

16 October 1978

## READING 2

### INTRODUCTION

What I had hoped for has emerged from the first two meetings of our discussion groups this term, namely that individuals would, if encouraged, give their own views about the proposition that ‘there is in every normal human being a source of truth which can tell one what is right and wrong for one at important moments’. Even among those twenty or thirty people who have lately joined us, it is abundantly clear that they all know very well at first-hand what we are talking about. That’s enough; we particularly do *not* want to blot out that individual source of truth by substituting some ‘establishment belief’; we want only to encourage and refresh the individual’s search for this source.

For this, as the Shankaracharya says, is the most important aim in human life. Animals too adapt to their environment, find food, have fun, build nests, reproduce themselves, look after their young and defend their territory. But the importance of being human lies in the fact that we can get to *know ourselves* and in doing that we can get to know the nature of our Creator and find that our own Self (the Atman) lives in the hearts of all; not only this but that there is a Universal Self (the Param-Atman) at the centre of creation which is of exactly the same nature, full of goodwill, energy and eternal delight.

At this stage the people joining us want to know more about what we stand for, what kind of Meditation we do, what kind of example and teaching we hope to share with anyone who wants it. Don’t forget that these papers go all round the world, to people of different colour and race, of different codes of morality, different languages and different ways of living. The contents of these papers must therefore be pretty general; and it is understood that any given group should pick what they need and leave the rest.

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### PART 1. AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE – THE FOUR WAYS

Our Western System has a Universal Symbol through which all questions can ultimately be answered, if correctly put. A symbol expresses *in a nutshell* what would take volumes to explain in words; just as the letters ‘UN’ contain all we know of the United Nations organisation – its aims and how it works. If you receive it in the spirit of enquiry, it will become emotional and so clear away the self-elements and be recalled in memory at any time. Here is an example:

Figure 1, overleaf, (which should be taken in stages – first the centre, then the circle, then the triangle and the three Traditional Ways, then the central circle and the Fourth Way).

### ABOUT THE DIAGRAM

1. A Christian Monk of the 7th century said:

Imagine a circle, and in the middle of it a centre; and from this centre forthgoing radii-rays. The farther these rays go from the centre the more divergent and remote from one another they become; conversely, the nearer they approach to the centre the more they

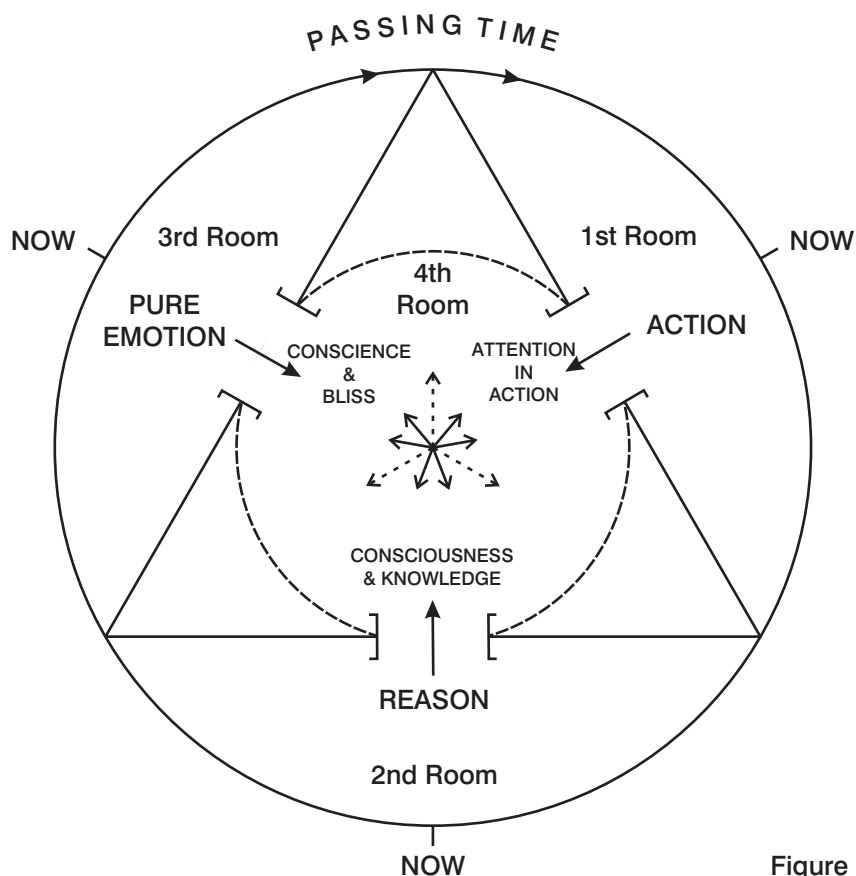


Figure 1

come together. Now suppose that this circle is the world; the very middle of it, God; and the radii rays going from the centre to the circumference, or from the circumference to the centre are the paths of the lives of men. And in this case also, to the extent that the Saints approach the centre do they come nearer to God and to one another.

