

3 June 1974

## READING 6

### A NEW ORIENTATION

It might be advisable for those taking Groups to try this out for themselves to see if it really works with them as it has already done with some before. In that case it would be good to read again part of Reading 5 to which it is very relevant.

At one of your discussion groups last month, Miss G.B. suggested that, in order to be able to answer some important questions people are asking today (as, for instance, about how to reconcile the Shankaracharya's words and the two half-hours of meditation with our ordinary active life), a new orientation would be needed. After repeated attempts, it seems possible that what follows here could, in time, provide it.

Many disciplines involving changes, sometimes profound, in a physical or outer life, have been invented by spiritual travellers in the past. With increase of knowledge more and more of those are found unnecessary or impossible in modern conditions. We have been frequently assured that there is nothing wrong about our lives (as governed by the physical body and its senses). What *is* wrong is the narrow, limited view we take of ourselves, because we are so ignorant of the structure and purpose of life. Indeed we cannot, by the time we start to earn a living, make any major changes in our outer lives, and it's a waste of energy and dangerous at that, to start that way. Changes will come, but they must come naturally with greater understanding, and more intelligent adaptation to a changing environment. What we need to do is to grasp the general idea of 'simultaneously existing within worlds' so that, by practice, we can develop some power of choice over what tendencies can, with advantage, be encouraged, and what can be dispensed with.

#### PART 1

Let's start with the hypothesis that the only permanently *real* entity in the universe is *Radiant Energy* (Figure 1). On the physical level, as studied by the various physical sciences, the centre can be taken as a quantum or unit of Radiant Energy – the 'photon'. Take any source of radiant energy like our Sun; the Sun is emitting radiant energy in all directions. Whether we know it or not, this radiation is always present, and all life on our small earth would cease if the Sun were to stop emitting radiant energy even for a moment – a moment for the Sun of course!

In just the same way, on the *Causal Level*, *Pure Consciousness* at the centre is radiating from a Spiritual Source (the 'Self' of the Universe, called in Vedanta, the 'Param-Atman') always and everywhere whether you or I are conscious of it or not. William Blake's famous definition, 'Energy is Eternal Delight', shows in four words a relation between the Physical and the Causal worlds.

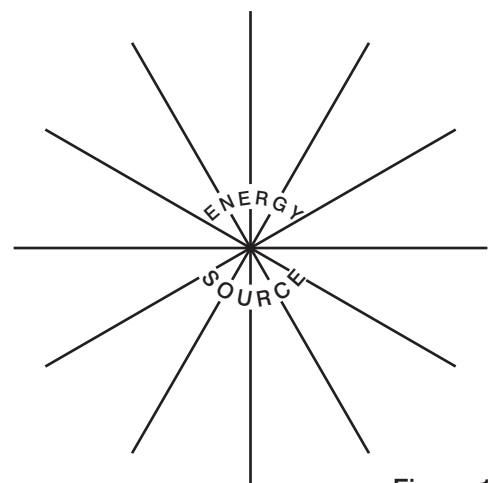


Figure 1

- Radiant Energy: central source  
 a) Physical: quantum or photon  
 b) Causal: unit of 'Pure Consciousness'

\*

Now we'll take the homely everyday example of our day's routine of 24 hours, according to the *Standard Time* set by our watches and clocks for our general convenience (Figure 2):

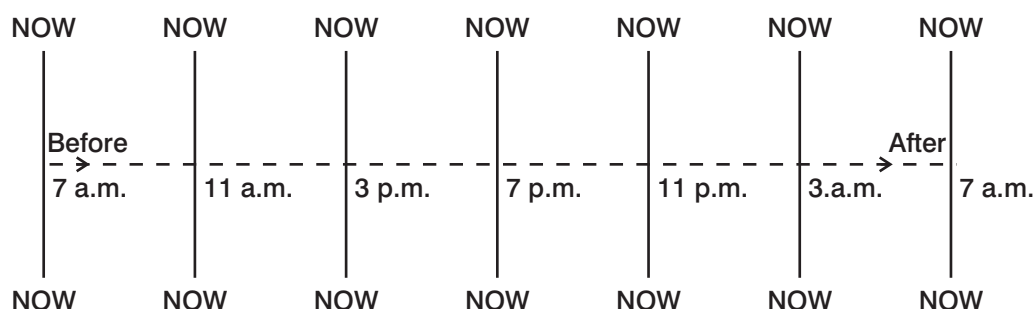


Figure 2. A Day

What we do not realise is that every moment 'Now' (which for us is about 3 seconds – the period of one breath cycle at rest) has its own unique existence, and its own relation to Consciousness. For Consciousness is carelessly used in two different senses: one the Pure Unchanging, 'abstract', Consciousness; and the other our individual mental reflection of that consciousness, which is never the same. 'At every moment,' (said Hughlings Jackson just about one hundred years ago) 'we are differently conscious'. For this individual changing, and therefore unreliable, consciousness, let us use a small (instead of a capital) 'c'.

