

14 February 1977

SENIOR GROUP MEETING

Dr. R. Before we give the rest of the announcements, we must tell you that our friend George Griffiths, the poet, died early yesterday morning, having been desperately ill for some months. Perhaps some of you may not know that shortly before Christmas he and Margaret Pearce were married. She was thus able to make his last month as happy as it could possibly be. She wants us to say that she will be pleased to see anyone here at the cremation on Tuesday, 22nd February at Putney Vale at 3 p.m. You may like to get a copy of one of George's small books of poems called 'The Secret Stream' – there is one in the library, and I can thoroughly recommend it as an expression of our beliefs.

After some other announcements Dr. R. continued:

May I remind you that at our last senior group ('Small Monday') meeting I promised to show you in three stages how our symbol of the 'Circle of Nine Points' shows clearly the validity of the Shankaracharya's statement that our Western System and the much older System of his great Tradition must have had a common origin, but diverged a long time ago, so that there are now radical differences in approach.

We started last time with the Ray of Creation and from there we want to proceed with the next step this afternoon. We are lucky today to have with us Shri Jaiswal who has done practically all our translations and without whom we could never have had any communication with the Shankaracharya or understood a word he has said. So he can speak up and correct us whenever he likes even in just the matter of pronunciation of Sanskrit words. But before we embark I would wish to be silent for two or three minutes and ask for help in this rather difficult task.

MEDITATION

Afterwards:

Dr. R. The first question is: Why are we attempting this particular task just now? – and this has reference to our latest directive from the Shankaracharya (which Jaiswal managed to procure for us in Benares very recently) namely that our chief obstacle at this stage lies in dispersion of the mind – Vikshepa. In the classical Yoga System this difficulty was foreseen at the fifth step of Yoga which all students had to practise before they were ever allowed to meditate – the practice of Pratyahara which was to concentrate the mind by 'collecting the whole of a given subject in a nutshell'. Our nutshell is this symbol, because to see anything in the enneagram it has to be right by everything else. Then the symbol can be used to connect any fragment of the truth with the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Some groups last week looked at the Ray of Creation in the straight-line form in which it was first given to Mr. Ouspensky in St Petersburg in 1915. This is a space diagram in terms of distance and magnitude only (Figure 1, overleaf). Others tried to put it round the circle of the enneagram which is a *time-space* diagram and therefore rather more difficult. But either way, if you did it correctly (Figure 1) you will have seen that besides the six points or 'notes' in any progression of events (labelled 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8) there are four points from

