

BABA RAM DASS LECTURE AT THE MENNINGER FOUNDATION

This paper (Part 1) is a transcription of a taped lecture given May 5, 1970 under the sponsorship of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas. The text has been edited in such a way as to preserve its spoken content and flavor. Baba Ram Dass is the name given to Dr. Richard Alpert by a teacher of yoga in India. Dr. Alpert was formerly a professor of psychology at Harvard. Part II is scheduled to appear in a forthcoming issue-Editor

Baba Ram Dass: I thought I would begin this evening with a brief statement of the subject matter, and I thought rather than my saying it, I would say it through a few other eyes. First we'll start with Dante in the *Divine Comedy*;

Dante: I have been in that heaven, the most illumined by light from him and seen things which to utter, he who returns hath neither skill nor knowledge, for as it nears the object of its yearning our intellect is overwhelmed so deeply it can never retrace the path that it followed. But whatsoever of the holy kingdom was in the power of memory to treasure, it will be my theme until the song is ended.

Walt Whitman: Swiftly arose and spread around me the place, the peace and joy and knowledge that passes all the art and argument of the earth, and I know that the hand of God is the elder hand of my own, and I know that the Spirit is the eldest brother of my own, and that all men ever born are also my brothers and the women my sisters and lovers, and that a kelson of creation is love.

Robert Browning: Truth lies within ourselves; it takes no rise from outward things, whate'er you may believe. There is an inmost center in us all, where truth abides in fullness and to know rather consists in opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendor may escape than in effecting entry for light supposed to be without.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, counting, planting man, does not as we know him represent himself, but misrepresents himself.

*path of
consciousness*

Last evening, here in Topeka, as one of the journeyers on a path, a very, very old path, the path of consciousness, I, in a sense, met with the Explorers Club to tell about the geography I had been mapping. The people who gather to hear somebody called Baba Ram Dass, formerly Richard Alpert, have somewhere, at some level, in some remote corner, some involvement in this journey. All that I can see that we can do with one another is share notes of our exploration. I can say, "Watch out, because around that bend the road falls off sharply to the left . . . stay far over on the right when you do that."

*cyclic nature of
spiritual journey*

The motivation for doing this is most interesting-it's only to work on myself. It's very easy to break attachments to worldly games when you're sitting in a cave in the Himalayas. It's quite a different take you do of sex, power, money, fame, and sensual gratification in the middle of New York City in the United States with television and loving people around and great cooks and advertising and total support for all of the attachments. But there is the story of a monk who got very holy up on the mountain until he had some thousands of followers. After many years he went down into a city and he was in the town and somebody jostled him. He turned around angrily and that anger was a mark of how little work he had really done on himself. For all the work he had done he still hadn't clipped the seed of anger; he still got uptight when somebody pushed him around. So that what I see as my own *sadhana* (my work on my own consciousness-it could also be called my spiritual journey) is that it is very much cyclic. There are periods of going out and there are periods of turning back in, periods of going out and periods of going back in. Just as living here in the market place is forcing things into the forefront, so sitting in a room by myself for 30 or 40 days in a mountain is forcing other things to be confronted. Each hides from the other, each environment hides from the other sets of stimulus conditions. For example, in the commune we've been designing up in the mountains of New Mexico, where I ran an ashram for awhile this winter, the design has four components to it which are roughly related to the solstices. For one period, a person would be in the hermitage on the top

*four component
design of ashram:
first part*

of the hill where he would be going deep-diving deep within. He would be totally alone in solitude in a hermitage. The food is left outside the door. In the one I ran this winter, the people would go in for up to 19 days. The first time they went in I let them take books and pictures and weaving and all of their things (their pet kind of cream cheese or whatever it was they needed). For the second round we changed the game a little and all they took in was their sleeping bag. They walked into a room, closed the door, and for the next 10 days, fire and wood and food were left outside and there was a jug of water. They were all protected, all taken care of. There were no phones to answer, no mail. We were protecting them and giving them that chance to get free of all the stimuli that keep capturing consciousness all the time so that one keeps saying, "If it weren't for " Well, we did that. We created that place.

A second part of the four-point cycle is that a person *lives* in a commune, an ashramite lives in the commune . • . that is, he takes care of the gardens, the babies, the goats, cooks the food, chops the wood, does Karma Yoga. That is, Karma Yoga among what's called *satsang* or *sangha*, that is, a community of other beings who consciously know they are working on their own consciousness. In Buddhism there is a traditional thing you do which is to take the three refuges. There is a chant, which means, first, "I take refuge in the Buddha," I take refuge in the fact that a being can become enlightened, that is, a being can get free of any particular state of consciousness (attachment) . Second, "I take refuge in the Dharma," I take refuge in the law, in the organization of the universe, the laws of the universe, you can also call it karma. And third, "I take refuge in the Sangha," in the community of other people, of monks on the path, the community of other people who are seeking. Thus, when you define yourself as a seeker after sensual gratification then you surround yourself with other people who are seekers after sensual gratification. When you define yourself as an intellectual you often surround yourself with intellectuals. When you define yourself as a seeker after consciousness, you start to surround yourself with other seekers after consciousness, because in that phase being around such people really gives you a kind of environmental support.

It's like . • • take the matter of consecrating life actions . . . what I mean by the word consecration is bringing into consciousness the nature of the act in a cosmic plan. For example, in the old days people would say grace. Grace was

*second part
of ashram
cycle*

*three refuges
of Buddhism*

*effect of
self-definition*

*nature of
consecration*

a thing you waited for before you ate the turkey. Norman Rockwell characterizes the kid reaching while everybody's head's bowed. It's that time, "Let's say grace." "Grace." Now, when I bless food, the statement I say, when I say grace, is an old Sanskrit one. It means "This offering of this ... this little ritual I'm performing, this is part of it all, part of Brahma, part of that which is eternally all. He who is making the offering means, that which is being offered is part of it all. The hunger to which you are feeding . . . the fire which you are feeding, that's all part of it all. Whoever you are offering it to is part of it all, too. He who realizes that all of it is interrelated, all of it is one, becomes one with it

There is a very lovely short story by J. D. Salinger called *Teddy*, in which Teddy is a very ... he's like an old lama who's taken a reincarnation in a kind of middle class western family by some quirk of cosmic design. He is about 10 years old and on a ship with his sister and his mother and father. He's out on deck and he's meeting this man who has begun to see that this little boy isn't quite like a little boy, and he says to him, "When did you first realize that you . . . how it was?" And Teddy says, "Well, I was 6 years old. I was in the kitchen and I was watching my little sister in her high-chair drink milk. I suddenly saw, that it was sort of like God pouring God into God, if you know what I mean." Well, that's exactly the same thing as that Sanskrit mantra. You're pouring energy into energy for a matter of energy in honoring energy. So big deal, so nothing's happened. Certainly knocks a hole in orality to start to see the universe that way. What are we doing? Nothing. How could you ever do anything, it's all here? Are we all here? Sure. So in learning how to consecrate and so on it is helpful to have people around.

It is part of my karma to be visiting my father who is a 73 year old ••• a Republican from Boston, a conservative man, and a very successful man in the society. When we sit down to the table, he starts to eat and then he looks over and he sees that I'm doing this "thing" which I do quietly, I'm not coming on about it. I'm just sort of sitting quietly . . . and he'll hold his spoon in mid-air and he'll go, "pht." It's almost an involuntary thing that comes out. It's like, O.K., I'll wait for the kid . . . it's his *meshuggeneh* thing. Now that's not satsang, that is, that is not the community of monks on the path. And that "pht," whether that helps me or hinders me ••• is a function of where I'm at, really. In other words, if I am into what I'm doing strongly enough,

all that that "pht" does is arouse a feeling of poignancy about our predicament, but it doesn't in any way deter from the amount of the living, vibrant quality I can invest in the thing I'm doing.

I go to church now and then around the United States and we sing hymns that are mind-blowers. They are all hymns that get you "high." They were written by people in ecstatic states and you read them ... everybody's singing them like they're reading the shopping list. There's no spirit, the spirit isn't invested in any way in the singing and yet whoever wrote it invested the spirit. We say, "WeU, they were naive." What we mean is that *we* are turned off. When Christ says, "Look, I am making all things new," it's the same as when you're really living here and now and every moment is all fresh and that hymn . . . it's like the first time you ever heard it and you really go out on it. Otherwise, what did you go to church for?

*investment
of spirit*

The third part of the ashram cycle is where a member of the community goes into the city, society, and pursues what Buddha calls "right livelihood," that is, he raises the bread for the commune. I once was with a group of ex-convicts who had started a commune up in the mountains outside of Los Angeles. There were about a hundred of them and they would break into groups of eight and lie out in the woods with their heads touching and all take LSD with their wives and children. They had quite a powerful community and they were wondering what to do . . . because after a certain point of working inside you begin to feel the pull of service, the pull of sharing or serving. It's like a karmic predicament you're in . . . you can only collect so much before you have to hand it over, spread it out, and then you can go back inside. And so, they asked me what to do and I said why didn't they open a shop in Laguna Beach, which they did. It is now a fantastically successful shop where they make the crafts up in the hills and ship them in. That whole process is one of building these different parts of ourselves, and people rotate through these various scenes.

*third part of
ashram cycle*

The fourth component is visiting other ways of achieving consciousness. For example, I've been working with the Benedictine monks at a monastery to start work on an exchange program with ashrams in India, with growth centers, with the Hassids, and with the Sufis. Another example, this evening is the last formal lecture or discussion that I am

*fourth part
of ashram cycle*

*doing your own
being*

*consciousness as
freedom from
attachment*

going to be giving in the United States on this round, in this incarnation, I hope. (That's only an attachment too, of course.) I'm about to leave and I'm going back into training now because I'm a beginner. I realize I'm really like the water boy on the team so I'm cashing in the chips and going back into the jungle. However, the first thing I'm going to do is go to South America to a Sufi training program. The Sufis are the mystic wing of the Moslem religion. You know them, perhaps, as the whirling dervishes. That's only one aspect of them. Gurdjieff was trained in the Sufi tradition, primarily. After that ... I'll go back to India. Now these are the kinds of things I'm talking about as the fourth stage. So, what I'm saying is that this evening is part of my work on myself because I realize that *the only thing you have to offer to another human being, ever, is your own state of being*. You can cop out only just so long, saying I've got all this fine coat-J oseph's coat of many colors-I know all this and I can do aUthis. But everything you do, whether you're cooking food or doing therapy or being a student or being a lover, *you are only doing your own being, you're only manifesting how evolved a consciousness you are*. That's what you're doing with another human being. That's the only dance there is! When you're protesting against somebody, the degree of consciousness with which you're protesting determines how well they can hear what it is you're really saying. And consciousness does not mean attachment to polarity, at any level. It means freedom from attachment. And once you see that the highest mother is the mother who is the most *conscious* mother, the highest student, the highest therapist, the highest lover, the highest anything is the most conscious one, you begin to see that the way you serve another human being is by freeing him from the particular attachments he's stuck in that turn him off to life. You realize that the only thing you have to do for other human beings is to keep yourself really straight, and then do whatever it is you do.

I stop at a Shell station, and the man starts to wash my windshield and put in gas. I've got an old Buick usually, a 1938 limousine, and I live in it, and I'm driving around, and I'm sitting there with one leg under me, driving along at 45 miles an hour, full speed, and I'm doing my *mantra* . • . I'm doing my cognitive centering device. When I stop I'm in a very high state of consciousness just from doing that. I haven't been going anywhere, the car's doing it. It's like a movie of driving down the road in an old Buick. It's like cinerama, a four-day movie of cinerama. I'm just sitting . . .

