

15 July 1963

READING 10

PART 1

From the second half of Monday Meeting, Colet House, 8th July, 1963:

Dr. R. But now let us come back to these questions about trying to *do* something, because we are in fact trying to *learn to Do*. In the material last week (63/38) I was approaching it in terms of what we have not considered for some time – the fact that every centre (thinking centre, emotional centre, moving centre) is divided into three parts, the mechanical part, the emotional part and what I would prefer to call the ‘voluntary’ part – that is, where the *Will* keeps the Attention on the object *even when one is very emotional*.

Now these mechanical parts of the different centres are all inter-gearred and many people never get out of them, never get away from them, and their output is very dull! Most of what people call ‘thinking’ and what people call ‘feeling’ are not the real thing at all, but simply the operation of the mechanism. Only lately we have had wonderful opportunities in the Meditation of getting out of all that, and how pleasant it is! Then one of the most noticeable things about trying to do this Dervish Turning is that one *cannot do it with the mechanical parts of centres*; it is quite, quite impossible. But one is continually adjured to ‘Look into your *own heart*’, to ‘Find the roots in *yourSelf*’; and if one does that, the impossible becomes possible; suddenly for a few seconds one finds oneself Turning!

To return to the meditation: in checking the meditation nearly all the problems and difficulties and questions and all the rest of it, we find on investigation to be just the mechanical parts of centres being allowed to interfere with something very simple, being believed in and trusted in instead of the real thing! It does seem that through leaving all that aside – not analysing or bothering with it and coming to a quiet place – many people have had quite often new and wonderful experiences of Higher parts of centres working.

Many ordinary things can be done with the mechanical parts of centres – that is laid on; but if you want to do something different, if you want to do something rather special and rather interesting, invent something or create a work of art, or especially to *Realize your own possibilities*, then Higher parts of centres are necessary; we have to leave the mechanical parts, recognise them and leave them; don’t trust in them, don’t have truck with them.

I would like you to ask questions about that if you feel like it. For instance, in connection with the *emotional* centre people say, ‘I am a very emotional person; what do you advise for me?’ What they call ‘emotion’ is not what I call ‘emotion’! Very often it is half animal – just simply crowd emotion, excitement and temporary interest which flares up and dies down. That is *not* emotion; that is just the mechanical part of the emotional centre interwoven with instinctive reflexes and the mechanical parts of other centres; it is not real emotion. Any questions?

Q. Can one not use even that kind of energy in some way to develop?

A. What kind of energy?

Q. The mechanical energy, because it is energy of a kind?

A. Yes, it is rather valuable energy – the energy by which everything gets done. The surplus has to be got rid of, and the turning thoughts, the feelings and the pictures and the dreams are all part of the exhaust mechanism and should not be interfered with. By attending too much to them we increase the amount of energy expended in that way; it becomes an excessive leaking away of energy – the valuable energy which we need. So we don't attend to these things, we don't add to them, don't stress them, don't wastefully burn that energy up; but keep our attention for more conscious functions which lead to lasting happiness. Our particular scourge is the abuse of our Intellectual centres! Our thinking is not at all good; it is our main stumbling block. The *mechanical* part of the Intellectual centre – formatory centre – is our chief bane! It stops any ideas from developing, makes meetings dull and unproductive, impedes individual progress.

