

26 June 1961

READING 5

ALL GROUPS

Now seems to be the moment to remind ourselves of why, last Easter, we set out to re-examine the vast canvas of the Universe. This, in brief, was to prepare the mind for flashes of Cosmic Consciousness so that it would be able to bring something back; but meanwhile also to lift the mind out of its narrow prison, thereby reminding us to be cheerful from day to day about our aims and possibilities.

The following seems to be the simplest and truest re-statement of our way of development of these possibilities in the light of recent first-hand experience. I want you to listen attentively to this new interpretation of 'man as a house of three storeys' and put all old associations out of your minds.

PART 1

Each of us possesses a three storeyed house (Figure 1) but prefers to live chiefly *in the basement*, where thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and movements are just mechanical – the result of past habits and the drive of external events. That is the easy way – no choice, just take what comes hoping to muddle through somehow.

Sometimes, as when we fall in love, pass through a crisis, or discover something new and important, for us, we are roused above that and enter the *middle room* for a short spell; but here dragons await us – the dragons of imagination, identification and negative emotion. St. George has to slay the dragon; Perseus must kill the gorgon Medusa while looking into his own polished shield lest he be turned to stone. The awakening of conscience is of enormous help in that work.

Some lucky mortals are born with the natural capacity to live in the *top room* for short periods. This necessitates full command of the attention upon what we may be doing at the moment, each detail being related to a bigger whole. Here some of the higher human functions begin to manifest in the different forms of what we call *genius*. Leonardo lived here at times, Michael Angelo for longer, Goethe, Mozart, Pushkin, Shakespeare – about many we have first hand evidence, of which perhaps the most convincing is the great series of self-portraits by Rembrandt. Here he is depicted as an ordinary man with all human weaknesses, but a man who knew himself thoroughly enough to have a superb sense of values and complete command of his own medium of expression.

But even these lucky mortals are subject to grave dangers, for genius *is* akin to madness; they all testify that they cannot have their inspiration when they want it and have to wait for it to come, in agony and despair. And some have tried to get it back by drugs when the inspiration has departed.

For any but rare and specially gifted individuals, to expect to be able to have 100% attention in the full fervour of creative energy and inspiration would be like hoping to earn a living by picking up money in the street. So, ordinary people like us would have to continue living in the basement never fulfilling the fine promise of our youth, were it not that we have learnt the big secret of the existence of a hidden *Fourth Room*, which contains all that we could desire and

