

6 November 1978

### READING 3

#### THE ACTIVITIES OF MAN as seen in terms of his Three-fold Structure

This paper must be made to last for at least two weeks; so the plan is to devote Part 1 to P.D. Ouspensky's line of study which introduced us to this subject, and Part 2 to the Shankaracharya's approach, with the object of *uniting* the two in a single practical way of living.

But first let us see what is new since Mr. Ouspensky's day in the conception brought by the tradition of the Meditation, and to do that we should replace the diagram of Reading 2 by this one (overleaf) which gives the fewest possible labels:

1. The three circles are the physical, subtle and Causal levels, from within (the Atman) outwards to the universal (Param-Atman).
2. The movement round the smaller circles can be in two opposite directions – when seen *from below* in our usual space and time concepts, the direction is naturally clockwise, and that is the way P.D.O.'s approach had to be. When seen *from above* as the fully Realized man sees it, the direction is counter-clockwise. The numbering of the rooms must change accordingly.

#### INTRODUCTION

Perhaps we should start with, probably, the oldest of all such accounts. When asked about the simile of the *chariot* used in several of the Upanishads, His Holiness said:

S. This image is described and discussed in many places. The chariot is the physical body; on the subtle level the horses are the desires driven by the senses, and Buddhi is the Charioteer; while on the Causal level, the Atman is the owner. The Charioteer controls the chariot with the brake, and the horses with reins, bit and whip. In one place (Katha Upanishad) it is said:

The man whose chariot is controlled by discrimination (Buddhi) holding firm the reins of his mind (Manas), reaches the end of the journey – the supreme ever present Spirit (Atman).

There is also a Cosmic chariot where the elements or different combinations of the Gunas are the horses, the universal Buddhi the driver, and the Param-Atman the owner.

S. For us the chariot is the three bodies (physical, subtle and Causal) in our nature, for the Param-Atman it is the whole universe. The Atman is not the chariot, but he can take any chariot when it is needed. It is not the chariot that matters, but the use to which it is put.

(Record, 23 October 1965)

A beautiful pre-Christian image is given in the figure of the Charioteer that dominates the museum at Delphi; for he seems to show all the hallmarks of Attention in action.