Look again, now, at Figure 2, and you see that the arbitrary line of 'Passing Time' (Before-Now-After) begins and ends at the same point, namely (for me) at 7 a.m. when I 'wake up' and the brain's sensory computers start recording 'sensory time'. The deeper layers of the brain were, of course, recording 'inner time' all through the night, but we knew nothing about it unless we woke up and realised the 'passage of time'. Figure 3 (facing page) shows that each 24-hour 'day' or period is a cycle, and days develop a built-in general pattern as they repeat and repeat, though they differ in detail from day-to-day for me and for every individual. We can learn to view those continuous lines of 'Now' connecting us with Pure Consciousness as the really important governing principle of our lives and not the fictitious dotted line of 'Passing Time'.

Cling to the dotted circle of passing time and exaggerate its importance as we usually do, and we find that our lives have no meaning at all – the 'future' is continually melting into the 'past'; the moment of physical death, too, coincides with the moment of birth – 'I came like water and like wind I go'. For the repetition of the 24-hour cycle is not an isolated phenomenon, but cyclical repetition is a general Law of the Universe. There are no straight lines in Nature – even the apparent straight lines radiating from a physical centre of energy are really curved.

This is the beginning of the new orientation to life that we have gradually to acquire. In half-hours of meditation 'before' and 'after' each working day, we come out of the circle of time and approach the Source of Energy – the Centre. Don't stop for a moment to 'think' or you'll get back on to that fictitious circle and the power of that moment will be lost. Meditation is the universal need, but must be reinforced by remembering the existence of Pure Consciousness (Param-Atman) at any moment 'Now'. There are as many moments (3 seconds) in a day as there are days in an average lifetime (nearly 80 years); and lives are made out of days just as days are made out of moments.

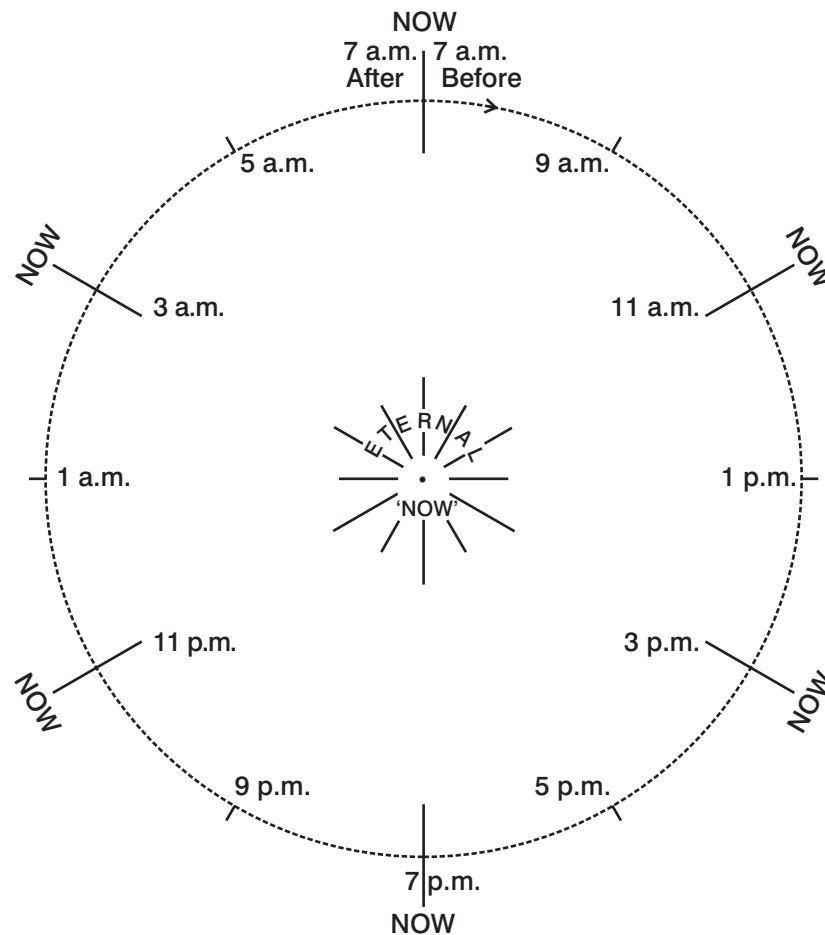


Figure 3. A 24-hour cycle

## PART 2

Part 1 was read last week to a new Group who have the Meditation but have not had the Western System by which we came to it. The fact that they were able to grasp it straight away and asked very good questions, shows that this approach *can* be understood and welcomed. The only real difficulty is that of verbalisation – neither ordinary common language nor scientific jargon can really take us very far in this quest; it is best to take some relevant story, myth or parable emanating from Higher Mind and gradually penetrate more deeply into its meaning – not only on the physical, but on the subtle and Causal levels too.

