

WORLDS WITHOUT END

During our trip there were many long hours of waiting, mostly spent in the beautiful garden of the hotel in Allahabad, which formed an ideal setting for reading *Tertium Organum* and discovering yet again the magic of its insights and power of reasoning.

The following extracts show how closely Dr Roles followed Mr Ouspensky's lead in considering India as the source of our teaching and they illustrate how, in trying to probe the mysteries encasing our existence, that it is the way we perceive time and space, (those two lynch pins of our ordinary life), which forms the main illusion, and thus the main hurdle, in experiencing the unity of creation.

But before reading these extracts as examples of this thesis it would be well to remind ourselves that Dr Roles constantly told us that humanity's main predicament lay in its lack of recognition that it exists simultaneously in three completely separate, though interpenetrating, worlds— in fact, the parrot's cage, in the paper we have been studying.

Firstly, the physical world which we sense as individuals, through our sexual, moving and instinctive centres.

Secondly, the subtle world, the inner world we sense with our individual and personal psychology as it animates our behaviour through head, heart and hand.

Thirdly the causal world, the home of that infinite universal force without which nothing could exist. As our Western system tells us (and the Eastern confirms) we remain blind to this world which, of course, is fundamental to each of our individual lives as the source of our individual being.

This basic triad, this 'holy trinity', forms the creative note in the Ray of Creation, as the Absolute sounds the octave in which we find ourselves and live our lives. Chapter XXII of *Tertium Organum* starts by describing it in terms of Indian philosophy and contains the following:

Real Indian philosophy, even in that embryonic form in which we find it in the *Upanishads*, stands completely by itself. And if we ask what was the highest purpose of the teachings of the *Upanishads* we can state it in three words, as it has been stated by the greatest Vedanta teachers themselves, namely *Tat twam asi*. This means *Thou art That*. 'That', stands for that which is known to us under different names in different systems of ancient and modern philosophy. It is *Zeus* or the *Eis Theos* or *To On* in Greece; it is what Plato meant by the *Eternal Idea*, what Agnostics call the *Unknowable*, what I call the *Infinite in Nature*. This is what in India is called *Brahman*, the being behind all beings, the power that emits the universe, sustains it and draws it back again to itself. The *Thou* is what I called the *Infinite in man*, the Soul, the Self, the being behind every human Ego, free from all bodily fetters, free from passions, free from all attachments (*Atman*). The expression: *Thou art That*, means: *thy soul is the Brahman*; or in other

words, the subject and the object of all being and of all knowing are one and the same.

This is the gist of what I call Psychological Religion or Theosophy, the highest summit of thought which the human mind has reached, which has found different expressions in different religions and philosophies, but nowhere such a clear and powerful realization as in the ancient Upanishads of India.

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In India it was so expressed that *Brahman* and *Atman* (the spirit) were in their nature one.

The early Christians also, at least those who had been brought up in the schools of Neo-platonist philosophy, had a clear perception that if the soul is infinite and immortal in its nature, it cannot be anything beside God, but that it must be of God, and in God. St. Paul gave but his own bold expression to the same faith or knowledge, when he uttered the words which have startled so many theologians: *In Him we live and move and have our being*. If anyone else had uttered these words they would at once have been condemned as pantheism. No doubt they are pantheism, and yet they express the very keynote of Christianity. The divine sonship of man is only a metaphorical expression but it was meant originally to embody the same idea. . . . And when the question was asked how the consciousness of this divine sonship could ever have been lost, the answer given by Christianity was, by sin; the answer given by the *Upanishads* was, by *avidya*, nescience. This marks the similarity, and at the same time the characteristic difference between these two religions. The question how nescience laid hold on the human soul, and made it imagine that it could live or move or have its true being anywhere but in *Brahman*, remains as unanswerable in Hindu philosophy as, in Christianity, the question how sin first came into the world.

Both philosophies, that of the East and that of the West [says Muller] start from a common point, namely from the conviction that our ordinary knowledge is uncertain, if not altogether wrong. This revolt of the human mind against itself is the first step in all philosophy.

In our own philosophical language we may put the question thus: how did the real become phenomenal, and how can the phenomenal become real again? Or, in other words, how was the infinite changed into the finite, how was the eternal changed into the temporal, and how can the temporal regain its eternal nature? Or, to put it into more familiar language, how was this world created, and how can it be uncreated again?

Nescience or *avidya* is regarded as the cause of the phenomenal semblance. In the *Upanishads* the meaning of *Brahman* changes. Sometimes it is almost an objective God, existing separately from the world. But then we see *Brahman* as the essence of all things . . . and the soul, knowing that it is no longer separated from that essence, learns the highest lesson of the whole *Vedanta* doctrine: *Tat twam asi*; "*Thou art That*", that is to say, "*Thou who*

for a time didst seem to be something by thyself, art that, art really nothing apart from the divine essence." To know *Brahman* is to be *Brahman*. . . .

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Whatever we may think of this philosophy, we cannot deny its metaphysical boldness and its logical consistency. If *Brahman* is all in all, the One without a second, nothing can be said to exist that is not *Brahman*. There is no room for anything outside the infinite and the Universal, nor is there room for two infinities, for the infinite in nature and the infinite in man. There is and there can be one infinite, one *Brahman* only. This is the beginning and the end of the *Vedanta*.

As the shortest summary of the ideas of the *Vedanta* two verses of *Sankara*, the commentator and interpreter of *Vedanta* are often quoted:

Brahma is true, the world is false. The soul is Brahma and is nothing else.

This is really a very perfect summary. What truly and really exists is *Brahman*, the One Absolute Being; the world is false, or rather is not what it seems to be, that is, everything which is present to us by means of sense is phenomenal and relative, and can be nothing else. The soul again, or rather every man's soul, though it may seem to be this or that, is in reality nothing but *Brahma*.

In relation to the question of the origin of the world, two famous commentators of the *Vedanta*, *Sankara* and *Ramanuga* differ. *Ramanuga* holds to the theory of evolution, *Sankara* to the theory of illusion.

It is very important to observe that the Vedantist does not go so far as certain Buddhist philosophers who look upon the phenomenal world as simply nothing. No, their world is real, only it is not what it seems to be. *Sankara* claims for the phenomenal world a reality sufficient for all practical purposes, sufficient to determine our practical life, our moral obligations.

There is a veil. But the *Vedanta* philosophy teaches us that the eternal light behind it can always be perceived more or less clearly through philosophical knowledge. It can be perceived, because in reality it is always there.

It may seem strange to find the results of the philosophy of Kant and his followers thus anticipated under varying expressions in the *Upanishads* and in the *Vedanta* philosophy of ancient India.

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In conclusion let's turn to the paper which all groups are studying this term, where, HH having said, "Sometimes it has been observed that a person has the idea of the peaceful Atman as being in a closed part of one's being. In fact the picture is just the reverse..." goes on to describe the whole structure of the universe as lying within the Atman. He then says:

The same pattern is in the individual. The Atman is extensive because it encompasses the whole organism. Within this Atman is Chitta (*Avyakta*) and then Prakriti (one's manifested nature) of *Ahamkar* and *Buddhi* and *Manas*, and the the space, air, fire, water and earth (the matter which is the

Prithivi). When one gets the experience of this peaceful abode, it is in fact the reflection of that extensiveness which is pervading all over the Universe that is reflected within, so one experiences all that. This is the correct picture.

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