

27 April 1981

A PREVIEW – FOR GROUP TAKERS ONLY

INTRODUCTION

Since our last Monday meeting a long-expected event has come about which must surely clarify for us the purpose for which this ‘Study Society’ was created – most of which still lies ahead. It may be regarded as the start of Act 3 of a small drama (within the larger drama of Western civilisation). Of this small drama, Act 1 was the return of a system of knowledge in Western form to Europe via Russia in 1914, to be developed and carefully given out by our first instructor Peter Demianovich Ouspensky (hereafter referred to as ‘P.D.O.’). At least three years before his death in 1947, he had altogether finished with Act 1. What remained was only what he had proved for himself, and before his death he stressed that we must do the same. ‘Don’t use my language; don’t hang on my soul. If you succeed, it will benefit me; somehow it is arranged like that.’ So we were left to our own devices for thirteen years awaiting Act 2 which began with our introduction to the Advaita (non-dualistic) system of Meditation and our first-hand instruction over twenty years by the Shankaracharya in the wealth of that 25 centuries-old tradition which P.D.O. had so accurately foretold. Both of them also foretold that we should be prepared to play a significant role in Act 3 which must lead to a complete revolution in European scientific thought and creative art. Every scene in this drama must be set *beforehand* by a Consciousness higher than ours.

PART 1

Though we are still rehearsing Act 2, we were given a foretaste of Act 3, in the lecture we heard at our AGM by a top scientist (himself at the forefront of the urgent research on the conservation of human food supplies by the most up-to-date methods, including airborne radar). Since we were given this talk in private (for the lecturer’s own career as well as our own future will depend on the assurance we gave him) we must still await his corrected script of the lecture allowing only what he authorises to reach the outside world, we can at the moment say only this:

His talk consisted of the evidence (illustrated by slides) for the astounding conclusion reached so far by a few leading mathematicians, physicists and biologists that *chance could have played no part in the creation and maintenance of the physical universe, and that a supreme intelligence must have presided at every stage* – an intelligence that knew the end from the beginning. The handful of scientists who are also mathematically equipped have calculated that if the early development of this observable universe had been allowed to vary by one million millionth part (a factor of 12 noughts!) through the intervention of chance no such universe could possibly have come about. And since the ‘plasticity’ of the human mind is such that it *becomes* whatever it is allowed to entertain for long enough, the present wave of chaos and violence everywhere evident in the activities of mankind may be seen to be stemming from the prevailing concept of the birth of the physical universe itself in the chaos and violence of a vast explosion (the ‘Big Bang’). Hence the title of the lecture – ‘The Universe and the Mind of Man – which the Reflector?’

The event referred to is the very recent awakening (by a few of those qualified to get the evidence across) to the absurdity and impossibility of our present point of view – an awakening which has changed their whole lives. The lecturer warned us that, since there are some 30,000 scientists still working within that out-dated framework, ‘who are too busy doing their science’ to notice this absurdity, any premature statements in the world at large would only make the task ahead more difficult – hence the need for caution. He welcomes our Society as a forum for the private discussion among intelligent and unprejudiced people of such vast and controversial ideas. It might take ten or twenty traumatic years to be generally accepted and ‘he could not be certain that the free world would come through it, but he believed that the greatness of the presiding intelligence would protect us, as always, from the consequence of our own folly’. No respectable scientist has said such things for a hundred years, since the apostles of evolution and atomic theory dismissed law and order from the universe!

PART 2

Though we remain stunned by all this and unable to look into the future, we can take comfort in the fact that it gives us a way of thinking about the meaning of ‘Param-Atman’ as a projection of the individual Self or ‘Atman’ on the universal scale – for so far it has been only a meaningless word for most of us. It must begin with a far better acquaintance by each of us with our own Atman so that it comes to govern our practical life and our relations with each other. It was put in the simplest way, by the Shankaracharya, to a party of our New Zealand friends who visited him in 1978.

S. When the individual (the Jiva) forgets that he *is* the Atman and considers himself to be only a body and a mind, then he is the Jiva. When he remembers that he is Atman, then he is Atman.

Q. So it’s the Jiva who believes that he is the one who is born and dies?

S. Yes, that’s correct. The Jiva experiences birth and death, but the Atman is never born nor dies.

As an illustration he says that if a person is ill, he needs some medicine. Now Jiva is the person who needs medicine, but he must acknowledge his need and agree to take the medicine. One who is healthy needs no medicine, and that’s Atman for he is already free so requires no discipline. He is already in tune with Param-Atman.

PART 3

Those who were brought up with our former System would now do well to go over what they remember of the ‘*Three lines of Work*’. It was said, they will recall, that ‘a School of the Fourth Way is an organisation for the transmission to prepared people of Knowledge emanating from Higher Mind’. Such a School requires work along three lines – work on oneself, work with and for other people in a group, and work for the School as a whole in its relations with the people of the world around.

What does that mean to us now when we must concentrate on the first two in order to be ready for the third?

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