

On the Reaction to Problems, and the Problem of Self-Identification **by Richard Rose**

There is much to be said of attitude. Attitude is a sort of reaction pattern. There is eternal duality in reaction, as well as in all things in nature. There is also the eternal paradox.

There is hardly such a thing as indifference. It may be an ideal but it is almost impossible to realize. Nature abhors a vacuum. The weed that does not fight for the sunlight dies. Of course it dies eventually, and this inevitability tempts one to throw up his hands. But one never does, completely.

So that we have two courses, to act, or not to act. The path of Action is more compatible with our mechanism. Complete non-action is physical death. And often too intense action toward a single objective brings frustration, limited knowledge, and failure even to achieve the one objective.

However throughout the trivial thoughts and also the more meticulously prepared philosophies of man, we find an endless wavering between the urge to take action, and the lassitude of non-action prompted by futilism. There are those who say, -- fight for salvation. There are also those who preach predestination, and of throwing oneself limply into the hands of the Almighty. Then there are such peculiar combinations as those who actively fight for salvation, but who become rutted into one channel of action and are indifferent to their progress. And there are those who believe in predestination yet live in fear (then this fear must be token of the insufficiency of their convictions). There are professed fatalists who worry, who build up fortunes and fight.

To take action, is to answer the challenge of life, and is good. To remain indifferent to our own mortality, to possible ultimate failure in the quest of the spirit is good. But this should not deter our quest, even though we stand upon the threshold. Thus singleness of objective is good, but not to be so aloof from humanity as to lose valuable teaching, or to be so intent upon one path that the comparative study of others is lost, or the constant reckoning of our efforts by observing parallel seekers.

Thus we find that through all things is woven the eternal paradox. That which seems to be the rule has often many exceptions, and interpretations.

In regards to the problem of self-identification it is best to start in the beginning ... as in all things. First know thyself. Many agree that this adage is true, but approach it from diverse angles. Or in other words they claim to identify the self in relation to nature or theology expounded by others. This is not knowing thyself first. It is knowing externals first, or of knowing the observed things before knowing the observer. It would be well to note here that this does not legislate against observing ... but only of arriving at final conclusions about the origin or meaning of external things before knowing the observer.

In order to properly know the self, it may be necessary to study much of the external world. Meditation is not begun without memories, language and the reaction of intuition and reason to the phases of life. However those studies which enable us to better know ourselves should be given precedence over the others. Thus metaphysical studies should be given preference over the material sciences. Analytical thinking over synthetic. And among the metaphysical studies those which remain closer to self-identity, should prevail over those that use such studies for the implementation of material results for the sake of presumed power, or for phenomena resulting from idle curiosity.

Life is a challenge and we do not err in accepting the challenge. One of the few true inherent characteristics of protoplasm is curiosity. If such is instilled in protoplasm either by a personal Creator, or by automatic teleology, or by the evolutionary survival of those curious over those not curious.

By either of these sources, curiosity is pardonable, and must have a meaning in our planning. And even as the amoeba probes cautiously in its medium, avoiding harmful chemicals and learning to consciously avoid after initial injury, so also must man be allowed to be cautious, and his right to doubt must be held sacred.

So that merely because a doctrine is traditional, and accepted by many, it does not mean that it must be accepted by any individual, although the fact that it is accepted by many gives us reason to examine it carefully. So that simply because all men have suffered death, we do not need to relinquish all effort and hope to solving the riddle of death.

At this point we return to the paradox. References have been given to natural tendencies, which have their seeming aim in the perpetuation of the physical organism, but now we apply these conclusions to endeavors extending beyond the life of the physical organism. A new type of survival is envisioned other than the physical. In other words, we find an implement that aids the temporal survival, and attempt to use it toward determining infinite survival.

The paradox lies in the possibility that nature teaches us to yearn for survival, but that it also teaches us that all things perish. The urge to survive, if it is not to be without meaning must be a type of survival that either eliminates death which is unlikely, or incorporates the dissolution of the physical body in its plan. At any rate it is possible that we are utilizing lessons learned from nature to assail the obstructions to possibly a higher type of survival.

Another paradox lies in the possibility that the urge to know and to survive leads us to dynamic action, yet does not necessarily legislate that we must continue an endless dynamic endeavor or series of endeavors. Whereas we begin with a finite mind our training may lead us to become less finite or more infinite in the scope of our thinking. The journey that begins on foot may terminate in an aeroplane.

At this point it is necessary to indicate that which we are about, and the reasons for our conclusions. In this we deal largely with concept. It has become apparent through the examination of many enquiring minds that the meaning of the word Search, and the process of

arriving at the Truth, are different in the minds of different people, -- generally depending upon the degree of spiritual or philosophic maturity.

Our first concept is that the most important thing in life is the pursuit of Truth. And by the pursuit of Truth we mean any processes by which we might define ourselves, and undertake to know with increasing certainty of the life or status beyond death. So that we accept the adage, "first know thyself," since it is self-evident that unless the thinker knows his limitations he will not correctly judge his own deductions.

In saying that the most important thing in life is the pursuit of Truth, we mean that all life is meaningless without true meaning, and that if we are to take estimate of result without cause, then we are to admit that we may be acted upon rather than acting, since we will have less idea as to the true motives in our lives with less introspection.

