

25 November 1968

## READING 7

## PART 1

The Shankaracharya's World System based on the 'Symbol of Nine' is more generalised and abstract than our Ray of Creation. He began it at our first talk last September and it only became apparent to us later that our subsequent questions about the Enneagram were, in fact, suggested by him *before* we had framed them! This so often happens with him that we have ceased to be surprised. This table is the plan: (Figure 1)

}	10	Do	Purush	Creator (Unmanifest)	
	9	▨	-----	'I will create'	
	8	si	Para-prakriti	Primordial Nature ('Blueprint')	
	7	la	Apara-prakriti	Manifest Universe	
	6	X	<i>a place where something new enters to fill the 'interval' below</i>		
	5	sol	Mahat-tattva	'The Great Transformation'	
	4	fa	Akasha	Ether	} Formless or Invisible
	3	▨	Vayu	Air	
	2	mi	Agni	Fire	} Formative elements (visible)
	1	re	Jala	Water	
0	do	Prthvi	Earth (matter without force)		
Notation	Number	Law of Seven	Sanskrit Name	English Equivalent	

Figure 1

This is perhaps most usefully expressed through the picture of the four-roomed house, but at first on a Universal Scale, yet (as you will see) of immediate practical help. To avoid long Sanskrit names we can refer to these in our talks by number. But first we must remind ourselves that there are three special points (9, 6 and 3) in the Enneagram at which the Law of Three can enter to govern the repetitive cycles of the Law of Seven; so place must be found for these in the picture of the four-roomed house. Points 0–6 we must leave till next week as there is some very special Knowledge connected with them.

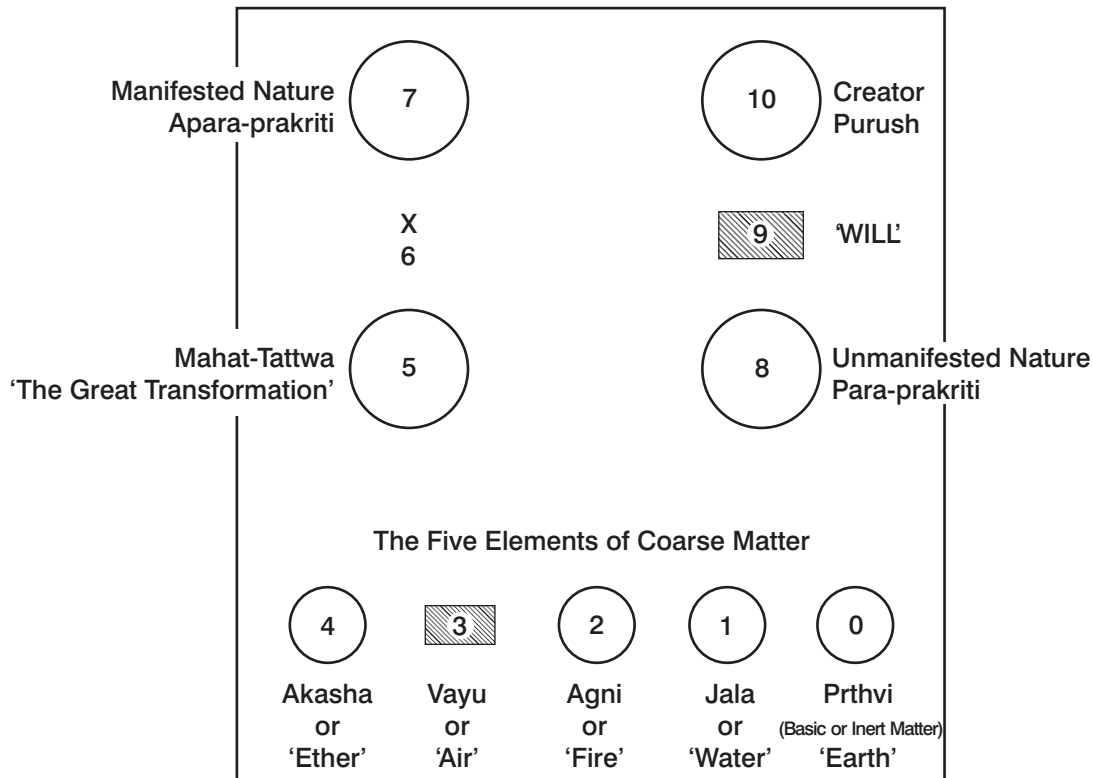


Figure 2

### 9th Talk. Saturday 21 September

S. The system of symbology is a concentrated form of Knowledge, and these are designed to impart more knowledge in that sense than can be imparted by other means. They differ from land to land and in India this Symbol has also been evolved. The Law of Three which in India is called Trik, is also the root word of three in the English language, and the Law of Seven, and the Law of Nine which makes the complete number. The complete number consists of 9 – Absolute, Unmanifest, Manifest – Prakriti – then Mahat-Tattva, Ether – Air – Fire – Water and Earth.

