

Seeing the third element

Start with Meditation

*This paper for two weeks.*

Last week we discussed how we mainly see everything in opposites. Because of this we get a limited view of the Universe, because Mr Ouspensky tells us: 'The world does not consist of pairs of opposites. It is made up of unities'.

The meeting paper suggested that a useful way of remembering the Param Atman is to try to see the third element or force at work in everything in creation. This way we may come to understand our role in Creation, the purpose of School and more clearly, the Creator's Will.

In the Western tradition we were taught that for progress we had to work on Knowledge and on Being in order to reach Understanding.

So how do we go about this? We have been constantly advised to study the Higher Knowledge given to us by our mentors, and then contribute to it with our own studies and talents from observations in our daily lives.

Then we have to work on our Being and, as one member of the group said last week, the key word is 'stillness'. This is the important factor in all methods whether it be the Meditation, the Turning or the Movements.

By working on Knowledge and Being we are fortunate, at times, to get the grace of Understanding. Provided we keep our thoughts free from the intrusion of ego and allow our Being to become purified and more transparent, then will the Grace of Consciousness increase and the 'Pull of the Way' will begin to operate with ever increasing strength.

Pause for observations

It is evident from the writings of Study Society members that we are already beginning to see this force more often. Here are three examples from contributions to *The Bridge* No 15, which had as its theme 'Natural Insights'.

The following comes from an original turner and ballet master (p131):

*What is the dance? It is a movement from stillness to stillness. The dance arises from stillness and is a movement that returns again to stillness. The eternal movement is revealed very clearly in ancient Egyptian sculpture. Here we see figures standing with one leg in front of the other. The balance of the body is carried neither on the front leg nor the back leg, neither in the future nor in the past, but in the moment between. In that eternal moment is neither before or after.....Hence the dance is a movement in time and space that is an arrested moment held in eternity. The dance is a drawing aside of the veil where ordinary time is no longer.*

In the 'thirties Mr Ouspensky told the young Dr Roles that a good doctor needs to cure a patient, not just physically, but in the head and heart as well, and it is interesting to note that many years later,

in 2006 an eminent psychiatrist had this to say in *The Bridge No 15* (p8)

*As little as ten years ago the concept of spiritual medicine didn't even exist. And yet courses in spiritual medicine are now available in over 75% of USA undergraduate medical schools. (The same evolving interest has taken place in the UK).*

*Why is all this happening? Because of the accumulation of evidence that spiritual medicine works. And also because the change is being driven by neuroscience. We are beginning to have a much better understanding of the brain mechanisms involved physical, mental and spiritual health, and once we have this, we have the basis for spiritual techniques.*

Mr Ouspensky also told Dr Roles that it was important for certain members of the Study Society to keep abreast of scientific development, and this article shows why. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Consciousness has now established itself as a legitimate subject for scientific research and several members of the Society are now contributing to this research which was at the heart of P D Ouspensky's writings and work.

The article written by the architect, lecturer and photographer on Chartres (p77) abounds with examples of the 'law of three' and the 'three in one'. Here are two passages but first he starts his article by saying:

*Among the works of humanity there are those which seem to have the power to awaken us to the meaning of life, granting us an insight into the subtle worlds that underlie everyday existence, opening us, perhaps to the whole purpose of life, to unite our everyday life with a spiritual reality only a hairsbreadth away, although seeming hidden.*

He continues further on:

*The church was a symbol of heaven, in fact a symbol that the ladder to Heaven begins right where we are, nowhere else. At Chartres this is communicated first by the fact that the building was conceived as an encyclopedia of Christian wisdom of which most survived, so that there are said to be ten thousand figures in stone and glass. They created a new art of sculpture, and they created a new art of stained glass as well as creating a new art of architecture.*

Elsewhere he says:

*Three and seven, the most potent of numbers recur all over Chartres. Apart from the three inherent in the layout and height of the building, the transept and the choir each have three bays, there are three portals, each with three doors and three storeys to each tower. Every three signifies the same truth, the underlying presence of the Divine Nature.*

The western tradition has many examples of the law of three, such as food, air and impressions; active, passive and neutral; body, intellect, emotions connected with three nervous systems and so on.

The eastern tradition also has many examples: sattva, rajas, tamas; sat, chit, ananda; physical, subtle and causal levels and so on.

In order to stop thinking of everything in opposites it would be helpful now to try to expand our consciousness to find more examples of the three forces. Could each of us bring a written example

of how we have seen the law of three operating in our own experience or professional life. It will be the basis of our meeting next week and could help to expand our consciousness.

An answer given by the Shankaracharya to this question inspires confidence (Record 1964 p87):

Q: *How to create this feeling of expansion – by thoughts or are there other ways?*

HH: *It is not only feeling or thought, it is fact. The macrocosm and the microcosm are both created of the same elements, what is in the Universe is in us too. Let the mind go, release tension and try to think within. This is fundamental. Unless you do expand you remain limited. One should remember that one is far bigger than one thinks. If one does remember that one embraces everything, one can draw strength and power from everything.*

(Any questions)

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Additional material for next week to go with contributions:

So far in this paper we have been mainly talking about Knowledge in relation to the three ingredients. Now let us look more closely at the law of three as it relates to Being. That is to meditation which works directly on Being.

Here the Shankaracharya advises:

*One should watch three things: Time, Place and the Body. Place should be clean, purified, secluded – quiet and devoid of interference. Time factor is also important. The day is divided into three periods of different influences.*

He then goes on to say that at night time the influence of Tamas prevails. And during the day Rajas reigns. But the four hours at the beginning and also at the end of the day, dawn and dusk regions of time, Sattva prevails. He continues:

*One should try to meditate during these periods, so as to avoid the Rajas and Tamas influence. The other factor is the body, one should prepare it before meditation. There are three places of importance – the hands, mouth and the eyes. We must clean these properly before sitting for meditation. With a clean body, pure and clean place, at the proper time, we should try to fill ourselves with serene feeling and visualise the whole of the Universe and dive deep into the Self for meditation.*