

3 March 1980

**READING 5**  
(for two weeks)  
**UNDERSTANDING IDEAS**

**PART 1**

At a recent audience (given to M.E.P.) the Shankaracharya pointed out that there are three stages in the understanding or realization of an important idea. The *first* is to *know* something about it, hear it or read about it and discuss it at a group; the *second* is to *reflect* on it, hold it in mind for a week or longer, and come back to it again and again. Then will surely follow the *third* and very rewarding stage of passive *contemplation* when the idea will present itself spontaneously and in silence to one's consciousness bathed in the light of a realization which will illumine neighbouring ideas as well. I'm guilty of causing you to miss much by introducing too many ideas, just as we carry too many desires all at once. It is clear to several of us that Stage 1 is limited to the dominant left hemisphere; Stage 2 is for the awakening of the interest of the inward-looking right hemisphere and Stage 3 comes from the union of them both, with both kinds of memory, short-term, and the long-term memory of the Atman.

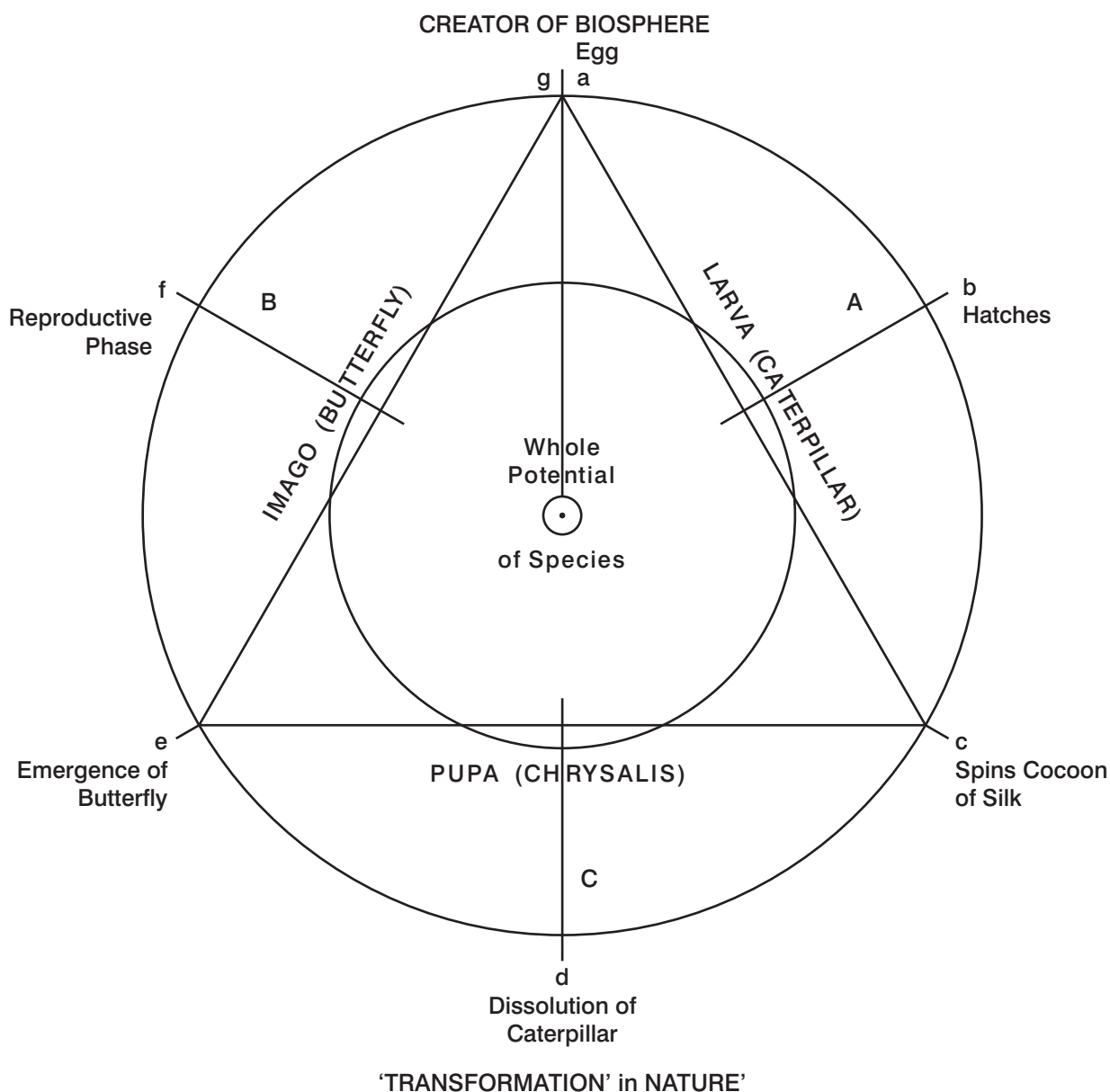
As an exercise in acquiring that art let each of us hold in mind the idea and perhaps the Symbol (see Figure, overleaf) of the transformation of man from caterpillar to butterfly, in relation to the theme of our Reading 4, which was also the theme of Chapter 3 ('Superman') of *A New Model* and much later of the charter of the Society which Mr. Ouspensky founded here at Colet. The object of this Society he named then as the 'Study of the Psychological Transformation of Man' or 'Psycho-transformism'.