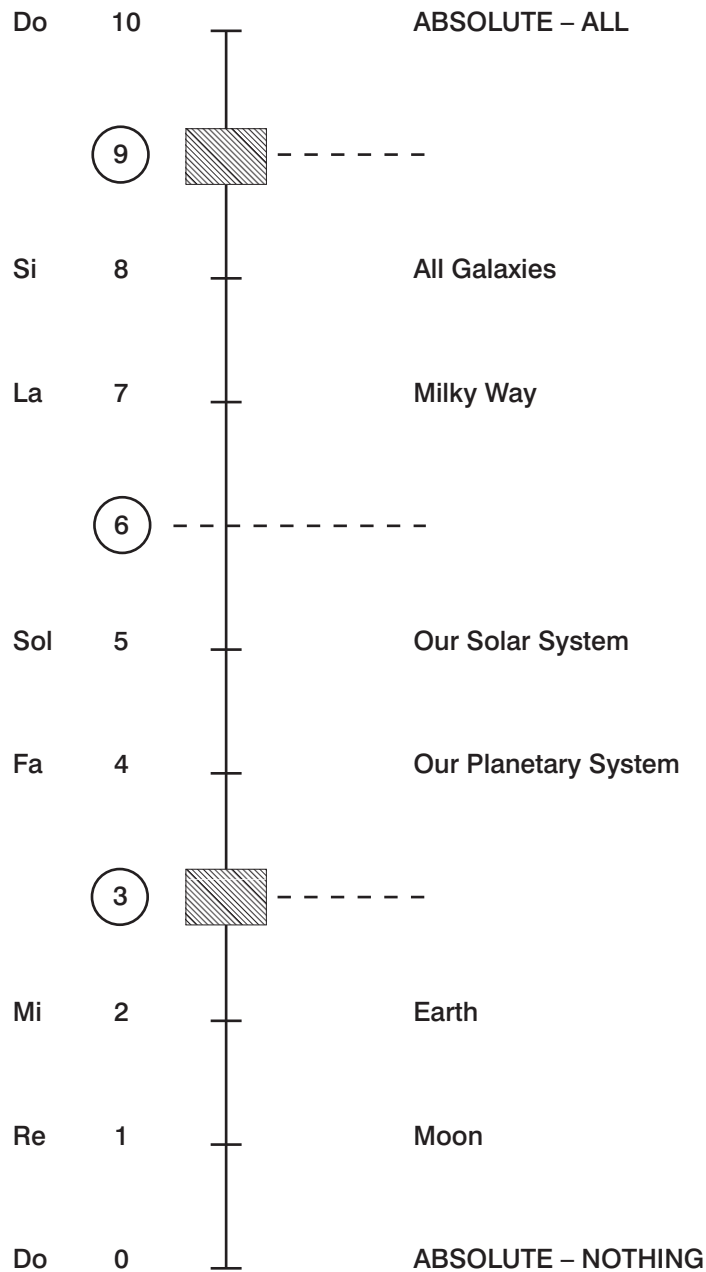


Figure 1. RAY of CREATION. Spatial Aspect (Magnitude & Distance)

which fresh impulses enter to maintain the original direction both upwards and downwards. One of these is the centre of the circle and the other three are labelled 3, 6 and 9. These have a hidden connection with each other, while being independent of the circular movement.

Taking these four points from 'Absolute Nothing' (point 0) to Absolute All' (point 10) we divided the universe into three octaves from Absolute All to the Sun, from Sun to Earth and from Earth to Moon, beyond which is Nothing.

(Figure 2 on screen)

We must understand the three octaves as a perspective view of the universe as seen by an observer on our small planet earth, where those entities which are close to us and comparable in size appear very big and important and play the major part in influencing our physical lives; whereas other planets, other stars and other galaxies have progressively less physical influence upon us.

This is quite compatible with contemporary views such as this one from Professor D. W. Sciama:

To give a general idea of the (small) size of our Solar System, we may mention that the distance from the Sun to the outermost planet, Pluto (which was only discovered in 1930) is in terms of light (and all electromagnetic waves), just 5½ light-hours, that is, it takes light 11 hours to cross this Solar System.

Thus ends the first stage of our exploration of the universe. It has taken us from the circumference of the earth, a mere fraction of a light-second, to the outer edge of our Solar System – a few light hours. The next stage, to nearby stars, involves a big jump from light-*hours* to light-*years*.

(Professor D. W. Sciama, *The Unity of the Universe*; Faber, 1959, p. 29)