A second concept is that the total Truth cannot be necessarily gained by the self with the self alone. That it is necessary to examine all to know much. That even as a child goes to school, so he will be perhaps a teacher to another child, and thus there may be many in a position to help we who are as children in the Search. But that unlike standardized education the Search is beset with false knowledge, and erratic conjecture. It is not to be presumed that there is anyone or any organization that possesses the Truth, since such a person or organization would be indisputable and all-powerful. For it is our belief that the Truth is the whole Truth, since to actually know one thing for certain, would be to know its relation to all else, which would embody "all else." So that in all probability those whose claims are most positive are lacking in honesty.

A third concept concerns the necessity for action, prompt action and sagacious action. We can accomplish little dawdling in blind faith, interminable and unfounded syllogistic haggling or simple procrastination. The normal span of life and its limits are known to all of us ... if we live that long. Nor can we afford to spend even that entire life in the wrong endeavor, in a false path or a wrong path. It is advisable to those who would vegetate, that is to live for the sake of life, and that which they care to identify as pleasure, to read no further. It is also advisable for those who feel that it is secondary in importance to economic exigencies or social position ... that they too should read no further. The purpose in writing these words is not to accumulate followers but to sort for co-workers.

We have no aversion to any study or endeavor, but we have but one answer to those who claim to have the Truth. Prove it before expecting our cooperation. Thus we bring into focus the note on sagacious action. Our lives, being short, should not be wasted upon any cult or ism that pretends ... no matter how unctuous or elaborate the pretension. Being aware of the difficulty of proof, we make no claims as to having final knowledge, but to aspiring to it.

So that it becomes next in line to be able to choose the true from the false, the quicker procedure rather than one that might be arduous and indefinite, and to understand ourselves well enough to know upon which step to place ourselves once the path is apparent. Then we must plunge in with total effort.

A fourth concept deals with the manner of deciding the true from the false, and the short-cut from the circuitous path. There are various yardsticks that may be used to analyze the motives behind a movement or system of learning. The movement must first be studied to see if it is general and speculative, or if it actually intends to aim at the Truth. Then if it has endured over a period of time, it is well to see if the followers still pursue and maintain the principles of the underlying philosophy. In other words we must see if the thing is consistent intrinsically. Its aims may be high, but its functional body diseased. Such is the case with most long-established religions.

Also we have to deal with those groups who pretend to dispense the Truth while actually building up followings for the sake of wealth and power. Consequently this can be avoided by not contributing to organizations that develop too autocratic a physical body, and by refusing to contribute to any movement whatsoever, but rather using all surplus energy in work with and upon the self, and in helping others closely observable to you who may in turn reciprocate in some manner by cooperation rather than servitude.

As already mentioned we may discount excessive claims. Many years may be wasted pursuing that which blatantly announces wild teaching abilities. Our records are filled with sad evidence from those who have spent half a lifetime in different movements and spent much of their earnings only to arrive at old age with nothing but disgust for all movements. We place this information available to all the sincere, at no cost, -- for any comparative study. However we retain the right to retain originals (which may be seen but not taken) to protect an honest enquirer from criticism or damage.

It is well to be cautious with those who bully the candidate. It is an old trick to intimidate with the use of awe-inspiring terms or complex terminology. The day is past when men are terrorized with the threats of hell-fire. But the theme still works. Nearly all cultists use the word God, freely, as though they knew this Being intimately. This casual name-dropping succeeds in over-awing. However the existence of such is not questioned here. It is the bombastic identification and definition of God that is challenged. Before man even knew the simple law of gravity, the world was subjected to the ravings of individuals and sects that purported to define God, and to translate his wishes to mankind. And yet many of those same "theologians" hinted that the finite mind could never pierce the infinite.

So that it is good to note these yardsticks:

- There is no price on Truth.
- To doubt is sacred privilege.
- A well-trained intuition.
- Purity of purpose.

A fifth concept deals with expediting our Search once we have launched into any phase of it. In this we believe that there is a longer and a shorter manner of pursuit... . That though an endeavor may be of value, that other things need looking into perhaps, so that to delay too long in one study alone may not bring the results that might come from comparative study, or from completing the investigation and progressing. That changes may be effected in daily life that will expedite our spiritual or psychic progress. That association with colleagues will aid the

science. That there are conditions in which the mind is more efficient, and that by making the mind more efficient we will achieve better and larger results. That the business of quickening the Search may in itself be so vast as to become a study in itself.

We do not legislate. It may be hard to understand ... for those who are accustomed to spiritual brow-beating to work in an undisciplined cooperative. In the first place they will be of more value to themselves if they have learned to discipline their own lives. Our purpose is to be a repository of knowledge available for those who sincerely will not in turn try to sell that which they receive, and to be a guide to those interested in any phase of philosophic or psychic endeavor regardless of which step upon the path it may be, so long as they are willing to work with total effort or increasing toward total effort, and to pass knowledge on to people of like efforts.

By applying simple laws of proportion we find that two people working together will produce greater results than two working separately, especially when they are using the same equipment, or are coordinating parallel studies for comparative purposes. We also find that work efficiency is increased with better coordinated effort, -- people working together in the same city will achieve more quickly than those in different parts of the country. And people working upon a scheduled program (this by mutual consent of all) will progress beyond desultory effort.

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If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as writer and teacher, please read his books, which are available at www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.