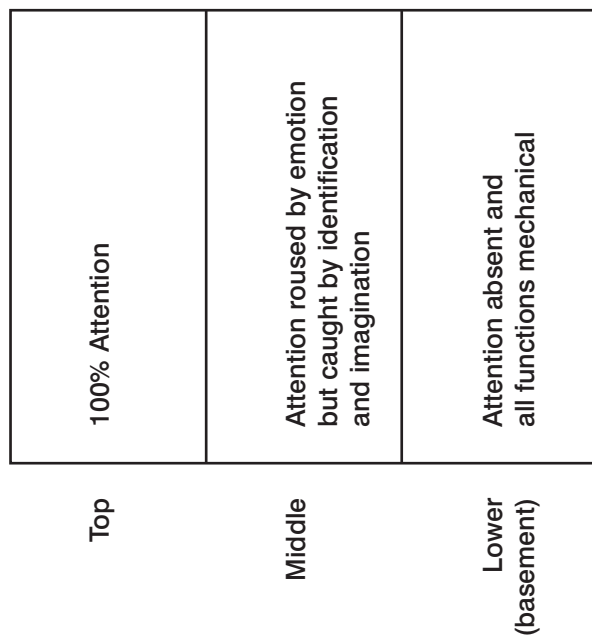


Figure 1

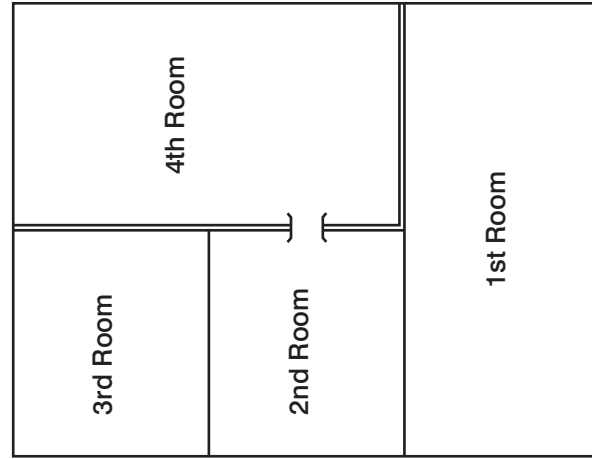


Figure 2

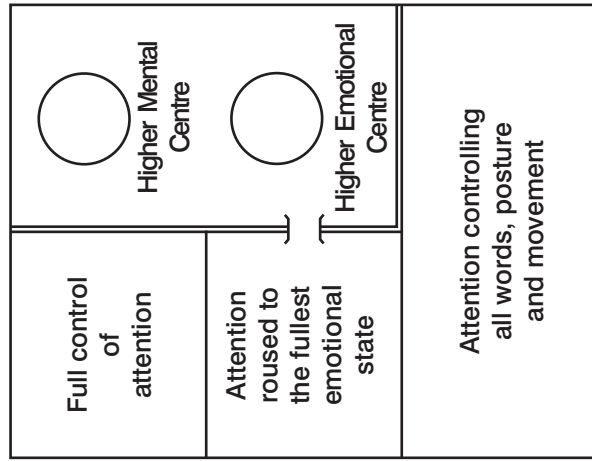


Figure 3

NOTE: The same diagram can be drawn on the blackboard in 3 stages

Eternal life as well. Of this, the highest level of human experience, there is also much evidence to be found by the discerning:

When thou canst throw thyself but for a moment into that where no creature dwelleth, then thou hearest what God speaketh. (Boehme)

So we now put into the diagram of man this Fourth Room and the entrance to it (Figure 2)

Two things must now be stressed: to get safely into this Fourth Room and back, one needs the guidance of an expert who has himself been there often and knows the difference between types of people; and one needs the help of other people and also the right conditions of living. In other words, a special School is necessary. If such a School were not available then it is far better for a man to stay where he is; we have witnessed far too many tragedies due to ill-advised attempts to take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. But since a guide and a School are now available to us, let us prepare to go there in perfect safety.

A city is builded, and set upon a broad field, and is full of all good things: the entrance thereof is narrow, and is set in a dangerous place to fall, like as if there were a fire on the right hand, and on the left a deep water: and one only path between them both, even between the fire and the water, so that there could only one man go there at once. If this city were given unto a man for an inheritance, if he never shall pass the danger set before it, how shall he receive this inheritance?

(II Esdras 7, vv. 6–9)

But secondly, if one is to go there, one must travel light; one cannot take any luggage with one, for 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.'

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PART 2

Within the Fourth Room are two higher 'minds' or centres (Figure 3), and although those are part of the natural equipment of all normal people (the 'Light that is born in every man that cometh into the world'), yet they are not available in ordinary states of consciousness.

[People in whom a faulty connection for some reason exists, lose consciousness when they pass that threshold – we call them epileptics; if they did not lose consciousness they would go mad.]

The first of these two Higher Centres, called the Higher Emotional Centre, appears in the Third state of Consciousness – the state of full Self-consciousness, in which a man can know the full Truth about himself. Experience of this state is often referred to in the East as Samadhi. It is possible to acquire in some Yoga 'schools' the trick of going into Samadhi and remaining in a state of suspended animation, completely oblivious of all surroundings, for as long as six weeks. But this is not consciousness; and in true Schools it is strongly discouraged. Even two minutes or ten minutes of Samadhi is quite sufficient to last the whole day, and continue while one transacts all one's ordinary business, more (rather than less) aware of oneself and one's surroundings. For our sense of time is so transformed that it is possible to relive many lifetimes in ten minutes of Samadhi.

