

## SUMMER PROGRAMME 1964

To pass the Fifth Step on the Ladder of Self-realization the small separate ego has to merge with the Universal, first in a flash, then for a day, before it becomes permanent. It is a great help to use the energy gained from some daily discipline to lift our minds above the changing scene and contemplate some great picture of the Universe. An echo of this idea, you may remember, reached England just before the first Elizabeth, in Castiglione's book, *The Courtier*:

The lover... shall gather in his thought by little and little so many ornaments, that melding all beauty together, he shall make an universal conceite, and bring the multitude of them to the unities of one alone... And thus shall he behold... an Universal that decketh out all bodies.

In the tradition of Raja Yoga (from which our System of Meditation came), *Contemplation* is a completely passive state which follows naturally after *meditation*. Then whatever enters the mind is illumined. We miss many golden opportunities if we have no universal picture for the mind to enjoy at such moments. That is the chief idea of this programme for the two months' holiday season.

We begin with the First Upanishad at the dawn of history:

### The Manifested Lord

Whatever lives is full of the Lord. Claim nothing; enjoy, do not covet His property.

Then hope for a hundred years of life doing your duty. No other way can prevent deeds from clinging, proud as you are of your human life. ...

Of a certainty the man who can see all creatures in himself, himself in all creatures knows no sorrow.

How can a wise man, knowing the unity of life, seeing all creatures in himself, be deluded or sorrowful? ...

They that know and can distinguish between natural knowledge and supernatural knowledge shall, by the first, cross the perishable in safety; shall, passing beyond the second, attain Immortal life. ...

They have put a golden stopper into the neck of the bottle. Pull it, Lord! Let out Reality. I am full of longing. ...

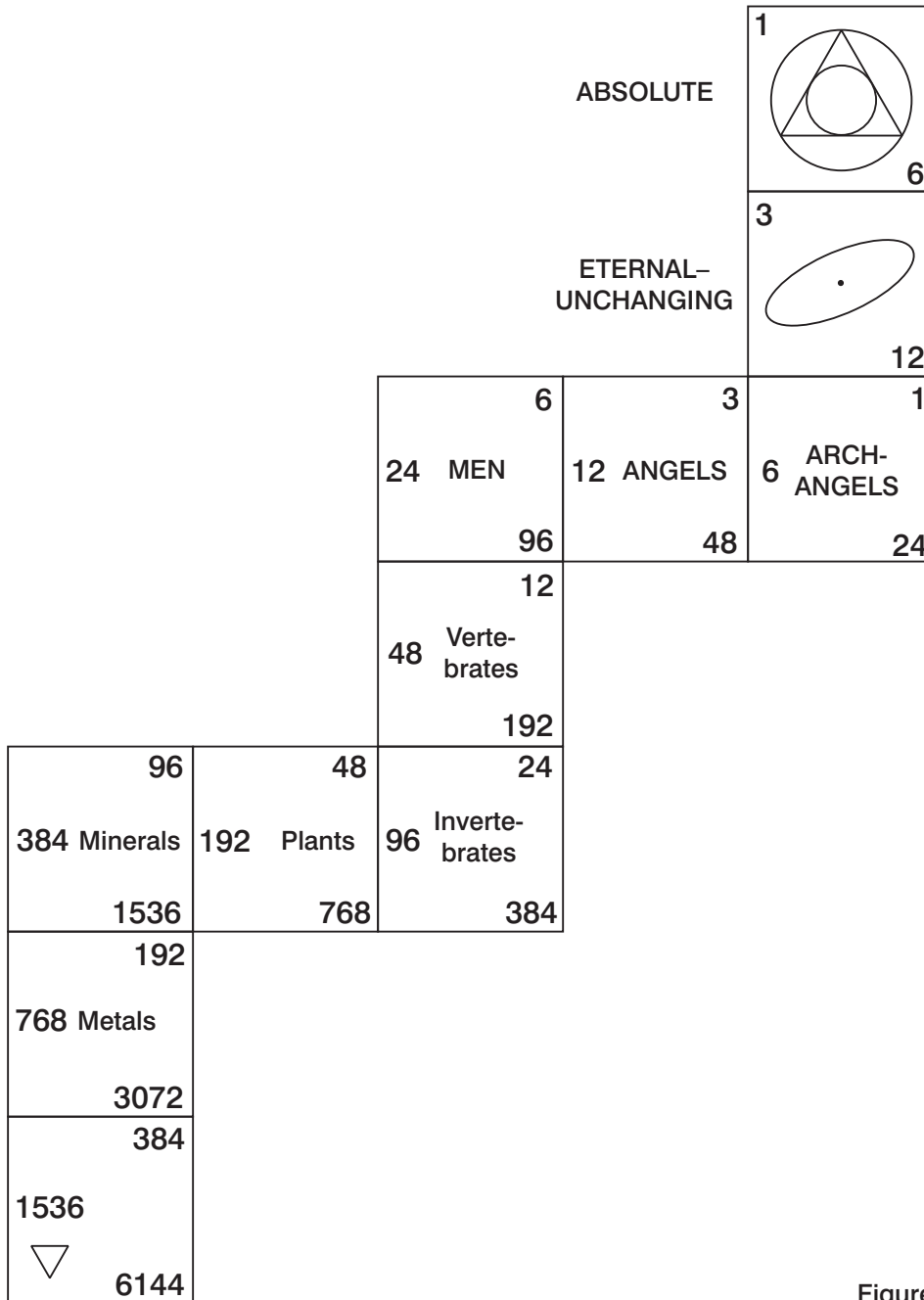
Life merge into the all prevalent, the Eternal; body turn to ashes. Mind! Meditate on the Eternal Spirit; remember the past. Mind! Remember the past; remember, Mind! Remember.

