

10 February 1974

READING 3

PART 1

During the next few weeks (if we get the chance), we should like to give you bit by bit our recent talks with the Shankaracharya, which were based on that first audience of Mr. Whiting's, of the School of Meditation, part of which you have already heard (Readings 1 & 2).

On Wednesday, 16th January, we entered His Holiness's private room where he was already seated on his divan and, after presenting fruit and flowers, we had a short meditation. This audience was only supposed to last one hour as he had some special function at the big religious Festival (Mela) which was going on for a whole month nearby.

After the exchange of greetings (during which we were asked if we had a peaceful and comfortable journey), R. led off by recounting an experience of the night before, to which the Shankaracharya replied:

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.

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PART 2. (MAINLY FOR THE NEW GROUPS)

In order to realise something of what lies behind this simple statement, we can turn to our Western System and consider (in the light of today's physics and astronomy) the question, *'What is the physical world for me?'*

As human beings, we are part of Organic Life on Earth, so our nearest world is our Earth with its single satellite, the Moon. But our small Earth is one of the system of Planets which revolve together round our Sun, so our Solar System is also 'our world'. This microcosm of our local solar system, though it is a reflection of the great Creation, is all that we can experience of it first-hand; and our System describes full Realization as 'immortality within the limits of our Solar system'.

But our Sun is only one of the uncountable Stars revolving round the pole of our Galaxy, the Milky Way; so the Milky Way is also 'our world'. But again, optical and radio astronomy tell us that our Milky Way is only one of an uncountable number of global or spiral nebulae which (in the present stage of creation) appear to be receding at speeds which increase with distance from us until, on the fringe of the universe, they are approaching the ultimate physical velocity – the velocity of light.

One school of astronomy goes on to claim that this whole universe was, at one time, a ball of fire which is now expanding; but will contract again to the fireball stage in a definite, but enormous period of time. So that the Laws of Nature demand that everything moves in cycles of expansion and contraction.

That is what the physical sciences can observe of the physical world, which has been expressed in our System as a Ray of Creation (Figure 1). But the True Knowledge expressed by

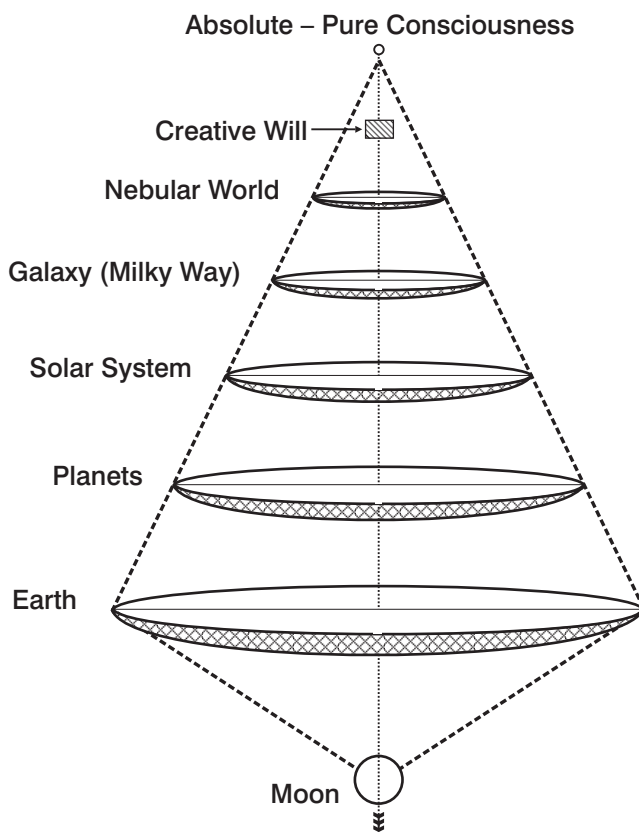


Figure 1

Figure 1 merely shows these from the point of view of their relative appearance, size and importance, to an observer on our Earth; so it is probably only a convenient artefact.

(Pause for discussion)

In order to study the Subtle world available to any human being who seeks the all-pervading Consciousness within himSelf, the System claims that we can see the place of Man in the vast scheme by means of a small Ray within the larger one (see Figure 2). This starts from the Unmanifested Sun and proceeds by way of the visible Sun's disc, the system of Planets, the levels of Organic Life (man, vertebrates, invertebrates and plants), all of which at physical death enter the crust of the Earth forming deposits of coal and oil, of minerals and metals – the whole being kept in place by the gravity of the earth and the revolution of the moon.

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PART 3. MANKIND, THE SUBTLE AND CAUSAL LEVELS

Whether you are interested in all this detail or not, a look at the diagram in the form of a spindle revolving round the central axis of Consciousness, will help to give some idea of 'relativity' and of 'scale' within the physical world. But, for Self-realization, one need only concern oneself with the small spindle starting in the 'Unmanifested Sun' or Atman.

To continue the Shankaracharya's words:

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 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

both Eastern and Western Systems, maintains that everything in the universe is alive with varying degrees of consciousness of the Absolute or Creator.

In the process of each cycle of creation, the Absolute lays down a set of Laws (like an architect's plan), but takes no further hand in the procedure which follows from the original plan, but with degrees of freedom and variation. As the fireball cools, galaxies, star-clusters and stars condense and separate; and, although we could know of no other planetary system but our own, current science maintains that it is probable that many stars contain (like our Sun) planetary systems, of which a certain number of planets must surely carry biospheres like our own. So, even if mankind and all Organic Life on Earth were to perish, there is not much fear that the great universe would be appreciably affected.

