

10 November 1969

READING 3

THE OBSERVER AND DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS

(for 2 weeks)

PART 1

The Shankaracharya uses the expression 'a different dimension of time and space' in distinguishing the gross physical level from the subtle, and this again from the Causal.

Our diagram easily links what he says with Mr. Ouspensky's conception of 'Different Dimensions':

Observer	None	One	Two	Three
	48	24	12	6
Dimensions of world observed	3 D	4 D	5 D	6 D

In the first column everything 'happens'; it is a changing kaleidoscope of which there is no observer who could draw true conclusions and profit by experience. Moreover, this is a 3-dimensional replica of the Real world – the mind perceives only a succession of separate objects – 'bodies' – many of which can be counted, weighed, measured, and studied like insects killed and pinned down on a board. This is the method of experimental science in the laboratory.

[Can be omitted by non-scientists!]

Physics, realising the fallacies of this approach, took a new step forward by introducing a 4th Dimension by means of the Relativity and Quantum theories. Thus Eddington :

We learn that h (the quantum) is of the nature of energy multiplied by time. Now in practical life it does not often occur to us to *multiply* energy by time. We often *divide* energy by time. For example, the motorist divides the output of energy of his engine by time and so obtains the horsepower. Conversely, an electric supply company multiplies the horsepower or kilowatts by the number of hours of consumption and sends in its bill accordingly. But to *multiply* by hours again would seem a very odd sort of thing to do.

But it does not seem quite so strange when we look at it in the absolute [he means probably 'objective'] four-dimensional world. Quantities such as energy, which we think of as existing at an instant, belong to three-dimensional space, and they need to be

multiplied by a duration to give them a thickness before they can be put into the four-dimensional world. Consider a portion of space, say Great Britain; we should describe the amount of humanity in it as 40 million men. But consider a portion of space-time, say Great Britain between 1915 and 1925; we must describe the amount of humanity in it as 400 million *man-years*. To describe the human content of the world from a space-time point of view, we have to take a unit which is limited not only in space but in time... We call this quantity (*h*) which is the analogue or adaptation of energy in the three-dimensional world by the technical name *action*. The name does not seem to have any special appropriateness, but we have to accept it. 'Action' belongs to Minkowski's world which is common to all observers, and so it is absolute.

(*The Nature of the Physical World*, 1928; reprinted 1947, p.178)

But why do we 'have to accept' this outdated name? Nowadays it would be quite wrong to do so. Why not think of it as 'consciousness' or 'Being' instead of Action or Doing? – 'something common to all observers'? It required another Russian after Minkowsky, Ouspensky – to show that 4 dimensions are not enough by which to describe the Universe.]

At some big meetings at Colet House just before World War 2, Mr. Ouspensky said:

Dimensions can be understood simply in this way. The fourth dimension is the realization of one possibility of each moment; what we call time. The fifth dimension is repetition of this. The sixth dimension is the realization of *different* possibilities. But it is difficult to think about this so long as we think about time as a straight line. The problem is not a real thing; it is just our weakness, nothing more.

Q. I do not understand what you mean when you say the fourth dimension is the realization of one possibility.'

A. Life is the fourth dimension, a circle, the realization of one possibility. When this comes to an end it meets its own beginning. The moment of death corresponds to the moment of birth, and then life begins again, maybe with slight deviations, but they do not mean anything. It always returns to the same line. Breaking a chief tendency, starting this life in a quite different way will be the sixth dimension.

We cannot think of simultaneous moments, we have to think of one moment following another, though actually they are simultaneous on another scale. For instance, our own experience in relation to small particles such as electrons is that their *eternity* is in our *time*. So why can our *repetition* not be in earth's *time*?

Q. From what I understand about memory, I do not see how it is possible to remember a previous recurrence. I thought that memory was dependent on the contents of centres which are in personality. How can personality remember recurrence?'

A. You cannot remember if you do not remember yourSelf here, in this recurrence. We have lived before. Many facts prove it. The reason why we do not remember is because we did not remember ourSelves. The same is true in this life. We do not really remember the things that we do mechanically, we only know that they happened. Only with Self-remembering can we remember details.

Personality is always mixed with essence. Memory is in essence, not in personality, but personality can present it quite rightly if memory is sufficiently strong.

Q. It is very difficult to think about preparing for meeting the System earlier.

A. You can prepare nothing. Only remember yourSelf, then you will remember things better. The whole thing lies in negative emotions: we enjoy them so much that we have no interest in anything else. If you remember yourSelf now, then you may remember next time.

Q. Is this the reason for the 'I have been here before' feeling? The feeling that one has already some piece of knowledge that one could not possibly have heard?

A. I want facts. It may simply be a compound picture of different ideas. If you can really remember something of the kind it means you can Self-remember. If you cannot Self-remember, it is imagination.

Q. Is accidental Self-remembering of any use for this purpose?

A. Accidental Self-remembering is a flash for a second. One cannot rely on it.

The only possibility of change begins from the possibility of beginning to remember yourSelf now. In the System recurrence is not necessary. It may be interesting or useful; you can even start with it, but for actual work on yourself the idea of recurrence is not necessary. That is why we have not heard it from this System; it came from outside, from literature and from me. Then you see it fits; it does not contradict. But it is not necessary, because all that we can do, we can do only in this life. If we do not do anything in this life then the next life will be just the same, or it may be the same with slight variations but no positive change.

Q. What I mean is that it seems a huge idea to think that between now and the time we die, we may make fatal actions which will give us tendencies for the next time?

A. Certainly, in every moment of our lives we may create tendencies that we may not be able to get rid of for ten lives. That is why this point is always emphasised in Indian literature. It may be in fairytale form but the principle is the same.