I've got a really good seat, and I see it all. I stop at the Shell station and I look at the man and of course he is somebody Central Casting sent over-right?- to give me gas and wash my windshield. He is playing like he's a Shell service man. He and I are both from Central Casting. I've been billed this round, in his consciousness, as a kind of strange far-out-looking guy in a weird old car and he is billed as a Shell salesman in my karmic unfolding. We meet, right there. At the moment he's washing my windshield and I look at him and ... it's saying, "How's the show going, man?" He says, "Groovy." But you don't say it quite that way, you just ... be there. Nothing to do, you don't come on to anybody, you don't have to change anybody. Just look at them. And so, he finishes and he starts talking about old cars, and then about how during this meat strike he carried turkeys in a car just like this back in 1929, or '39, rather, into New York City and sold them down the market. After we've been going at this for a while and I'm just signing my credit card slip he says, "Would you like to see my car?" "O.K." I get out and go see his car. It's a Mercedes and we look at that and talk about Mercedes. He says, "Say, I'd really like to have you meet my wife." "O.K." So we go upstairs-his wife lives upstairs-and we sit down with his wife. She says, "Would you like to stay for lunch?" "Sure." So I stay for lunch and pretty soon his son comes home from college and we're all settling in, and we've all got our feet up and we're all home. I realize, this is my home. Where am I? Am I going to say, "Well, I gotta go home?" How did I define what that concept is all about? Here I am and here we are. We're here again, we're all here. Behind the Shell man and behind the weirdo, here we are I begin to see that every moment of my life is that same place. So, tomorrow when I get in a car and go from Topeka to Albuquerque, the question is how much of my consciousness is spent going to Albuquerque, how much consciousness is spent leaving Topeka, and how much consciousness is right here and now, wherever here and now happens to be on the highway. To the extent that I keep the mantra going all the time ... this device ... I will stay right here all the time. I can never get more than a little flicker away and I'm pulled right back to the here and now. So from the Shell man I begin to see that *the environment is as high as 1 am*. If I come to the station thinking I'm just a guy getting gas, that's all I am-a guy getting gas. The Shell man goes through his platitudes and I go through mine and I drive away. And that's what my whole life becomes. My whole life becomes this exquisite dance of being in one role after another where we do our

concept of home

on-stage routine, we do our *Lady Macbeth* scene again or *Twelfth Night* or *Blithe Spirit* or whatever it is we're doing.

higher consciousness as a state of unity

It's easy to know this when you're sitting up in a cave. It's quite easy to sit and meditate and realize how all this is, to see how you get stuck in roles and how the life process, the spiritual contact, turns off the minute you think you're somebody doing something. As long as I think I am speaking to you and I'm doing something to you-forget it!-I'm just keeping you out there as "them." The question is, are you *them* or are you *us*? If I think of you using any model in my head that keeps you being *them*, I end up turning off myself. My consciousness, my concepts of the universe have turned me off because I know that the higher consciousness state is a state of unity. It is, "Here we are." I have experienced that. I know that. That's valid. It's absolutely obvious, now, that every time I perform an act which increases the distance, that kind of subject-object distance, I am taking myself one little jot further away from that unitive state which I now know, *is*. Only an idiot is going to bring himself down ...

Audience: What's this mantra thing you do while you're driving? I don't know what that means.

description of mantra

Ram Dass: Right. A mantra is a phrase, or it could be a sound or a phrase. It is a phrase that you repeat over and over and over again. Take for example the phrase, the Tibetan one (you can use English ones, but . . . • I'll show you why you use Sanskrit or Tibetan ones) *Om Mani Padme Hum*. This phrase is perhaps one of the most widely used mantras in the world today. In fact in Nepal you'll see rocks 20 feet long and 10 feet high with *Om Mani Padme Hum* written in tiny letters over the whole rock, so you can just read it like a letter. And there are prayer wheels at the temples where written in them ten million times is the phrase *Om Mani Padme Hum* ..• and you see lamas going around stupas saying *Om Mani Padme Hum*. Now, when you first start to say a mantra, the first involvement is in hearing it outside, through your ears, saying it aloud and hearing it and thinking about its meaning. That's the first game you play with mantra. So, if I give you that mantra, *Om Mani Padme Hum*, you think about it and you think, "Well, what does it mean?" Now, there are many meanings-there's a whole book written about its meaning by Govinda, One of the ways of understanding its meaning is that *Om* means, like Brahma, that which is behind it all, the unmanifest. *Mani* means

jewel or crystal. *Padme* means lotus, and *Hum* means heart. So, on one level what it means is the entire universe is just like a pure jewel or crystal right in the heart or center of the lotus flower, which is me, and it is manifest, it comes forth in light, in manifest light, in my own heart. That's one way of interpreting it. You start to say *Om Mani Padme Hum* and you're thinking, "God in unmanifest form is like a jewel in the middle of a lotus, manifest in my heart." You go through that and feel it in your heart-that's one trip. O.K., that's the first. That's the lowest level of operation of mantra. It's putting one set of thoughts into your head in place of another set of thoughts. Instead of thinking, "Gee, it's hot out. Shall I have a milk shake at the next stop? Gee, the engine sounds a little strange. Wonder how ... those new Chevy's don't look very good at all. Boy, I've been on this trip!" Instead of that, all of that stuff, which is terribly profound and important, but isn't really that relevant, you go into the mantra. Once the mantra has been going on that way for a while, it starts to change in its nature. You stop thinking about what it means; you just get sort of addicted or hooked on the Tibetan sound of it. And then it starts to move into your head, and then from your head sort of down into your chest, until pretty soon it's going around like a little wheel, going around inside your chest, just *Om Mani Padme Hum*. Right? Now, at that point it has stopped meaning anything to you. Any time you want to bring it back into consciousness, you can rerun its meaning, which will do that thing for you again. But you can . . . keep it down in the place where it's just running off. Now, it's got another quality to it. That is, when a mantra is done sufficiently it gets into a certain kind of vibration or harmony with the universe in a certain way which is its own thing. The conscious beings who evolve certain languages such as Sanskrit specifically evolve the sounds of these languages to be connected with various states of consciousness-unlike the English language-so that a Sanskrit mantra, if you do it over and over again, will take you to a certain state of consciousness. Am I spreading this description out too much for you?

*effects of
using mantras*

In Tibet, for example, they use what are called *tonkas*. If you go to a doctor in Tibet, instead of giving you a prescription like, "Pick these herbs by a damp rock" or "Go to your local pharmacy and get ..• , " whichever level of the game it's being played at ... instead of doing that, he often may give you a tonka, a mandala, to take home and put up on your wall and meditate upon. Now this is really far out, you

*the mandala
process*

see, because here's your doctor, you go to him because you've got headaches, or because you're depressed, or because you've got fear, or because you've got bleeding or something, and he gives you a piece of paper to stick up on your wall and meditate on. Now you'd say, "Well, that's pretty primitive." But wait a moment, just assume, for example, that they're not all nuts, see, and they're not all naive. And you go and sort of sit down in front of this paper and figure out what it's about. After a while you learn that the way these are designed is such that you put your focal attention on the entire mandala, which is a circle within a square and the square has gates, four gates. And then pretty soon your attention—you just let yourself be with that thing, let all other thoughts go and just stay with it—pretty soon, your attention is drawn in through the gates and in and in to the inner circle and into the innermost circle where there is a specific design or being or something and when you come in and in and in, you then experience the inner circle as something like a long tube. It takes on a depth, and as you stay with that inner circle you get drawn, literally drawn, your awareness gets drawn through that tube, and you get drawn from that tube into, literally, another frequency of vibration. It is as though that model in the center of that little circle changes your consciousness because you have brought your consciousness down to just that circle. It's like, if you go into the Fillmore Auditorium and there are huge rock and roll bands and 25 slide projectors and an overloading of the stimulus field, that will take your consciousness into another place. Now, you can struggle against it, and say, "Oh, I'm getting a headache and I've got to get out of here. I mean, they're not feeding me linear information." Or you can say, "Well, here goes," and just sort of surrender into this and then there is a new level of consciousness where you are experiencing all these things . . . in a Gestalt form, rather than in linear separate components. You've given up one type of analytic thought because it's not adaptive at that moment.

*mantra and
levels of
progression*

Well, a mandala, very much like what's called faith healing, is based on the idea that "mind manifests in matter" and that if you change the nature of the vibrations or the nature of the level of consciousness, you'll find certain levels of consciousness where certain illnesses don't exist. What a faith healer does is use his own vibrational rate to bring you to another vibrational rate. That's the way that process works. These tonkas work the same way. Well, a mantra works the same way. That is, it'll take you to its place. Now

there are mantras that are very strong power mantras. There are mantras for every particular thing you could want, but the only kinds of mantras that are primarily used in the West, and the ones that I work with, are all what are called general mantras. Wherever you are, they'll take you further on. It's sort of an infinite progression. It's not committed to any level other than the final level, which is no level. *Om Mani Padme Hum* is one of them. After you've been doing it for awhile it starts to affect your consciousness. It's just like when you do *pranayama*, breath control. After you've been doing the basic breathing exercises for just a few months, your breath gets very gentle and even, and instead of the gross breath environment most of us live in, if you watch a yogi's breath it's always just very faint, a very delicate breath. That breath is the environment in which your consciousness is living all the time. It's a very intimate environment that most of us don't notice at all because we're just so used to whatever our breath is. We think that's the way it is. But when we start to create that calm breath, it starts to bring us into another space. Now in addition to that, it serves as what would be called a centering device. That is, it's a place to make figure so that everything else becomes ground. And here is your predicament: you are stuck most of the time, just as I am, in the "illusion." That is, you are attached to something in time and space. You are identifying with your body, your feelings, with your thoughts, with your feet, you know. And the idea of a mantra is that it just sits there, and all that stuff goes by. It's like a bridge on which you stand, looking down into the water in which you see your own life going by. It's a training device to break you out of your attachments. When I'm driving and doing mantra I'm not attached to my driving. I'm doing mantra, and driving is just happening. So, in other words, the mantra is a technique for bringing me into a place in myself which would be called the eternal present; that is, a place where nothing is literally happening at all. It's a device for calming my mind.

*mantra as
training device*

*the eternal
present*

Mantra gets so far out, that after I did it for two days and two nights solid in Nepal once, I stopped to go to sleep and of course it continued going. But instead of it continuing going just in *my* voice it continued going ... what it sounded like was a cross between the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the O Heavenly Day Chorus. It's that huge a thing except it was made up of all old voices and they stretched back in time and space in infinite direction . . . you know, distance. All I heard was *Om Mani Padme Hum* and the

wind was *Om Mani Padme Hum* and the air conditioner was *Om Mani .••* , the whole thing. I had tuned in on that place where that was all I could hear. But it was no longer my *Voice*. I went rushing to a yogi and I said, "What's happening? I'm going crazy." He said, "You've tuned in on the *Om*, that's that place. You've tuned in on that place. There it is. That's where they're all hanging out."

It's interesting ... my teacher is so far out, he's so delicate, he's a very beautiful Brahman. He said to me, "Don't eat any food that isn't cooked with love or with mantra ••• because it will poison you. The vibrations of a person cooking food enter into the food when it is cooked over fire! Fire transmutes, converts ... brings that energy.... Well, now I can go into a restaurant along the road and eat something that is cooked by an angry chef and I won't experience it because I am so gross yet. My teacher would get violently ill, even . • . you will go through all your changes about this ... but even if the food were brought to him by a loving person and he didn't know anything about who cooked it, he would still get ill, because those vibrations are as real, as you get nauseous from the color green or blue or purple or whatever your thing is. Now at another level he could take that energy and transmute it, because that's the whole issue of transmuting energy which I'll only talk about if you ask me. O.K. That's my introductory remarks. They can go on for the next ten hours, I think you should know. When I first came back from India, I had so much energy-of course, I had been sitting silently in a temple for six months, you know. All that talk I hadn't used, I've been using ever since.

There is a most heterogeneous group here . . . whoever we are that's who we are. Any question you can ask is useful because any answer we give, we all need to hear, at some level or other. So we are only asking questions of ourselves whatever level we're at. Don't feel that any question is too naive, too technical or too anything, just feel free.

Audience: Well, it's interesting. I haven't read anything written by you. I only know you as Leary's associate. By the way, I should probably give a brief introduction of how I got into Ram Dass. I'm a follower of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and recently we were meditating in a group meditation and somebody had listened to a tape you had made. He made the statement that your guru said that LSD came to ... well, God came to the United States in the form of LSD and as

far as I know drugs have very little to do or almost nothing to do with consciousness, even though, you know, I mean, of course, to get on the Leary kick he'll give you the seven levels of consciousness and how on the highest level, it's ... which I don't agree with at all. And my own guru, the Maharishi, which I feel . . .

Ram Dass: Excuse me, one second. I think we have to define this evening as an evening of questions and answers, so instead of making a long presentation I think you'd better limit yourself to a specific question. O.K.? I think I'm going to have to do that. Right?

