

STYLE OF THE WAY

It is very simple to describe the Way in the abstract. It is journey with Being. If you ask me what journey with Being is I would say the complexity of that is quite great. It is to see what Being as a creative power is doing in our daily lives and times; it is to do what we see Being doing, and thus it is to reveal Being to other people. That would be to journey with Being or to be on the Way. This journey with Being is not something we tell ourselves, but something we do, something that we undertake, something that involves our whole lives. It is the journey of the whole person. It is also a journey in the midst of space and time. That is, it involves concretely our daily lives and the vicissitudes of this world. It is not something detached from or away from the world in which we live. This journey with Being is a journey of discovery. It is not just telling myself that life is a journey, but it is doing what is necessary to make my life a voyage of discovery. I would like to talk about the style of the Way under four categories: the way of creation, the way of awakenment, the way of adventure and the way of taking care of each other. The last one is really a conclusion.

The first point under the way of creation is the journey of nature. Sometimes you read that if you want to know what the Way is just look at nature. I have always found this very offensive because to sit and look at a flower does not seem to be very helpful, particularly if you are not inclined to like flowers. But what they were pointing to begins to make sense as a discovery. They were trying to discover how that flower comes to terms with life, how it flows and struggles with the creative process. Look to nature and you can see what it means to be on the Way.

I think we need a corrective, of course, for there are those who see that Way as the journey of history. Look at the decisions that have been made in the midst of history and the great trends that have been created by those decisions, both known and unknown. You know how our own studies have centered in where we have tried to look into the deeps of the historical process to determine the great waves of history and the direction of the trends.

Another part of the way of creation is the journey of the turning points. We first saw this in Kazantzakis where he had us coming out of the ego through our family, our race, our nation and expanding our lives until they reached all the earth. Our own work with life phases has been a work along this line, and John Dunne has a similar kind of scheme. At each stage of life there is a new horizon of feeling, imagination, thought and action that takes place and requires a response from us. We have spent much time in the years past working on this. What has been very helpful to see is that each turning point foreshadows the end, our own death. To put it another way, the turning point becomes a window of Being opened up for us. Although we study this, all you have to do is look at some of us who have just turned, or are about to become 40 and you can see how that window of Being has begun to open up.

The journey into consciousness is a part of the way of creation. The creative process forces us into consciousness unless we actively seek to hide from it. Indeed, what we have done is devise ways to help that process along. Recall in past images we used that enabled us to look into the archaic, into the future, into the universal and into the particular. We even talked about the central motivating shifts in the cultural revolution: the rapid expansion of consciousness and space, extension of time and relationships and the intensification of our old engagement. All this was a way of talking about how creation goes on and how we may participate in that as part of the journey of the Way, or the journey with Being.

Second, the style of the way is the way of awakenment. The first point under that is the journey of the "yes". This is always the first step in awakenment, no matter how it comes. It could be from RS-1; it could be in a town meeting. In fact, the night before last a colleague from the old days came up and said, "You know, nothing has changed here, but everything is different." I said, "Say a little more." He said, "Everything that is going on, everything I hear echoes RS-1, RS-1, RS-1." Now, that is where we were in our particular journey when he left. But you can see here how once the journey of the "yes" is begun this first step of awakenment is a radical happening to our lives.

Then are we willing to say we are on a journey that leads to death? That is part of the "yes", whether or not it is self-conscious when we begin, when we see that fundamental change in our vocation and in our work. Whatever else our life purposes would be, we are not out to build a great big movement or a great shiny HDP in and for itself. We are out to build a project of becoming human, becoming human beings in the midst of the world. This is what is behind our building of the projects. And so our journey proceeds out of the "yes", the first step in the journey of awakenment.

