when the need pulls something out, so it just has a knowing way of achieving it, without our instigation even. It does it for itself.

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So that we have a peculiar kind of recognition, of so called self. In so far as, it knows nothing, it's able to achieve, able to know, whatever it needs to know in the moment of knowing, so on and so forth, so, in one way, realising it isn't coming from within itself, as an entity, but somewhere of a greater nature, this is not me, and yet since it comes through and has that access, it is not other than me.

*(Laughs)*

So which one?

It's neither, it's both, it's the yes/no situation. That without identity, this is 'I'. 'I am', I am the vastness rather than this individuality, and yet that vastness is me. Yes.

P4 Because you can't discard the individuality.

RW You can't pin it down and yet you are not other than that.

To a degree, the body, this is where the body really comes in to use, rather than being used. It comes into use properly, in the sense that, whatever experience comes along this becomes the embodiment of it. It's like the light from this bulb. When you switch it on, it becomes the light and shines light. So that this will also shine out the basic ingredient of all things, which is love and nurturing. So this becomes the embodiment that radiates it out without any thought or idea of it.

One can observe, and enjoy it. But it radiates from this.

But it isn't me that makes it, because it has been emptied out and become completely open, then that flow comes through.

P3 Russel, I have seen that, but as you were talking, also the basic nature of all things is awareness...

RW Yes.

P3 ...and that flows out as well.

RW That's right, yes. That's there too, yes.

P3 Right! Because earlier...

RW It's all collected you see. These are all different aspects of the same energy.

P3 Yes! I've not seen that before, well, I have but I've only just caught it...

RW It sort of..., it hasn't registered.

P3 Yes.

RW That's good.

P3 So all the time your awareness...

RW ...is there.

Then this flow takes place, because the awareness is always, you can't be aware without openness. You follow?

P3 Yes, yes.

RW Now, if there is openness, you've got a complete flow of your mental aspect which is the co-joining aspect of everything. Isn't it?

P3 Yes, yes. So the only way, say, you can become aware of another person is...

RW ... is by that feeling.

P3 Yes, yes.

RW And of course as it flows out, the nature of that subtly comes back in, so that we know it.

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- P3 Its just..., when we were talking earlier about body awareness and...,  
... and I've been doing quite a lot of yoga, and I've been doing recently..., working in the  
postures for quite a long time, and..., say I have got my arm stretched out like that...
- RW Yes.
- P3 What I do, I send the awareness down...
- RW That's right. Out through the palm of the hand.
- P3 ... and it enlivens, and I..., and then it flows back again.
- RW That's right.
- P3 So it's like that.
- RW In actual fact it's doing it both ways at the same time. It isn't the in and out, but in and out as  
well.
- P3 Yes, yes.  
So the awareness flows out. The love flows out.
- RW That's right.
- P3 Yes, those two things.
- RW So that this is where the body really is acting as it should be as you might say, the feet firmly  
on the earth, as you might call it, for want of a better term, which is the earth aspect of this,  
and the breathe coming in from the Spirit, the two combining.  
Makes sense?  
So this thing now has a use in the world.
- P3 Yes.
- RW A marvellous use, which previously it was a hindrance.  
So that the world benefits from it now, which it couldn't do before.
- P3 It's like copper wire isn't it? Electricity...
- RW That's right.
- P3 You don't need...
- RW That's it, you got it.
- P5 Excuse me, I shall go now.  
<Break>
- RW What do you make of that?
- P4 Pardon?
- RW What do you make of that lot?
- P4 Which lot?
- RW That lot we were just dealing with.
- P4 Yes. I..., the love...
- RW It's so natural isn't it.
- P4 When it happens...
- RW It just happens, that's right. It didn't need deciding or not, it's going out. It just does it.
- P4 But it is. It is awareness. It's awareness of the...
- RW Oh yes, without awareness, it can't happen.