Audience: What did you imply by that statement, because I think this was included in that interview in *Playboy* also—that God came to the United States in the form of LSD?

Playboy interview

Ram Dass: I didn't imply anything. I reported the information I had picked up in India, which is the information that I have available from people whose consciousnesses I totally trust. Alright? And the quote I gave was a quote from my teacher, with whom I lived for six months, who was, as far as I could see, one of the purest and highest beings I have met. When I asked him what LSD was he went away and several weeks later he came back and he wrote, and the quote is almost exact, "LSD is like a Christ coming to America in the America is a most materialistic country and they wanted their Avatar in the form of a material. The young people wanted their Avatar in the form of a material. And so they got LSD. If they had not tasted of such things, how will they know-how they will know?" was his actual wording. Now, this plus the fact that my guru took 900 micrograms of LSD and nothing happened to him, and I watched this process happen, were the two bits of new information I had collected about LSD which I reported back to the intellectual community. I have no ... I am not at this moment using LSD nor am I not using LSD. Right? I am doing a type of yoga which is . . . does not require at this moment the use of LSD. I honor LSD ... that LSD has for me, anyway, made a major change in my perceptual field, and I feel that under suitable conditions it is a major breakthrough of technology, allowing man to change his levels of consciousness. I share Tim's vision in almost every way. I think I'm not as attached to certain kinds of polarities in terms of establishment and good and evil and dropping out and so on as Timothy is, but I think he is a great vision-

*preparatory
effects of
LSD phase*

ary and my feelings about LSD are: I honor it. I also think that it is very quickly becoming an anachronism. I think it is totally falling out of date because I think that the types of consciousness that it opened allowed the Maharishi to do the work he did in the United States and allowed the Beatles to do the work they've done and allowed all of that process to happen. I think that only took about five years and it seems to me that the values in the culture shifted dramatically enough, as a result of the psychedelic movement, to bring in a . . . another set of cognitive . . . consciousness possibilities into the *Zeitgeist*, enough so that they would become researchable, they would become studyable, and explorable; and yoga, which was a dirty word seven years ago, can now become a highly respected and thoughtful science, as it should be, as it is. It is an entirely different matter for people who have known of an experience of another state of consciousness to work on themselves than for people who have not. If I observe the Gurdjieff students, a lot of students, those that come into a group in order to get some kind of group affiliation and are just good, pure people, can meditate and do the work for long times and very little happens. However, as my teacher said, "If a person knows of such things, then.... " And that's mainly what all of the Indian literature says-that once you know, once you have tasted of this possibility, then your work becomes tremendously directed toward this . . . then your meditations work at a much, much faster rate. So that, in terms of the statistics with the Maharishi Mahesh group, of the numbers of drop-outs from the program, it is clear that a large percentage of people originally were not able to maintain that degree of involvement because they didn't have a frame of reference which made them able to use the mantra in the spirit in which it was invested. There is no doubt that the Maharishi teaches a classical method that works beautifully. It is just what he says it is. It does just what he says it does. And when the investment is made in the spirit and received in the spirit, it has done remarkable things to thousands of people. If you come into it as an experiment to see if it will work, or come into it for a lot of other reasons, there is a very, very high probability you will drop out unless you're really ready, unless you're ready-let's put it that way.

So now the *Playboy* interview is very interesting because that was done four years ago, before I went to India, and in fact none of those people ever met. See, that was a phony panel. It was put together by the editors of *Playboy* to make a colorful article and we were *all* asked a series of questions

and I had answered those questions four years ago before I had ever done any yoga. Then when they sent it to me now, they said, "You've already sold us this article. We have the right to use it. We're going to use it. Are there any changes you want to make? You have only a day to make them and they should be minimal." So all I did was ... I added the new information that I had which was: (a) what my guru did, (b) what my teacher did, and (c) the fact that I am not now using LSD. Those all went into the article. And those clues were the clues that I had to contribute to my fellow man at this moment. That's my explanation. Yes?

Audience: What about the book that you're going to be sending?

Ram Dass: On the book that I'm going to be sending?

Audience: Yes.

Ram Dass: Well, the book came about in a very strange way. I was in the temple in India and I was with my guru and a lot of remarkable things had been happening to me there and I kept some notes in a little book. One day the teacher came to me and he said, "Maharaji," meaning my guru, "sent his blessings for your book." So I said, "Well, what book is that?" and he wrote "Whatever book it is you're doing." So I thought, "Well, obviously I'm supposed to do a book," because you don't get any better instructions than that, in that scene. They don't say, "Now go out and ...", you know, "do that, team." It's not that way. You just do whatever it is you're supposed to do. So I figured I'm supposed to do a book. So I came home and as any good intellectual academe, I sat down and I typed a book, *My Journey to the East: Fantastic Adventures*, that kind of thing. And I sent it to all these publishers and they all sent it back, and they said, "Well, our fall line of interesting mystical journeys to the East is fun for this year and maybe you can try another publisher." And I thought, "Well, obviously that isn't the book, because, I mean, *he* knows what he's doing. He's not going to give me a blessing for a book he doesn't want to happen and if he's turning it down, he's obviously the publisher too." So I thought, that isn't the book. So I let it sort of hang for a year or so. And then people started to gather and I started to do this talking for a couple of years, at no charge, because I was no book, I was just doing it when people would drop by. I was going to sit in my cabin for a whole year and then go back to India. That was my

the "book"

original plan since nobody told me I was supposed to do anything. And I realized that any game I do comes out of my own ego. My job was just to work on myself, and if anything happens, it happens.

*personal
impurity and
personal desire*

Well, my impurity became very apparent to me. It was an exquisite impurity, the way all this happened. I went into town into this little . . . I was living in this little town of Franklin, and I went to the grocery store. My father was up for the weekend at his part of . . . I live in a little cabin, he lives in a big estate. And he said to me, "Take my new Cadillac." So I got into his new Cadillac, which of course blew my mind, you know, *Sadhu* renunciate driving a new Cadillac. I thought, "The boys in India should see me now!" And I am driving into town and I see two hippies over on the side of the road, a couple, and I wave at them and they at me. I go into the grocery store and I come out and there are five or six of them standing there. One of them comes over to me and he says, "Hey, man, you got any acid?" And I thought, "Oh-oh, I've been found out, who I'm supposed to be, you know; my history's caught up with me . . . my karma, I can't change, you know. They see I'm Richard Alpert, notorious drug man." So I said, "No, why do you ask?" They said, "Well, we heard a connection was coming up from Boston today and we saw this big Cadillac with masked plates and this guy with a beard and we figured you must be him." So I said, "Well" ... see now, here is my impurity, the next line is the statement of my own impurity, All I had to say at that point was, "Well, I'm not him. See ya," and get in the car and drive back into my woods. But, the other line I used-which was my own desires, which is why we're here tonight-is the line, "Gee, I'm sorry, I'm not *that* kind of connection." That's a leading line like, "Come on, baby, don't you want to know what kind of connection I am? I sure look interesting, don't I?" So, of course, I'm asked, "Well, what kind of a connection are you?" and so on, and that leads to them dropping by and then them bringing up their friends, and their friends bring the parents, and the parents bring the minister, and the newspapers, and then the universities. All I did was . . . wherever I was asked, I went. So it was the Rotary Club and Borscht Belt hotels and universities and hippie hangouts and communes and ... And I shared whatever I was supposed to do. So all of these started to be taped. People would go around with . . . because it's a big generation of collecting stuff. So people would collect tapes. And then this groovy woman, you know, typed them all up, till it was a stack, a huge

stack of these tapes from everywhere. Then this writer, John Bleibtreu, on the West Coast, was reading through them, and he said, "You know, there's really two beings in these tapes. When you start out one of these tapes usually you're being very professorial, you're talking heavy, you're teaching but when the audience is a certain way and they let it happen to you, it's as if you disappear and something starts to happen so all the words come out sort of like in iambic pentameter. They're not like you're talking at all, it's just like there's beautiful stuff coming out, except it's all 1970ish stuff. It's a lot like the *Book of Tao*, but it's sort of '70ish." So we said, "Well, why don't we cut out all the heavy parts and we'll put that together." Since I didn't say it, you see it isn't me saying it, maybe this is his book. He's writing his own book. He doesn't trust me, he doesn't want my heavy mind writing his book, he's going to write his own book. So we started to put all this stuff together, and we got a book. There's a group in New Mexico and, as I said last night, they start with these four-foot pieces of cardboard and they . . . this book is 108 pages and each day they meditate from five to eight in the morning-there's a group of five of them-and then all in silence . . . they hand rubber-stamp each page, all the letters of the page, and then the artists do all the sketching around the thing. Then the whole thing is photo-reduced and shipped to Japan where it's printed on rice paper and hand stitched because it's an experiential-type document. So that was the basis of the book and I was going to do 20,000 of those and split. That was my deal with Maharaji,

*further develop-
ment of "book"*

And then people said, "Well, if you're going to do it would you include that long bibliography on mysticism that you've been working on?" So, "O.K. I'll put that in." Then somebody else said, "You've got all these quotes you read all the time from Buddha and so on. Would you put those in . . . like little cards we can hang up . . . cards you can put up on the screen door as you're going out-liThe journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." by Chuang Tsu. And you've got one for over the toilet and one for going to bed and one for over the refrigerator. So we thought we'd put in a deck of those. Then somebody said, "You know, you've got all these pictures of these high beings and you hang out with them. Why can't we hang out with them? Could you put a set of them . . . put in two sets so if we take them out we won't ruin the book." "O.K. We'll put those in too." And then somebody else said, "Say, you know that long fancy book, my parents aren't going to understand

"book" becomes
"box"

it, you know. Could you do something very straight, like for my parole officer or my parents or whoever ..• ?" "O.K., we'll do a nice straight journey-to-India type story. Just tell the facts of the whole matter and. . • ." So we put that in. And then somebody else said, "You know, you've been talking about diets and about *asanas* and about breathing and you've been teaching this stuff about how to live and how to . . . what kind of world you start to create to change consciousness. Couldn't you put in sort of like a cookbook-type thing for people who say, 'All right, I want to do it, now what do I do?' for doers?" So we've got a psychic cookbook in there, too. A do-it-yourself enlightenment kit. And then people said, "You know, you chant, and I've been chanting with this girl and she plays the dulcimer and I play the tamboura and we just go out together on these far-out chants, Indian chants. Could you put in one of those throw-away records like *Look* or *Life* puts out . . . those little cheap records?" Well, that turned into a 12-inch record on both sides. So that's in there. So it became a box instead of a book. And the box had a big mandala on the front of it, and the box is called *From Bindu to Ogis*, which . . . Bindu is sexual energy and Ogis is spiritual energy, and *it's* the transformation of energy within the body through the conversion of a form of energy . . . it's called the raising of the kundalini, is one way of talking about it.

So, 20,000 of those are being made and they're all going to be given away. Your paying to come here gets you one, because you've already paid for it, since the money from this is green energy which goes to buy that. And then when you get the book, I'm done. It all comes out even in the end, right? When it's ready we'll write to you and say, "Your book's ready, do you want it?" and then I've fulfilled my karmic responsibilities as far as I'm concerned. The book is authorless, I mean there are about 50 of us working on it and there are no names connected with it. It's just Maharaji's book, I guess. It's not copyrighted. Yes?

*psychotherapy
and readiness
for path*

Audience: You said that you have to be ready for Yoga, and last night you said you went through five years of analysis, I think. I think you said that. And from what I gathered that didn't make you feel like you were ready. I was wondering if you think that psychotherapy of any form can be useful in readying.

Ram Dass: The question, if you all didn't hear it thoroughly, was whether psychotherapy can ready you or is a vehicle

on this particular path or journey. Is that a reasonable way of saying the question?

Audience: Yeah, right.

