

28 April 1975

READING 1

PART 1 (for general use)

If we are to continue to have meetings large or small at which ideas of True Knowledge are given and discussed, we need to adopt a different approach this term. Detailed reports of all our discussions over the years have proved that the individual reception of any new idea can be very different. To my mind we cannot do better just now than return to Mr. Ouspensky's Preface to the Second Edition of *A New Model* 1934, because in these forty years it has become even more cogent. That Preface begins as follows:

One of the American reviewers of the first edition of the *New Model of the Universe* remarks that two ideas in this book presented particular difficulties for him: the idea of esotericism and the idea of the psychological method.

It cannot be denied that, in general, these ideas are very far from modern thought.

But as there is no sense in reading my book without having some conception of the meaning of these two ideas, I will try here to show ways of approach to them.

First of all both ideas need the recognition of the fact that human thought can work on very different levels.

The idea of esotericism is chiefly the idea of *higher mind*. To see clearly what this means we must first of all realise that our ordinary mind (including the mind of a genius) is not the highest possible order of human mind. The human mind can rise to a level almost inconceivable for us, and we can see the results of the work of higher mind, those most accessible to us in the Gospels, and then in Eastern Scriptures; in the *Upanishads*, in the *Mahabharata*; in works of art such as the Great Sphinx at Gizeh, and in other memorials (though they are few) in literature and art.

He then outlines what he calls 'four levels of thought' in ordinary life, and we can put these in the form of a diagram:

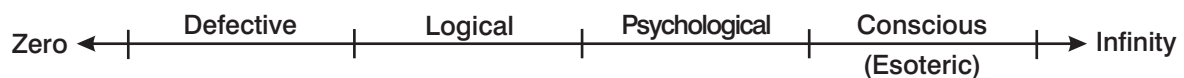


Figure 1

In order to relate this to the Shankaracharya's language and approach, we can take it as applying not only to Mind (with all its separate departments), but to Knowledge (in all its degrees of approach to Truth), and to disciplines of all kinds; but more particularly to the progress of the fluctuating human consciousness to the Universal or Param-Atman. We can see the four as co-existent in every human being and as a sort of ladder or 'Plaine man's Pathway to Heaven', the title of the folk book which inspired Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* of 1678. It is to this 'plaine man' that His Holiness's word 'Jiva' refers.

Mr. Ouspensky's simile (page xvi) is a lucid description to carry in the mind:

Let us try to imagine the four methods of observation and reasoning in relation to the room in which I am writing this. The defective method is based upon a glance at the room through the keyhole or through a narrow slit and its characteristic feature is the

certainty that what is seen through the keyhole or the slit represents all there is and that there is and can be nothing else in it except what is visible in this way. Given a certain imagination and a tendency towards superstition the defective method can make something very strange or monstrous out of an ordinary room.

The logical method is based upon a glance at the room from one definite spot, at one definite angle, and usually without enough light. Too big a confidence in it and the defence of this angle of vision makes the logical method defective.

The psychological method compared with the two first would be like a view of the room in daylight, moving about in it in various directions, knowing the objects in it and so on. It is quite clear that it is possible to learn more about the room in this way than by the logical method, and that it is possible to find many mistakes and wrong conclusions of the defective method.

The esoteric method of approach to the study of the room would include not only the whole room with everything it contains but the whole house, all the people in it with all their relationships and their occupations; and further, the position of the house in the street, of the street in the town, of the town in the country, of the country on the earth, of the earth in the solar system and so on. The esoteric method is limited by nothing and always connects every given thing, however small it may be, with the whole.

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[I propose a new game which, within reasonable limits, could enliven your meetings. A sample of 'Knowledge from Higher Mind' will be given upon which comments will be encouraged. Any one in the group can then give his or her view as to whether such a comment is 'defective, logical, psychological or Conscious', and the original speaker can defend himself! The group-takers have the job of keeping control of the discussion, bringing the group back to the original line, and perhaps suggesting a period of silence.]

Try this game with the following part of the recent talk by His Holiness, and upon which the Easter Programme was partly based:

Evening meeting at the Ashram on 4th March 1975

The Jiva-Atman, by itself is as incapable of achieving anything as a fly caught in a spider's web. Innumerable worldly obstacles caused by Maya are there to obstruct its efforts. He is free from these cobwebs of Maya only when the Grace of Param-Atman frees him. Therefore, what seems secure may turn out to be most insecure, and the insecure most secure.

(He then told the story of 'Death and the pigeon'.)

Thus, the ways of Param-Atman are beyond human comprehension. Many things are happening around us – some good and some bad – and we are unable to explain them. We wonder how Param-Atman, who is good, could cause a bad thing to happen. But 'good' and 'bad' are just comparative notions and there cannot be anything good unless there is something bad also. These notions of 'good' and 'bad' create constant conflicts in our minds and do not allow us any peace. The way to get over this is to dissociate ourselves from the events viewed, and to associate ourselves with the viewer of the events, the Param-Atman.

Param-Atman causes everything and is everything. The world we see is nothing; it was never anything in the past and will never be anything in the future. It is Param-

Atman who is the friend as well as the enemy. He is the saint, the householder; he is the beast, the man; he is the sorrow, the attachment, and everything else.

But things worry us, as they do in a dream. Nothing of the dream is left when we wake up. What else could all this be, except a most wonderful show?

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PART 2 (MAINLY FOR NEW GROUPS)

We can now extend 'the four methods of observation and reasoning' as Mr. Ouspensky meant it to be extended – namely to the 'world' instead of the room in which he was writing.

