

PATHS PART 8

Integration¹

There is a System aphorism which goes:

A man can be born, but before he can be born he must die, and before he dies he must first awake.

We have proved to ourselves that we can awake, albeit fitfully. So we can now consider the next stage on the path and what it means? 'Die' is something to do with a change in the ordinary self, a change that we may have experienced transiently, but we need to be in a better state for it to happen more often or even permanently. So for the moment let us leave aside the question of what 'die' means and think about what we can conclude about reaching a better state from our recent studies.

We looked at knowledge (jnana) and devotion (bhakti) separately, and now we should try to put them together; both the Shankaracharya and Ouspensky stressed the need for balance between our centres - physical, emotional and intellectual. In an appendix to this paper there is a quotation from a letter written by Rosamund Bland, a student of Ouspensky's in the 1920's, in which she reports that 'The really important thing for development is to have all your centres equally strong and you have to work to get them like this'.

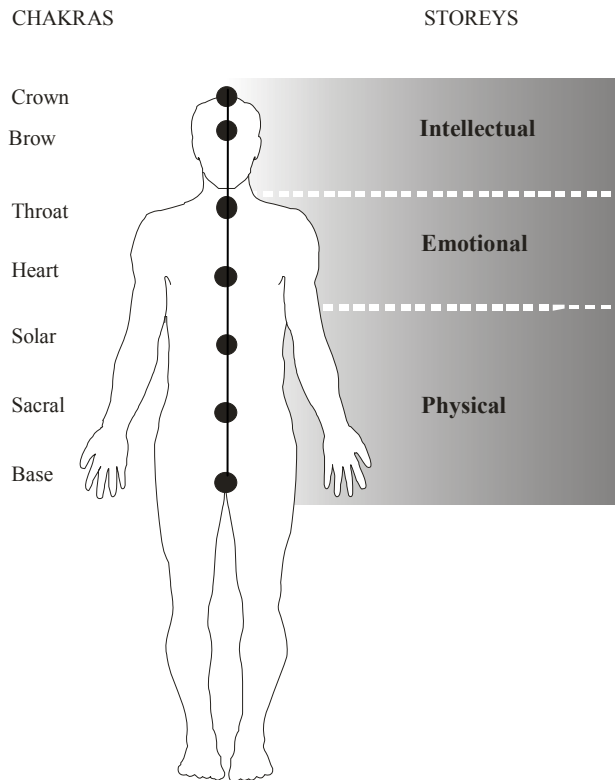
The Shankaracharya was asked about the need for devotion:

Q. What we find is that we have all this Knowledge, but it is the practice we are still short on. Many people have said that it is the devotional practice which needs developing. People in the West have very busy active minds, and many of the questions given to us have been how to make their devotional work more systematic, how to melt the heart, how to have more faith?

H.H. These two elements are present in each individual, but one is predominant - the other takes second place. If the intellect is predominant and the person is much more rational and his devotion is little, then you will find that the person is very active and there are too many preoccupations with which he keeps himself busy. But those who have more devotion, and simply resort to Knowledge to help themselves, then this creates a marvellous balance, and you find depth in their being.

The need for balance between the centres can be seen in the diagram used in an earlier paper of the three-storeyed house and the chakras.

¹ This is a long paper intended for reading over the Easter break.



The main idea is that the higher chakras have to be active for full awakening or realisation to occur. In us these chakras are normally lacking in energy, but can be filled by a flow of energy from below.

Why doesn't it work automatically? There are some quirks in our organism which prevent this. One way of looking at this is through the 'Food diagram' in the System, which describes the processing of the three main materials which enter our organism: food, air, and impressions (i.e. sense data). All of these three are processed in the body or the mind – the digestion and metabolism of food is the most easily understood – but at some point in each pathway it is said there is a blockage; it needs a product from another of the streams to overcome the blockage. For example, in the metabolism of food, oxygen from air is needed to make energy from sugar. Similarly, it is said, self-remembering is needed for both the air pathway and impressions pathway to proceed at all far; otherwise the energy will not be there to power the chakras. We have some experience of the relation between mind, self-remembering and breathing in the exercise we have been doing.

By withdrawing from the external world in meditation, or by doing an exercise, or by extending a gap, the flow of energy is enhanced. This is 'inward' work. But it is equally important to work as consciously as possible in the outside world to try to get the higher chakras working, and that is where 'balancing' comes in: knowledge is needed for the devotional path, devotion for the knowledge path.