The second of the Higher Centres, called the Higher Intellectual Centre, only appears after Self-consciousness and command over the Higher Emotional Centre have been established. Passing naturally at a certain stage from the state of pure bliss into a larger world, we feel at one with everything in the Universe and experience the world as it really is. In this state of Cosmic Consciousness the chain of worlds within worlds is found to exist and is actually experienced within and around one – a realization summed up in three words: ‘I AM THAT’. See also (Jacob Boehme):

When his third illumination took place, that which in former visions had appeared to him chaotic and multifarious was now recognised by him as a unity, like a harp of many strings, of which each string is a separate instrument, while the whole is only one harp.

... But the greatness of the triumphing that was in the spirit I cannot express either in speaking or writing: neither can it be compared to anything, but that wherein the life is generated in the midst of death, and it is like the resurrection from the dead.

Recently, in special conditions, one has known many hours in which a natural pulsation has been experienced – a contraction of all external consciousness down into a blissful state of pure feeling of oneself (Samadhi) followed by an expansion of external consciousness to take in the world (at the same time not weakening the full consciousness of Self). The ‘treasury and the market-place’ are simultaneously enjoyed for a time before returning to the treasury to fill one’s pockets. All this while one remains in the Fourth Room.

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PART 3

It must be remembered that, as in photography, there are two processes in the course of attainment of man’s full stature – developing and fixing. At each stage glimpses of the next stage are enjoyed, but each stage must be made permanent, must be fixed. The wise man does not lose what he has achieved by rushing into activity, by talking or writing books; he quietly and patiently fixes it. This may take a long time, for as the Chinese classic has it, ‘It is the Circulation of the Light and the Protection of the Centre’ the Light is easy to move, but difficult to fix.’

In the following account of the Seven Levels of Man, we refer to the Permanent state of each level, not to glimpses:

Men are born into the world either Man No.1, No.2 or No.3 – all more or less equal. Do not confuse this with the diagram of the three-storeyed house; keep them quite separate at present, for this refers to the ground plan of the house on the flat, whereas the other diagram shows you the elevation in another dimension. In Men No.1 instinct predominates, they are largely governed by the physical sensation of pleasure and pain.

Men No.2 reach their decisions emotionally – by like or dislike. Such people are rare in the West; and though most of us in this room would probably regard ourselves as No.2, that is only because we confuse emotion with physical excitement (a distinction to be kept in mind especially if we are contemplating marriage!). Men No.3 have to come to their decisions through some intellectual process – they have to have a theory!

Man No.4 is not born as such – he is the product of School work; in him the different functions are well balanced. He possesses a Permanent Centre of Gravity – that is to say, he has

proved for himself the existence of the Fourth Room, so that naturally the attainment of consciousness and control of the Higher Centres is more important than all his other interests. But he will be the first to admit that he remains an ordinary mortal because he is not a permanent resident of the Kingdom of Heaven and that 'the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he'.

Man No.5 has attained permanently the Third state of Consciousness and control of the Higher Emotional Centre; death of the physical body does not deprive him of that, for he has been reborn and possesses the Second or Natural Body. He knows the full Truth about himself and of everyone and everything intimately connected with him. He is called in the East 'The Stream-Swimmer'.

Man No.6 has permanent control of the Higher Intellectual Centre in the state of Objective Consciousness. He possesses the Third or Spiritual Body. He has all the Knowledge that a man is capable of having, but he has not yet acquired Will. He cannot Do. He is called 'The Once-returned' or Bodhisattva.

Man No.7 has achieved all that a man can achieve; he has full control of all the states of consciousness and all the seven centres; he has Will, he can DO; he has achieved Buddhahood and possesses the Fourth or Divine Body; and he has the choice of passing to the plane of Eternal Cosmic Consciousness or of actual reincarnation into the Past to help humanity. For he is said to be 'Immortal within the limits of the Solar System'.

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