

6 July 1981

## READING 6

We are told that in this game of hide-and-seek with the Atman as the object of the search, it is Nature who is tricking us into seeing an illusory world. The chief illusion concerns the sense of movement or the 'passage of time'. It is because our mind is moving with the changes registered by our organs of sensation, that we see time as moving.

In *Tertium Organum* P.D.O. points dramatically at the absurdity of our view:

But have we the right to *think* in this way?

Imagine a consciousness not limited by the conditions of sense perception. Such a consciousness can rise above the plane on which we move; it can see far beyond the bounds of the circle illumined by our ordinary consciousness; it can see that not only does the line along which we move *exist*, but also all other lines perpendicular to it which we now cross, or have ever crossed before, or shall cross later. Rising above the plane this consciousness will be able to *see* the plane, make sure that it actually is a plane and not only a line. Then it will be able to see the *past* and the *future* lying side by side and existing simultaneously.

Consciousness not limited by the conditions of sense-perception may out-distance the foolish traveller, climb a hill, and see from afar the town towards which he is going. It can convince itself that this town is not being newly built for his arrival but already exists by itself, quite independently of him. It will be able to look back and see on the horizon the towers of the town which the traveller left, and convince itself that the towers have not fallen down, that the town continues to stand and live as it stood and lived before the coming of the traveller.

Such a consciousness may rise above the plane of time and see the spring behind and the autumn in front, see simultaneously the unfolding flowers and the ripening fruit. It may cure the *blind man* of his blindness and make him *see* the road he has covered and the road that lies before him.

The past and the future cannot be *non-existent*, for, if they do not exist, the present does not exist either. They must exist together *somewhere*, only we do not see them.

The present, as opposed to the past and the future, is the most unreal of all unrealities.

We must admit that the past, the present and the future do not differ from one another in any way, that the *only* thing that exists is *the present* – the *Eternal Now* of Indian philosophy. But we do not see it, because at every given moment we are only aware of a small fragment of this present; this fragment we regard as actually existing, and deny real existence to everything else.

Once we accept this, our view concerning everything that surrounds us must undergo a great change.

(*Tertium Organum*, revised Edition, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981; pp28–29)

We should by now have accomplished this by following the Shankaracharya's advice and established for ourselves *why* the moving world is illusion and why only the motionless Observer is permanent and real. At different times he has given us three similes† (which were put together on p.68 of *A Lasting Freedom*) and many stories. Let us please make a new and determined effort to convince ourselves; for when we do (whether by effort or the compulsion of circumstances)

about ninety per cent of the problems on which our mind is always turning, disappear. Here is one of the stories:

A married couple were always disputing what career their son should adopt. She came of a medical family, so she wanted him to be a doctor; the husband wanted him to be a lawyer like himself. They argued the toss from morning till night at the tops of their voices until, one day, hearing the noise, a 'meditation expert' happened to call in, and asked what all the row was about. When they explained their problem to him he said, 'Well, fetch the boy. Let's ask him.' They looked at each other and went very pink and said, 'I'm afraid he isn't born yet.'

#### †Note

1. You are sitting in a stationary train at a station; on the next track another train starts moving; at first you are uncertain which train is actually moving. If you don't pay attention to the moving train you realise that you, yourself, are motionless; but the moment your attention is drawn to the moving train you also get the illusion of movement.
2. If you take a stick, light one end and rotate it vigorously you will see multifarious patterns of light, but not the stick moving and you don't see the source of those patterns.
3. Stand by a river, gaze at the flowing water, and you may experience the illusion that you are moving and the water is still but if you look away from the river, you will realise the truth – namely that you are still and only the water is in movement.

This is the principle underlying meditation, which can train the creative Mind to keep still and exercise its right function of discriminating between truth and illusion.

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