

24 November 1966

STATEMENT BY F.C.R.

In case any of you might wish to share my thought at this moment, I will try to express it.

Reduced to my last defences, with death only a few hours away, I had only a few simple words of the Shankaracharya to hold on to: 'A man comes to realise that he is not only flesh and bones, but he is also Soul and Consciousness as well.'

In returning to live on that basis, just one or two special things that people have given me (besides the lively sense of your love around me) have helped me to get started again.

The first (from Mrs. Henry) was this quotation from Plotinus which was unknown to me:

Let the Soul banish all that disturbs; let the body that envelops it be still, and all the frettings of the body and all that surrounds it; let the earth and sea and air be still, and heaven itself. And then let the man think of the Spirit as flowing, pouring, rushing and shining into him from all sides while he himself stands quiet.

Trying it, of course nothing happened, for this takes a bit of time to achieve by constant practice; and its full consummation would be at that sixth step of the Ladder of Self-realization which is called 'Abundance'.

Something else was needed, and that my family supplied – namely de Chardin's *Hymn of the Universe*. (This is the Spiritual Father Pierre, not the biologist, though in him the two were never separate.) It begins, if you remember, thus:

THE OFFERING

Since, once again, Lord – though this time not in the forests of the Aisne, but in the steppes of Asia – I have neither bread nor wine nor altar, I will raise myself above these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the Real itself; I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar, and on it will offer you all the labours and sufferings of the world.

Over there on the horizon, the sun has just touched with light the outermost fringe of the Eastern sky. Once again, beneath the moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and trembles, and once again begins its fearful travail... Grant me again the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to the new day...

This restless multitude confused or orderly, the immensity of which terrifies us; this ocean of humanity whose slow monotonous wave-flows trouble the hearts even of those whose faith is most firm: it is to this deep that I thus desire all the fibres of my being should respond. All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase; all those that will diminish; all those, too, that will die; all of them Lord I try to gather into my arms, so as to hold them out to you in offering. This is the material of my sacrifice, the only material you desire.

Once upon a time men took into your temple the first fruits of their harvests, the flower of their flocks. But the offering you really want, the offering you mysteriously need every day to appease your hunger, to slake your thirst, is nothing less than *the growth of the world borne ever onwards in the stream of universal becoming*.

Receive, O Lord, this all-embracing host which your whole creation moved by your magnetism, offers you at this dawn of a new day.

This bread, our toil, is of itself I know but an immense fragmentation; this wine, our pain, is no more, I know, than a draught that dissolves. Yet in the very depths of this formless mass, you have implanted... a desire, irresistible, hallowing, which makes us cry out, believer and unbeliever alike; 'Lord, make us one'.

Because, my God, lacking the soul, zeal and the sublime integrity of your saints, I yet have received from you an overwhelming sympathy for all that stirs within the dark mass of matter; because I know myself to be irremediably less a child of heaven than a child of earth; therefore I will this morning climb up in spirit to the high places... and there... upon all that in the world of human flesh is now about to be born or to die beneath the rising sun I will call down the Fire.

(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. *Hymn of the Universe*, Collins, 1965)

Now, strangely, however, hard I tried to read it, nothing else in that book made this special appeal. For there is an idea contained in this quotation which shows itself in several different aspects, if one plays with it after meditation or during a change of consciousness from sleep to waking. In seeking to expand consciousness from a dim awareness of an Individual Self into more and more universal aspects of the Creator, this idea that 'what the Creator really wants, what will appease his hunger and slake his thirst is nothing less than the growth of the world borne ever onwards in the stream of Universal becoming', opens many doors. There is human history, for instance, with its incredible foolishness and apparently unnecessary crimes committed through ignorance against this idea. Yet nearly always there have been people who have understood that this is what the Creator wants and in their different ways have set about doing all they could to further such a cause. If you think about it you'll find, I'm sure, that it widens the horizon and the possibilities of what we here are trying to do.

This branch of the Work which Mr. Ouspensky brought to London in the 1920's has now become too big to be under the exclusive control of one man – it has clearly become cosmic in aim and is receiving cosmic help. We have lately been deriving tremendous value from a life-giving graft of the Mevlevi Tradition.

RESISTANCE TO INNOVATION

Here is a special message to all those now at Colet who belong to my generation, that is those who knew Mr. Ouspensky and were trained directly by him. All through those difficult times from the 1920's up to World War II, all through that war, its bombings and its threats, we developed a built-in negative attitude to intrusion and innovation of any kind. This was necessary and appropriate then and for the first few years after his death in 1947; but *it is no longer necessary or appropriate*. As we get older too this tendency is apt to become stronger – this resistance to change and innovation. It is probably our chief obstacle to attaining our own Kingdom of Love within. We must stop it; we must step out of it! Fortunately Lord Northesk has always been able to see beyond that, and now with Mr. Allan and many others of the newer generation to help us, the future looks good indeed!

Our System of True Knowledge shows us also other aspects on bigger and bigger scales of 'the growth of the world and the stream of universal becoming'. That hazy band of light so far away across the sky at night is not far away at all, because we live in the spiral galaxy of the Milky Way, and our sun is revolving as a fragment of what seems to be a vast forcing-house for star-

clusters and stars of many different orders and kinds about which volumes are being written today. Yet if our mind takes refuge in focussing on to this single star, our Sun, what a forcing-house for experimental forms of life is revealed within our tiny solar system!

But one can kill the idea by going on talking about it! Better, one feels, to let the mind play around with it for a time in accordance with H.H's hints about 'expansion'; another illustration of which is the fact that the physical body of each one of us is an epitome of all organic life with which it celebrates each day. We should learn to understand it better, its struggles and its needs.

Our System aphorism has become peculiarly vivid to me: 'Prepare to die to-morrow, but look after your body as if it had to live a hundred years.'

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