Ram Dass: Psychotherapy is just as high as the psychotherapist. If your psychotherapist happened to be Buddha, you would get enlightened in the process, see. I'm not being facetious, now, but I'm saying that if it comes right down to . . . when you cut aside all the melodrama, that you will get as free of your particular role-attachments as the psychiatrist is free of his. Because if he is still attached to his particular role, all he can do is give you one *role* to substitute for another, which is primarily his. So that generally Freudian patients end up Freudianized and Jungians end up Jungianized. Now most therapists have a model of what they think they're doing and how it all works, so any data that's fed in from the patient goes through this model and out comes a response consistent with this model. For eight years I was a psychotherapist, among other things, at the Harvard Health Service and the Stanford Health Service and Cal and so on, and I would spend a day a week. I had eight patients and I would sit there and I would run them through my Freudian theories. After I had taken psychedelics for awhile I began to see that the model I was using was standing in the way of real change at times, because since I was busy being a doctor at some level or other since that was the only role available to me-doctors needed patients, that's the symbiotic thing that you do, that's who you hang out with—so that if I'm going to be the doctor ... there's only room for one of us being the doctor, and I'm it. I may have as many hangups as you have but we've decided the game is that I'm the doctor this time and therefore you're the patient. And the question is how a patient ends being a patient. It's like, "Psychoanalysis Terminable or Interminable"—another level of understanding that article by Freud. So I thought, "Well, as long as I'm busy being a doctor, I need patients, and every time a person stops acting like a patient, I have to get rid of him, because he's not fulfilling whatever it is I need." So then I entered into a new . . . I was teaching game theory at that time as a psychodynamic device, not as a joke but as a way of ... I was teaching it in junior high schools actually. I was teaching a mental health, mental hygiene course, teaching kids how to do behavior change in themselves through game-analysis of their own game roles and so on. They were very hip, those kids. They'd say, "Is there a non-game center?" And I'd say, "No, no, no," or "I don't know," or

*therapist's
model consistent
with results*

game theory

*new game-
change of role*

"Don't worry about that," or "You're not ready," see, because I didn't know what to answer at that time. So I changed my therapy deal, which seemed like a kind of external "hype," but it was symbolic of something a little deeper. I started to have the person sit next to me and we had a big chalk board up there and we would chart his game. He brought the data and I brought the research theories. He was my research collaborator in this behavior-change problem. And what I did was, I was immediately setting up a dissociative thing with the "patient" so that the part of him that was sick was the part that *we* were studying and the relationship I was having with him was as a researcher of his own sickness. That is, I was immediately separating him from his sickness by saying, "The guy who you and I are relating to isn't the sick guy, O.K.?" Now that was phony, and it was real. It was a little of each. Now . . . then I went to India and I started to get into other kinds of spaces and understandings and I came back and I realized that to the extent that I didn't think at all, didn't get stuck in any role, I was going to be the optimum use to him.

I've got to feed in one experience that I had that seems relevant. I was in England and I was with a psychiatrist by the name of Ronnie Laing. Ronnie and I decided to take LSD together. And he said to me, "How much shall we take?" I said, "Well, why don't we take about 300 micrograms?" And he said, "Well, that's a little much for me. But as long as you're along, I guess it's all right." Now by his saying that he put me into the role of sort of being his protector, that is, he cast me into the role of being the guide, which bugged me a little bit. But O.K. I don't know this guy. If that's the trip I'm supposed to play, I will be John Responsible. And he can flip around the room, right? And my usual model of what's going to happen is I'm going to take it and I'm going to create a pleasant environment. I'm going to put on Miles Davis records (in those days) and we're going to lie around and, you know, do it. So we take this and the first thing that happens after we've taken these chemicals is he takes off all his clothes but his shorts and he starts to stand on his head. This doesn't fit into my model of what you do when you have psychedelics. I don't know anything about yoga, and it all seems absurd to me. This is five, six, seven years ago. So I watch with a certain, you know, disbelief. Then he walks over to me and he looks into my eyes and his face looks like the most defenseless child, just like my model had been that I'm going to have to take care of him . . . I'm going to be the guide. He looks like a totally defenseless child. He looks like somebody who ••

he arouses in me every nurturant impulse I have. I feel tremendously protective of him. And I just feel like saying, "Oh, Ronnie ...", "I'm not saying anything but I'm like, "Ronnie, it's all right, I'm here." You know, "Count on me." He's just like a little child, wide open. And we were no sooner in that role than his face takes on the subtlest change, just muscle patterns like, it's as if a thought in his head manifests in a change in his face-he now looks like the most protective, fatherly, warm, nurturant being-and he arouses in me all those uncooked seeds of being a little, dependent child, see. And I become, "Oh, Ronnie, oh, wow, you will take care . . . You are going to be my . . . Oh, Ronnie, I can do it this time. Oh, Wow." The minute I'm in that, his face changes again, and he is now the student and he's asking me questions. This is all silent. It's all mime and all just facial things. It's all thought forms.

*more role
changes*

I had once taken LSD in New York City. I was going to the David Susskind Show, I think, and I put my consciousness in the right place. I took this and I had several hours before I had to go to the studio and I was at an uptown penthouse-type thing. There was a girl there drawing people's faces on the walls with crayon. I mean the apartment owner wanted her to make a set of faces along the stairway wall. So she asked me if I would pose, and I said I'd be delighted. My mind was in liquid form and I stood there and I thought, "WeB, who is it I am? Who is it she's drawing?" I thought, "She's drawing a young man looking into the future." So I became like, well ... it's like you see the sun just ... the sunrise is just over there and you're just . . . that feeling of . . . you've seen so many pictures like that. They're always life insurance. And I'm *just* looking into the future and she starts to draw me. She's very sure of herself and the lines are all very fierce. And then I'm sort of bored with looking into the future. I know I can't change my face, because that would ruin her picture, so I just start to think I'm somebody else. Now I think I'm her lover. I don't do anything, I just think I'm her lover. After about 30 seconds she erases and erases and erases. She's got to draw this thing in a new way. And after a while I think, "Well, I don't think I'm going to make it as her lover. That doesn't feel quite right," you know. Then I thought, "Really I'm an old, wise man." And she erased again and started to draw. And finally she said, "I can't do your face; it's just like plastic. It keeps changing." Well, Ronnie and I in the course of the next six hours went through, I don't know, perhaps 80 or so different social roles. What we did was we went. . . once I saw the way the game worked . . . we'd go into a role, a symbiosis, like

role reversals

*behind all
games and roles*

therapist and patient, and then we'd flip it around and be patient and therapist. We'd be executioner and prisoner and then prisoner and executioner. Some of them really scared us, believe me ... it really is scary. In each one you had to say, "Right, O.K., that one," and then flip over and do the reverse of it. And I began to see that Ronnie and I were establishing a contact in the place where we were behind all of that. You could say behind the people that were playing the game. It's like in an English tennis match at the set point when they're fighting for this point and they look up at each other and say, "Jolly good game." "Yes, jolly good." And then they're back into the game. You see, it's that up-level of, "Here we are and the sun's out and it's really beautiful, isn't it?" And the most powerful statement of that I've ever heard connected with LSD was in the *World Medical News*, the work of Eric Kast giving LSD to terminal cancer patients. One cancer patient had said, "Yes, I know I'm dying of the deadly disease but look at the beauty of the universe." That is, she was able through that experience, or in the midst of that experience when LSD was properly administered under the right conditions, to see the process of dying as a process of dying and still identify free of "she who is dying." Then the fear disappears. Most of the difficulty you have in the dying process is the fear connected with death. In fact, many difficulties on many planes are connected with that, many planes.

*guide of
consciousness
journeys*

So when I come back from India now and after that experience with Ronnie, I'm not doing anything and people come to see me and they are hung up in some way. Now I'm a yogi, see. But after all, I'm trained as a psychotherapist, so I'm still a psychotherapist. And I've been guiding the psychedelic sessions so I'm still in some sense a guide of consciousness journeys, even though I'm not working with drugs any more. All that stuff instead of being lost just seems to be amalgamating. It's summing in some way. So now I'm doing an interesting thing. I look into somebody's eyes (I may look into their eyes anywhere from 30 seconds to ten hours) but when I look into their eyes, I'm not really looking into their eyes. That's the first thing. I'm looking at a point right between their eyes. Slightly above, right here. And as a result of focusing on that point, I am able to see both eyes, first thing. The second thing is, I'm sitting there doing *Om Man! Padme Hum*. In other words, I empty my mind completely. So that I am merely, if you will, a mirror, since I have no game going. There's nothing . . . all I'm doing is bringing myself to my center and focusing . . . just as if I were focusing on a candle flame. It is not inter-

personal, in any sense. I'm not saying, "Are you there? I am here. Hello. I love you. Don't worry, you can trust me." None of that. It's just, you know, candle flame, it's one-pointedness. Now I have finally, after this work of the past year, defined a little game which is called Guts Ball, see. I say, in effect, "Look . . . when I was in the temple in India, whatever I thought, it turned out the guru knew. And as I told you last night, even the most horrible, innermost, intimate, frightening, scary thoughts, even the ones that after five years of analysis, \$30,000 later, I still hadn't fully in their full flavor shared with the analyst-not because I didn't want to, but because the flavor was so rich I could never find the way to share those particularly . . . particularly perverse fantasies, or whatever they were. More like a posturing than a total. I mean you can tell them the gross thing, you can say anything you want in an abstract enough way and it has no effect. It's when you get into the flavorings and the colorings that you get the affective components. I say to the person, "When I was with my guru, I realized that he knew it all from inside. He looked at me and he saw that place in me where I was behind all that, so he didn't get hooked on 'I am a neurotic' or 'I am a bad person' or 'I am a good person' or 'I am anything.' He just saw me almost as life and he could feel the merging of love and light with that being inside me, behind all that." And I say, "Just like the Sikhs, a religious order in India, say, 'Once you realize God knows everything, you're free.' That is, once you realize that it's all right (the whole model of original sin, in other words), once you've seen that you're not the original sinner, you are free."

Now when my guru did this to me and when I suddenly realized there was another human being so deeply inside my own head that we were both looking at it from the same place, and with all that, here he was totally accepting, I experienced this tremendous sense of freedom and exhilaration and well-being. And it changed my behavior because then I found the truth was no longer too expensive, truth was now an absolute pre-requisite in the dance, because if I wanted to be high with everybody all I had to do was let them in. I didn't have to go around letting people in like the ancient mariner with the albatross around his neck, telling the story in a preoccupied way, but I had to be able to let another person in. The guru was already in and it was all right, so it was obviously all right.

So now what I say to the person is, "That's one of the things that he did for me. Maybe I can do that for you." So the

*total
acceptance*

*simple rule
of game*

need for
invitation

simple rule of this game is that you like to play. I'll explain the rules of the game but you'd better only play if you want to play because you can only play if you want to play anyway. Even if you make believe you want to play, that won't be good enough. So the rules of the game are this: anything you can think-and you might all try this on for size, it's kind of fun just to look inside-anything you can think, feel, desire, fear, anything you can bring to your mind about any of these, that you have difficulty with, are embarrassed by, are made uncomfortable by sharing with me-share it with me." It's a simple rule of the game. In other words, I'm saying to you, like in Herman Hesse's magic theater, "Any door you've got closed, open. Let's get on with it. You and I are sharing this thing. We're going to get on. . . ." And I say, "I'm not my guru, I can't go into your head because I choose to go into your head. I can only go into your head if you invite me into your head, and you can only invite me into your head if there's no way in which I am 'him.' Every thought you have that you've got to keep from me, keeps me 'him.' And finally when there's nothing in your head that you can't share with me, then we're 'us.' That's like you've been out au a hard day and you go home and 'you put your feet up and you throw your wallet on the table and you relax and you're home and there's 'us.' And 'us' knows all the foibles, etc." Let me just finish this sequence. So a person looks at me and I say, "You only play if you want to play." "Oh, yeah, I want to play, I want to play." Now I'm sitting looking between their eyebrows doing *Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani Padme Hum* and they look at me and they say, "I want to stick my penis up your nose," that's for openers. So I sit there doing *Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Man; Padme Hum* and it's just as if he had opened his mouth and gone, "a blah, blah, blah, blah," right? In other words, I don't have a theory going.

When I was a Freudian somebody would say, "I've been thinking about my mother's vagina," and I write down, "mother's vagina," you know, and pretty soon I've got the patient reinforced so that every time I pick up my pencil he gets a flash . . . he's winning my attention and love ••• pretty soon he's talking about his mother's vagina 15 minutes of the hour. And then I think, "Ah, we're getting some place." But now ... it is literally true ... there is nothing he can say to me that makes any difference at all. I couldn't care less what he says.