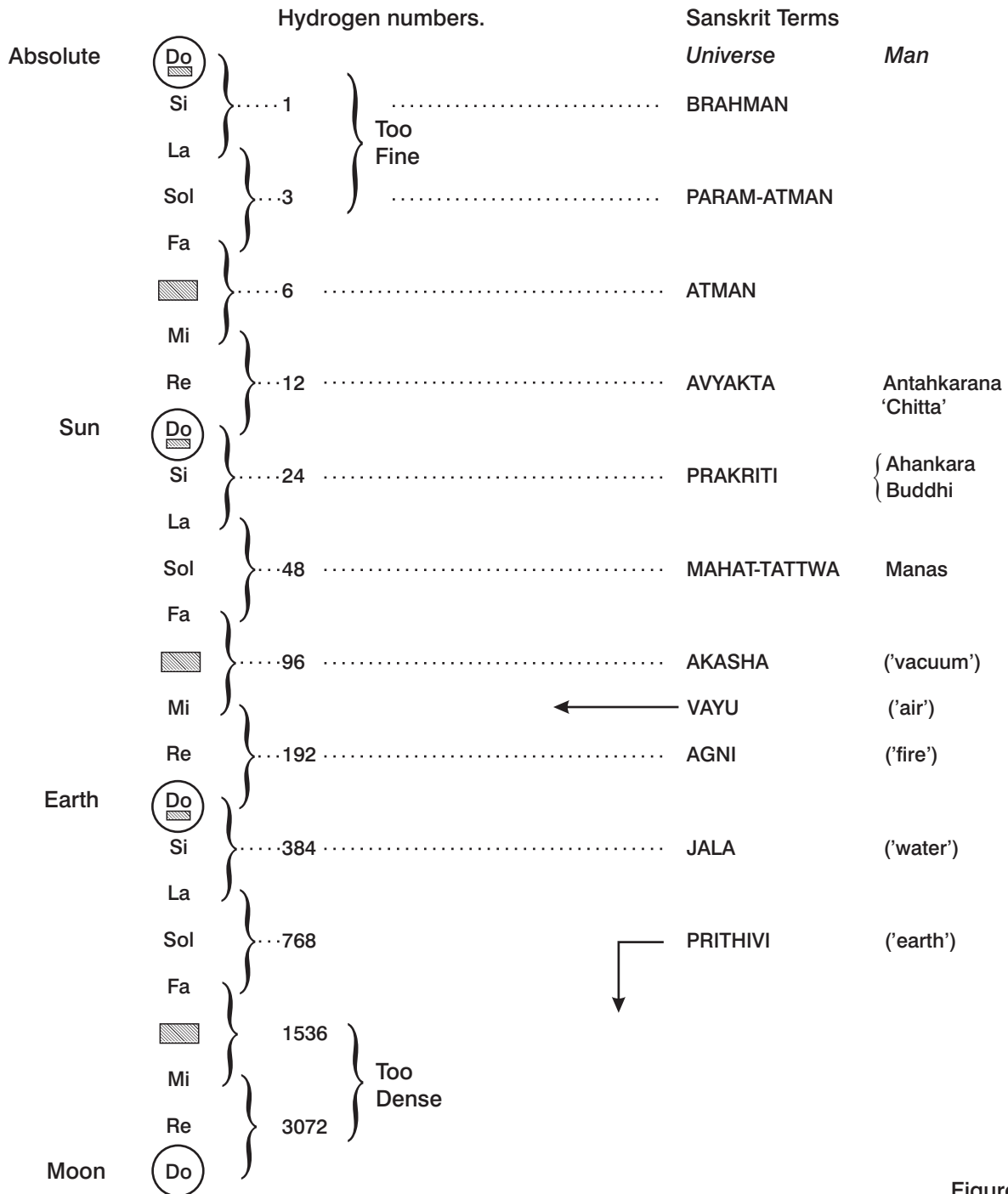


Figure 2

That jump was shown at point six in the Ray of Creation (Figure 1). Today there is no time to go into the Western terminology of the Hydrogen table with which most of you in this room should be now be familiar. We will return to it next time. Since we have Jaiswal with us, I will put up alongside the Hydrogen numbers, the terminology that H.H. and his Tradition have always used. This will show you that it is by no means inferior – in fact vastly superior if you understand the meanings of the names. One of the talks with the Shankaracharya in which all those terms were defined was then read; and Jaiswal (who had originally translated it) agreed that our exposition was accurate.

S. In Atman is Chitta, the unmanifested Causal body, then Prakriti, our manifested nature of Ahankar, Buddhi and Manas, when purified. And then space, air, fire, water and earth – the solid body of flesh and bones.

Q. It is more like the drop returning to the ocean?

The Shankaracharya smiled and said:

Whatever is the cause, it is always bigger than the effect. When we see earth coming out of the water, then immediately one has to understand that water is more extensive than earth. So this progression builds up, and over all one sees Brahman or Atman – the cause of all – as more extensive than anything else.

Dr. R. Brahman or Atman is the cause of everything else, but has no other cause than Itself.

Reading continues:

To look at oneself on the way of Self-fulfilment, the most important factor to tackle is the Manifested Nature – Ahankar and Buddhi. Just below Avyakta (or Chitta) is the manifested nature (Prakriti) and the individual nature is just the same as the Universal.

He then quoted the prayer of the great poet, Tulsī Das: ‘Please, by your Grace, let my nature be Sattvic and completely harmonious. Only then will I be able to worship you.’

‘So,’ he concluded, ‘the nature of the individual has to be transformed to become a Sattvic nature.’

(Record, 23 January 1970)

Dr. R. At this point we can remind ourselves of the aim which Mr. Ouspensky gave for the first Society which he started in this house (the prototype of our present Study Society) which was defined as the *transformation of man's nature* which he called ‘Psychotransformation’. How similar – we have come ‘full circle’.

You will see next week when we come to relate the Table of Hydrogens with the Enneagram once more, why I have called the Eastern system ‘vastly superior’ in potential. There is just a hint in Figure 2 – where ‘air’ (Vayu) is put at a point *between* fire (Agni) and vacuum (Akasha) – that they were aware of the entry of air from the outside environment as one of the ‘foods’ which maintain the physical body.

