

18 October 1976

READING 3

THE THREE WORLDS CONTD.

NATURAL BARRIERS

As Mr. Ouspensky was fond of reminding us, we have very 'much more time' than we imagine, and the Shankaracharya confirms this.

The Absolute lives always in the present, being outside of time and therefore devoid of past and future; so conscious contact must come in the present moment. But the time-value of a moment differs widely in the 3 worlds (see Figure).

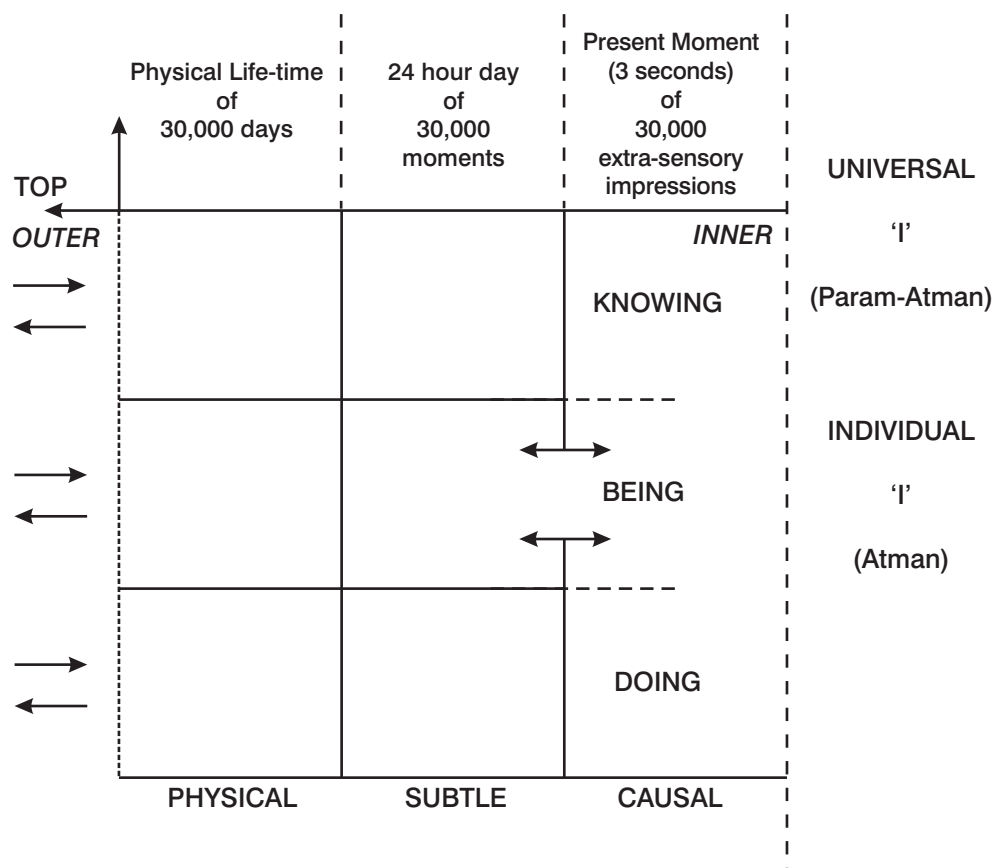


Figure 1. Three levels of the Brain and the Three Worlds.

For the *Causal Body*, 'a moment' lasts 3 seconds (the time of one of our breath cycles at rest) It is made up of extra-sensory perceptions each of which lasts a minimum of 1/10,000 of a second. That is shorter, for example, than the time needed by the intellect to recognise a flash of lightning and know it for what it is. Yet such a moment can change a man's whole life.

For the *Subtle Body* a 'lifetime' of a day (24 hours) is made up of 'present moments' of 3 seconds, so the famous '40 days and 40 nights' of the temptation in the wilderness is in psychological time 120 seconds – just 2 minutes! This explains many things such as the great speed of thought or of dreams and the rapidity with which a few sips of brandy or whiffs of marijuana produce psychological effects affecting the whole organism.

The *Physical Body* lives (on average) for 30,000 days and is measured by our calendars and almanacs in big units of days, months and years. (You will notice that the 3 worlds are separated from one another by this ratio of 30,000 and later you will see why.)

Thus a chain of events which in the physical world appears to take a very long time – Self-realization for instance – could all happen in a few hours or days; while on the causal level they are all there any moment. Many of H.H's examples and stories (notably *Lakshman's Dive for the Ring*, from the *Ramayana* epic) reveal these facts.

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Spatial units of magnitude and distance have similar boundaries. Thus to come into the physical presence of a fully realized man, someone has had to travel thousands of miles and spend many hours with him; but once the relationship is established for a large group of people, we can be in his mental presence all day and every day; and on the causal level, we are (as he says) *never separate*, for any moment we can be with him in spirit, and when anyone makes that contact, he knows it. That's why he wants everyone to realise that a physical audience is not required, once the contact with some leader has been made.

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All this determines the difference between the scientific, the psychological or artistic, and the 'spiritual' approaches to knowledge and experience. Today's experimental scientist and psychologist is bound by his terms of reference to keep to the physical world only; if he strays from what he can physically prove, he is lost. So we can gladly leave all the current detailed knowledge about brain and nerves, about electronic circuits and EEG tracings to the neurologists; using only what is useful to us on the path of self-fulfilment. We begin the science of self-observation with a little knowledge about our own psychology – which few scientists ever even consider, being trained to bypass what is regarded as merely personal and subjective.

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Those who realise, through meditation or other means, that the Shankaracharya is speaking and acting always from the causal level (in proportion to how much his hearers are capable of understanding), need only listen and carry out his instructions, by gradually understanding his examples and stories. Others who haven't yet come to that, may need preparation from other sources, which are legion; but we do advise that people go only for the highest possible sources and base their beliefs on nothing less. For this purpose let us read again this short extract from the Apocryphal *Hymn of Jesus*, which expresses simultaneous perception of and the difference between the physical and the causal worlds in the clearest possible way:

Thus... having danced with us,
The Lord went forth,
And we, as though beside ourselves,
Or wakened out of deep sleep,
Fled each our several ways.

I, then, when I saw him suffer,
 Did not even stay by his sufferings,
 But fled unto the Mount of Olives,
 Weeping at that which had befallen.

And when he was crucified on the Friday,
 At the sixth hour of the day,
 Darkness came upon all the earth.

My Lord standing in the midst of the cave,
 And lighting it up, said:
 'John, unto the multitude below in Jerusalem
 I am being crucified,
 And pierced with lances and reeds,
 And gall and vinegar is given me to drink.
 But unto thee I speak,
 And what I speak hear thou.
 I put it into thy mind
 To come up into this mountain
 That thou might hear those things
 Which it behoves a disciple to learn from his teacher
 And a man from his God.'

Having thus spoken,
 He showed me a cross of light set up,
 And about the cross a great multitude,
 Not having one form;
 And in it the cross was one form
 And one likeness.
 And the Lord himself I beheld above the cross,
 Not having any shape, but only a voice...
 Saying unto me:
 'John, it is necessary
 That one should hear these things from me,
 For I have need of one that will hear.'

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