Then, he looks and he looks away, you know, and I say, "You can look at me, it's all right. Here we are." I say,

"Right. You want to do that and here we are," And I'm doing *Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani ••*. He says, "Gee," and after that one he feels so good he says, "You look like Buddha, there's light canting out of your head and you're so beautiful." And inside me goes a little wave of, "Um-m-m, maybe I am, maybe I am the Buddha." And inside goes *Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani. . . •* And the *Om Mani Padme Hum* is watching him say that, and me do my trip, and it's just watching it all. I'm just sitting there with my eyes on the light saying, *Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani Padme ••*, just watching transference, counter-transference, all of it, go under the bridge. It's all just going ... and I couldn't care less.

He says, "You know, you ... your face just changed, you look lecherous, evil; drool coming out of your mouth, and fire, and I'm getting nauseous," and he's going through the whole thing and I'm *Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani* Now what's interesting is that I'm using this as a device for centering on myself. I'm working on myself. That's all I can do. All I'm doing is working on myself, which is my instruction always to people who are therapists who ask me what do you do about therapy. I say, "Work on yourself," see, "because your 'patients' will be as free as you are." That's why I come back to the statement that therapy is as high as the therapist is. Now the only other thing I would say in response to your question is that each particular therapeutic school is related to one particular type of distribution of energy in the system, or *pran*. For example, if you think in terms of *chakras* or energy centers in the body or connected with the body, there is the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh, which are called the *muladhara, sradhishthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddha, aina*, and *sahasrara*. The first one is at the bottom of the spine, the second is sort of below the navel, the third is at the navel, the fourth is in the heart region, the fifth is at the throat, the sixth is between the eyebrows, the seventh is on the top of the head. These don't necessarily have any physiological correlates. They're just psychic localizations of psychic energy, let's put it that way, in this Hindu system, a Sanskrit, Hindu system I was talking about. Now, instead of doing an MMPI or a Rorschach you could also do a chakra chart, just like you could do an astrological chart. And these all tell you certain things. An astrological chart is like an MMPI one level back in abstraction. In the same way, a chakra chart tells, in a way, where the energy is fixed or localized in a person, where it's stuck.

*therapy is as
high as the
therapist is*

*description of
chakra
centers*

*location of
energy: first
chakra*

For most people in the Western universe, in fact most people in the world, almost all of the energy is located either in the first, second, or third chakras. The first chakra can be characterized crudely as being connected with survival and survival of the individual as a separate being. It's like we're in the jungle and there's one piece of meat and who's going to get it, you or me? It's a survival-of-the-fittest-type model. It's a Darwinian assumption about the motivations of beings. When you're at that chakra, your motivation is to protect yourself as a separate being, your separateness. You can think of that as darkest Africa. And the channel up which this is all going is called the *Sushumna*-think of it as a big river. You go in the river from Africa and the next stop is like the Riviera. See, you've got your security under control and now you start to go into sensual gratification and sexual desires and reproduction. You can't be busy reproducing if you're protecting your life, but the minute your life's protected a little bit, then you can concern yourself with the next matter, which is reproducing the species. So the second chakra is primarily concerned with sexual actions, reactions, and so on-at the reproduction level. Procreative. Sex.

second chakra

third chakra

The third chakra ... that's like Wall Street and Washington and London. It's primarily connected with power, with mastery, with ego control. Most of the world that we think of is connected with those particular centers. All the energy's located there. People justify their lives in terms of reproduction or sexual gratification, sensual gratification, or power or mastery. And it's interesting that pretty much any act we know of in the Western world can be done in the service of anyone of those energies. So that a man can build a huge dynamic industry and we can say, "Aha, phallic," meaning second chakra. Or a person can seduce many women in order to have mastery and power over them and we say, "Aha, concerned with power and mastery," meaning third chakra. Doing sex in the service of third chakra.

Freud

Now it turns out-and this is the one that many of you will find hard sledding, but it's the way I understand it now, having been through this particular trip I've been through-that Freud is an absolutely unequalled spokesman and master of second-chakra preoccupation, that is, of those beings who were primarily involved in second chakra. So he could say quite honestly, because it is true at the second chakra, that religion is sublimated sex. Now it is true that in his generalized libido theories and the idea that all the body is erog-

enous . . . there are a lot of ways in which he slips over the edge; but his system is primarily concerned with the second chakra, Adler is primarily concerned with third chakra, Jung is primarily concerned with fourth chakra. I would point out that there are still the fifth, sixth and seventh chakras. And these are in terms of other kinds of psychic spaces and ways of organizing the universe and understanding what's happening. So that to the extent that you have "uncooked seeds" of the second chakra and you have a Freudian analyst, he's going to help you cook those seeds. He's not going to do much about where you're stuck in the third chakra, particularly. And he hasn't much to say about the fourth chakra, which is what Jung pointed out about Freud.

Adler and lung

Now, you can take any of these theories and extend them out in many directions, but there is a discontinuous place between the third and fourth stage. There are many theories that are nonmystical and there are theories that are mystical. There are theories that deal with transcendent states and there are theories that don't. And when Jung starts to deal with his archetypes, collective unconscious and so on, he is starting to deal with what's called the fourth chakra, which is the same thing as Buddha's compassion. He is still in astral planes and he himself is afraid to go on. That's quite clear. He goes just so far and then he stops, because he's afraid that if he goes the next step, he will no longer be able to do what he does as Carl lung. That's a very tricky place, to be able to surrender your game which you have certain mastery in, in order to go for more. But I'm afraid that everybody is driven to go for more until they can, in the depths of their inner being, say, "This is enough." And they can only say that when it is. So the press of evolution on man's consciousness is inevitable. There's nothing he can do about it. He doesn't really have much choice in the matter. He's just got to wake at the rate he's got to wake. Yes, questions, yes?

*discontinuous
place*

fourth chakra

lung's fear

Audience: Will you talk about the levels of consciousness?

Ram Dass: Will I talk about the levels of consciousness? Here is the predicament that one faces about this work. The goal of these efforts is a non-dualistic state. That is, the place you are reaching for is a state where there is only one. Not one versus anything else; just one. It all *is*. It's one. A non-dualistic state. To get to that place you use

*goal is a
non-dualistic
state*

methods that are in dualism. Right? You use dualism . . . hum?

Audience: To talk about it ..•

*use of dualism
to go beyond
dualism*

*basis for talking
about
planes or levels*

Ram Dass: Yeah, and to talk about it. You use dualism to go beyond dualism. All right. So that concerning all of the planes other than the plane of oneness ... a Buddhist would say, "Don't get hung up in all that stuff because all you're doing is perpetuating dualism," right? A Mahayana Buddhist or another kind of Buddhist would say, "You can use dualism as a crutch to get yourself beyond dualism if you use it intelligently. So that you can use Guru Rimpoche or Padma-Sambhava, who is a being on another plane of reality, as a connection to work with, but you know that he's part of the illusion, too, and he's going to have to go finally. O.K.? So if within that framework you can understand that anything I say about planes is all illusory and you and I both know that, then we can talk about planes, right? O.K. There's that level. There are a variety of systems that project out a number of different planes. You can have three, seven, nine, and many more if you want to get into finer and finer gradations. I can only approach this matter of planes in . . . I can do it experientially through two places. One, I can do it through the variety of psychedelic experiences that I've had where I have experienced various things which I kept in horizontal compartments in my head, sort of saying, "Well, that's that hallucination, and that's that one, and that's that one, and that's that one," sort of like in storage units waiting for retrieval when I'd have a model they'd fit into. And then along comes a model and I say, "Oh, that one is clearly 'blup,' " see, and that one's a "blup," and it all falls into place. And I say, "Aha, this system encompasses all the experiences I've had to date, anyway," all right? For example, at one point I take 900 micrograms of LSD standing in the ocean in the middle of the night in Mexico, right? Now I'm trying to get into . . . as close as I can to the primitive world, universe. I'm trying to work through my first chakra fears. So I'm standing there with the surf pouring around me and it's going to drag me out and I can feel the sand pulling out under my feet and I can feel the bugs biting me, which makes me want to dive into the surf, except that the stars and phosphorescence in the water have all become just jeweled carpet that surrounds me in a 360-degree sphere and I don't see which is up and down. I have a suspicion that if I go into that wave there's no way to come up out of it—since up and down seem to me to be the

something at that *point*. So I am there with that predicament and at that point it all turns into vectors. That is, all I see is fields of force. All I feel is energy forces and it's like I'm a point and there are these forces acting upon me, pushing me in one direction. It's all like a physics problem now. That's all that's left of the universe. At that point I see, most interestingly, that if I do go into the ocean then . . . I die but at the same moment I come into another harmony with the universe, and at either place I am in perfect harmony with the universe. So, now I have gone through an experience which is ... that one to me is life and death. I'm seeing that place. Then I'm saying, "Well, if one to me is life and death why am I staying alive?" And then I see that out of all these vectors, when I sort of summate them, like see where the force is, there is one added vector that is my link to my fellow human beings. It's like my incarnation as a member of this species is keeping me attached, so that I can't reject my species by *killing* myself. See, the *act* of dying is an act of suicide, which is an ego act. And I see that I must live on because I must live on, because that's the way the forces are acting. O.K. Now, I can find that level in many books describing the level where it is all gotten into a place of just patterns of energy. And I can say, "Well, now what I'm dealing with is a plane that is very much, very close to the ..• or the causal plane which is merely forces and counter forces. It's like the world of Yin and Yang, that level. There are times when I go into things where I start to meet other beings, which are like dreamlike beings or demons or whatever you want to call them. And I say, "Well, now I'm on certain other kinds of planes, as I see in the books."

*link to
fellow man*

The simplest system would say there is this physical plane, then within each of us there are three bodies. There is the physical, a subtle, and a causal body, if you want to call it that. The physical body is connected to your body and what you know yourself to be. The subtle body is connected to your personality, your emotions, your chakras, and so on, your thinking mind. Your causal body is the world of ideas out of which all that comes. It's like a pyramid and the ideas are the top place. They're like Plato's pure ideas. Behind that is a level where it's all homogeneous field. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* deals with bardos, which is another statement of levels, coming back the other way. The seven chakras can all be connected with various planes of astral and causal place, this one being causal.

My general way of dealing with this is to ignore most of

*sharing
consciousness*

it. I mean I don't learn all of these systems because I'm not terribly interested. Because whatever it is that I see in "form," I've got to go beyond it, anyway, so why bother chronicling it? Once I understood that the job is to finish the journey in one lifetime, I'm just doing it. I'm just finishing the journey. So anybody I meet, any powers I gain, or anything, any beings that come along, I just say, "Groovy, baby. Cool it, 'cause I'm on my way." I'm like the rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*. I can't stop, fellow, I'm sorry. I can't stop to groove in the heavens or be the God of the Wind or whatever the trip is. Those **are** all planes that we're dealing with. • now I know for some of you that's really far-out stuff. Sounds pretty nutty; and I haven't made a great effort to make that transition, to put it in psychodynamic terms and so on, because I feel that we are a very heterogeneous audience and some of us can hear it one way and some of us can hear it another; so I'm sharing my consciousness as well as I can. Yes?

Audience: What's the monkey and the picture and the clock for?

Ram Dass: Well, the clock is to tell time, so I can tell it's 25 past 9, so I know that I won't talk after 10 o'clock ... unless you want me to ... but I'll stop and you can go home. That's what that's for, to show me that nothing's happening.

Audience: The hand's going around ...

Ram Dass: Well, that's the clock's problem ... the hands going around. That's not my problem. Just like my body's decaying, that's his problem; that's not my problem. It's funny about what happens to birthdays . . . you know birthdays kind of fall away 'cause who's getting old anyway? Who's getting old? The body's getting old, but that has nothing to do with me. I'm afraid I'm here. And I'm not going anywhere, so. . .

Now the monkey, this is Hanuman, or it's a representative of Hanuman. Hanuman is the . . . the Hindus are very far out, I should point out. Our gods, like Jehovah, you know . . . Jehovah has a very limited repertoire of emotional responses, as gods go. He can be righteous, he can be indignant, he can be punitive, he can be benevolent. That's about it. He's sort of like somebody's quite old grandfather. That's who Jehovah usually is. Now and then in one of the Psalms you get a little feeling that he could be a swinger,

but not very much-it's just alluded to in the Bible. Usually he's very straight, you see. Well, in India the same being, whatever it is, who is common property to all the religions of the world, obviously, he is ... they see the many forms of god and they see him in a variety of different roles.