These together contain all that there is in the creation. The creation of the Causal World, the Subtle World and the Coarse World, and then beyond that the Absolute, everything is contained in 9. The Law of Seven (Prakriti) is a rigid form of the manifest which is very closely governed by the Law of Three, but it is a repetitive form and it can have multifarious levels which can be seen in individuals or in general, in the composition of the universe, and the composition of the human being. The Law of Three is repeated practically everywhere – in our discussions it has appeared many times – states of Being; Gunas; Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva (or the creative aspect which maintains, preserves and dissolves). There are many examples of all these. The diagrams which you have given show just one way of expressing the inner meaning of the philosophical aspect of human life or the universe.

...

The whole of creation is undergoing change all the time in all things. This change has two directions. One starts with the desire of the Absolute as unmanifest, and goes on becoming coarse manifest form, and secondly having fulfilled the destiny of manifest form it goes back to its cause. Thus the particles of earth are merging into the cause which is water, water into fire, fire into air, air into ether, ether into Mahat-Tattva, into Apara-Prakriti, into Para-Prakriti which is manifest and unmanifest into the Absolute.

Although the forms are changing yet the law of change itself is eternal in comparison to changing things. It is only the Absolute which is changeless and eternal as Truth, everything else is changing and so temporal, but the law of change is also eternal.

**PART 2**

His Holiness went on to show the correspondences between the world picture and the organisation of individual man. The Creator, Purush, is also called Chit = Absolute Consciousness; point 8, Chitta, is the individual Consciousness with its Memory of the Eternal Truth; point 7 is Buddhi (the Charioteer); point 5 Manas (the five horses or the chief functions); with chemical regulation of the body at points 4 and 3; and points 2, 1 and 0 the coarse physical organs.

A new picture of the four-roomed house is emerging in experience, which will clear up some of our mistakes.

Suppose (as His Holiness has been saying during our last two visits) that the walls separating the different rooms are really made of transparent material which lets through light. There are, of course, no anatomical walls present in the brain; such 'partitions' must be qualitative differences of space-time at different levels. Now in our progression through this and previous lives these transparent partitions have been fogged up or even painted over with accretions of impurities. The five sheaths or parts of this fog (shown in Figure 3) have names and have to be got rid of in a certain order, and then the corresponding partition becomes transparent. We are immediately concerned with the fog separating the Fourth Room from the two upper rooms on the left.

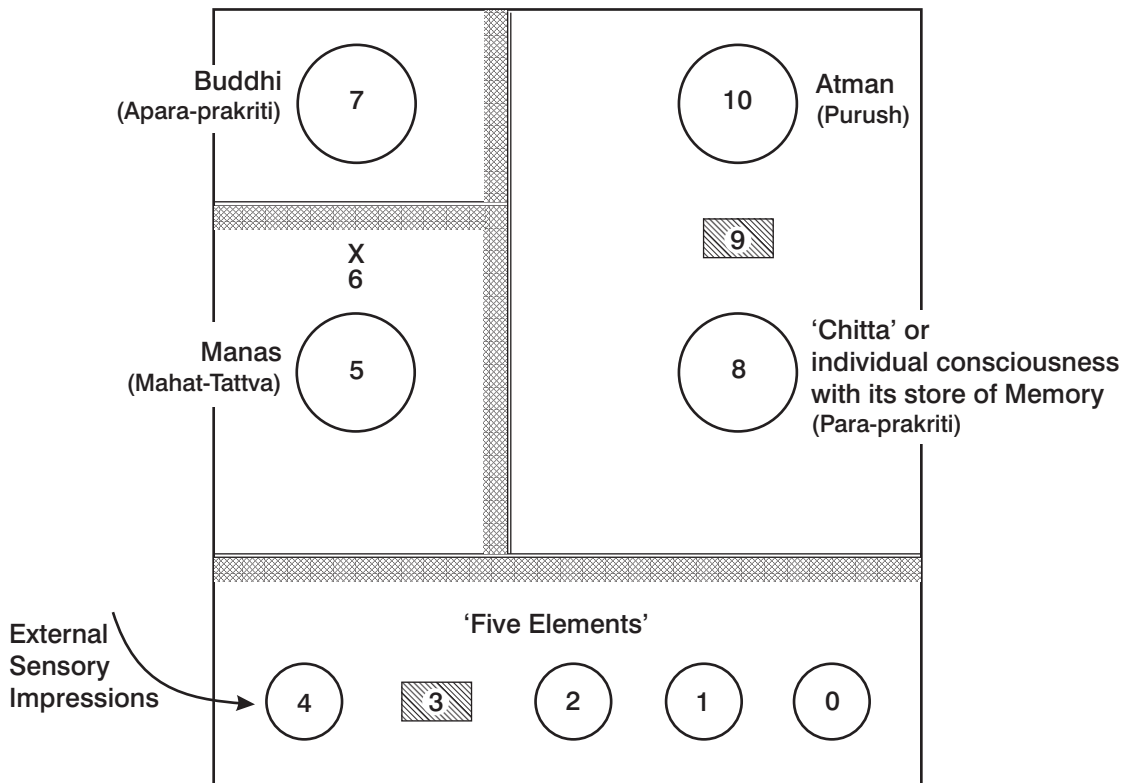


Figure 3. Correspondences in Individual man. (Figure 2 names in brackets)