There are some issues to do with devotion and knowledge which we should discuss:

- a) Ouspensky said that System ideas could not be understood just with the intellect (see Appendix).
- b) As we are, devotion and knowledge appear to be second-hand, and rely on external sources of energy. What would 'first-hand' mean?

- c) Intellectuals find devotion difficult (even the word (!) – but etymology is ‘dedication by a vow’).
- d) Devotional people should ‘resort to knowledge to help themselves’; but what kind of knowledge?
- e) As we get older there seems to be a natural tendency towards the devotional path.
- f) What we have found that consistently helps us to be more devotional or to thirst for knowledge?

[Discussion]

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Where does this lead eventually? To go back to the System aphorism ‘A man can be born, but before he can be born he must die’, what exactly does ‘die’ mean? We need to have more information about the structure of the mind to take this further, but here is an example: in the Introduction for newcomers at the beginning of this term there was the first part of a quotation from the Shankaracharya which spoke of ‘coming out of what we are not’. Here it is in full:

If you begin to be what you are you will realize everything, but to begin to be what you are you must come out of what you are not. You are not those thoughts which are turning, turning in your mind; you are not those changing feelings; you are not the different decisions you make and the different wills you have; you are not that separate ego: Well, then, what are you? You will find when you have come out of what you are not, that ripple on the water is whispering to you 'I am That', the birds in the mango tree are singing to you 'I am That', the moon and the stars are shining beacons to you 'I am That'; you are in everything in the world and everything in the world is in you, since for you it only exists because it is mirrored in you; and at the same time you are that – everything. [1961]

Exercise

Colet has issued an Easter programme and individuals may like to follow it. Alternatively or in addition, try taking a simple phrase that means a lot to you and repeat it whenever you remember yourself during the day. Take it to heart. For example:

I have nothing of my own.

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Appendix

This is a quotation from one of a series of letters written by Rosamund Bland, a student of Ouspensky’s in the 1920’s, written soon after he had come to England and started groups in the studio of Lady Rothermere. It’s a bit muddled, and thus rather close to our own way of thinking!

There have been two more meetings at the studio since I last wrote. I will try to tell you a little about them and what Ouspensky said this time. He talked chiefly about

there being different kinds of men in life and how they were divided according to this system. We all know that we have three general functions, thinking, feeling and moving, but we don't ordinarily think of these as being actually different *minds*. He drew a diagram, which I will show you when I see you, and put these three functions in and called them centres. Intellectual centre, emotional centre and moving centre, which also includes instinctive centre. Intellectual centre is concerned with all our thoughts, emotional with feelings, and moving and instinctive centre with all movements, external and internal...Roughly you can say that men are either with one or another centre predominant and the other two badly developed. People with moving centre predominant are those who practically never think or never feel but who like all activity of a physical sort. These are Men number 1. Man number 1 can be instinctive centre people too, then they like eating and drinking and are very lazy. People who chiefly feel everything are Men number 2, and people who only *think* and have theories about everything are called Men number 3. The really important thing for development is to have all your centres equally strong and you have to work to get them like this....Perhaps a person who did nothing but think would have to do physical work or something of that sort. I don't know how you could make yourself think, if you always felt things too much, but I dare say there are some kinds of exercises for this.

Ouspensky said that nobody had balanced centres ordinarily, and that a man who had balanced his centres would be different to ordinary man and could be called number 4. So I suppose this is what you must try to do if you want to make your essence grow and get control of the rest of you.

I have had an awful terror that Ouspensky would tell me that I had got to learn Russian, because I know that he has told some people to. Why should it be Russian anyway? Just because it is his own language, I suppose, and I don't see a bit why one should do it because of that. Anyway I am not going to do it, and when I went to see him at his flat near Barons Court last Wednesday I went quite determined to revolt if he suggested it. I was awfully nervous when. I first arrived and he immediately asked me how I felt about this thing, so I dished up all my doubts and uncertainties and inferiority feelings about having a weak intellect and so on,

...He was very reassuring in all respects - and he never mentioned the learning of Russian! Perhaps he thought it was hopeless after my saying all this...He was also very reassuring about my lack of intellect. I don't mean by telling me that I had got one, which most fools would have done, but by telling me that intellect was the weakest of the three centres and that it was impossible to grasp this teaching with intellect, that it was a question of getting a certain attitude towards the whole thing as well as grasping it in an intellectual way, and that a person who had a normally good intellect would think he had grasped it before he had, and this was useless and prevented him from moving further. I said, 'Well the intellectual people ask better questions, don't they?' He said, 'To you perhaps they look good, but to me they are not good questions for this thing'. [*Nine Letters*, Rosamund Bland]