For example, the farthest-out one for us Westerners perhaps is that of Krishna. There is a great religious story of Krishna sporting with the Gopis, the milkmaidens, on full moon nights by the river, where he plays his flute. He's about 17 years old and he's handsome and a swinger, see. He plays his flute, and he plays it so beautifully that the chicks drop their milk pails and their babies and they leave their husbands and they leave the pots on the stove and they go flying to this guy, because when he plays his flute, that's it. He awakens that thing in them. And they rush to him . . . there's about 16,000 of them . . . and he manifests himself in 16,000 forms and he makes love to each of them just as they would most want to be made love to. They are making love with God, right? And then after their mad sport they all go into the river and bathe and *it's* a wild scene, see. And this . . . this is as much a . . . like Passover or Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah or Good Friday; it's another one of the scenes, see, because in *Bhakti* Yoga—Yoga meaning union and *Bhakti* meaning the vehicle towards union using the heart chakra or devotion—there are eleven different ways in which you can be devoted to another being. You can be devoted like . . . to your father or like Mary to Jesus, like mother to child, or like a friend, like John and Jesus, or in this case like lover and beloved, which is certainly a very high human relationship. And the fact that you can use the relationship of lover and beloved to come into that oneness with God is a spiritual practice. In fact there is a sect in India who are worshipers of Krishna. They are Gopis. Now they're not transvestites though they dress as Gopis. They're men . . . they dress as milk maids and they are in the relation to Krishna of lover to beloved. All of these different relationships are possible. Now Ram is another of the incarnations of Vishnu, as is Krishna. In the Hindu system the one Brahma becomes the three: Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, meaning the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer or Changer, to put it crudely. And Vishnu, the Preserver, has a number of incarnations, of which Krishna's one, and Ram is one, and Buddha's one, and so on. And Ram is a perfect statement of *Karma* Yoga. He's the perfect father, he's the perfect husband, he's the perfect lover, he's the perfect friend, he's the perfect servant, he's just a wonder-

Krishnastory

*levelsof
readiness*

Ram story

ful guy. He's a great king. The *Ramayana*, which is one of the holy books of India, concerns his story. Now like every great holy book, it's always written at a number of levels, and you read the level you're ready to hear. Like you can the Bible, the New Testament, as a teaching in higher consciousness when you're ready to read it that way, or you can read it as a melodramatic story of Jesus. There's the Jesus story and then there is Christ's consciousness. And you'll notice in the Bible there's always Christ sort of standing around saying, "Well, that's the way the prophecy said it. Well, tomorrow's the big day. Keep quiet, woman, it's *not* yet my *time*." I mean he's like directing the script. He knows how it all is. And then there's Jesus carrying the cross and doing the thing and curing the people and doing his trip, saying, "Why are you going to sleep?" and stuff like that. "I told you to stay awake; why are you going to sleep?" That's the Jesus story, see. And then there's the Christ-consciousness. Well, in the same way in the *Ramayana*, and most of these other books, there are always these two levels.

Example, at one point, Ram is sent to . . . Ram is going through the jungle and he meets these naked ascetics. And they say, "Hey, Ram, you're God and we're really being bugged by these demons; we can't meditate. Would you mind finding . . . getting a mantra we could say that would get rid of them, cause they're making a lot of noise? You know, it's like cats making love on the back fence. They're really screwing up my meditation. Could you get me a mantra that would get rid of the blue jay so it wouldn't scare away all the other birds?" Ram says, "Well, I have to go see my guru," because he's a young man..•• So he goes many miles and he goes to see his guru; takes his wife with him, and his brother. He sees his guru and the guru is sitting in a house and takes one look and sees God coming towards him. So the guru runs out and falls on his face before Ram. Ram looks and sees his guru, so he runs and falls on his face before the guru. They're both down there honoring each other. Ram says to the guru, "I've come to get a mantra to help these ascetics." And the guru says, "Come on. baby, what do you mean? I mean, you're God. If you're God, you're the mantra and you're the demons and you're the whole business; so if you're all that, what do you need me for?" And then right in the middle of the sentence ... "Oh, I forgot. We're in an incarnation and this incarnation you're a nice young man and I'm your guru, so of course I'll give you the mantra and I'll. . . ." He gives him the mantra and

he goes home and does his thing. Now those are what I mean by the two levels at which these high books are written. At one point Ram's wife is taken away by the bad man, Ravina, who is really a good man finishing up a bad incarnation, if you want to know the real plot. And Ram, of course, is beside himself, because his wife's been taken away, you know. She's pining away and she won't make it with the bad guy and she's going to die. He's determined to find her. He goes to the king of the monkeys and he asks for help. The king of the monkeys assigns his monkey lieutenant, Hanuman, to serve Ram. Hanuman becomes the perfect servant. Hanuman is a representative of pure, unadulterated service. He's not serving in order to take over Ram's job. He's not serving in order to get patted on the head by Ram. He's just serving because he serves. And Ram says to him, "Hey, Hanuman, who are you, man, monkey? And Hanuman says, "When I don't know who I am, I serve you. When I know who I am, you and I are one." So that's who Hanuman is. It turns out that the temple I was brought to is a Hanuman temple in India. They worship Hanuman. They are in the relation of devotee to God, in the relation of servant to master. So my name is Ram Dass . . . Dass means "servant" and Ram is the name of that incarnation, so it means "servant of God." So my gig is to serve; so I am doing my service. As I say, when I know who I am, you and I are one, when I don't know who I am, I'm serving you. That's why I ask often, "How may I serve you?" because it's not like the movie "The Servant" where you're trying to take over power. It's where you're playing out your part in the drama by being a servant, it's just a pure relationship. Yes?

Ram Dass

Audience: In a rapidly deteriorating situation, like in this country and the world today, why are the most aware people that I know of, and others, really feeling the need to get into heavy political action? And this seems to take on two manifestations: one, it divides people even worse, and the other is, on the survival level, it seems like about the only thing to do. I'm just wondering what ... how ... what you feel about political action.

Ram Dass: The issue, it seems to me, is the issue of social responsibility. It seems to me to be responsibility to the well-being of one's fellow man, and just as I said earlier, if you watch the way it often works, people can get locked in a struggle and then some other model can come which frees both of them from an untenable predicament that they're stuck in, right? In other words, somebody comes in

*the issue of
social
responsibility*

*Einstein and
new levels*

with a new way of looking at it . . . like with two children fighting, you often can come in and get their minds somewhere else so that the whole fight changes its nature and what they're fighting about doesn't seem to be the essence of the matter. It seems to me that the tensions in society today are much more profound than any specific external condition . . . those are all manifestations of it, but it is itself not the war in Vietnam or not poverty or not. . . . Einstein said an interesting thing, he said, "The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level as the level we created them at." That is, the only way we can solve them is by creating a new way of conscious . . . a new level of thinking about them. In other words, we've got to break the set. O.K. Now it's obvious to you just from the way you phrased your question, as it is to me, that when there is a kind of confrontation the confrontation usually increases the amount of hurt and anger and polarization, ultimately. That no matter what the short-term gain is . . . there is a long-term loss in terms of increasing paranoia. So that, especially in California, you can see the increasing polarization most, most dramatically. In high-energy centers in the country it seems to precipitate out much faster. That polarization and paranoia.... If I identify with any side of any position, then my attachment to that side makes me see the opposite side in terms of an object, as "them." Seeing another being as "them" is what the problem is, that's what it boils down to. That is, whether it's nationalism or racial tension or generations or theories of research or whatever it is. To the extent that you see somebody in the universe as "them" you create increasing paranoia because you're stuck in your world of "them," which puts "them" in the world of "them" which increases the "them-ness," or subject-object, or psychic distance between people. So that, as I said earlier, I see that the only law or rule of all human relations, be they mother and child or therapist and patient or lecturer and audience or army and pacifist or North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese or whatever it is, the only rule of the game is to put your own consciousness in a place where you are no longer attached to a polarized position even though you may by the nature of the game contracts you're involved in be forced to play out a polarized role.

*nature01
game contracts*

For example, I recently met with this police chief who has been going around to colleges getting college students to be-

come policemen for New York City. I told ... I complimented him on what he's doing, on trying to create another kind of psychic space in the police department, and so on. At the same point, I said "The program will be as successful as you are 'conscious' because as long as you are stuck in the polarity you're just going to enroll more people into the polarity. If you aren't stuck in the polarity you may be able to free people by the model that new policemen will have about what it is that they think they're doing every day when they go out and be policemen."

When I was in India in the temple, I was sitting there and there was a river flowing by and there were birds chirping and it was gentle and I was meditating and I felt this great feeling of well-being and calmness and I thought, "What am I doing here? Why aren't I back on the front lines? Why aren't I back fighting? Why aren't I back doing what I believe for what I believe; you know, protesting against injustice and so on? Am I copping out? Is this like a rear battle rest station? What kind of a scene am I in? Is this a cop out?" Then I began to see that staying alone in that room at that moment was confronting me with an internal battle which was much fiercer than any external battle I had ever fought before. And until I had found some way through that internal battle, all I could do was get sucked into the external manifestations of it in such a way as to perpetuate them. Right? I began to see that it was absolutely imperative in terms of socially responsible, effective behavior that I work on myself sufficiently so that I could look at any human being and see that place in them behind whatever their melodrama is, be it Nixon or a hippie or Mao or Hitler or Schweitzer or Mahatma Gandhi or whatever the person's trip is, to be able to see behind that. Until I was centered enough, till I was in that place in myself, I couldn't really know that place in other beings. I saw that, finally, my responsibility was to work on myself.

Now, to bring this to the West, it seems to me that there is . . . that . . . because of many of the factors that have been, I think, sufficiently well pointed out by Marshall McLuhan and others so that I don't have to particularly repeat them, there is a tremendous change in the cultural context in which we are living and it's been changing very intensively in the past ten years. This is leading to changes in our time and space concepts, the time and space concepts we live in everyday. Because of these changes we are experiencing a great input of energy. It's as if we're tuning in to more and more

*decade of
intensive change*

*unintentional
repetition of
patterns*

*the first
criterion:
start with
your own
being*

energy in the universe, so that you feel the geometric progression at which things are happening. Look at the culture. It's as if it's all going faster and faster and harder and harder in all directions, all at once. What I notice is that when a person feels this higher energy, which really turns out in the Hindu system to be fourth chakra, which is a place independent of time and space . . . when you start to experience that energy, you tend to want to "do" something with it. It's like, "I've got to do something!" And the things that you do are the habits you had out of the last trip you were on. In other words, you're on "I'm going to do something. I'm going to make this world a better place to live in. I'm going to change the system"-that's the feeling. The young person feels, "I have all this energy. I see more. I can do it." When he starts to do something, what he ends up doing is a set of responses which are still in the third chakra, which is in the world of "we" and "them." So all he does is bring more energy to a set of old games that the culture's been playing out, where the son overthrows Daddy and then the son becomes Daddy and Daddy becomes just as bad as he was before, because he's now Daddy, see? So I can pick up a hitchhiker in Big Sur who's had to cut off his hair because he's in the army and he says, "Hey, man, this is fierce," he says, "None of the chicks will go out with me because I have short hair." And I begin to see that there's a new establishment which is the long-hair establishment. They're saying, "You can't come into our club because you don't have your credentials. You don't have an American Express Card. I'm sorry, you can't stay here." **In** other words, it's a new system that comes in when that energy is used unconsciously. They're just perpetuating the illusion, perpetuating the darkness. So now it became apparent to me that . . . what one can "do" if one feels a sense of social responsibility, which is that vector that pulls me back out of the ocean and which is what I'm doing here . . . • one first of all keeps working on himself to become a higher and higher rate of vibration. In other words, a peaceful man is the first criterion if you want to have a peaceful universe. You start with the universe you've got, which is your own being; and if you're angry, you can't be angry about peace because all you're creating is more anger in the world, rather than more peace. So whatever you're going to do, you've got to do it peacefully. In other words, you've got to do it with peace in your heart if it has anything to do with peace. It may not, but if it has anything *really* to do with peace you've got to realize you *are* whatever it "is" and so you've got to start right there. You can't say, "Well, I'm angry

about peace, and as soon as I have peace, I'll be peaceful," because it doesn't work that way. It works just the opposite because of the laws of action and reaction which the universe functions on. So you see that the only option is to work on yourself.

