

23 November 1970

READING 9

NEW DIMENSIONS

Before we can profit by some of the very interesting insights which appeared in your questions and remarks at the meetings last week, we must make another attempt to break out of the 'mirage'.

In one of its aspects this mirage depends only on the confusion arising from the word 'Time', which does duty for too many conflicting ideas. Discarding the illusion (a little thought would make it obvious) that there is such a thing as 'a great straight line of the great time', we see that all the evidence points to the fact that every completed series of events is a cycle, symbolised by a circle described by a radius about its pole or point of origin. We see also that the word 'Time' can refer both to the succession of external events round the circle, and also to the 'movement' at any moment 'Now' (on that circle) along any radius to or from its centre. The Greeks had separate words for these two meanings of time – *chronos*, meaning a period (the whole cycle), and *kairos*, the varying possibilities at any point or moment.

The writer of *Ecclesiastes* uses (in the Greek version) these two words to distinguish between a large cycle & small cycles (moments) within it:

To everything its 'season' (cycle);
and a 'time' (moment) to every
action under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck
up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to
build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to
dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a
time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to
refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to
speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.

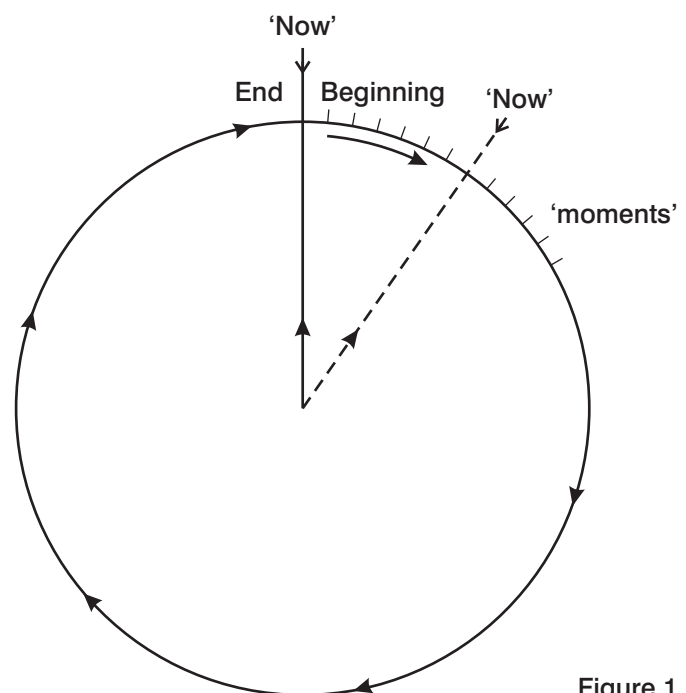


Figure 1

You may take the duration of your cycle as an hour (or two half-hours) of 3,600 seconds so that every 'degree' on the circumference means 10 seconds, or you may take a human lifetime composed of 'moments' of 8 hours (a working day), or you could take the lifetime of our earth

composed of 'moments' of about 80 million years. But the first is the immediately practical scale.

We'll start by taking the circle to represent a single human life and quote Mr. Ouspensky :

Each moment contains a definite number of possibilities. I may actualise one of the existing possibilities, that is, I may do something. I may do nothing. But whatever I do, that is, whichever of the possibilities contained in the given moment is actualised, the actualisation of this possibility will determine *the following moment of time*, the following *now*. This second moment of time will again contain a certain number of possibilities, and the actualisation of one of these possibilities will determine *the following moment of time*, the following *now*, and so on.

Thus the line of the direction of time can be defined as the line of the actualisation of one possibility out of the number of possibilities which were contained in the preceding point.

The line of this actualisation will be the line of the fourth dimension, the circle of time... The perpetual existence of this actualisation, a line perpendicular to the line of time, will be the line of the fifth dimension, or the line of eternity.

(*New Model*, p.428)

In relation to what Mr. Ouspensky describes as 'the line of the fifth dimension' (instantaneous movement to and from the centre), the *Buddhi* (discriminative mind) has a unique role to play. To understand this, we cannot do better than take the Gospel parable of the Prodigal Son which (we are told) describes two states of the *Buddhi*. Facing outward away from the centre, the younger son (allied with the separate ego) demands his portion and 'goes into a far country where he wastes his substance in riotous living'. Only in some succeeding moment, when he becomes aware of his starving state, does he turn back towards the centre and remembers his 'Father'. Detaching himself from the movement in time and space around the circumference, he arises and goes to his Father. Almost instantaneously, 'while yet a long way off', he receives unexpected help. Not only is this experience well-known to each of us at certain recurrent moments all our lives; but even in a single half-hour it happens perhaps several times. It may be a recognition of certain recurrent situations like that which prompted Angela Parsons' question in a letter to Peter Stern last week:

There are certain recurring situations in one's life which always present a particular kind of difficulty, and for some reason it seems important in quite a deep kind of way to overcome these difficulties – that this would have a bearing on the growth of one's own True Self. How would this relate to the picture of life as a whirl of events on the outer circle, which is all drama and ultimately doesn't matter? Or, what part does the drama itself play, or at any rate certain aspects of it, in a person's real growth?

The story of the Prodigal Son may suggest to her where the solution of her problem lies. The True Self doesn't have to grow. It's the *Buddhi* that has to be looked after, and reminded of its true function.

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