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- P4 It is active interest.
- RW Yes. You can't be aware, unless your mind is open. Doing this is not, it's only aware in here, so when it's out there, it's open.
- <Break>
- P4 ...and the opposite, the other thing...,selfishness seems to be when you're just locked away.
- RW That's right...
- P4 Locked into yourself. You are just not connected.
- RW You see, this is the difference between grasping and aversion. They are both the same thing, but one's grasping out there, and the other is clinging to this.
- P4 Yes.
- RW ... to keep it away from that, so it's all grasping. Grasping is the key. Recognise that for what it is, friendly, not as an enemy, then you find it will dissolve away and you're left with an open mind
- P4 I think there's been a glimpse of the fact that you are still who you are, with all your faults and little foibles. They don't disappear completely.
- RW No look, you're still..., the body still has habit patterns that it will follow. You know that, it's just a body and not me or yourself.
- But you have to be with that until it dies because it's got to live its own life, and you've given it habits to follow to live quite reasonably well, but there's no volition in it anymore. There's no nastiness that you can be responsible for. Surprising enough?
- P4 Mmm.
- RW So it will get up in the morning, have its breakfast, whatever. Do whatever chores there may be, because that's habitual. In other words, it sees it as a need because it was necessary, to live the life it lived before. But as the consciousness becomes clearer, it won't allow that to happen.
- But the mind becomes free anyway, and you know you're free. That's the difference - it always was, but you never knew it.
- When you realise you're free, yes! "I can observe all this and see the whole nature of what's going on," and from that you can learn to know what other people are. Because they're all, no matter who they are, they all live under these rules, not necessarily the same experience or the same kind, but under the same greed, hatred, envy. You know what they were because you have left them behind and you can see them now for what they were, which you couldn't see them even when you were in them, anymore than those people who've got them can see them now.
- You're able to see and observe other people with a great deal of compassion.
- Because all the while you were stuck in those, you suffered. But the mind being free cannot suffer. The body may, because it's still part of the world. But the consciousness no, it is free, and knowing it's free, it doesn't suffer.
- But that's by choice. It can come back and suffer, if you like to. But there's no point really is there.
- (Laughs)
- P7 What you were saying there about the foibles and things in Buddhism, one of the differences between a Buddha and an Arahant (*Pali – perfected person*) is that Buddhas don't have those. They're called 'Vasanas' in Pali, and Arahats still have, you know, the things you were talking about. The pacceka buddhas (*Pali – lone buddha*)– some Buddhas don't have those,

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they are vasana free, you know, and that's one of the main differences between Buddhas and Arahants.

RW One of the things you find is this...

That you become aware, more, of the present, and you can't see any future, it's just a blank. There's a vague aspect of the past, vague! But no knowing of the future at all. But well aware of where you are. Interesting is that.

Because you're not reaching into the future to plan things, of course you can plan for next week or next year if you need to. But then you put it down again and leave it till the time arrives for it to arise again. So you're not bothered about it, and in that, there's no fear. You see fear arises at the possibility that there is a future; at what may occur. But since there's no future, there's no fear. Because in the present, everything is fine.

Interesting that.

There's no thought of "what will become of me." There's just, "this is all there is." I am here and now, period.

And of course it's there, in the present of course, I mean, it's a changing present which makes it even more interesting, it's not static.

*(Laughs)*

That makes it even more interesting.

You travel by bus and train, no doubt, or anything else for that matter, but not driving necessarily. But you notice (*inaudible*) when somebody else is doing the work and you are just a passenger, and you observe the passing of the scenery, or whatever it may be, but when you do, in the normal sense, you don't see a passing thing at all: you see object, object, object, object ; and you watch it as it goes; object, object, but you are not doing that are you? But when you've dropped away concepts and ideas, then you do do that .

So you get the whole scene, and not this one, and that one.

P4 Yes.

RW It's surprising isn't it, when you think about that. Except you pick out an object and follow it along, and then when you get an open mind you see it just takes the whole lot in without specifically picking anything.

P4 So that's the grasping.

RW That's right.

P4 Whereas if you can just be open to it as it is.

RW That's right exactly, then you've got a different picture.

P4 Yes.

RW Even when you can observe that sometime.

P4 Yes, yes, you stay with it, just stay with it.

RW Just staying with it, there's just the motion, the passing scenery, I am passing the scenery.

*(Laughs)*

There are little things you notice like that you know.

<Silence>

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But the whole thing you see, whatever it is, is to use..., learn to be more fully conscious whatever it is you're experiencing at any point in time.

Don't necessarily try to identify or think too much about it, but just sense and experience it for whatever it is, and when you learn to do that, then you're really well on the way. Just be totally conscious in this, and that, and something else, and of course the..., as you became more proficient at being aware, then of course life gets much more rich as you go along, every little detail is picked up, when it was previously passed by.

Looking at the surface of things, and not in any depth, you see things in depth as you go along... it brings out a different nature. It's almost as if you've been looking in two dimensions and suddenly there's three dimensions, which makes a big difference.

In this case it could be in the fourth dimension as you might say, because you see the nature within things is the same thing, and realise its unity, which of course you couldn't before.

It was all possible before, it's true, but unfortunately too much thinking was going on, and didn't allow you to see much, it was a sketchy view of experience. Now you get more experience and less thinking, you get to know things differently.

There is that story, which comes up in Buddhism from time to time, with the blind men and an elephant, each picking a different piece; its leg, or its tail or its trunk, or whatever. Each feeling something different, this is true, but they all felt something the same, at the same time and through the sense of skin, they actually touch, they sense a living creature, regardless, of shape or form.

Point isn't it?

P3 I had never taken it to that step. I heard that story on Saturday; somebody was teaching it...

RW ...nobody tells you, they all felt the living animal...

P3 ...yes...

RW ...that they did have in common! This one felt that, this one felt that, what did they make of it. "It is a living creature."

So they did have something in common after all you see.

P3 Yes

<Silence>

RW It's surprising when you look at nature too, and find it's not at all uncommon for one species to suckle another.

