

6 May 1974

READING 2

(MAINLY FOR THE NEW GROUPS)

A good starting point this term for those recently joining our weekly discussion groups happens to come at the very beginning of our latest series of talks with the Shankaracharya last January. I've called it a good starting-point because it contains a convenient link between the ancient non-dualistic (Advaita) philosophy of the Tradition of Meditation which coincides with current knowledge in the West.

In reply to R.'s first question (about an experience of the night before), the Shankaracharya spoke as follows:

In this universe the impulse for all movements is given by the Laws of Nature (Prakriti) and it has a particular momentum according to the kind of being which inhabits the universe, and this movement goes on until the energy is dissipated; then all created beings need to have a rest according to their own measure of time and space.

In the *physical world* one can see that every being starts a 'day' or a round of activity, and by the end of the day, having expended all its energy, must have a good sleep on its own.

Similarly, on the inner side of the human individual, there is also a need – and a natural longing – to have rest; and this psychological rest comes only when other desires have been given up – i.e., only after the cessation of desires. Then the individual reaches into the great ocean of the Atman where he finds rest in the peace, where there is no movement activated by desires or by the Laws of Physical Nature. There, alone, is the real home to which the individual always needs to go, and if he finds a chance to go there, then he gets a glimpse of the great Bliss which is available within this ocean of the Self. Otherwise he only gets individual physical rest to keep his body going during his short life.

(Record, 16 January 1974)

Our first teacher, the Russian writer, P. D. Ouspensky, worked out in considerable detail a part of the 'Western System', fragments or hints of which he was taught in Moscow in 1915. This part is called the 'Doctrine of Cosmoses', and probably took origin among the Greek philosophers of the 5th century BC at about the same time as the Shankaracharya's Tradition assumed its present form in the hands of a great Indian teacher known as Sri Shankara. The 'Doctrine of Cosmoses' exactly relates to the classification of 'all created beings according to their own measure of time and space.'

Ouspensky discovered that there are four chief physical measures of time for all beings:

1. the time of the shortest mental perception,
2. the present moment governed by a very accurate chemical clock in the brain called the respiratory centre,
3. the daily cycle of rest and activity
4. the duration of bodily life.

For a *man*, Ouspensky established the following figures:

Shortest mental perception	Breath	Day & Night	Average lifetime
1/10,000 second	3 seconds	24 hours	70–80 years

There is a common ratio evident here for there are as many breath-cycles in a 'day' of 24 hours as there are days in an average human lifespan.

But we never before understood the significance of the time barrier of 1/10,000 of a second. It is, by no means, what it used to be labelled 'the shortest impression': for our bodies can register much higher frequencies. In fact this figure corresponds to the shortest mental perception (or what Wundt used to call 'apperception') which means that the roof-brain has had time to place the impression, label it and tell us its significance. It is exactly the time of a lightning flash which you know as a lightning flash, but slightly shorter than meteor speeds in space where you only think afterwards what it was that caught your eye.

If we could do a little research on the significance of these four time-points in the mental picture we have of ourselves and the world, we should make a big advance.

The lowest figure has, for example, the significance of being the highest where both thought perception and the mantra are transcended in meditation.

The Shankaracharya went on:

So the System of Meditation has been prescribed to all of us for this deep dive into the Self.

[In each half-hour we should dive through all physical and mental activity to the area of space-time beyond all mental perception.]

The Self is like the great ocean full of Bliss, and it has a very sweet taste – one who dives deep comes out with radiance and a sweet smile on his face, and with enough energy and light to guide himself and others around him.

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