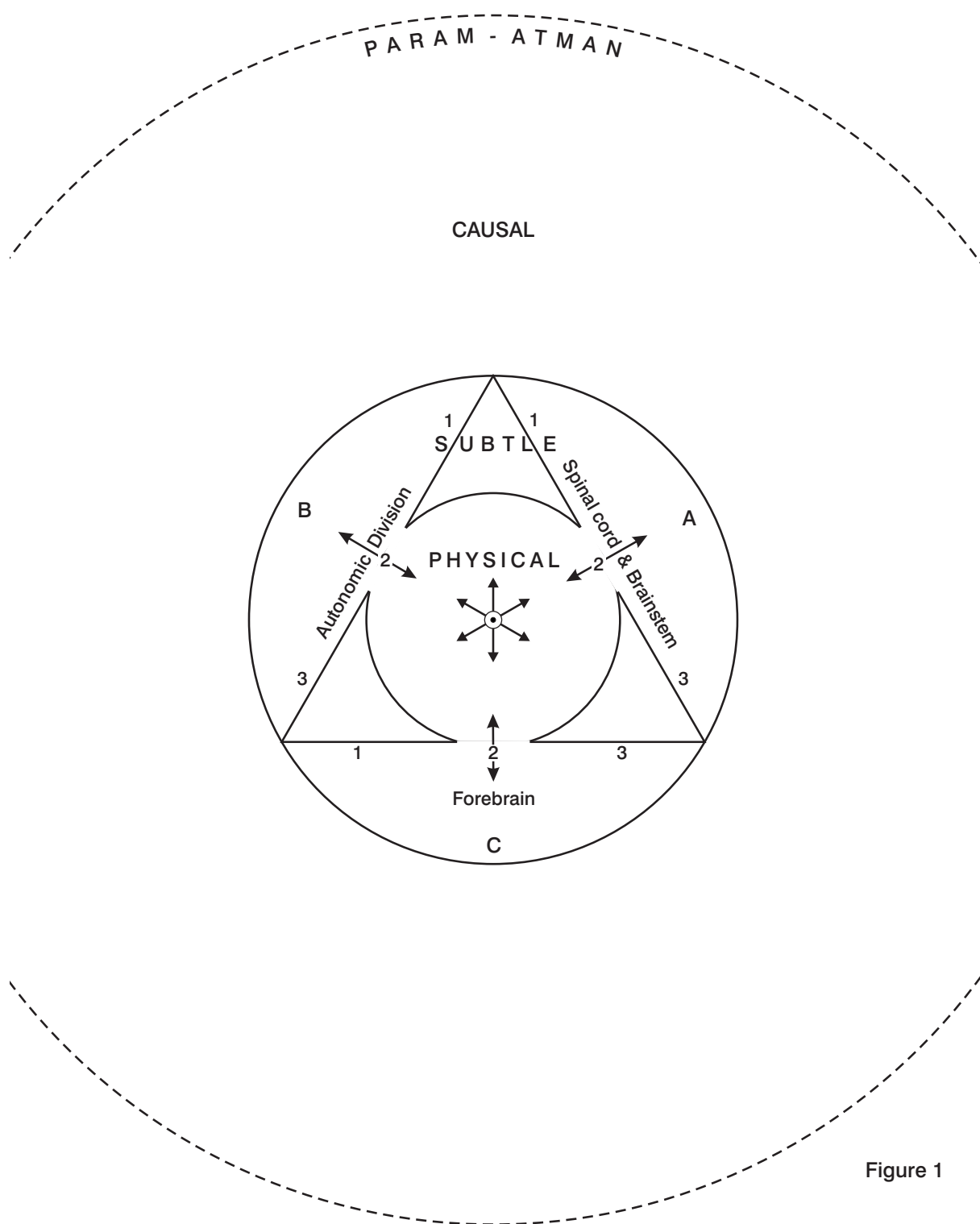


Figure 1

**PART 1. THE SIX ACTIVITIES OF MAN**

Some people in the New Groups were rather mystified last week as to why the principle of levers was introduced in their reading. This was meant only to illustrate how important is the relative *place* in any triad of the Three Forces – on the physical level, the power, the load and the fulcrum – when you want to pick the right instrument for the job. You may want to crack a nut, and your hand reaches instinctively for a pair of nutcrackers (not tongs or scissors) without knowing exactly why. Ultimately the choice depends on the position of the Three Forces in the construction of the tool.

For P.D.O. the principle held good even more in the *subtle* (psychological) *body*; the power is the force of *desire* arising in the autonomic division, and the balancing-point or fulcrum is the *forebrain* which, if still, can take in the whole situation and decide 'yes' or 'no' on the basis of reason or calculation. In order to understand him, our diagram is seen as three storeys (A B & C) each divided into 3 rooms.

At the end of Reading 1, part of a meeting he held in New York City in March 1945 about the 'Realization of Truth' was quoted. One of our leaders in Mexico (T.J-S) wrote recently about this:

The papers on 'Conscience' interest the group and myself immensely. What really moved us and made a deep impression was the quality of the meeting held by P.D.O. in New York City. The clipped replies, the sure-fire question and answer, the succinct condensation of it all somehow penetrated our sleep and gave us all a tremendous lift. Words – special words used in a special way – certainly have a power packed in them that has lasted over all these intervening years.

Thus encouraged, we give in this paper part of the rest of that talk which describes the 'difference between these activities of man which look alike but are essentially different'. It was the last pronouncement we have that he made in public on this subject.

Q. Does Conscience see the difference between activities?

O. Not *see*; it can help. First we must learn with our mind – and then little by little we begin to *see*... We can understand difference of matter – paper and wood for example – but we don't understand difference of action. Learn this first: There are six triads shown in six activities possible for man – seventh only possible for Absolute when all occupy each point of the triangle. In lower worlds only six are possible – six combinations of the Three Forces. *First category* – trying to remember yourSelf, school work under guidance, also best form of art, poetry, music. *Second* contains highest intellectual or scientific discoveries. *Third* contains inventions, also best professional work – tailor, doctor. *Fourth*, labourer, physical work, sawing wood – much effort, planning, materials, as in building a house. *Fifth* unskilled physical activity, ending in destruction, burning that house – just one match. *Sixth* is crime.

