

30 November 1970

READING 10

NEW DIMENSIONS (continued)

INTRODUCTORY

We have been planning to lift our minds on to a bigger scale during the last two weeks of our meetings this term. Many of your questions have shown that you have followed the line so far very well, and indeed have foreseen what is to follow as a means of liberation from the small personal viewpoint. For each one of us is an atom of that part of the magnificent creation which is bounded by this Earth, on which we live within the limits of our local Solar System.

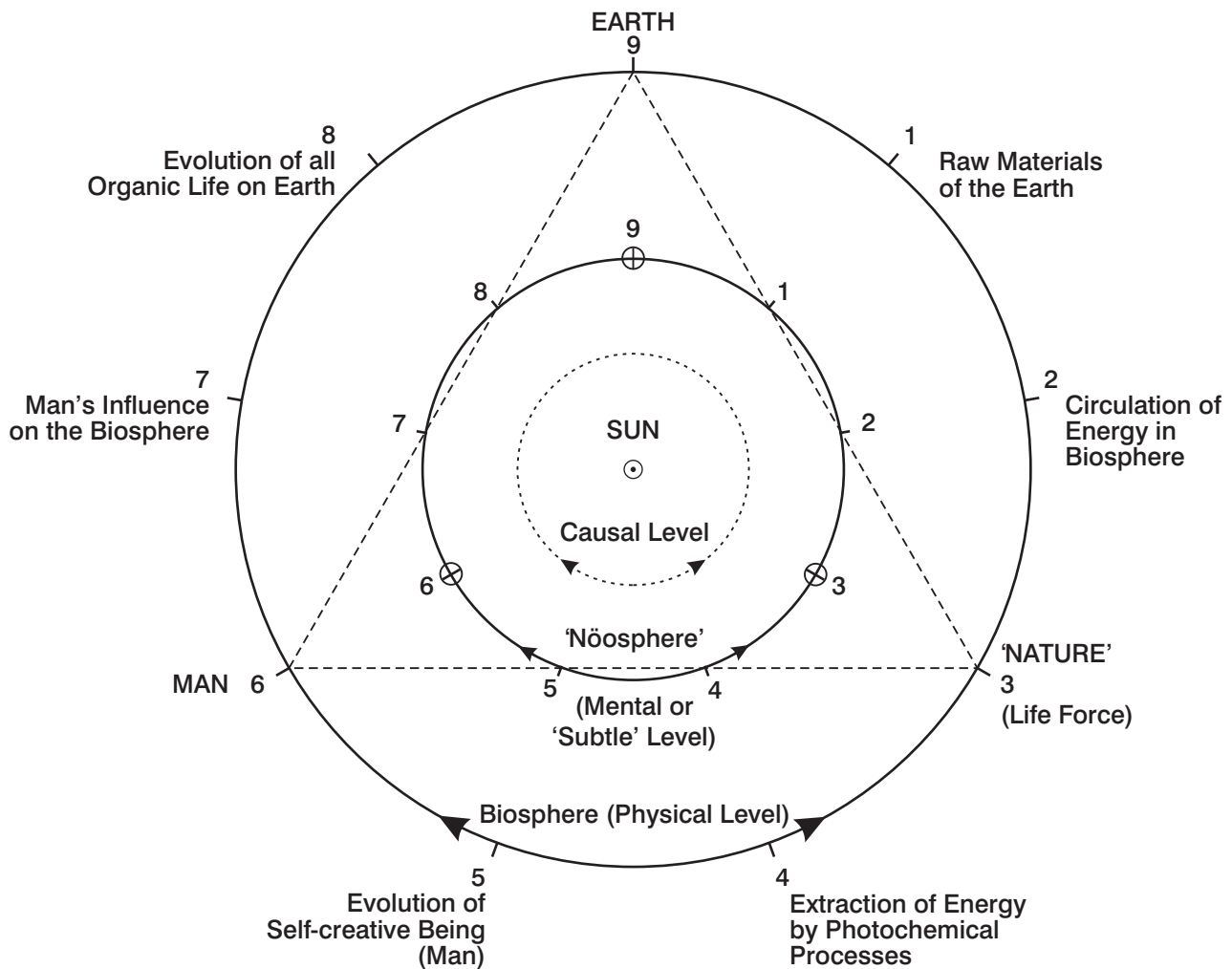
In last week's reading we took the step of 'discarding the illusion that there is such a thing as a great straight line of the great time'; and substituting the statement that 'every completed series of events is a cycle, symbolised by a circle'. The circle is the basis of a universal Symbol depicting the Laws of the Universe, which not only belongs to our own Western System, but is the means by which men of the Inner Circle of humanity have been able to communicate at all times and in all places. We were not surprised, therefore, to find that it was perfectly familiar to the Shankaracharya, and that his more ancient System is based on it just as ours is.

This Symbol is called by the Greek name 'Enneagram', which signifies a completed circle of 9 points but, being constructed on the decimal system, provides for the continuation of the fundamental sequence in circles small and great. Later on you will be hearing a great deal about the construction and meaning of the Symbol, but this week we want to use it to describe the Earth with its thin film of organic life and try to see what was intended in the evolutionary process for the 'Self-creative being' Man, who is beginning to realise that he is not just a playboy having fun on his own, but has a fundamental role in this great drama in which there is nothing accidental, but everything is governed by law and order.

