

31 January 1977

READING 1

OBSTACLES TO SELF-FULFILMENT

PART 1

Not having heard from the Shankaracharya for over a year – in fact since our last talks with him in October 1975 – we have just had a directive which, as I'm sure you will agree, is perfectly suited to our present situations. He says in effect that the only obstacles to the realization of our possibilities are three bad habits which have become part of human nature.

He reminds us of what he has said about them in the past. The first he calls '*Mala*' which springs from 'I know better'; and means deliberately doing something different from or opposite to what is advised. Mr. Ouspensky called it 'self-will and wilfulness'. The second is called *Kashaya* (derived from a word denoting the sticky aromatic sap of a tree): the mind 'identifies' with something that seems attractive and sticks to it, just as a fly gets caught on fly-paper and can't get free. The third is *Vikshepa* or dispersion of the attention in rushing from one association to another – a process we used to call 'destructive imagination'.

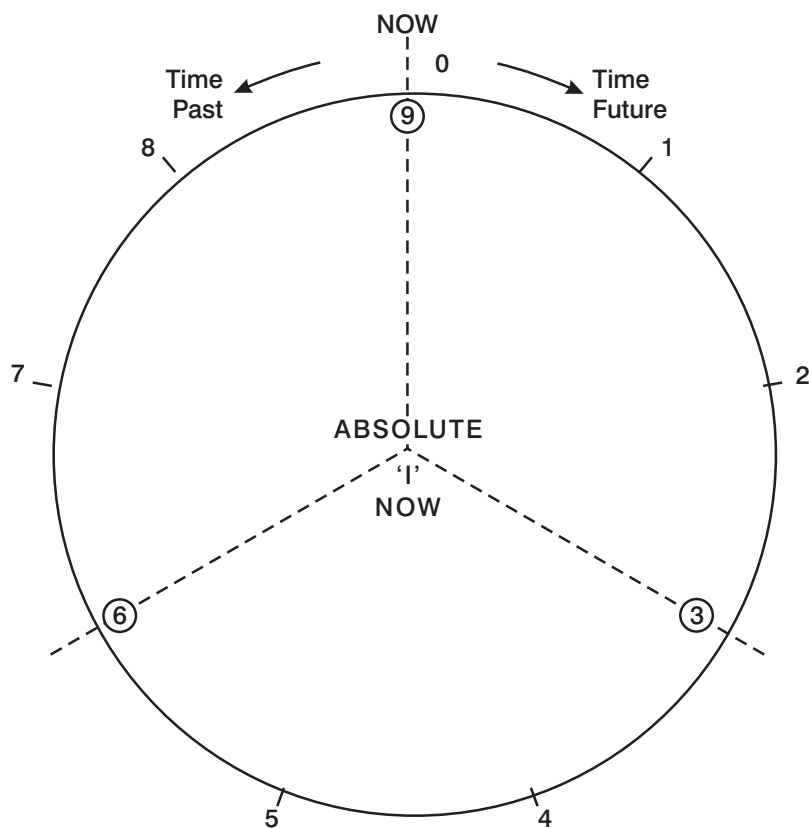
'*Mala*', he now says to us, 'is not so much the problem for it is obvious that the search for Truth is in action, and there is no denial that it is being done with faith in the Tradition. *Kashaya*, also is not too difficult, but *Vikshepa* is really terrible and very subtle. Only if mind (Buddhi) is still (during Meditation) and all ambitions and desires are (then) discarded, will *Vikshepa* loose its hold. Otherwise it keeps company in a very subtle way without being noticed. This is the field to work on.'

So our immediate task is not just to study these obstacles (for we have studied them for years) but to free ourselves from them. To do that, let us make sure we understand what these are by bringing every day examples of our own at first-hand, It would help us all if group takers would feed us back with the best ones. We need to attend to our *actions* at any moment trying to do them in the most efficient and appropriate manner. Only if we practise this will we be able to observe how much these obstacles get in our way so as to bring good examples each week.

The 'media' are nowadays bombarding us with examples of this 'dispersion', just as physically we in London are being bombarded by vicious acts of violence. A notable example was the BBC 2 Television programme last Thursday with the engaging title of 'The Key to the Universe'. At vast expense this proceeded from one absurdity to another, getting more and more remote from practical life as technology produces its 'own ultimate particles' with loud cries of 'Quark, Quark'. It wasn't so much 'Alice in Wonderland', as 'Delinquent in Dizzy-land'. Rather few of us, I gather, could see it through!

PART 2. A NUTSHELL

So our weekly meetings must at least achieve one thing for us – give our minds rest and refreshment. The remedy in classical Yoga for this 'dispersion' was the fifth step called 'Pratyahara' or 'one-pointed attention'. The pupil had to practise this thoroughly before he was allowed to meditate at all. H.H. tells us:



This means 'abbreviation'; when a given subject has become diffuse and dispersed and one wants to bring the whole subject into a nutshell, then you reduce it to some symbol or point – like 'UN' for United Nations.

(Record, 4 February 1971)

Now we have, locked up in our treasury, a universal symbol – the 'Enneagram' based on a circle divided into nine equal parts – which is ideal for this purpose. Since we were left on our own by the death of our first instructor P. D. Ouspensky this has been the basis of all our teachings; and anybody who is to carry on when our Society passes under new management will have to know how to use the symbol in this way. A simple basic form of it is given here, which anyone can carry with them.

This symbol is ultimately the only way to get over all difficulties of language and communication in order to unite the central core of our Western system, with the Shankaracharya's system of Advaita (non-dualism) and the inner content of all true religions, philosophies and sciences; it is the key also to the best in art. The aim was beautifully expressed by the Christian Messiah (as an embodiment of the supreme Consciousness of the Universe):

Come unto me, all that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.
 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

(Matthew 11: 28–30)

You may recall that Handel chose this for a very moving aria in his *Messiah*.

The human mind with all its complex departments has been brought by evolution to the point where it can supply anything needed for Self-fulfillment. If it is rested and supplied with

the right energy it will immediately answer any demand. One time at the end of a visit to Mr. Ouspensky in the USA during World War II, I asked him for a message to take back to England.

‘Tell them’, he said, ‘that they must be able to answer all questions.’

We say the same to you today.

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Note for Group takers: If we want to improve our Being as well as our Knowledge we should use this symbol as part of the discipline of the 5th step of Yoga to overcome dispersion of the mind. I would ask you therefore to keep your meetings strictly on this subject as here presented, and to announce that no one should refer to any books or published descriptions of the symbol for the present.

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