Q. Is there any sign by which you can tell that we have not been in this house before?

A. No one can tell. I only know that *I* have not been in this house before.

Q. Then we have not either?

A. I do not know. But you will be nearer to the truth if you begin with *this* as the first time. If we did something before, then it was only so much as made this possible.

Q. Does the idea of parallel times mean that all moments continually exist?

A. Yes, it is very difficult to think about it. Certainly it means eternity of the moment, but our minds cannot think in that way.

Our mind is a very limited machine. We must think in the easiest way and make allowance for it. It is easier to think of repetition than of the eternal existence of the moment... Our mind and our language are very rough instruments and we have to deal with very fine matters and fine problems.

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PART 2

We now learn from the Shankaracharya that anything short of the realization of the 'eternal existence of the moment' is due to ignorance and to the mechanism of the human mind. Thus the physical 3-dimensional world is complete ignorance; Observer 1 gives us a better

approximation by taking Time into account; and Observer 2 gives a still better one by taking repetition into account. But 'time' and 'space' and 'repetition' are only products of the human mind; they do not exist for Observer 3 – the Self or Atman who has the 6-dimensional view of the world as 'always now'. So the only way through the maze is by union with Observer 3:

Before the Soul (Buddhi) can comprehend and can remember it must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is moulded is first united with the potter's mind. And then to the inner ear will speak the Voice of the Silence...

(H.P. Blavatsky, *Voice of the Silence*, 1893)

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This cursory account of an observer's experience of change of space-time may help us to understand some conversations with the Shankaracharya:

The first I want to quote here followed a question on 20 September 1968:

M.A. It seems strange when only our physical body is limited to 70 or 80 years that we have such a small limited sense of time. Is it because we don't understand the importance of the present moment, and do not live enough in the moment?

S. The concept of time differs from coarse to subtle level. The 70 or 80 years which are available for our life is based on the calculation of the physical world. Physical world has its own pace, and all time is related to this movement which Nature affords it. The physical body is tuned to that time-scale and so naturally one has to respect that time-scale for all physical activities. One has to be in the present moment to use and enjoy that according to its pace. The concept of this time changes when you come to the subtle world. Meditation is mainly handled by the subtle body which is governed by a different time-scale.

If one wanted to go to Badrinath which is 12,000 ft. up in the Himalayas one would need at least fifteen days to cover the journey there and back, some money, clothes, companions in case one got lost, and good health. This one can do on the physical plane, but once you have completed this journey by physical body you can journey there and back in a matter of moments by your subtle body. In this journey you do not need time, money or companions and not even good health. The subtle world reduces this time to a different dimension.

Meditation is more of a coming home which is very easy. What one really needs is faith, sincerity and daily effort. If one does meditate faithfully and sincerely and keeps up continuous efforts, one would be able to comprehend and complete the journey to the Real Self very much sooner. On the general level a full effort of this sort would need only one year to allow growth of being to reach full freedom. But in our case it takes much longer, and the length of time seems long; or in other words, the length of lifespan seems short to achieve liberation, which is completely wrong. Half-an-hour twice a day is in fact enough, but we only use a few minutes of this time. That is enough for the twenty-four hours, but if one really used the whole half-hour one could undo the effect of previous lives and reach unity with the Self.

The second quotation is from a letter dated 22nd September 1969 where he answered some questions of mine about the relation of 'Time' to the physical, subtle and Causal levels:

S. All events take place at the physical level only, though their effects pass on to higher levels also. But the intervals of time and space decrease with rising levels. A thing far off

at physical level, such as Self-realization, is not so at the subtle level. He gave the following example of Rama and Lakshman.

Once, while returning from a bathe in the Saryu River, Lakshman requested Rama to show him Maya. Rama kept quiet, but later on, when Lakshman had forgotten his question, Rama asked Lakshman to pick up his ring which had fallen into the river while bathing. Lakshman dived into the river to get it.

Beneath the water, he completely forgot where he was. He saw an altogether different world there, more beautiful than this one. A young girl stood there, telling him that she had none to look after her. She requested Lakshman to take her under his protection and to marry her. Lakshman agreed, lived with her for a whole lifetime, and had children and grandchildren. Finally he grew old, fell sick and died. His sons submerged his body in the river. But the touch of cold water brought him back to life, and he raised his head above the water. Now he found himself again in this world, with Rama standing on the bank in front of him.

Lakshman, completely out of his wits, told Rama what he saw under water and that he had spent a whole lifetime underneath. Rama told him that he had been under water for only a few moments by earthly time. It was all Maya, which he had wanted to see – a few minutes at one level but a lifetime at another. This is how time and distance change with level.

Finally his last letter (3rd October 1969) answered some questions about how to reconcile the ordinary physical world with the world seen in ecstasy, since they were becoming irreconcilable:

S. The two worlds which Lakshman saw were both false, due to Maya. So is everything that passes the eye, including the worlds you mention. Lakshman was confused at the irreconcilable duality. No wonder, therefore, if you or any of us on the worldly plane had the same feeling. If we want to get rid of it, we have to reach beyond Maya's field of gravity, into the calm regions of the Atman, where alone the laws of sameness, oneness and changelessness hold good. This happens when the thrust of true Knowledge is there to boost us up. Meanwhile, as you know, you have to try to be as objective as you can.

Yes, the Atman does see changes and movements in Prakriti (or Nature) actually taking place. But only like a spectator sitting in a cinema hall. Ahankara (ego) takes it as real, and Atman as unreal.

Regarding the barrier between us and God, it is better to treat it as one only – that of ignorance. Movement of mind, false I, as well as a host of other factors we do not know are either its consequences or other different forms. If ignorance goes, they all go; if ignorance remains, they all remain.

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