To help you to do this I will give you the particular story which His Holiness has used many times to show you how he builds up an understanding of this story at the level of the questioner. The only addition to Figure 3 that it requires is the idea of seven dotted circles separating any moment 'Now' from the Pure Consciousness. This story is called 'The King and the Seven Gates'. I heard it at my first visit to His Holiness's ashram in 1962 when my interpreter – noticing a temple in the garden – asked him what religion the temple served and, in fact, what was the Shankaracharya's own religion?

S. replied: It is the religion of the Divine Self, the Absolute, and it is called Sanatan Dharma. Every religion contains its own inner core and its own rule of living to enable its followers to reach that Centre. If each person follows his own religion truthfully he would, for certain, be following Sanatan, for it is the basis of all religions and their Centre.

Q. Who founded it, and how was it kept pure?

S. The Tradition of Sanatan was founded by all those men whose names you pronounce at Initiation from the first one, Narayanam, before the dawn of history. They are the real men behind it, and when we use their names we ask their further blessings so that they will help us on the Way.

He then told the story:

Once a King announced that he would give the keys of his Kingdom to any person who would come to him by 4 o'clock. Thousands of people started out, but the King arranged that at each of the seven gates of the city there would be riches given away free – everything anybody in the world could want. Nearly all the people stopped off to enjoy those riches and forgot their quest; but one man didn't pay any attention to them and just went straight through the gates, met the King at the appointed time, and received the keys of the Kingdom...

The same applies to our Work: if somebody wants the Kingdom he has to go straight inward and get it; but, unfortunately, the pleasures and beauties of the physical world tempt nearly everyone away.

(Record, 22 October 1962)

COMMENT. That is, they forsake the line of 'Now' and the memory of the Pure Consciousness and revolve endlessly in one or other circle of 'passing time'.

\*

The next year, 1963, some friends attended a discourse by His Holiness at Mathura in December, when he again illustrated the talk with the story of 'The King and 4 o'clock' – as usual with spontaneous variations! The theme of the talk on this occasion was the Meditation, and he commented:

S. People's attention is attracted by the physical world, and they cherish the idea that accumulation of its riches and knowledge would block out all difficulties and discomforts in life, so they run amok in the hunt for prosperity and comfort. But when one stops to think, one finds all *that* very temporary. There is an inner world which is a million times more extensive and permanent.

(He then spoke of the physical, subtle, and causal levels, and continued):

From the Causal level – the world of Truth – there emanate Consciousness and Bliss, which diffuse all through the several worlds of increasing density of matter. But how long could the physical world retain its value for one?

One might extend one's lifetime up to 100 years, but that must be the limit. Beyond the moment of physical death every possession must be left behind and one has to face a different world altogether; but if one has desired, and worked for, the Divine Self, then one can enjoy the unending happiness of the Divine World of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

The essence of this talk (he concluded) is that the aspirant, supported by Meditation, reaches the goal and inherits the Kingdom, whereas the robbers and thieves who steal pleasures and comforts without paying for them move in vain round the circle through all Eternity.

(Record, 29 November 1963)

\*

When I visited him again in 1964 I referred to the story, saying that it had made a considerable impact.

S. That story is, in fact, a tale of the Universal Self and the individual Self. The Param-Atman (Universal Self), being the King, invites all individuals to come at a certain time to get the keys. Only the Atman – individual Self – the one with clear vision and determination to stop for nothing on the way, reaches the King and inherits the Kingdom. The ‘gates’ offer magical temptations through hidden forces at different steps on the Ladder of Self-realization.

(Record, 8 September 1964)

\*

In 1970, when we were sitting in his tent at the great five-yearly religious Festival, he told the same story through the loudspeaker to the crowds in the tent and all around – though we didn’t understand it till afterwards when we got a précis in English. This time the theme of his talk was *Tyaga* or ‘giving up’. His comment after the story was:

Thus *Tyaga* (renunciation – ‘giving up’) brought him a kingdom.

\*

Again, in 1971, R. asked further questions about the meaning of this story:

S. The seven gates are the seven covering layers of our Manifested Nature (Prakriti) including the five veils of Maya (illusion) which enclose both the individual and the Universal Atman (the two birds on a single tree of the Upanishads) in the most inaccessible region of the ‘inner organ’ or Soul.

The individual Atman actually sits in the lap of Param-Atman, but the trouble is that the individual clings to an external outlook and feels constrained by those external layers of Prakriti – i.e., the seven ‘gates’.

If the individual Self could turn its eyes inwards through Meditation, then it would see where it actually is, namely in the very lap of Param-Atman. Then the seven ‘gates’ cease to matter and there is a state of unbroken Truth and Joy all round.

(Record, 28 January 1971)

\*

A thought to carry in the mind:

Love and True Knowledge are just two names for one and the same force, which is a natural property of the Self and surfaces spontaneously whenever the Soul concentrates.

\* \* \*