Holy Light! Illuminate the way that we may gather the good we planted. Are not our deeds known to you? Do not let us grow crooked, we that kneel and pray again and again.

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Somewhere back in the mists of time this conception was given a precise form in the great 'Diagram of All Living' (part of our System of Knowledge) 'which leads us far beyond the limits of what we call "living beings", both upwards and downwards, and deals not with individuals but

with classes in a very wide sense. According to this classification every kind of creature, every degree of being, is defined by what serves as food for this kind of creature and for what they themselves serve as food’.



Figure

[The figure refers to the Table of Hydrogens 3rd scale; but you only need to know that each square denotes a *level of being* – characterised by a number on the left, the numbers on the right showing what each ‘eats’ and is ‘eaten by’.]

The illumined mind sees this diagram moving in two continuous streams both upward from ‘dead matter without the Holy Ghost’ and downwards from the Source of Life.

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Centuries later the Sufi poet, Mevlana, gave the same idea of 'eating and being eaten' in a more homely way (*Mathnawi*, Book 3, pp. 232–5), which may help us to take a more universal and dispassionate view of the tribulations through which we pass from time to time:

Look at a chick-pea in the pot. How it leaps as it suffers the fire! In its boiling, the chick-pea rises again and again to the top, crying: 'Why are you setting the fire on me? If you like me, why are you doing this to me?'

But the housewife goes on hitting it with the ladle. 'No,' says she, 'boil nicely and don't jump away from the cook. I'm not boiling you because I hate you, but that you may gain taste and savour and so become food for Man and mingle with Spirit.

'You, when green and fresh, used to drink up water in the garden: but that water-drinking was only a prelude to this fire... Continue, O chick-pea, to boil in tribulation that neither separateness nor subjective ego may remain in you. By parting from the garden of earth and water, you are becoming nourishment and strength and reason. You came from the cloud and the sun and the sky: now you are becoming Soul and action and speech and reason.'

Action and speech and sincerity became the food of the angel, so that he mounted on the ladder up to Heaven; and just so when that morsel became the food of Man, it mounted from the inanimate state and became Soul. The caravan of Spiritual beings incessantly descends from Heaven, to traffic on the earth and then return. Go with them then, sweetly and gladly of your own free-will, and no longer with bitterness and loathing like a thief. When by enduring this tribulation your heart is thawed and your blood is made to flow, only then will you escape from all tribulations.

And again (about Death): (p. 247)

Earth says to the earth of the body, 'Return! take leave of the Spirit, come to me like the dust.' ... Death comes to shatter the body so that the four elements may abandon each other. These elements are four birds with their legs tied together: death and sickness and disease loose their legs. When death has released their legs from one another, each part like a bird flies to its home! ... The waters seek the moisture of the body saying, 'O moisture come back to us from exile.' ... The aether is calling the heat of the body, saying, 'Thou art of fire: take the way to thy origin.' ... The Soul says, 'O my base earthy parts, my exile is even more bitter than yours, for I am celestial.'

The desire of the body is for green herbs and running water because its origin is from those; the desire of the Soul is for Life and for the Living One, because its origin is Infinite Soul.

The desire of the mind is for wisdom and the sciences; the desire of the body is for orchards and meadows and wines. The desire of the Soul is for ascent and exaltation; the desire of the body is for gain and the procuring of fodder. That Exalted One too hath desire and love towards the Soul; therefore understand the Koran: 'He loves them and they love (Him)'. If I explain this, it will be endless; the *Mathnawi* will grow to eighty volumes. But the gist is that whatever anyone seeks, the Soul of the object sought is desiring them also. Whether it be man, animal, plant or mineral, every object of desire is in love with everything desiring it.

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Or again, one may see all this movement as a vast stillness described to us by the Shankaracharya so recently in these words:

When we think of Creation, and the revolution of Creation, we see only the external, physical changes; the coarse matter taking different shapes which merge one into another. But being outside of time, Atman and the Knowledge are Eternal, they never die. So what they hold always remains there. It's always there, so we don't have to go anywhere to collect it. For them Time-and-Space is immaterial, and if a Creation is made and dissolved, for them it is nothing but just a play going on and on. Atman holds the Knowledge and this passes into certain people who are prepared to receive it and make the Knowledge known to humanity. This is how the Eternal Knowledge is being passed from Creation to Creation.

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[When new ideas and examples come during contemplation of any of these themes, don't lose them. Try to recapture them; note them down and later express them in *your* way, then they will grow and grow.]

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