

24 February 1969

READING 5

PART 1

People have asked to have the diagram and part of last Monday's meeting again. Use the picture or not as you like.

R. (with Figure on screen): I feel that is how we have seen it: The whole spiral is the Ladder of Self-realization with its seven stages, and the places where the Law of Three comes in to help it. The part in our System which speaks about 'the Way not beginning on the level of ordinary life, but being separated from it by a staircase', refers to the 3rd and 4th steps of the Shankaracharya's Ladder (from the point at which a person has received a method and guidance and True Knowledge from some School connected with the Tradition, until the time when he is able to move forward and step off on his own two feet with confidence, the last doubt having been removed). And the 'stairway' – the Ladder of Self-realization from the Shankaracharya's point of view – is a gradual realization of the smallness and transitory nature of the external world (on the right-hand side of the circle) in contrast to the great power and permanence of the Inner world (on the left-hand side of the circle).

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There is the question of the *three kinds of Influence*. I think it is fairly clear, isn't it? What about *a* and *b* influences and the *direct C* Influence? I don't think it can be taken at all for granted that, because somebody has taught us Influence *C* direct, what they taught us is still Influence *C*.

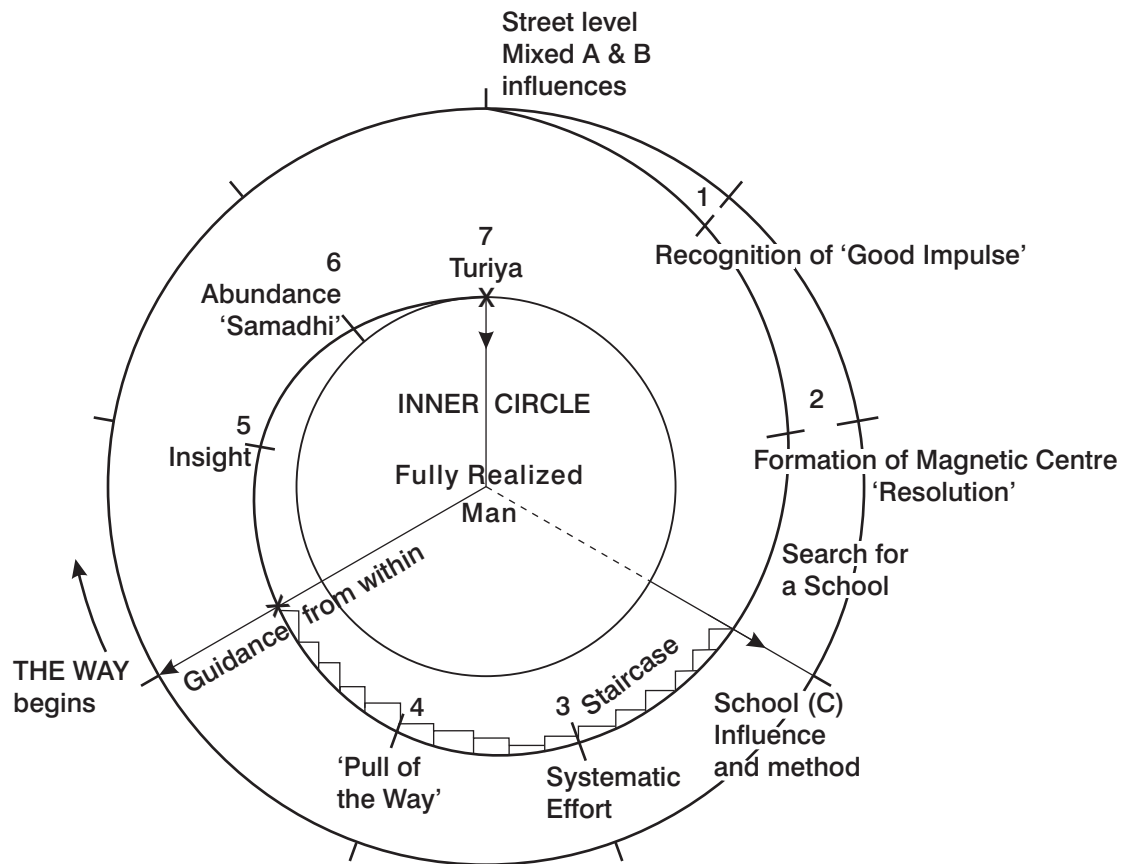
It can dissolve, lose its life and become *b* or *a*. It depends entirely on whether we are practising what we preach, getting fresh light, new access to the Truth within ourselves, if what we have been given is still Influence *C* with all that potency.

