

17 November 1973

THE TIME UNITS OF BODY, ESSENCE, ETC.

The 'clocks' of the brain's computers have fixed ways of counting *everything*, and with regard to counting *'time'* they use certain units rather as our watches use seconds, minutes and hours, only with a much bigger differential ratio.

Both Mr. Ouspensky and the Shankaracharya knew these counting systems used in our organisms. The time unit in Ouspensky's System was a single breath cycle at rest – 3 seconds; whereas the unit in the Shankaracharya's System is a single heart-cycle ('heartbeat') in deep sleep or in deep Meditation – namely 1 second. The two systems of units are, of course, interchangeable and we can learn from each.

The Shankaracharya argues this way (in seconds): There are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, and 24 hours in a day. This (if you work it out) comes to 86,400 seconds in a day. Substituting 'days' for 'seconds', what does 86,400 *days* come to? The answer is 236.4 years, which is exactly 3 full lifetimes of 78.8 years. (You remember that a lifetime, Ouspensky's count – namely 30,000 days – comes to 78.8 years – though he used 80 years as an approximation.)

Now both Systems agree that, for all practical purposes, the 'time of essence' is 3 body-lifetimes. We have to reckon with our last life ('yesterday' or 'past'), the present life ('today'), and the next life ('tomorrow' or the 'future'). You may remember the statement at our last visit that 'the film of our life is already made'. Well, that film was made during the last life, 'yesterday'. Most people just repeat the film with ever-deepening tendencies, improvements or the reverse. We may have been lucky at certain key points this time, but if we don't do something about it, we are unlikely to be so lucky next time!

If we don't like that idea (and I assure you I hate it), we have to be making a new film 'on location' in this present life. That could be done by remembering Param-Atman all the time, and living accordingly. Only through Self-remembering would we be able to make the choice at the time of death between escape altogether from recurrence, or living a better life making up for all our missed opportunities this time. There are many further implications of both these counting systems, but it is essential to understand this much at any rate for a start now.

* * *

