

October 1963

READING 2

The theme this Winter is to be '*Self-realization*' with only just so much of the System as can be carried in the mind to guide us up the Ladder of Seven Steps.

The principle we wish to try to live up to at our meetings is that we should all speak from ourselves, and anyone speaking from empty theory and not from actual experience should be sent off to amuse himself somewhere else! So those taking the meetings will have to look to their laurels. Therefore they shouldn't allow themselves to be overburdened with duties, but should choose to do what will help them most from among all the activities and techniques which now we are so lucky to have at hand.

No matter what technique each person favours for the attainment of their aim of Self-realization, of course *Attention* will be the tool employed – if we only get to understand in what it really consists. Both through the Meditation, the Movements to music, and the Mevlevi Dervish Turning we have begun to realise the truth of the Shankaracharya's words:

Only in Sattva can there be Attention; there is no attention possible in Rajas and Tamas.

When we have this energy, this glow of happiness and compassion, Attention becomes possible and feels easy and natural – provided we keep our minds on what we are doing, and do not allow any psychological processes to intervene between our attention and the work in hand.

The familiar and fundamental diagram of the Four Rooms is so easy to remember and contains so much practical information that we couldn't do better than begin with it once again:

The Three-storeyed house first shows us how all our endowment of functions relates to Attention. But it must be understood that the house must be ruled from above, (shown by the arrow) and that without the influence of the hidden Fourth Room this is impossible – for neither can our attention be fully roused by emotion, nor can we have the Will to control and

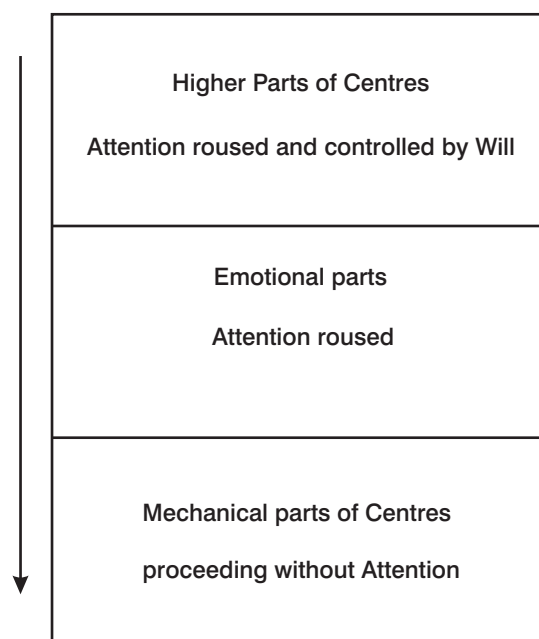


Figure 1

apply it. So, if we are not content to live in the lowest room all our lives, we must understand the implications of Figure 2:

The Fourth Room is a well-guarded 'strong-room' containing the Treasure. There are

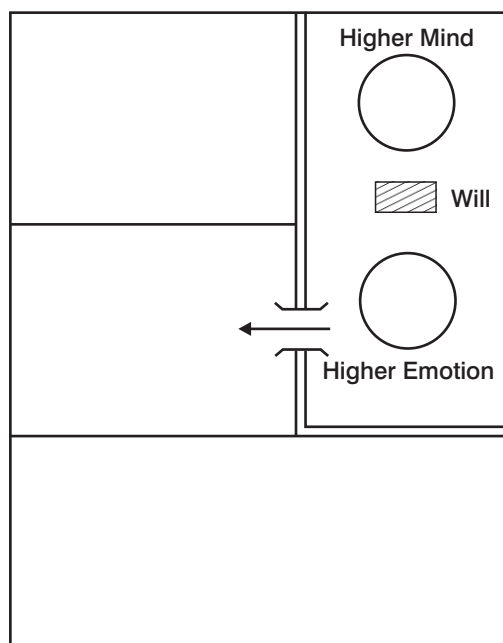


Figure 2

safety-devices which prevent anyone from having contact with it before they are ready. For it is dangerous to try to 'take it by storm' while a man is still capable of identification, self-deception, and negative emotion. Many myths of dragons which the hero must first kill before he can have the treasure warn us about this.

One of the great lessons we have been learning is that we don't have to *go anywhere*, go through a door or something! The Higher Centres already work in us. If we only set our house in order with the help of Attention, the 'juice of the herb' – or the Influence reaching us through Higher Centres – will come through the door to us and will be felt as happiness, energy and confidence. Gradually all our other functions will be illuminated and latent talents realised. First it will come in little spurts and later when and for as long as it is really needed. If one seeks first the Kingdom of God, then all the other things will be added.

Remembering that our whole object is to acquire the power to receive the Influence of the Fourth Room at Will, while retaining Consciousness, we would like you to try to come to your own decision as to what is necessary for you to be doing to achieve that object. The less experienced might even welcome a little advice on the subject!

In conclusion, if we relate this diagram to the topic of 'Happiness' as described in Reading 1, we shall find much that is new and stimulating.

Cast your eye on all the different things that are called 'happiness' in human life, and all your own experiences that you have ever thought of as happy ones, and you will see that they all belong to the five ordinary functions of our nervous endowment; and they are all dependent on the physical body and perish with it. The temporary happiness of intellectual discovery, of emotional relations with people, or of artistic creation, pleasant physical sensations, the bodily

aspects of sex, and the joys of skilled movements, are of short duration and accidental occurrence. True happiness (such as we have described) belongs to Consciousness of the Higher Emotional Centre in the Fourth Room (Figure 2). Such consciousness, if achieved, is independent of the physical body and survives its death. With the Influence of the Fourth Room, all these other fields of happiness are perpetually renewed, becoming reliable and no longer accidental.

So if this is thoroughly understood and the diagram carried in the mind, the cultivation of Attention becomes itself a happy pastime, and a guarantee of happiness even in this transitory human life.

FROM THE DHAMMAPADA. II, The Canto of Wakefulness

21. Wakefulness is the way to Immortality; heedlessness (inattention) is the way to death; those who are wakeful die not, the heedless are already dead.
22. The wise, those who have realized this outstanding feature of wakefulness, rejoice therein and are drawn to such spheres of activity as engage the Noble Ones.
23. Such wise ones, meditating, putting forth effort, attain to Nirvana, the incomparable state of security.
24. Continually increasing is the glory of him who is wakeful, who has aroused himself and is vigilant, who performs good deeds, and acts with becoming consideration, restraining himself.
25. Let such as one, rousing himself to wakefulness by self-conquest, make for himself an island which no flood can engulf.
26. Ignorant and witless persons pursue a heedless course; the wise one scrupulously guards his wakefulness as a merchant guards his wealth.
27. Pass not your time in heedlessness, nor identify yourself with the pleasures of sense. The wakeful man, meditating, acquires an amplitude of Bliss.
- ...
32. A devotee who takes pleasure in wakefulness and looks with fear only on heedlessness, cannot fall backwards; he is coming near to Nirvana.

* * *