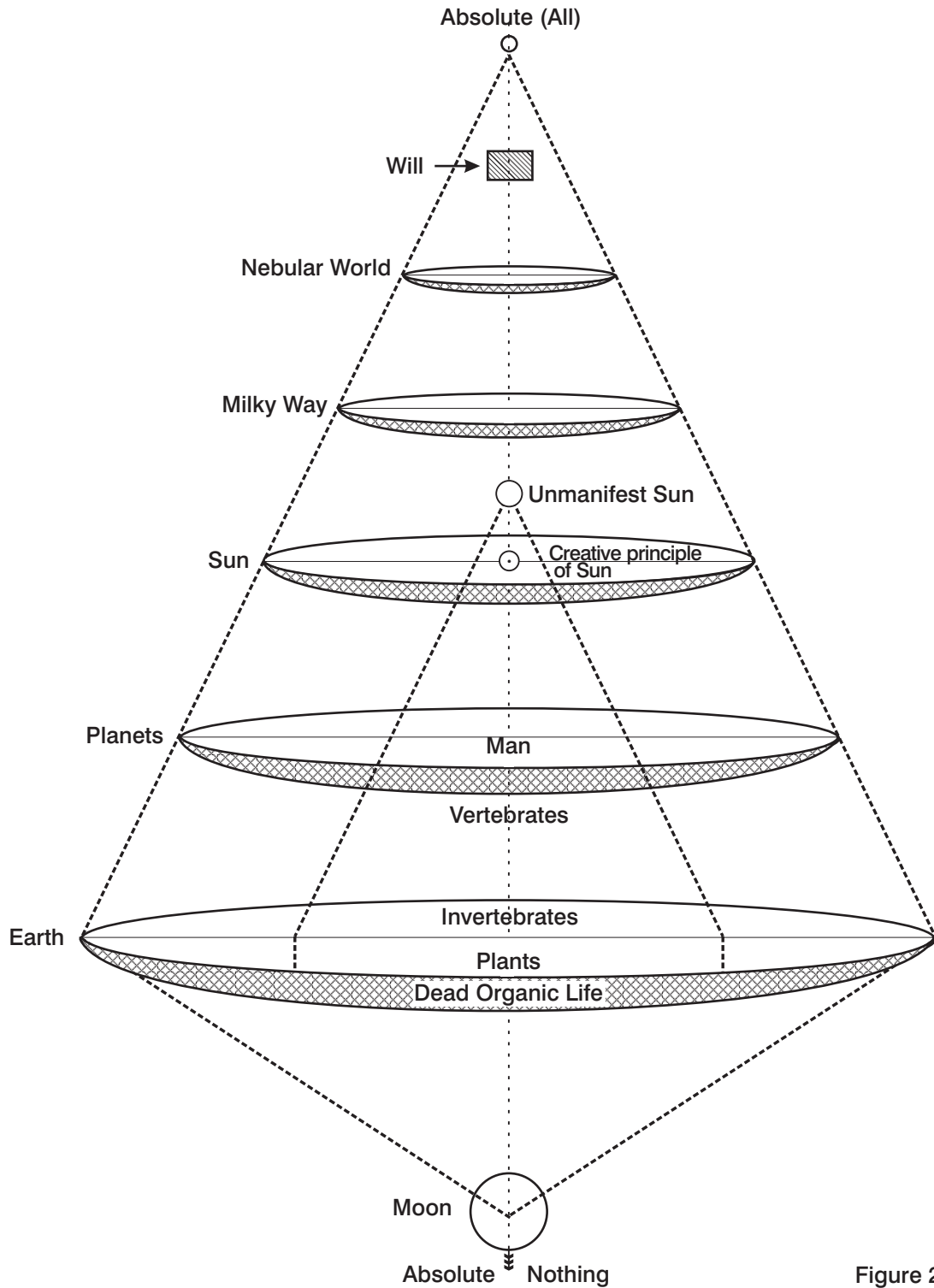


Figure 2

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.

R. Must one, then, reach this ocean before one can hope to transmit with radiance and simplicity the Truth that His Holiness gives us?

S. The process of giving takes place only when one has acquired. So, the System of Meditation has been prescribed to all of us for this deep dive into the Self. 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 Light to guide himself and others around him.

So, it is only a question of acquiring the ability to dive deep into this great ocean; and if one comes out with even one drop of this Bliss of the Self, then one would be good enough to guide the destiny of oneself and one's fellow men.

CONCLUSION

As the Shankaracharya led us from question to question, he was able – by our fifth audience – to bring us to the following point:

When the original Shankara was discoursing with his disciples [you will remember it was 25 centuries ago], he told them that, in a single couplet he would give them the gist of all the Advaita [non-dualistic] philosophy:

Brahma satyam – Jagan mithya
 Brahman is Truth – the world is illusion
 Brahma jivaiva naporah
 Universal and Individual Self are not different.

(Record, 20 January 1974)

A glance at our Figure 2 shows that there is no trace of the dualistic thinking which mars all our thought processes (scientific or otherwise); and yet nearly all branches of contemporary and ancient Knowledge can be brought together in that single Symbol. It is worth committing the diagram and the couplet to memory, so that they will float into the mind at moments of doubt and confusion.

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