The second point under the way of awakenment is the journey of embodiment. In other words we have to internalize that decision, that "yes". When we say "yes" to the journey we become radically one with the earth, bodily incarnate in that situation. You never know if you really embody the situation. It is always a struggle to know whether or not you are in the midst of that, and sometimes you are surprised. I recall when I was a kid in my mid teens I went to a foreign country and was away from people that I knew. I had gotten diarrhea and was homesick. I had been up two or three nights and was tired. I was lying in the back of an automobile sound asleep, and the sun had come up and awakened me. I sort of sat up, and about that time the car came over a hill. We looked down into a bay where there was a ship flying an American flag. Suddenly a surge of emotion came over me that just grabbed my whole being and shook it. I could not have done anything about it. I was just seized. That response had been woven into me by my culture. You would expect someone in that kind of existential situation to respond that way. It was woven in without my knowing, so to speak.

A couple of years ago when I returned to India after a summer session the first people I met said, "Welcome home." The same thing happened to me again: a great surge of emotion just seized me and shook me. As I stood there like that they probably thought I had trouble getting off the plane, trying to keep from appearing I was shaking. That seemed to say to me somehow that I had internalized the decision to be in that particular place. That internalization then just took over my life and my being.

Under the way of awakening there is, in the third place, the journey of humiliation. This also involves the "yes" we spoke of above. But here it involves a journey to the center and back, a journey of radical detachment and radical engagement. You remember how it was a breakthrough for us when we first began to work with these categories? In our ITIs and Academies we included, for example, exercises of detachment. Participants would scream and yell and almost get up and run out of the room. We saw in ourselves the difficulty of the journey to the center and then of the return to engagement. But once that journey happens to you you see it continuously happen from then on.

Furthermore, the journey to the center is simultaneous with the journey back from the center. That first hit me a number of years ago when all of us went out to see a movie. It was one of those films which made life transparent in the midst of ordinary happenings. But it was weird. They had a situation where a woman hated her elder sister over the years because her elder sister had ground her under. The movie had her going to her elder sister who was in bed. She walked up and pulled the covers back to embrace her elder sister. When she reached down, she saw it was herself lying in the bed as a corpse. She went ahead and embraced her own corpse and when she did, lo, she backed off -- it was her elder sister. You cannot exercise care unless you die to your attachments. That is a simultaneous happening. The great story of the journey to the center and the return is telling us that.

The same thing happens in our social situation. The village of Chikhale was ruled by the Brahmans for many years. However the great majority of the people there were a backward class called Agri-Marathas. About seven or eight years ago they rose up out of great hatred of the oppression they were under and drove the Brahmans out of the village. Now there are several huge mostly unoccupied Brahman houses in the midst of the village and they still own much of the land. A few have returned and others try to operate from a distance to control that village and to squeeze it in such ways as they can. The sarpanch was not going to let this go on. A couple of weeks ago he smashed back at the Brahmans and told the Agris not to bring out the plough. The catalyst in that situation happened to be the Community Development Association which had been formed. They all resigned that night. One of our staff happened to ride in about that time. They just dumped the whole problem in his lap. He knows when people have been through enough awakening to know they are on a journey. He said, "Well, it's your situation; you have to solve it." He turned around and drove off. When he came back the next morning do you know what was happening? All the Agris were out with 20 bullock teams ploughing the Brahmans' fields. The Brahmans had got out, rolled up their dodis and were helping around the fields! They ended up

ploughing all the fields of the village. How can you care for all those Brahmans? Or your village? You can't care until you die to the fact of your hatred for them, until you move through that hatred in radical detachment. This is the journey of humiliation that always goes on in the way of awakenment.

The fourth point in the way of awakenment is the journey of care. That is an ever-increasing and expanding care. The more that we journey into care the more intense is the suffering and humiliation. I won't elaborate on that anymore because we have worked on it quite a lot.

Third, the style of the way is the way of adventure. The first point under that is the journey of the gifts. Dunne repeated the Prometheus story, saying that there are two things given to us: light and darkness. For darkness you could substitute other words like mystery or the unknown. The light by which we live comes out of our ever-increasing consciousness, and the darkness in which we live is that which conceals our fate from us. In other words, the darkness is always present. We do not know what is going to happen to our work tomorrow. We do not even know what is going to happen to us. Both the light and the darkness are gifts and both are essential elements of the journey. We are up against these at every point of the journey. Light reveals our situation and the darkness always conceals our fate, or destiny. To say "yes" to these leads us to hope, and leads us to adventure.