Now does working on yourself have anything to do with whether you protest, march, drop out, drop in? No, it has nothing whatsoever to do with that, because at any moment you are consciousness involved in a nature package. That nature package includes your heredity, your environment, all of your personality characteristics, all of the opportunities that exist at this moment, all of your attitudes, all of your predispositions-the whole package. Right? That package is functioning under the laws of karma or the laws of the universe. In other words, that package is unfolding. It's just lawfully working itself out. As you get more conscious, however, every act you perform increases the amount of consciousness in the universe, because the act itself conveys the consciousness. In other words, I could tell you the greatest truths of the world but if I don't understand them inside, forget it, because all I'm doing is taking it from there and giving it to there and I'm not giving you the key that allows you to use it, which is the "faith" in it, which I can only convey through my own success in whatever I'm doing.

*increasing the
amount of
consciousness*

So, then with all of that said, it's quite apparent that as you work on yourself, on your consciousness, you continue to do whatever dance you're doing or the dance evolves. As you are conscious, you begin to see how the acts you perform can become more and more optimum to the conditions. That is, when you're about to change a law in the country you begin to understand the way the whole system works as you stand back one bit, and you see what the optimum act you can do is, and you go and perform, and you perform it totally without the attachment to . . . emotional attachment to that act . . . but with an awareness of how that act works in the whole system. You hear what I'm saying? In other words I can . . . its the ability to sometimes have delay of gratification, if you will, the ability to stand back, to do what is the more optimum response. Sometimes it's the immediate thing to do. In other words, a parent may or may not slap the child. The parent may or may not be emotionally involved in slapping the child. The parent may or may not know . . . understand totally how many ramifications are involved in slapping the child. These are all different places which they can work at.

*the optimum
response*

*up-leveling
consciousness
discloses
more creative
solutions
to problems*

So finally the general rule applies to all action no matter whether you tell me that the world is going to end tomorrow or in five years or ten years or the bad guys win or the good guys win, or it's all up to me, or we've got to get together and do something. All of that leads me always to the same response: I will work on myself, since the work on myself is going to be the highest thing I can do for it all, since I understand that as man up-levels his own consciousness, he sees more creative solutions to the problems that he's confronting. Therefore, it always feeds back to the same place. But working on myself is just like this ... this is social action at the moment ... and yet this social action is totally without attachment. I can't be concerned with whether you can know this or not. I can only do what I do because the minute I'm concerned, I'm caught. The minute I'm caught I can only catch you.

Audience: I have one other point. Would you tell the same thing, say, to a black? The black struggle is a little bit different than . . . like I can sit here and hear what you're saying and I sit back. . .

Ram Dass: Right. I hear aU that. Yeh. The situation yes, I certainly can tell it to him. Whether he wants to hear it or not is something else. On the West Coast I would say that I have at least 500 percent higher participation of blacks in my lectures than on the East Coast, right? It's as if many more of them are ready to hear this kind of information because they've begun to see the futility of their strategy, right? That they're going to lose what they wanted, in the bargain, with the game they're playing. Now, the matter of consciousness is how quickly you give up a past model, so that you can be here and now. In other words, the deck has now been re-dealt. The Negro is really psychologically in a different space than he was a year ago. Now, he's been oppressed for hundreds of years and he has worked very hard to get to this moment. How many years should he have to be preoccupied with how hard it was to get here? How long should that capture his consciousness? Right? In other words, I've been driving and speeding and I'm given a ticket, how long does the ticket eat away at my intestine and the acid secrete and I sit around rehearsing the thing and saying, "Wen, if I had said this, and he shouldn't have done that, and I've got to fix it." Or how much, right after that, can I be here and look out and say, "Wow, look at the sun. Isn't it beautiful?" In other words, how long do I persevere? And the Negro's predicament, the black man's predicament, is

how long he perseverates at this point. The minute he can come into the here and now, he will appreciate that there are literally hundreds of thousands of other people around him who see him as another human being in the here and now ... see blackness as a secondary rather than as a primary consideration. Is he going to spend the rest of his life punishing himself for the punishment that he has had, by retaining the paranoia, or does he give it up? The problem is one of how quick he can up-level his own predicament. That's the question . . . it's for all of us the same question, you see. And all I can do to help him up-level his own predicament is for me not to get caught in it. He can say, "Look, man, you're Whitey and I'm going to beat the shit out of you." And I can say, "Yeh, baby, I understand, and here we are, right? Here we are, I understand the whole trip, why you got to do that and why you feel that, and all that; but here we are. I see it and you see it and now here we are. Now what? Now what?" And that's a fierce one. It's fierce because there are many people that are getting so many points out of their melodrama and they've been on such a thin reinforcement schedule that they don't want to give up the brownie badges they're getting. That's true of the psycho-analytic societies and it's true of blacks and it's true of the sexually beautiful women and the rich men in our society, and the handsome men. They're all getting fantastic payoffs in our externalized culture, which is not going to be enough in the long run for any of them, but they're saying, "I'll take it now even though. . . ." Buddha pointed out very clearly that ... just like Christ said, when he said, "Lay not up your treasures where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break in and steal" ... Buddha said that the cause of suffering is desire or craving, and that means to be caught in time, craving things which pass. Beauty, money, power, external freedom, youth-all pass. Therefore, any time you crave that, there is always going to be suffering built right into the situation, by definition. Even when I was going with the top models in the country, the most beautiful women in the world, I could feel in them the fear of what was going to happen tomorrow, when now they were only the second most beautiful girl in the world. That's built right into the system. It's built right into the system of *time*. And that's what human suffering is about-an attachment to time. What is now happening in our culture is we are having a technologically over-determined push into a place independent of time in our consciousness. We're moving to another level of consciousness. The only question is how fast we grow up to who we now are. I dig that we grow up just as fast as we

*the same
question for
all*

*payoffs in
externalized
culture are
not enough*

*the cause of
suffering*

are "conscious." That is, as long as communication is what it is, so everybody's hearing what everybody else is saying -fantastic amount of informational exchange-then it boils down *to* the most conscious beings start to change ... help the game change. It only takes one Pasteur or one anything to change the nature of the entire dance because he touches a place where the answer is, and he brings it back, and then everybody knows it.

anachronism

It is true that in the West at the moment there is a fantastic breaking down of attachment to the models that kept man locked in one particular organization of the universe. Things like nationalism, religion, racial and social-economic groups are suddenly all anachronism. And we're living with a system where to get a passport I've got to pledge undying allegiance to the United States. I'm going through something like a 1930's movie somehow because I've seen the picture they shot from the space capsule. I look at the earth and I see it's a big round sphere we're all sitting on, and any damned fool knows we're all in this thing . . . that's the unit we've got. As McLuhan says, "*It's* now ... the stuff that's going on in Vietnam is going on in your own back yard, because the earth is a village." And we're still saying "Now don't cross that dirt line in the center strip." It's like High Noon in an old Western, as far as I'm concerned. "That's my wheat and I can't care if you're starving."

Sure it's going to take fantastic redefinitions of all the games of energy and matter and form, and changes in institutions; but that happens just as fast as our consciousness happens. The United Nations can become an absurd joke, as it often is, where everybody's sitting in there protecting their own game, or it can shift in one moment and suddenly be a group of men who are involved in a collaborative, unitive venture, if any of them can be touched by that place in each of them that is behind the ways in which they are separate-and that is based on the *Zeitgeist* or the psychic space of man at any moment. Wars effect the psychic space. When Hitler killed all those Jews, as horrible as that act lives in the world of form in Man, forever, still the service that the whole horror served was that it unified Man in the experience of the horror of it. That, in away, brought him to a higher level of consciousness. You don't pit the giving up of a human life to any of that •••I'm merely pointing out that history "is" the story •• it's Man's story of evolving consciousness. That's what history is. It's always "his" story. It's not your story, it's his story. And you're living your own story. And your story will live as fast as you become conscious.

*evolving
consciousness
is Man's story*

You can look around and see that the universe is being kept at the plane it is and isn't going up in smoke at the moment because when you get on the bus now and then, there's a bus driver who's so high and beautiful, that everybody that gets on his bus feels better when they get off the bus than when they get on the bus. He's just driving the bus. He just happens to be Buddha driving a bus. He's not going around saying, "I'm appearing in Town Hall; I'm BUDDHA," see, he's just "being" Buddha. He's just doing what Buddha does. And you begin to realize that the earth is full of very high beings who are constantly spreading this other force, you know; creating this other kind of consciousness.

There's a great set of comic books called the *Dr. Strange Comics*. "Dr. Strange Meets the Mystic Mind," is one of the great ones. The Mystic Mind has created a mind net and he's not going to let anybody through. Dr. Strange has got to get through to save the Mystic Mind, who is caught in this net. So Dr. Strange sends images of himself, see, and you see Dr. Strange images going into the Mystic Mind. The Mystic Mind puts up huge nets and pushes them all back and you see their minds manifest in aU of these ways-it's three dimensional. It's all comic book stuff. And then you begin to see what it means to create psychic spaces. Now I ... like for example ... I do talk on, I know. It's funny one question and I go on and on. Just seems to cover . . . all right I won't tell that story. I'll answer questions. Yes?

Audience: This is a question which sort of relates to comparing LSD and mystical experience. My problem is this ... like, the practice of yoga has been around for thousands of years, whereas people have only been taking synthetic psychedelic chemicals for say the last ten years. Now isn't it possible that in the future, with new drugs and more refined techniques, that chemical . . . since the world is an illusion, after all-isn't it possible that drugs could become a religion, over say hundreds of years?

Ram Dass: Well, not only could they be, but they already have been. They are. **In** fact, they are a religion. Go ahead, yes.

Audience: I mean, isn't it possible that through chemical means you could attain all the...

Ram Dass: I suspect people have been doing it for thousands of years, also, but they haven't been talking about it.

*interchange
of methods*

*need for very
open mind*

It's quite clear now that there are what are called initiations ... secret initiation rites, like the Eleusinian Mysteries and so on, secret initiation rites in many religions that are probably used or have turned out to use things like various psychedelic herbs, psychotropic herbs and so on, as part of the rite connected with it. It's entirely possible, as far as I'm concerned, psychedelics are another yoga. The fact is that at this moment we in the West don't know enough about this particular yoga, either chemically or in terms of all possible side effects and implications, or in terms of what is the optimum method to use to make it work. Those of us that are working on consciousness are looking to as many other methods as are available, to learn where we can learn from them with the idea that there is this interchange. In other words, it is very conceivable that some combination of yoga and psychedelics, traditional Indian yoga and psychedelics, will.... For example, the Good Friday study that Walter Pahnke did, that we did at Harvard and Boston University Chapel ... we ran twenty theological students in a double blind, placebo study on Good Friday *in* the Chapel, and of the ten that took the psilocybin, nine of them had a religious, mystical experience. Now they had it with psilocybin, but it's in a church, in a regular religious setting, so we're learning something about what rituals of religion are necessary for it to be a religion that brings man into the Spirit, which is what religion was supposed to be about in the first place. Right? So it's entirely possible it can be. It behooves us to have a very, very open mind about all of this at all times. All I see is that we're exchanging information.

Audience: Do you feel that you've achieved a state of mind now that you could with LSD, apparently before?

Ram Dass: Do I feel I've achieved the state of mind I had before with LSD? When I am doing very formal sadhana, meaning spiritual work on myself, and part of the sadhana I do, which is part of *Ashtanea* Yoga, the yoga I pursue, involves *pranayam* which is control of breath-control of pran through breathing techniques. Under these conditions I have gone into states that are comparable to almost all of the states I have experienced with LSD, not all of them but almost all of them. I see that that is a method very similar, in certain ways, in that it forces, it overrides, certain habits of thought and places I'm not, in order to put me in that place, and then I come back from **it**. It's a discontinuous place again for me. But it functions very much like psych-

edelics and you can get hooked on pranayam in the same way you can get hooked on the experience of LSD. All of them are experiences. And, you finally have to give up experiencing it to be it, and then you're beyond the psychedelic or beyond the *Hatha* Yoga or the pranayam.