What is the 'world'? A reasonable answer was given at the last Monday Meeting before Easter; and we can now superimpose it at the mid-point of Figure 1, for Figure 2 here assembles the facts generally known today about the physical universe as far as the logical mind can take them. There is nothing much wrong with this arrangement; it is the view we are taking of this physical world which is fictitious. (See Figure 2)

A little 'psychological thinking' will at once show its limitations.

For example: it is all the creation of the mind of man as a creature who lives on the earth. He is looking first at everything bigger than himself; but when he looks the other way at everything

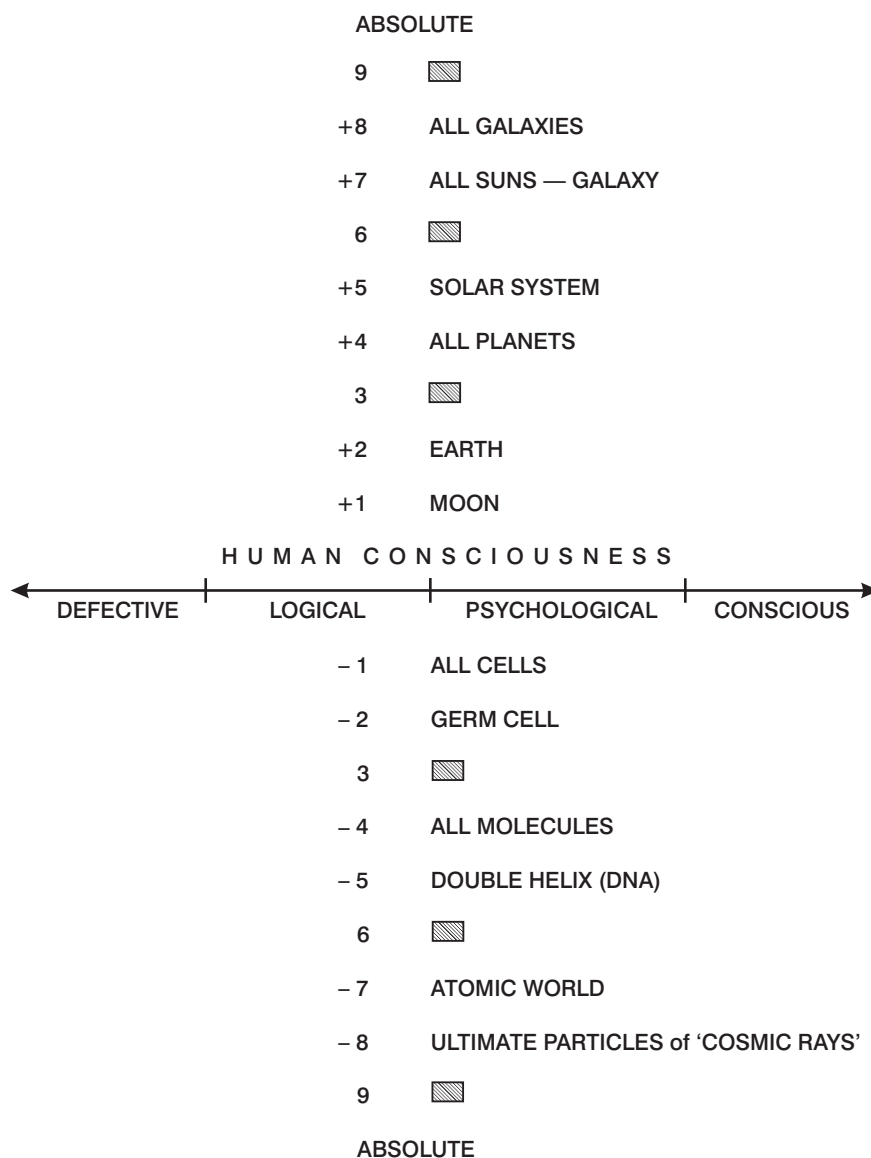


Figure 2

smaller than himself, he is really looking at the same world. The first way he is seeing 'aggregates,' and the second way he is seeing the units of which these aggregates are composed. Both worlds are conditioned by his own artificial conceptions of time and space, mass and velocity, as compared with himself as the only consciousness in the universe!

The human mind is dualistic by nature. All dualism is fictitious; there need be no conflict between the big world (the macrocosm described by Einstein in his relativity theory) and the small world (the microcosm of quantum theory and the atom).

Further, there should not be conflict between what we do here – meditation, polishing the mirror of our consciousness, improving the working of the various departments of our mind – and the current scientific methods of assembling the material evidence. In fact, we can classify all the different branches of science in terms of this diagram, as Mr. Ouspensky encouraged some of us to do when we visited him in America during World War II. Both the knowledge of the world of Creation and Knowledge of the Creator or Param-Atman can help each other if used in the right way.

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Whatever our interests and talents – our assets – if we value the Meditation and the other methods we practise here, we must at all costs be genuinely ourSelves. Confronted with the Divine Self who is always present, it is humility and simplicity that counts. The pilgrimage to and fro along this horizontal line that is outside time and space, demands the *inner* renunciation of everything else but Truth, true Love, and true Knowledge.

What better attitude to carry with us than that of the unknown 16th century poet:

As you came from the holy land
Of Walsingham,
Met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?

How shall I know your true love
That have met many a one,
As I went to the holy land
That have come, that have gone?

...

Know that love is a careless child
And forgets promise past;
He is blind, he is deaf when he list
And in faith never fast.

His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy;
He is won with a world of despair,
And is lost with a toy.

...

But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never old, never dead,
From itself never turning.

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