The result of those two gifts is the second journey under the way of adventure. That is the journey into the night. The "yes" releases us to take a journey into the night, to grasp the destiny concealed there, and to see Being's dark purpose at work in our lives. The purpose is dark because it is unknown. But it is creative, because it always feeds back into our situation and gives us a new being to operate out of in the next step. To see that the darkness, too, is good, and to receive it as a gift, to say yes to both gifts, the light and the darkness, enriches our lives and gives us a sense of significance. Here is the basis of our fulfillment. Here is the basis of our wrestling with the articulation of the myth factor.

The third point in this way of adventure is the journey of presence. It is necessary for someone who experiences being on the way of adventure also to grasp himself as the presence, and to stand and be that way in every situation and articulate it to others. We have said the intensification of knowing and doing is presence.

An illustration from India shows how this radically alters people. We were thinking of putting an industry in one of the villages on the Deccan Plain. We had been to the bank and worked with them to get approval. Because of the distance to the project the bank was reluctant to give us approval, but they followed it through because we had other projects going and had a good scheme. Their representatives kept postponing coming to the village, until it looked like we wouldn't have our key district circuiters present. So I decided I had better go along on the visit. Upon arrival at the Taluka place I rode in a jeep with the bankers to the village. Because the bridge at the front of the village was out we had to drive around to the back, which

always looks horrible. As we drove in I kept looking for some visible signs of development like a fine welcome sign. There were none. On the narrow street by which we entered the village there was only junk and rubble with drainage in a rut down the middle. I said to myself, "We have gone through the back part, and soon we will see the fine looking preschool." It had been moved. Only the debris remained. Then we got to the auxiliary house, and it, too, was in the chaos of reconstruction. The circuiters Samson and Ghodke were not there, and a number of youth were milling around. I couldn't tell who was auxiliary and who was not. No one spoke English. I grabbed the first youth I thought I might have seen before. He turned out to be from a neighboring village. We asked for the village leaders. They were all away from the village. Finally what seemed to be the equivalent to the village drunk came up and started talking! I kept anticipating the questions and trying to clarify the situation. Then the women who would be operating the industry came up. They did a tremendous job explaining their role but they couldn't answer any questions about the relation of the industry to the village. I explained everything to the bankers and in principle they received it, but they were obviously nervous. We got in the jeep and drove back out the way we had come. Ghodke was standing at the entrance of the village by now. The banker from Bombay said, "Is that Samson or Ghodke?" I said, "Yes, yes it is Ghodke." So we stopped. Ghodke happens to be the younger of the two. He began to ask Ghodke questions and again I couldn't understand them, but Ghodke answered back -- bang, bang, bang, bang. About that time Samson rode up on a bicycle. He had come into the back of the village and then chased us all the way around, which, by this time was about two kilometers. They were beginning to ask hard question. Samson went back to his bicycle, unbuckled his bag and pulled out a little book. He said, "What would you like to know?" They would ask who the village leaders were. He would respond. Then they wanted to know about the Community Development Association. He would respond. Then about the people of expertise in the village and the taluka place. He would respond. Then they asked, "Who are the women?" Samson had 31 women listed in his book with their names, their family situation and income and on and on. By the time they got through those bankers were just putty in those two fellows' hands. They answered every question, they stood up straight, they spoke directly to the bankers. They didn't cringe at any hard question. When we left we had that industry-- it was solid.

That is an example of the journey of presence. Those young men articulated what was going on in that village in a way that just slammed meaning and significance into those bankers' midst. This is what I mean by the journey of presence.

People on the way of adventure are also on the journey of meaning or fulfillment. Their task is to tell the story of the journey that people's lives may become significant and be fulfilled. We not only grasp the light when we tell this story, but also the darkness and the destiny concealed there. That does not mean we tell all the gory things about what has gone on, but that we tell our story in such a way that the Mystery begins to seep through the happening in a brand new way and envelope others. They can see that what we are doing is dealing with the depths of life. It is not rattling off victories, but proclaiming the significance of those victories in transformed lives brought into being. That is what had happened with Samson and Ghodke. They were not rattling off victories; they were proclaiming the victory that was there, the significance.