We are now able to base this description on established facts, for the September 1970 issue of the *Scientific American* (now in our Library) is made up of eleven articles on the subject. Colin Lucas, who has for many years made a special study of the Enneagram, has made a simple summary of the content of these papers in terms of our Symbol. We happen to be specially interested in the opening paper by the Professor of Zoology at Yale University, who states that 'it is essentially Vernadsky's concept of the Biosphere that we accept today'. Before we came to Colet House in the late 1930's, we made and read at Mr. Ouspensky's meetings an English translation of Vernadsky's book (also in the Library). In this he describes the Biosphere as the film of embodied beings on the surface of the Earth, and within which has been developed (partly through man's agency) a sphere of mind (the Nöosphere). These two concentric spheres are very close to the Shankaracharya's term, the 'physical and subtle bodies on the cosmic scale'. Within these two, Father Teilhard de Chardin (chiefly in his *The Phenomenon of Man*) later looked to a third (though he did not name or define it precisely), which can be described as the 'Causal Body' or the 'Kingdom of Heaven'.

THE BIOSPHERE

We can now show part of the Symbol and of Colin Lucas's synopsis of that issue of the *Scientific American*:



'It so happens,' (he writes) 'that the Enneagram contains a means of combining all this information in a single diagram, and this enables one to understand much better the scale on which they are writing, and to see the whole picture in better perspective.

Actually it is the scale of the Solar System, the creative power of the Sun, the nature of the Earth as a planet, the evolution of the Biosphere, and the significance of Man's activities – all these come into the picture. We put 'Earth' at the apex of the triangle (which symbolises the Law of Three Forces or Gunas) at point 9. 'Nature', the life principle in the cosmos, we put at point 3, and Man, the mind (Manas) or intelligent principle in the cosmos, we put at point 6. It is through these points that the Earth as a planet is able to receive influences from outside itself – from the Sun in particular, which we put in the centre of the diagram.'

Look at this diagram and try to relate it to what you have been hearing: For example, Time, as we know it, belongs to the outer circle, and is, in fact, the time of the Earth which is supposed to have existed so far for a few thousand million years, and by which we set our clocks and calendars and regulate our physical movements.

From the sphere of mind we infer that movement toward the centre along any radius is an instantaneous change in consciousness and understanding; and at the centre the Sun is always shining both physically and spiritually. On the causal level of the Antahkarana (innermost circle) everything is under one Will, everything is connected and nothing is accidental. Some of the remarks that were made at your meetings in the last few weeks were a foretaste of this picture – notably the one made by Mr. Orme at Teddington, which was relayed to me in these words: ‘The drama round the circle is already written, and what matters is the depth’ (of understanding?) ‘at which one plays one’s role’.

We may decide that what the Lord God said to Adam is true of those who look to that outer circle and the physical body only, that ‘dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return’.

Though the idea of the ‘subtle’ sphere of mind is already a great step forward in biology, yet to see the real Truth one has to go right to the centre as in the following talk with the fully Realized Man:

Q. As only Universal Being exists, are both the causal and subtle levels illusory?

S. All this creation of the physical, subtle and the causal level which one experiences is illusion created by the desire of the Self. This desire is Mantra. The Self pronounces a Mantra (a word), and this word manifests itself in all these glorious forms of creation and stays for as long as it has been desired by that first Word. When the limit has been reached and the word is withdrawn or the play over, the Mantra will not be over – it will still remain with the Self, which will always be there whether there is a world or whether creation is active or not. The causal, subtle or the physical – all are illusion, the only thing which is real is the Self and its Mantra. This illusion is like a play which magicians perform by use of a special mantra creating illusion in which you see different things which are not there. When they don’t want the show they pack it up and everything is gone, like magic. The whole creation is magic. The magic is created by the Word of the Self, of the Param-Atman (Universal Self).

[This is echoed by St. John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.]

Q. Is the Causal body the Antahkarana plus the forces emanating from the Atman?

S. Yes, you are right – the Causal body is the combination of the Antahkarana and the Light and power of the Atman; but the coming together of these two forming the causal body is also illusion...

The illusion is illustrated by the way you see your face in the mirror – the face seems to be in the mirror, but in fact it isn’t there.

So this whole thing is up to a point the shadow-play of the Self; up to a point only for the Realized Man since he has to use the physical world, but for the ignorant fully real.

(9 March 1970)

[St. John again: And the Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth.]

CONCLUSION

It may interest you to hear the concluding remarks of that introductory paper by Professor Hutchinson of Yale:

Vernadsky, the founder of modern bio-geo-chemistry, was a Russian liberal who grew up in the 19th century. Accepting the Russian Revolution, he did much of his work after 1917, although his numerous philosophic references were far from Marxist. Just before his death on 6 January 1945, he wrote his friend and former student Alexander Petrunkevitch: 'I look forward with great optimism. I think that we undergo not only a historical, but a planetary change as well. We live in a transition to the nöosphere.' By nöosphere Vernadsky meant the envelope of mind that was to supersede the biosphere, the envelope of life. Unfortunately the quarter-century since those words (of Vernadsky's) were written has shown how mindless most of the changes wrought by man on the biosphere have been. Nonetheless, Vernadsky's transition in its deepest sense is the only alternative to man's cutting his lifetime short by millions of years. The succeeding articles in this issue of *Scientific American* may contain useful hints as to how this alternative may be brought to fruition...

(*Scientific American*, The Biosphere, 1970, p.53)

[Note: It so happened that R. was in the United States with Mr. Ouspensky in that year of 1945, and was asking him about the distinguished Russians he knew who had escaped from the Revolution to New York. When I mentioned Vernadsky he said: 'Vladimir Ivanovitch (Vernadsky) died earlier this year in Russia, but he was never a Bolshevik. One day his work will come into its own.']

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