The cat will suckle a dog, or vice versa, so on and so forth.

It's not uncommon for that sort of thing to happen.

Through the maternal instinct I suppose, or whatever it may be.

P7 We had a mother duck on the river last year, and she had seventeen babies and every single one survived, she must have been a really really good mother.

There was a mother duck one year, on the river, years and years ago, and this old man, took me across the bridge to a nest and there was a mother duck on the nest, and he used to go and see her every day, and she knew him very well, and she would let him stroke her.

We saw something similar, you remember the monk who came here, X? We took him to the top end of lake Windermere and there was a cob and a female swan, and tiny tiny signets. You know how defensive male swans are about their young and yet he let Venerable X stroke



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these tiny signets. Obviously he was a very loving kind of person, the male swan could obviously feel this, didn't feel in the least bit threatened. We all stood back so that he wouldn't be picking up our vibrations, and just picking up the monk's vibrations and he was actually there stroking these signets. It was wonderful to watch.

RW I remember a chappie on the Isle of Aran who was like that, and I remember him wading out into the sea, up to here, to pick up a duck that was injured, and the duck waiting for him to do it. The birds used to come, he had a bit of a shed in the bottom of his garden, right on the shoreline virtually, and he had to put curtains on the windows of the shed because the birds would fly into it when he was in there. Every time he came out, they mobbed him virtually, on his shoulders, on his head. If he just put his hand out, they would come and land on it.

I remember that he had been a bank manager in Glasgow most of his life. He'd been retired down there, and he was just one of these people who had this fascination with animals and birds, and they used to come to him, just like that. Occasionally he'd come along with a little tobacco tin with bits of cheese in and hand them to the birds and they'd just sit one on each finger, and all together, which is very rare again, usually one at a time.

And I actually watched him and this duck was showing signs of distress on the water and he waded out, up to here in the water, just picked it up gently, came back, sorted it out. It had displaced its wing and he put it right and it was there 3 or 4 days before it moved on.

P3 It reminds me, I came across a book recently that I read in my teens, called "The Snow Goose".

RW Oh yes I remember that.

P3 By Paul Gallico.

RW I remember that. A snow goose that kept coming... adopted him!

P3 ... and then he he...

RW He went to war with it.

P3 I kid you not, I read the first paragraph, it's happening now, I just wept. I haven't read that since I was quite young.

RW I remember that a long time ago, Paul Gallico, he was good at that!

P7 It's a really beautiful book.

P3 He was an artist wasn't he the guy that wrote Snow Goose?

P4 Paul Gallico.

RW The Snow Goose is a very brilliant piece of writing. If you didn't have a bit of emotion with that, you never would.

P3 Yes, that's right.

RW The goose still migrated, and came back to him each season as you might say, and just stuck, like a companion, and the story was that during the Dunkirk period he took his sail boat and sailed over there and the goose went with him.

*(Laughs)*

P3 And it's a young girl, 12 I think, who brings him the goose.

He's actually, Paul Gallico, they never said why, but he is actually physically misshapen. He's got one hand slightly... and they build up a relationship through this goose, you know, and then he obviously gets killed.

RW That's right...

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- P3 ... and the goose comes back, just circles the light house he lives in and shoots off, and this girl realises she actually loved him even though he had this kind of gross physical... only a little thing but, I wept!
- P7 Has anyone read "The Man Who Planted Trees", that French one?
- P5 That is a similar one.
- P7 Yes, It's not true, it's fictional, about a man in Provence, a peasant, who doesn't really have much contact with people, or anything like that, and he plants dozens and dozens and dozens of acorns, but of course when he's dead there's this wonderful legacy left. The man who planted trees, forest grows up. I wondered if it was a true story, but it isn't. But it's a very similar kind of feel to it isn't it.
- P3 Talking about that, you must walk on Chorlton Meadows.  
About, maybe twenty five years ago, I was walking on those meadows when they were just beginning to be kind of re-done with one of the guys who was a chief planner.  
He said "Just remember, this isn't being done for now, it's being done for 25 years time", and I walk down there now and think, "Yeah, you were right", you know, it's all blossomed hasn't it, it's fabulous!
- RW It doesn't take long for nature to take hold does it? I mean, if Manchester became bereft of human beings, within a hundred years you wouldn't see anything but the trees.  
Nature will take over wherever there was anything in due course, give it a little time.  
I mean, you've only got to look in South America. and places like that, these old structures from past civilisations, to see how they have been overgrown with jungle and animals that go with it. These place will be exactly the same.  
*(Laughs)*
- P4 Corners of my garden are like that.  
*(Laughs)*
- P1 Whole civilisations been lost in X's garden...  
*(Laughs)*
- P4 ...it just wants, it just wants to grow doesn't it?
- RW The whole thing is becoming, becoming, becoming. Talking about, I mean life is very tenacious, vigorous; I see tree growing out the side of flipping rocks.  
*(Laughs)*  
Amazing. While the conditions are there, life will survive.
- Anyway it's time to move on...