I sat in a meeting not too long ago where we were naming the victories of the week and I had some information that others did not have: we were about to go down the tubes. I was sitting there and my whole life was being ground up by that knowledge while they were giving all these little victories, like, "I bought 5 eggs for 4 pisa instead of 50 pisa." It had nothing to do with my guts or my destiny. What they were doing was what they should have been doing, I'm not trying to comment on that. But what I'm trying to say is when you are talking about victory, or about the light, if it doesn't include the darkness or your destiny, the whole of your being, it is not victory. It is not finally significant; it is not fulfillment.

During this past June in Maliwada we had a celebration of the 232. We gave the 10 great happenings of the 232 this past year. Two and a half years ago we sent the first four project auxiliary out after graduation. The money did not come in, and we sent them out with less than \$100 in their pocket to do the consult. Then, a little over a year ago the President came and said no, and all our top level authorization went out the window. That is not the kind of victory I had planned. That was not the kind of 232 that any of us thought ought to happen. Yet it went on. We had also planned that for the first HDTI all the ITI grads from the movement would rush to join. Five came. That is all that have ever come. Almost all the people that attend the HDTIs are villagers and almost all of them are uneducated. So we have a mass number of villagers with only uneducated villagers as auxiliary. That was not the way we had planned it. In other words, the whole coming into being and bringing off of the 232 was a radically different operation than any of us dreamed of. The victory was won because of us and in spite of us. It was Being's victory, and it was a fantastic victory. But it was one that Being brought off, or the dark purposes and the destiny of our future.

What does it mean to talk about that? I think that now we could go to any third world country and say replication can be done with local support, without money, and without educated troops. Perhaps that has been said to us through this particular kind of happening, and we continue to spin on what that significance is.

There is endless creativity to what significance you could give to happenings like that. For example, when we had the 232 celebration, it was just out of this world. There were huge flags of the 232 all around. We totally filled the Nehru Chowk, which was about the size of this room, with about 1000 people. Over half of them were in full blue. At the end of the celebration Suryban came up to several of us and began to talk. He said, "You know, this was a great celebration for Maliwada. Maliwada felt that when the President came here over a year ago we bore the responsibility for that negation. Over the past year we have had to bear that burden. Now, the 232 celebration is the absolution for what happened over a year ago." Here was a villager with a third or fourth grade education spinning the significance, spinning the story to give those villagers new possibilities. And not just for the villagers, but for us also. That was a brand new way of articulating what had happened.

Finally, a word about the style of the way as the way of taking care of each other. It is thinking through screens and tools for getting at the initial starting point of the journies. Town Meeting is the initial starting point for getting someone on the first step of saying "yes". But what is the tool to get people on the initial starting point of the journey to the center and back? I don't think it has to be as elaborate as we had at the beginning of our work on the New Religious Mode and Other World, but something like that. The kind of things that we forged out for the expansion of consciousness now could be used in other realms. Then, there are tools we created for the turning points of life phases. What are the other great journies we have in life whose turning points we can get screens for? Also, what would be the designs to enable a continuous journey? How do we talk about the journey to the **center** and back as a continuous activity that goes on every minute of our lives? There is little help when radical humiliation is going on at every moment. How do we talk about the journey to the center as a brand new opportunity to share with our fellow man?

These are some of the places we need to develop screens and tools: at the beginning point of journies and crucial turning points and stages along the way. In addition, we need tools that enable us to take continuous journies that happen in every moment. Tools could be words, phrases, slogans, stories, poetry, movies and perhaps artforms. We have much work to do in this arena to nourish the daily spirit lives of each other.

I want to read this to you. It does not express the fullness of the journey of the Way, but you may swirl with it:

Cease, Man, to mourn, to weep, to wail;  
Enjoy the shining hour of sun.  
We dance along Death's icy brink,  
But is the dance less full of fun?