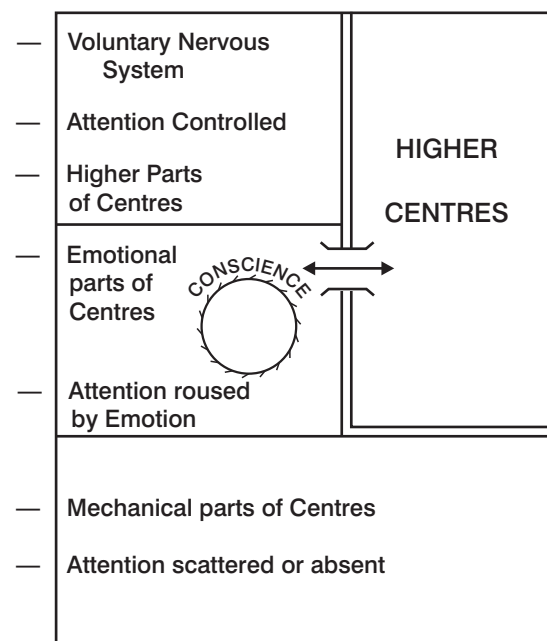
*

PART 2

It would be useful to summarise our discoveries about 'Attention' and 'Learning to Do' by means of a basic diagram seen in a way which for many of us is still rather new and unexplored.

It is said that 'man has a House of Three Storeys but lives only in the basement' – that is, in the mechanical parts working without Attention. When we first come to a Discipline such as this one, we are advised to obey one or two simple rules such as not talking to anyone else about what we do. Even this (which at first we find difficult and irksome), has far-reaching effects. For rules of this sort inevitably start work on all three storeys – they *curb the mechanical parts*; they arouse the emotion through the waking up of *Conscience*; and they make us begin to exercise what *Will* we have. If you think of all the things we do together, you will see that they are designed to continue this work on all three storeys. The Meditation can do exactly the same with the lightest discipline of all. Gradually the Higher parts of centres work more strongly, more often and for longer; this is the process of 'Waking up'. Conscience enables us to escape from the bonds of meaningless conventions and becomes our chief weapon of Attention and the gateway to all that we want – the Higher Centres (the ecstatic Realization of Truth).

But we cannot be conscious in Higher Centres until our Wills have become strong enough to control the machine when the emotional parts are working very strongly. Conscience in the work of Self-realization acts like the 'artistic conscience' of the great painter, poet or composer which does not permit wrong notes, flaws in his harmonies.



As we go up the Ladder of Self-realization Higher parts of centres work more and more. These manifestations are referred to in the terms 'Insight' (5th Step) and 'Abundance' (6th Step). Conscience is the sharp edge of 'Insight'. But only on the 7th Step ('Turiya') is there full Consciousness in Higher Centres. The difference between the objective and subjective in the output of learning and of art is expressed in these words by Thomas à Kempis (Chapter 31):

And unless a man be elevated in spirit, and set at liberty from all creatures, and wholly united to God, whatever he knows, and whatever he has, is of no great weight.

...

There is a great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated devout man and the knowledge of a scholar.

Far more noble is that learning which flows from above, from the Divine influence, than that which with labour is acquired by the industry of man.

In terms of Recurrence, manifestations of genius (Higher parts of Centres) tend to appear earlier and more vividly in successive lives, but full Memory of past lives as a guide to the present life comes only from Higher Centres as the result of deliberate work for Self-realization. This is probably part of the meaning of some of Mr. Ouspensky's last remarks:

Mr. O. We can understand some things by thinking. For example, the question as to whether all people are affected in the same way by recurrence. It is impossible to say simply yes or no because what can be applied to one man cannot be applied to another. For one man it will be the same way, the same house, the same cats. But for other people it may be different. Great poets, great writers, they may not need to walk by the same streets. They may walk by different streets and yet do the same things. This difference may not be due to efforts but to capacities, to achievement and to scope of thinking and feeling. A great poet may not need to write the same verses again. Perhaps he got not all, but sufficient, out of his environment, so that he may try something else that he did not try the last time.

...

Q. After hearing the lectures, people always ask if great poets have the being of man 1, 2 and 3. Now you say that a poet need not do the same thing over again.

Mr. O. No. He may be a great poet and yet not belong to objective art. Others less great may produce objective art.

...

Think about some of these ideas, but do not think that you know. There are many variations, many possibilities. Think, because there is nothing more important for you.

(New York Meeting, 1945)

* * *

