

10 June 1974

## READING 7

## A NEW ORIENTATION CONTD.

An 'old hand' (M.E.P.) glancing at Reading 6, said: 'We have heard all this before, years ago, why do you call it 'New'?' Since it depicts an Eternal Truth, the framework cannot, indeed, be called 'New'. What *is* new, and what must be constantly renewed, is the use to which we put it.

But then another 'old hand' (H.W.) said: 'It makes me so happy that we are getting back again to the framework that used to work so splendidly long ago.' For indeed, it was this very picture of the circles of Time and the radii of 'Now' which enabled us to set up work again in London after Mr. Ouspensky's death in 1947. But how much more practical could be our approach now with His Holiness and the Meditation!

Recent flashes of understanding tell us that everything physical that lies on the circle of passing time – earth time – together with the mental commentary, is the individual's own concern. He has to watch his step from day-to-day, but he cannot directly change the fixed pattern of his outer life any more than he could change the earth's rhythm of day and night, or its movement in earth-years round the Sun; because each person's physical life is part of a larger pattern involving so many other people. It is only his relation to the Source of Energy that he can change, and then his relation to the world will be much more harmonious and productive.

To continue, Figure 4 (overleaf) shows three of the many possible circles of our relationship to Consciousness at any moment.

With regard to a physical lifetime, one is born at a certain moment, of certain parents, in a particular place; one goes to school between certain years; at a certain age one leaves home and marries (or doesn't marry), on certain dates one's children (if any) are born; at certain times one gets ill, and when one's time ends the body dies. Nothing will change.

For people, then, who recognise nothing but the bodily life:

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

(Omar Khayyam)

If you don't believe this, take a single day and try to change it. Today is Monday; could you have changed any of the external events from the moment you woke up till you arrived here at 6.30 p.m., and then till you get home to bed, we hope, by midnight?

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In Chapter 27 of Ouspensky's screenplay, *Ivan Osokin*, the magician has been expounding these very facts to Osokin, who:

... throws himself into an armchair and holds his head in his hands.  
'Tell me,' he says, 'is it true that I have already been here with you before?'  
'It is true,' says the magician.  
'And I asked you the same thing?'