For two weeks now let us each study and reflect on this idea in his own way (some may want to read from Mr. Ouspensky) until the 'contemplation' stage is reached. But let us not *talk* about it any more at our meetings during that time.

**PART 2**

What we need to do now at meetings is to make sure we understand the *new* point of view we are getting from the Shankaracharya, for the chief idea of his Advaita (non-dualistic) tradition is also that of Superman or, as he calls him, 'Fully Realized man'. Though this can be seen on almost every page of our recorded conversations with him, I find the most readable account in an audience given to Mr. Whiting of the School of Meditation (see Record, 1974, pp. 4-9) from which we read the following section at our large meeting (80/9) on Monday, 25th February.

You will see how far removed is his description (from which I have never known him depart in his own conduct over all those years) from today's fantastic guesses by ordinary 'science fiction' (everything from Tarzan to Flash Gordon!) and from our own sociological and educational views of the 1980's. Indeed there's a joke circulating at young Ben Ciappara's school about the Irishman who changed from a *tadpole* into a butterfly!



W.W. Is it possible to hear more about actually providing the stillness or rest? We seem to know the words, but it remains to be realized.

S. *Rest at the physical level* provides enough energy to employ in eight or nine hours of activity for any individual. This is how the human race keeps going without much trouble. At least people with common sense appreciate this and provide themselves with physical rest, and keep in good health and normal activity.

*Stillness at the subtle level*, by cessation of conflicting desires, brings another dimension to the idea of stillness. In this dimension efficiency [attention] arises, and this works through all activities – ordinary physical work or artistic work. Thus stillness at this level between fulfillment of one desire and initiation of another, will be rewarded with efficiency – (‘and labour saving’.)

The *third or causal level of stillness*, which is profound stillness or spiritual immobility, is in the realm of the Absolute. Since the causal realm cannot be described, one learns about it from its effects. One can see it in the activities and dispositions of such men who provide themselves with Spiritual stillness. There are three prominent features:

Firstly, they show love and affection toward everything they encounter. All activities will be initiated with love, and then held and nourished with love till they come to their fulfilment. All relationships with individuals or activities, direct or indirect, will be lighted and guided only by love and affection.

Secondly, their ideas, intentions or motives will be pure and simple. Purity and simplicity widen the horizon, and they think and work for the whole of humanity and only through the Laws of the Absolute. The divisions of groups, races or nations disappear and only natural Laws are employed. Their thoughts naturally encompass the whole of the human family, and its intrinsic goodness.

Thirdly, the physical movements of such people are only geared to the natural rhythm, and the result is simplicity and economy of movement. They never rush into any situation; are never agitated; and perform all actions in an efficient, sublime, and refined way. Whatever they do will emerge from stillness, be held in stillness, and again submerge in the same stillness which they experience in this great total immobility.

This would establish an ideal or a standard for the common man to aspire to, if he somehow awakes to the need to improve his lot.

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An additional thought to take with us from the *Apocryphal Sayings of Jesus*.

Jesus said:

Let him who seeks, not cease in his seeking until he finds;  
and when he finds he will be troubled  
and, from being troubled, he will marvel,  
and, will be a king over the All.

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