*hooked on
experiences*

This is an interesting situation for me here, because gathered together here are not only members of the Menninger family but members of the . . . I don't know how to say it . . . the hippie community, the young people, the long hairs, the . . . the "problems" that our society faces, the drop-outs, the young seekers, the people who don't have a vested interest in the game, the ones that are letting the change happen, the people that are on the firing line that are doing it rather than thinking about it. There are a lot of different levels at which we can define who we are here this evening. It's quite easy to take a group of very high hippies and go out until we're all just beyond words together. It's quite easy to sit down to a psychiatric staff conference. Recently I spoke at the Einstein Medical School to the psychiatric Grand Rounds. There was a long conference table and I came in with my beads and my whole business and the psychiatrists all sat around the table. This was usually a case conference. And I looked into their eyes and into their hearts and I knew . . . I knew that I was the case. There was no doubt about it. Although the little program said I was the guest speaker, that was obviously a misprint. I was sitting cross-legged on the end of the conference table, which is . . . because that's the most comfortable for me. And I'm working with my beads. And I look like that poor Dr. Alpert that used to be at Harvard and took all those drugs and look at what we . . . this is a very interesting case this week, and you know . . . well, he's schizophrenic, you know. And I had heard all that. I used to sit in case conferences for many years.

case conference?

So, I presented myself as a case, right? I talked about the onset of hallucination and the dissociative experiences and I reported my whole journey in psychodynamic terms, just as if I were the doctor on the case presenting the case. It took a couple of minutes before it became apparent to everybody that the patient was presenting himself, which is an unusual situation, for the patient to present the Freudian dynamics, etc., right? Now in the whole course of it I only used terms like "religion," "God" and "spirit" in terms of talking about the patient's responses. And when I talked about . . . *mala* I talked about a heuristic device for cognitive centering

*communication
through
metaphor*

because I found out that truth could be said in whatever metaphor we need, to communicate with one another. If the message is pure enough it should be able to be said to everybody so that everybody can hear it in the way they need to hear it. The interesting experience for all of us tonight was to be able to bridge all those funny little gaps that we're all stuck in, saying I'm me and there's them and there's them here and them here, which were in my head as well, and find a way of answering each question so that all of us . . . there is the optimum possibility that all of us can hear what we need to hear. And I realize that this demands work on myself that is extraordinary, that I haven't yet done enough of, but it's the kind of work I'm doing, because if I am pure enough, in how I understand it, I will be nobody, and what will come out of my mouth will be a function of all the consciousnesses gathered in this room at the moment. What will come out will be the optimum thing needed for all these consciousnesses. So that's been the experiment we've been playing with tonight and I've found it . . . an experiment we've been playing with tonight. We'll now have about a five-minute break and then those that want to ask questions are more than welcome.

*modification
of group
consciousness*

Once one sees how these processes work, one sees that what we have just been doing is as formal and disciplined an intensive device to change consciousness, when entered into freely, as any other technique. And the repetition of simple phrases and the use of a drone instrument such as this one here is a quite exquisitely designed vehicle. In a number of seminars, week-long seminars I've run at growth centers, at Esalen, for example, I have created a psychic space, a certain environment. We've all lived together for five days, cooked together, in silence, using chalk boards. Part of our work involved doing all-night chanting where with drums and cymbals and tamboura and flutes we would just repeat . . . Rama or Had Krishna or whatever phrase we were working with. Just do it over and over and over again. We'd go through change after change after change in terms of the group consciousness. You go through the excitement, enthusiasm, the boredom, the fatigue, and keep going on and on and on behind that. Finally you get into a space where the thing is going on by itself. It is as if it's a wheel and ball bearings, and everybody's just sort of doing that thing to keep it going. It's this place we have all come into where we are now the keepers of the song rather than having any other function . . . all the little separate games we brought to it.

And it becomes a very, very high vehicle for group consciousness modification. Questions that I may answer for you? Yes, sir?

Audience: Being an experimenter, a researcher by experience and background, can you still be, without corrupting the purity of the experience that those who don't have such a background can achieve, practicing . . .

Ram Dass: How much can one remain an experimenter, is that what you're asking?

*the problem
of the
experimenter*

Audience: Remaining the experimenter, can you achieve genuinely. . . ?

Ram Dass: No, I think not. I think that there is a part of the process that involves giving up any specific predisposition you have. There is an act of surrender. Now it turns out that when you give it up you don't lose it like you thought you were going to do when you gave it up, but you do have to give it up. I consider myself data, really. I consider myself a subject in the world of Western science because my own consciousness is the stuff and I can only be studied within the subject-object world of the experimenter by someone independent of me, since it's happening to me. At the same time, I was trained as an experimental social scientist and therefore what I'm doing now is a . . . really a behavioristic study of my own behavior change . . . or my own change. Did you make it through? In other words, there is a . . . in social science anyway . . . this may not be exactly the question you're asking, but I'm sort of working around it a little bit. We got so frightened of Titchenerian Introspectionism in the way we got into Behaviorism that we got fiercely into Behaviorism, and we ruled out the possibility that a person could be the observer of his own behavior, without having the subjective fallacy as the experimenter. There are ways of training yourself to do this, once you stop being afraid to do it, and it is a body of knowledge that becomes available that way. It's not . . . it doesn't meet the criterion of being public data, but it still fulfills certain criteria and as such is a body of knowledge not formally within the scientific system. There are parts of this where the model of being an experimenter stands in your way. There is no doubt about that. It corrupts it. You have to give up being the experimenter to have the experience of the transcendence of experimenter-ness. And this is one of the problems that . . . you can only know you know after you've been it . . . and in order to be it you've got to give up knowing you know. It's a fantastic paradox. Yes?

*transcendence
of
experimenter-
ness*

Audience: My next question was going to be: How do you reconcile faith and reason?

Ram Dass: How do you reconcile faith and reason? Well, as I feel it now, we have come out of a period where in man's evolutionary journey . . . in the evolutionary journey of us as beings, Man evolves which has a . . . these great frontal lobes and this capacity for rational thought or for self-consciousness. And this is, in the Hindu system, what would be called *siddhi* or a power. That power can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used in the service of what I call the third chakra, that is, in terms of man's control over his environment, which is the way we've been doing it, which is . . . the rational mind controls. It's man over nature in the anthropological Florence Kluckhohn differentiations. She talks about societies that are man *over* nature, societies that are man *in* nature, and societies that are man *under* nature. Attachment to the *siddhi* of the rational mind put man in the group of man over nature. That particular way of knowing the world through the rational mind has tremendous advantages, obviously, which we have exploited as hard as we could. At the same point, it is becoming apparent that there are certain limitations to that particular device for knowing. That is, that it is in "time" . . . it is in "time." It takes an object *and* it cannot get beyond the subject-object world, the rational mind can't. It can't know itself . . . it's a metasystem. It is linear, for the most part and, therefore, it is tremendously limited in dealing with large numbers of variables simultaneously. Even the high-powered computer doesn't approximate. . .

*limitations of
knowing through
the rational
mind*

Now it turns out, that there are ways of knowing the universe which for the most part we have relegated to the realm of mysticism, or poetry, or romantic poetry, or falling in love, or . . . we sometimes call it "intuitive validity" in science. That's the closest we get to it. There are ways of knowing about things that we don't know through our analytic, rational mind. But since we have committed ourselves, we have grown-up . . . in order to survive we have become participants in a religion, if a religion is a specific faith . . . the faith is, faith in the rational mind. And, therefore, we as professors or as rationalists become the priests in that particular faith system, which is a faith, after all. It's faith in the fact that what you know through your senses, through your thinking mind . . . and through the logic of your thinking mind . . . that that has anything to do with anything. That's a faith. There's nothing you can do about it, because you can never get outside of the predicament of knowing, independent of that faith.

intuitive validity

Now once you begin to experience that man is caught in a dilemma, that his vehicle is finite and he's trying to know something about the infinite, and you begin to realize that right over the hill from *Plank's* constant is something pretty interesting, but that you can never get there with your rational mind, you begin to entertain what William James has talked about as altered states of consciousness, which are not primarily experiencing information through the linear, analytic process of what we call logical, rational process. Now a lot of the techniques for altering consciousness take you into states where you are experiencing a relationship to what was previously what you'd call the objective universe, in such a way that you are experiencing it in a *subjective* rather than an objective sense. In other words, you are experiencing a unitive link with it rather than knowing through your senses. It is known in the mystic trade as the opening of the third eye, which people have related to the pineal gland and so on, which is probably just more stuff to feed into your computer to confuse you. But whatever it is, it is very clear that there are ways of knowing that are *not knowing* either through your senses or through your rational mind. Whether or *not* that way of knowing is useful to man is something that we only know as we explore and enter into that realm ourselves, you see. Now, it turns out that what is required to get to the next level of consciousness is to transcend the rational mind. That means to transcend the knower who knows. And that is a very frightening thing when that has been your vehicle for controlling your universe up until that point. And it turns out, of course, that when you do that you end up *with* your rational mind but in the role of a servant rather than a master. We're coming out of that place, as I said last night, of *cogito, ergo sum* and we're now going into a place where we're seeing that we aren't our thinking mind but that *it* is merely another servant, not the master. You are still dissatisfied. What's bothering you?

*non-rational,
non-sensual
ways of
knowing*

*new role for
rational mind*

Audience: Still I'd like to know, it's very simple, whether you found more assets or liabilities in terms of the whole body of Western epistemology in your efforts to discover the truth or set of truths in the Eastern sector of the categories of thinking.

Ram Dass: I feel that I cannot ... I can't ... I cannot see it all as but summing. That is, I feel that I am somebody who has been ... who has been in a way blessed by having been given everything that Western society could offer, in large part, in terms of affluence, so that I was not concerned

*logical
progression
of evolving
consciousness-
not Eastern
versus Western*

about my security, so I could finish with that; lots of love from people around me; the best training, with a Ph.D. and that kind of research orientation; the best technology could offer me in terms of transportation, communication, psychedelics, and life process; and I feel that all that was part of my preparation to now know something else, to do something else. I don't see it any more particularly as Eastern versus Western. I merely see this as a logical progression of my own evolving consciousness. And I see the way it's happening to me is quite Western. I am making use of Eastern methods. I am not Hindu. I am a Western, Jewish boy from Boston who is ... who has studied Hinduism. And I am also making use . . . because I also find the same thing in the Greek Orthodox Christians, and in the Hasidic movement in Judaism. I find it in all mystical traditions: in the Sufi, in the Egyptian, and certainly in ... in St. Teresa and St. John and so on. So that, I find that it is in a way the amalgam of all this stuff that is allowing me to be what I am doing right at this moment.

*attachment an
impediment-
development an
asset*

It seems to me that there was a point where my "attachment" to my Western training stood in my way. I didn't have to give up my Western training, what I had to give up was my "attachment" to my Western training. That's the critical difference. I didn't lose my Western training. As I said last night, Jung said in a eulogy of Richard Wilhelm, "He is a gnostic intermediary, in that he was willing to give up a Western predisposition in order to experience another system at the being-level, in order to bring it back." Now my bringing it back is as a Western scientist. And all that stuff is helping me be able to translate it into something that is meaningful to us in the West at this moment in the work we're doing. I see that as tremendously valuable. But I do see that my "attachment" to my rational mind at one point was an impediment although the "development" that I have with my rational mind is clearly an asset. The power of the rational mind . . . that particular siddhi, as it's called in the Hindu system-when you turn that back in on itself, which is called *Inana* Yoga or the Yoga of the Rational Mind Beating Itself-which is part of the Zen Koan and so on, which demand exquisite discipline of the rational mind ••• that, in a way, was usable only because of the disciplines I had developed. So that I see them very much as an amalgam rather than in any kind of sense as contradictory.

amalgam

Audience: Well, I think you're right, if I phrased your thinking that way, namely that an epistemological obstacle

is inherent in man's attachment to one particular sense, rather than intrinsic to the subject matter or the method.

Ram Dass: Exactly, exactly. The truth is everywhere. Wherever you are, it's right where you are, when you can see it. And you can see it through whatever vehicle you are working with, you can free yourself from certain attachments that keep you from seeing it. The scientist doesn't stop being a scientist, nor anybody stop being anything. You find how to do the things to yourself which allow you to find truth where you are at that moment.' Yes?

*truth every-
where*

Audience: You're actually saying there is no invention, it's just discovery.

*no invention-
just discovery*

Ram Dass: That's right. I'm saying there's no invention, there is just discovery. That's a beautiful way of putting it. I'd say we never find out anything new; we just remember it.