I don't know if you have heard the story of the great Teacher to whom people used to come from miles around? Before he spoke to the people he would go into the forest, light a fire and say a prayer; then he would come back and speak to them. He died, and his successor used to go into the forest, light a fire, but couldn't remember the prayer! After a time this Teacher, too, died and his successor just went into the forest; he had lost the art of lighting a fire or saying a prayer, but came back and spoke to the people; and finally his successor did not even bother to go into the forest, but just sat and taught the people, and that was the end! So there you have the life-history of *C* Influence and what happens to it if people just repeat the words without working on their Being.

Is this clear about *C* Influence?

Q. Is *C* Influence only practical work, not mixed with anything theoretical?

R. It has its philosophy and its theory, but those are always related to its practice. It has a broad basis which is true and some detailed theory, but neither of those divert from the *practice*, which is the most important of all.



Figure

Q. (as repeated): You get people who go on talking and talking, and he wonders if there is not more value in practical things, to get on with your living?

R. I see, Yes. The great trouble which always vitiates *C* Influence is the development of duality, which puts it at odds with the ordinary life of the householder. We see this in lots of instances. If the *C* Influence can be related to the practical life of the householder without any conflict at all, if the practical life is seen as the *expression* of the *C* Influence, then full Self-realization is possible.

Do you think you can now see without conflict your practical life in terms of the *C* Influence which entered it?

Q. I think so.

R. Tell us at once when you stop being able to do that. Then it will be serious! It is the thing that we should be looking at the whole time.

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Q. Can *b* influence be turned into *C* Influence by quality of Being?

R. Yes, after Step 5, because *C* Influence can arise from the person's own Fourth Room, his own Atman. Before that, you cannot gamble on it; it would be like earning a living through winning at roulette; but it does happen. And always a School and organisations and everything else are simply a lead-up towards the *C* Influence that comes from the True Self of the individual.

- Q. Is *C* Influence really energy rather than form?
- R. Yes, originally it was energy. In the Fourth Room it has assumed no form; it is in the unmanifest universe itself. It is when it comes into the other rooms of the house and meets with outside impressions of external life that it acquires form and gets labelled with names – becomes manifold instead of One.
- Q. Could one say that there was an unlimited amount of *C* Influence if one was in the right stage to receive it?
- R. Yes, the Shankaracharya has assured us that the source of ‘True Knowledge’ (*C* Influence) is limitless at all times and in all places. The other influences are obviously limited at certain times and in certain places.

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Though I’m sure that it is refreshing at times to think on the scale of humanity – it gets us out of the small ego; yet it won’t really make for a big progression in our own Self-realization unless we get flashes of understanding by which we see *that all this is also in us*. Take the Circles of Humanity: the Inner Circle is the Fourth Room; the Fully Realized Man at the centre symbolises one’s own Atman; the mind is continually in the sphere of influences of all three kinds – *a*, *b* and *C*; the Staircase is in oneself; and the three types described in relation to the staircase are in oneself... It is the same thing one is looking at but on different scales.

It is important to find those in oneself, because in the outer world one thinks always in terms of the coarse physical dimensions of space and time, geography, thousands of miles separating people, distances and difficulty of travel, clocks and calendars. It seems a very long time while one is sorting out the *b* from the *a* influences and making Magnetic Centre – a very long process for one (if one is thinking in terms of ordinary space-time) of going up the Ladder and falling down it a few times! But if one turns inwards and sees it on the *Subtle* level, everything is transformed – a quite different space and time. A man’s size is measured in metres; nuclei in the brain contain hundreds of thousands of cells in a space a few millimetres across, but through the interior of a cell the units are microns (millionths of a metre), so space is quite different. Time also: what would take a man a year in ordinary clock time, takes rather less than 20 minutes in psychological time, and 1/30th of a second – that is instantaneously – for the Atman on the Causal level. So what one has to try and understand is how the *same ideas* can be related to the *inner world of different space and time* instead of just to the outer world. Is that clear? We stop where we are if we think in terms of years and miles and everything else!