Amongst many stories which throw light on the need to clear away these accretions and polish the partitions so that they transmit the light, there is one which has been told and retold in different parts of the world from a time long before writing was invented. His Holiness told it several times in varying contexts, and some of you have heard the famous version in the *Mathnawi* (Book 1, vv. 3467–3499), but this has so many fine points that you should hear it again now, with Figure 3 in mind. It follows the passage where Mevlana is contrasting scientific with mystical knowledge in sentences like these:

The sciences of the ‘men of heart’ bear them aloft; the sciences of sensual men are burdens to them.

When knowledge strikes on the (heavenly) heart, it becomes a helper (*yari*); when knowledge is acquired through external senses, it becomes a burden (*bari*).

God has said, ‘Like an ass laden with books’, burdensome is the knowledge that is not from Himself.

The knowledge that is not directly from Himself has no more durability than a woman’s make-up.

...

And if you desire a parable of the hidden Knowledge, relate the story of the Greeks and the Chinese:

The Chinese said, ‘We are the better artists’; the Greeks said, ‘The (superiority in) power and excellence belongs to us.’

‘I will put you to the test in this matter,’ said the Sultan, ‘(and see) which of you are approved in your claim.’

The Chinese and the Greeks began to debate: the Greeks retired from the debate.

(Then) the Chinese said, ‘Hand over to us a particular room, and (let there be) one for you (as well).’

There were two rooms with door facing door: the Chinese took one, the Greeks the other.

The Chinese requested the King to give them a hundred colours; the King opened his treasury that they might receive that (which they sought).

Every morning, by (his) bounty, the colours were dispensed from the treasury to the Chinese.

The Greeks said, ‘No tints and colours are proper for our work, (nothing is needed) except to remove the rust.’

They shut the door and went on burnishing: they became clear and pure like the sky.

There is a way from many-colouredness to colourlessness; colour is like the clouds, and colourlessness is a moon.

Whatsoever light and splendour you see in the clouds, know that it comes from the stars and the moon and the sun.

When the Chinese had finished their work, they were beating drums for joy.

The King entered and saw the pictures there: that (sight), as he encountered it, was robbing him of his wits.

After that, he came towards the Greeks: they removed the intervening curtain.

The reflection of those (Chinese) pictures and works (of art) struck upon these walls which had been made pure (from stain).

All that he had seen there (in the Chinese room) seemed more beautiful here; ‘twas snatching the eye from the socket.

The Greeks, O father, are the Sufis: (they are) without (independent of) study and books and erudition,

But they have burnished their breasts (and made them) pure from greed and cupidity and avarice and hatreds.

That purity of the mirror is, beyond doubt, the heart which receives images innumerable.

One point Mevlana makes so clearly is that both the polishing of the Greeks (or Sufis) *and* the colours of the Chinese are needed – otherwise there would be either no reflection or nothing to reflect. Another example of the uniting factor between two opposites!

If one patiently does the polishing over a long period, and in the right order, one experiences glimpses of something wonderful. There is no question of having to ‘get into the Fourth Room’ or ‘go anywhere’ at all. The Light of Consciousness can shine for a moment into all the rooms of the house as one goes about one’s business of creating. And one discovers (as Figure 3 shows) that there is an exact correspondence between Points 10, 9 and 8 in the Fourth Room, and points 7, 6 and 5 into the upper two rooms on the left. They are essentially the same – but the former in Eternity and the latter in Time and Space.

The main essential for success is that the ‘look-out man’ (top left) must learn to be *still*; he must not attempt to keep pace with the great changes of frequency of which he becomes successively aware. He must be content to record at his own three cycles per second frequency; so that when the final layer of cloud is removed between him and the Atman he will fulfil the psalmist’s injunction: ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ If he doesn’t learn to do this the risk of breakdown of this delicate mechanism is great, as is shown by the effects of a drug like LSD which violently tears away the veil and can produce a split mind in ordinary unprepared people. All our work of polishing by means of Meditation, Dervish Turning, Movements to Music depends upon the stillness of the observer in the midst of all the movement of Creation.

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[COMMENT

You will quickly appreciate that the Shankaracharya’s world picture is totally different from our Ray of Creation, although one can shed light on the other. His description is not spatial; that is, he would say that wherever in the Universe there is matter, from Galaxies to planetary satellites which can be made visible or audible to the senses by optical or radio telescope, then this matter would be composed of the five elements in the lower storey.]

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