Q. Is crime a negative emotion which we act out...?

O. We cannot put it simply that crime is negative emotion; but behind crime is always ill-will against someone.

Q. Isn't crime against law itself?

O. Well, my experience is not so big.

Q. It's not just sporadic action?

O. It may be prepared action, may be very clever, many possibilities.

Q. If the first activity contains the highest forms of art, where do we place lower forms?

O. Just nonsense; we don't count them.

Q. Yet some people spend their lives at it. How do you describe the other activity – writers, painters, musicians?

O. Just physical work or professional work, I don't know.

Q. You said that writing a poem might be just physical work. I don't understand that.

O. Quite so. There are libraries full of such poems.

Q. Do you discourage activities that don't reach the highest plane?

O. I neither encourage nor discourage. Some I recognise as art, some I call nonsense. In ordinary thinking we don't even begin to understand the difference between activities. Some day when it dawns on you, you will see it as a revelation.

Q. Are these activities related to different states of consciousness?

O. No, we speak of ordinary man, ordinary states of consciousness, (deep sleep, dreaming, day-time activity). Many good poets, many good painters but that doesn't make them Conscious people. Right activity is what you want; if you want one thing and get another that is wrong activity (like wrong food).

Q. Are all six activities necessary for the existence of man.

O. One can be missed.

Q. Which one?

O. Crime.

Q. Could *mankind*, not just *one* man live without crime?

O. They say so. I am not a specialist on that.

Q. Does an awakened Conscience mean...

O. Awakened Conscience means awakened Consciousness, nothing more. Trying to be sincere and honest. Nothing more to say.

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#### ENVOI

He had often said that if one reads the Gospels with an awakened Conscience one sees 'difference between activities described on every page'. So as I came away from that meeting the following (from Matthew 7) floated into my mind:

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.
14. Because strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
15. Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
16. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?...
21. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.
24. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken them unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell *not*; for it was founded upon a rock...

And it seems to me now that ‘Meditation’ by itself is like saying ‘Lord, Lord’ and is of little avail; what is needed is to try ‘to say what you feel and do what you say’ the rest of the time. But without Meditation and the simple teaching that stems from it, we would never have got anywhere at all.

## PART 2

During our first three years with the Shankaracharya we tried our Western System on him and it was astonishing that in all the fundamentals the two systems were so similar. But with the added precision of O’s teaching of the System, we have able to understand much more of the Shankaracharya’s language than we would otherwise have done. But not knowing this system, our interpreters were quite unable to get at its real meaning which we are only now beginning to appreciate. For instance here is a passage about what he calls the three rooms and we are calling storeys. Modern science tells us that what he calls the 3 Gunas refers to three groups of powerful chemicals that take origin in the autonomic division (B). As seen from above he calls B room 1, C room 2 and A room 3. Referring to the diagram here is his account:

S. The human being has been provided with three rooms – three compartments. A Sattvic person uses all three rooms but lives in room B of which B2 is the room of Sattva which is clean and transparent, where light prevails, where peace dwells. For his daily activity he uses the room of Rajas (B3) where he has complete consciousness of the Sattvic light, even when this state becomes activated by Rajas. He retires into Tamas (B1) to regain his strength.

(adapted from Record, 23 October 1965))

**COMMENT:** Where only the primitive part of the autonomic remains functional: breathing, heart and circulation, digestion and so on.

There he goes to sleep; there is no light but the moment he gets up he perceives all his three rooms and goes to them according to his need.

Rajasic man does not know the first room (B); he has a little consciousness, and with the help of that he works in the world and leads his life (C).

The third kind of man – who is completely Tamasic – lives only in A and believes that the body itself is the ultimate for him. So he only looks after the physical body and knows nothing more; so he never bothers. To him those two storeys (B & C) do not exist, and because those two are not properly used and never cleaned, they become obsolete and non-existent for him. He really is scarcely conscious of them at all.

(*ibid*)

For us, we should use all three storeys.

What then have we to do from day to day in order to achieve Self-fulfilment? This was explained in the same conversation in his description of the three sides of the triangle – the partitions between the three compartments. We had been given already an analogy of the three bodies to a house in which the partitions could be built of three kinds of material e.g. glass, or hardboard and plaster, or of concrete.

S. He says that in fact all bodies are built of glass; but what happens is that the Rajasic body accumulates fog and dust so that you can just peep through here and there and see something going on around you and in you. But a Tamasic body will be that in which

the glass is thickly covered with mud and has become completely opaque; so you cannot see anything of what is going on outside or inside, and no light can penetrate into that body. If the glass were to be cleaned then there is light both inside and outside. This would only happen through being Conscious.

(Record, 23 October 1965)

Each of us has only to find by self-observation what dirt has accumulated on those partitions and gradually clean it away.

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