- Q. You once said to somebody that what we are and what we think we are are two entirely different things. What we are is much more us than what we think we are?
- R. I agree; but now where do you go from that?
- Q. What you were saying just now – there is a feeling that there is an incorruptible Now?
- R. For the highest part of one’s nature it is *always Now*...

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PART 2**Special relationship within a School**

The figure above can also be used to illustrate the fact that the Ladder of Self-realization is an octave, which is always a repetitive affair until the final step is taken and the circle broken. We can perhaps grasp the idea which the Shankaracharya has been trying recently to get us to understand – that all our life, until we found a reliable method of Self-realization, has just been a preparation. He goes further than that, and in the following passages you will see that our relationship together in a School has extended to lives before and will go on until Self-realization for all is complete:

S. We have known the word SAT, that which *is*. Whatever *is* has substance, but this substance is of two kinds, the Immobile existence and the mobile existence. The Immobile and the mobile are known as Purusha and Prakriti, or Atman and Nature (the Creation)... If one experiences any sort of movement or any sort of sensation or any sort of intake, one is still in the world of Prakriti. Meditation is the simplest process to take one from movement to non-movement (stability).

The climax of meditation (Samadhi) is that a man becomes One – one without a second. Then there *is* nothing else. The substance is the same and there is no difference at all. Difference is in being mobile and immobile. The immobile is very close therefore to the mobile, and so it seems that both are mobile. The movement of Prakriti is extremely fast and when Purusha looks at Prakriti or outside, then everything seems mobile, and when it looks inside (to itSelf) then it experiences immobility. Atman (Purush) is immobile and present everywhere. When one goes into deep meditation one reaches the spot where there is nothing but the Self which is still, firm and immobile. In this unity the senses and Manas and Buddhi have no validity. That One is beyond the senses and the mind, so there is no possibility of any other type of consciousness than the Consciousness of the Self. [Therefore there is no death, no mortality.]

(Record, 2 November 1967)

During the conversation I read a letter from a member of our School who was about to die of cancer. This was the question:

What is the most important thing to do before death in order to ensure continued connection with your Holiness, and our own School, and to be of best use to this Work as a whole?

The Shankaracharya smiled and said quietly:

There was once a young disciple with a Realized Man who was very old and just about to leave this world. This young disciple was worried and asked the master, 'Since you are leaving this world for liberation, what happens to me? How do I become liberated?' The Master replied: 'You don't have to worry about this. Once a relation has been established between the Teacher and one under discipline, both will be liberated together.'

Next day we asked if he would tell us more about liberation in relation to physical death:

S. Mortal bodies are made of materials which in time are bound to be decomposed, so it is natural that whatever is born must face death. The one who is said to be born with a body at birth, only discards that body at the time of so-called death; but the one who

takes and discards the body is a Conscious being and death does not bring an end to Him (the Atman). Just as people use clothes and when the clothes become worn or torn they are thrown away and new clothes are taken; in the same way the Conscious being takes a new body after throwing away the old one. This is the only relation of the material body with the Conscious being.

There is another type of relationship, and this is the relation of Atman to Atman (that is, of Conscious being to Conscious being). This relationship is established on the Way. The Leader of a School and his followers have such a relationship which is not bound by time and place. As long as both are not liberated, this relationship remains, but at liberation it ends because they are One, there will then be no duality.

Q. When liberation is achieved, will the Conscious being not have to take another body?

S. Taking a body or leaving the body has no relation to Liberation. The Liberation is to understand that *I* am not the body, and once this is achieved, one is free of all bonds.

Note: This is another way of looking at the ladder and at the special relationship and advantages of a School in the eternal meaning that Mr. Ouspensky gave to that word. It is not our business, as individuals, to go back into the past or worry about our future. Our concern is to be nearer that Conscious being today and every day.

As Christ said to the faithful twelve up in the high mountain:

Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

Be not anxious therefore for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

(Matthew 6:32–34)

Then the evil that the mind so often imagines will not happen.

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(This material is for two weeks.)