2. Mr. Ouspensky explained in *A New Model of the Universe* that the circle represents 'Passing Time' and every point on the circumference represents a present moment of *NOW*. The triangle represents the three divisions of man's nervous system or 'Three rooms in which we live' – Room 1 is the brainstem and spinal cord – the organs of action; Room 2 the forebrain, the organ of observation and discrimination, reason and classified knowledge; Room 3 the autonomic division governing the inner world and the basis of all our feelings. There is also a 4th Room, comparatively unknown where everything comes together in what has been called the 'Soul' where 'real I' can be directly experienced as consciousness, conscience and attentive action when required.
3. There have always been three well-known traditional gateways to the 4th Room – which our Western system used to call 'the Ways of the Fakir, the Monk and the Yogi' for three extreme types of people, the physical, the intellectual and the emotional. But there is also a little-known 'Fourth Way' which (by developing conscience) works in the 4th Room itself; and this way is for people like us who have some emotion, some intellectual knowledge and some efficiency in action – a little of everything.

The three traditional ways require giving up *external* things (name, family life, money, career) and living a dedicated life in special surroundings; the Fourth Way surfaces at special

times in history, providing a way (by giving up selfish and subjective attitudes internally) for householders like us who have duties and obligations to fulfil. It is also called the 'Way of Understanding', because one must understand what one is doing and why, rather than acting from blind obedience or imitation. It uses techniques from other Ways, but always for 'Self-remembering'.

Knowing all this in theory we have been able (since 1960 when we first met the Meditation) to understand the approach of the Shankaracharya's tradition of non-dualism, whereby he has been demonstrating exactly the same thing in his own language and by his own example. For instance, he tells us that the system of Meditation was adapted around 1940 (by his predecessor and others) from Raja Yoga (the 'Yoga of Consciousness') for use on the Fourth Way so that it is compatible with contemporary life. The Initiation ceremony, he says, is designed to take one straight to the 4th Room; and at every half-hour we should enter that room by complete *stillness* for a few moments.

With the Symbol and this example before them, the two new groups can begin to answer all their most important questions for themselves. For example:

Tony Soare. (first meeting) I have heard it said that although the Shankaracharya is Hindu, at the same time he is outside religion. How can this be?

Dr. R. Actually he calls his own religion 'Sanatan' meaning 'that which *Is*', namely the religion of the eternal Self; the central core of all religions e.g. the Lord's prayer for Christians. Because he lives among Hindus he uses their teaching; but there is no need to change one's religion. Listen to his own answer to the first question I ever asked him (at a meeting in 1961 for 70 Westerners and many Indians) the Maharishi translating:

Q. When the original Shankaracharya 25 centuries ago founded these 4 seats of learning North, South, East, and West, in India, what were they and what are they now; are they religious places, schools of philosophy or practical schools of Yoga?

S. The Truth was given long before by inspiration to Narayana (an incarnation of Vishnu) and our tradition was made to be *a beacon light* from which many other religions, philosophies and schools have branched off; and these, by whoever holds this office, have to be put right when in any of them the balance is upset. It is neither religion, nor philosophy, nor Yoga, but a beacon light for all spiritual aspirants.

(Record, 1 June 1961)

**Comment.** He later called it 'The Fourth Way', the same expression Mr. Ouspensky used when he started our school at Colet.

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(cont.)

You will note that there was an Introduction to Reading 2 and Part 1 but no Part 2, so this could be Part 2. It reads as follows:

People are very different both in nature and in educational background and our Society should try to take this into account and have something for everybody. For all alike there is the universal need for Self-discovery, and (when you have found yourSelf) for Self-remembering. Most people leading busy lives haven't much time for knowledge and can't go by the Way of Devotion, so need practical methods based on the cultivation of Attention in daily life. Some want knowledge – if so, let it be True Knowledge; that Knowledge which never changes and about which the ancient system of the Shankaracharyas, inspired writings like the Gospels, and our 20th century Western system, agree. By comparison, a few individuals with strong and pure emotion can go by the direct route of Bhakti or Devotion; they don't need much knowledge or rules or regulations or codes of behaviour. For them the practice of Meditation and remembering 'the self that lives in the hearts of all (Param-Atman)' is enough. Some of us want something of all these three; as one such person of long experience wrote to me on October 17th:

About conscience. I find that when one's inner Self has something to say, the Mantra starts going on its own. One doesn't have to think or formulate or *try* to remember - it is there without any words. Isn't that the chief point about the meditation as a method, compared with what we used to do before? For me it is a marvellous solace and help for which I am eternally grateful.

The beauty of our 'Fourth Way School' created by Mr. Ouspensky here at Colet House is that all these different people can meet in one room, enjoy each other's company, and understand each other. That is what lies behind the words in the Introduction to Reading 2: 'Don't forget that these papers go all round the world, so their contents must be pretty general; and it is understood that any given group should pick what they need and leave the rest.'

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