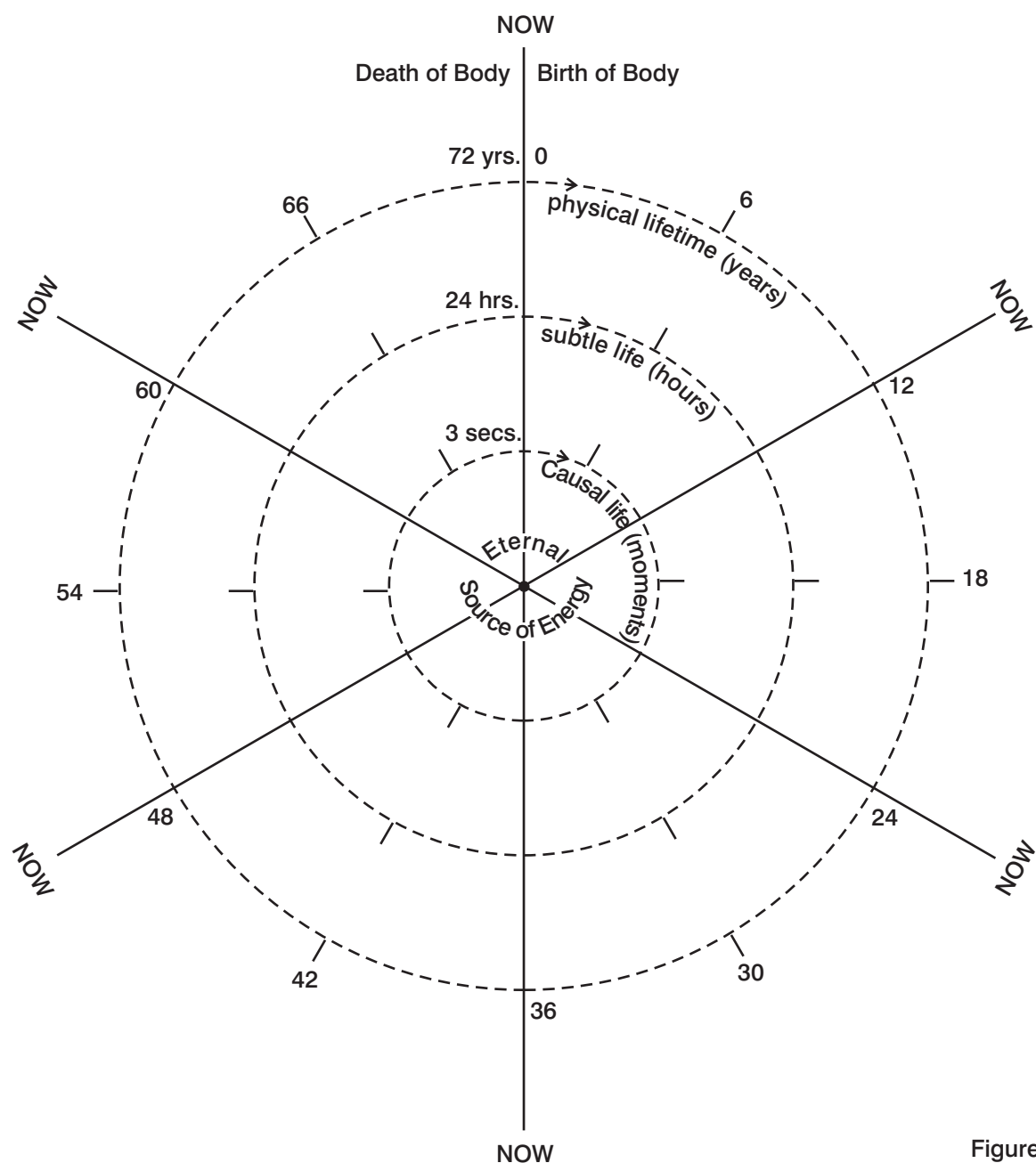


Figure 4

'You did.'

'And shall I come again?'

'That is not so certain. You may want to come, but you may not be able to...'

'But this is simply turning round on a wheel! It is a trap!'

The old man smiles.

'My dear friend,' he says, 'this trap is called life. If you want to repeat the experiment once more, I am at your service...'

'But this is horrible,' says Osokin. 'Is there no way out?'

A nervous trembling takes hold of him so that again he cannot speak. There is the cold of the grave in this thought...

Osokin and the magician are both silent.

'What am I to do then?' says Osokin at last almost in a whisper.

'My dear friend,' says the magician, breaking the silence, 'those are the first sensible words I have heard from you since the beginning of our acquaintance...'

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So, what do all Mr. Ouspensky's and His Holiness's instructions refer to? Surely what they call 'the Way' means progress towards the Centre along any line of 'Now' when we remember who we are – i.e., to the central Consciousness and our reflection of it at any moment. In illustration, listen again to this:

S. Any effort made on the Way is itself a realization of the Way. Slowly and steadily everything is being done, and one doesn't have to worry about the end of the journey which is where there would be nothing further to do at all. All one can do is to make these little efforts from day to day. Making the effort is itself a part of the realization of the work, and one feels happy that these efforts are being made towards understanding the words.

A certain man had to go out to another town miles away. It was night and pitch dark, and all he had was a tiny little lantern which could, at most, light a couple of steps. Because the journey seemed so long, and the night dark, he was depressed and unsure – unsure of reaching his destination with only this tiny light.

While he stood at the door in utter frustration and helplessness, a Realized man happened to appear there, and asked him why he was standing at his door with a lantern. The man replied that he really did not know what to do; he was all set for the journey, but it appeared so long, and the night so dark, that his small lantern could not really be of much use.

The Realized man explained to him that it was not necessary to have a light big enough to illuminate the whole way. 'As you proceed,' he said, the light will move with you, so that the next one or two steps will always be clear. All you need do is to *hold on to this light and start walking*. As the darkness clears (with the rising of the Sun), if you keep walking you will reach the destination in the full light of noon.'

(Record, 9 November 1973)

#### COMMENT

The same applies to one's little efforts. After hearing the words, however small the efforts one can make, the Light will be enough for the goal to be achieved. Then there will be nothing else to do except enjoy the full bliss of Union.

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