But for us the top of the diagram is the all-important part of it, if we want to take ‘the direct route to the summit’, to see what the Meditation is supposed to achieve and what important mistakes are being made. In particular we want to find the right approach to the three highest levels – Brahman, Param-Atman and Atman – for they cannot be defined or

distinguished by the intellect and they require an attitude of awe and wonder as in the expression: 'Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground'. We have to 'take the shoes from off our feet' because the place we want to stand on is 'holy ground'. Only in that way will we bridge that top interval, only then will Grace be allowed to bridge it and enlighten us. So I would now like to read a question and answer which was put to the Shankaracharya during the years 1970 and 1971 when he talked a great deal to us on this subject and there was a lot of correspondence, and also talks at his Ashram and to the general public at the Religious Festivals.

In a letter to one of us – D.B.C. – he replied to this question:

A. reads:

D.B.C. In the children's game of 'hunt the treasure' we say hot or cold to guide them to it. In my search I want someone to say 'hot or cold' to help me recognise the Atman.

In his reply the Shankaracharya wrote:

In the Antahkarana (Dr. R. The Antahkarana is on the Causal level, level 12) of each person – the Jiva – there lives the Param Atman-along with the Jiva Atman for the purpose of guidance. Therefore we get a guiding voice from time to time when we are in difficulties.

In order to hear that inner voice, we should pray to the All-knowing Param-Atman in solitude with a settled mind. Then an answer to bring us face to face with success is sure to come forth.

But, you say in your letter: 'my efforts seem ineffective like digging a very large field. It sometimes seems that the spade is not enough; a tractor is required'. But the field you speak of is by no means too large for our Buddhi. All fields are smaller than Buddhi, since all lie within the sphere of Manas.

Until we realise this, then both of them, together with the Power of Atman appear small, and we feel small in every field of life. Atman contains Buddhi; Buddhi contains Manas; and Manas contains the body.

But people ordinarily think the other way round – that is, that the physical body contains all that. Here lies the mistake. The moment we take a broad view of our Manas and Buddhi, the whole world goes into it.

(Record, 19 November 1970)

Dr. R. Now this is a mistake we keep on making, and it comes from a wrong application of the system we once inherited. It was to belittle ourselves and our endowment so much by stressing our own nothingness and saying we 'cannot do'. Jaiswal will remember how the Shankaracharya keeps protesting to me about saying 'I cannot Do'. This was what was wrong in our previous training; so we must change it from now.

In order to clarify this point I would like to tell you a little story that his Holiness told at about the same time at the Mela Festival in 1973 referring to the feeling of 'I', because as you will see later, here (pointing to level 24 on diagram) is man's 'nature' and both feeling of 'I' (Ahankara) and the Mind (Buddhi) are felt in the head. He introduced this story by saying:

S. The word Ahankara – the ego – is frequently treated as a synonym for self-pride and we consider it as an undesirable quality. But if you have any feeling of 'I' at all, better raise it sky high, otherwise it will go down, down, down!

Dr. R. It is true that part of it is false (Ashudda Ahankara) but the part which is true is in line with the Atman. If one concentrates on the true and raises it sky-high, one gets on better than to let it go down and down and down. The story was this:

A Mahatma used to say: 'There is no Mahatma like me.' Bystanders around complained: 'Surely that is the limit of self-pride to say things like that? How does it become you, a Mahatma?'

He replied: 'Everyone else is either better than me or worse, but no-one is exactly the same as I am. So I am right.'

This, added the Shankaracharya, has a deeper meaning, for indeed every one of us is unique, having no equal anywhere in the world. It has become fashionable today to talk of 'equality' but can you find equality anywhere in the vast field of creation? The world exhibits nothing but variety; variety depends on differences. If all these differences disappear, then the whole world disappears as it does in the state of dreamless sleep.

(Record, 3 February 1973)

Dr. R. contd:

So let us be careful about stamping on our 'feeling of individuality.' That is a big cause of mental disease, isn't it Dr. Fenwick? – when people lose their feeling of individuality they are in danger of a nervous breakdown?

Dr. Fenwick. Yes, or when it becomes too strong, too narrow.

Dr. R. Yes. And the people who get a wrong idea of religion, often do that. We have books called: *The Troubled Conscience and the Insane Mind*. We can, at least, be free of that!

All right, that's enough for today.

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