

26 October 1964

READING 4

In the beginning to arrange the teaching of the Shankaracharya and his many illustrations and stories, it is useful at first to have two pictures of the three-storeyed factory in view.

PART 1

The first is the 'state of mind' which obtains all over the world among all people who have no knowledge of the Self or discipline related to it. This is the picture not only of the mind of the 'man in the street', but that given by all current Western systems of psychology and of the best scientific minds of to-day. In Figure 1, the Manas is represented as controlled by, or in control of the factory, and as knowing nothing higher than itself.

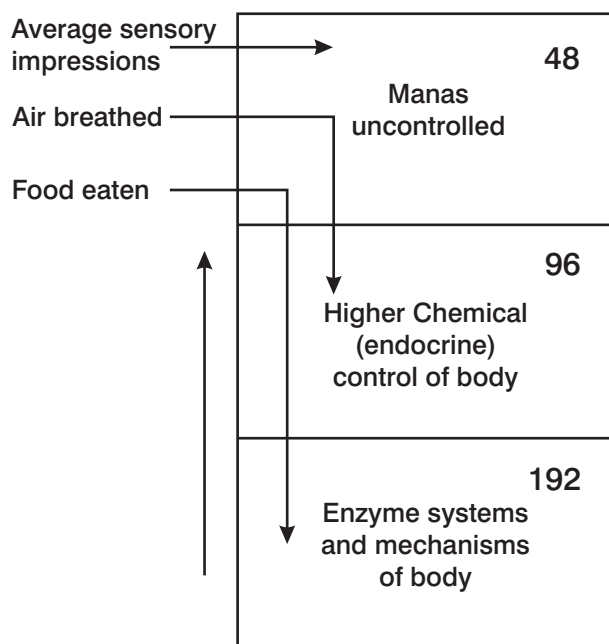


Figure 1
'Man in the Street'

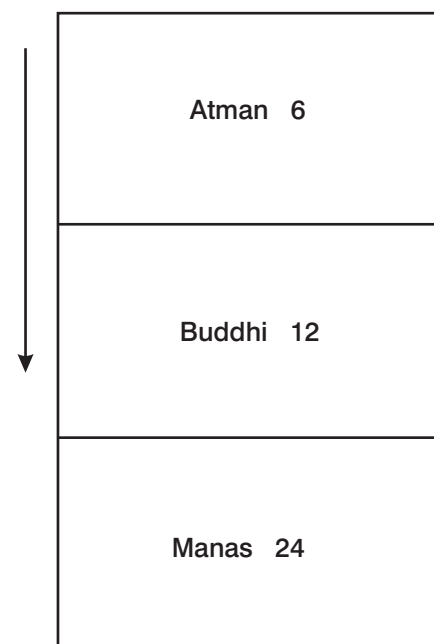


Figure 2
Final state of Enlightenment

One should never allow this Manas to run free or it will be up to all sorts of mischief. One must first distinguish between useful and useless activities of this mind.

3.9.64

S. The activities of *Manas* are two-fold. One is directed to the useful work for the Atman and the other against it. The useful activity for Atman results in usefulness of Buddhi, senses and body also; and the useless, or activities directed against the Atman, result in destruction of Buddhi, senses and body. The 'imaginings' are the useless and harmful activities. They use our energy for our own destruction. For common men, all that which is useless and harmful is pleasant to senses and they run after it without realising that it is not useful. So the Manas becomes the boss and the being is recklessly used in pleasure-hunt and self-destruction. If Buddhi is allowed to control Manas, the direction of activities will be towards usefulness.

A sick person usually likes to eat food which he is asked not to eat by a doctor, because the effect will be damaging. People today are sick, they don't know what they should have and what should be left alone. In running only after pleasure they allow mind to go towards ruin.

R. It has been found that mind is either running into past or future and not making use of the present moment for Self-realization.

S. There was a lawyer; he got married and after some time they both started *planning their future*. The lawyer suggested that when they will have a son, they should bring him up and educate him to make him a lawyer, even better than his father. The wife had something else in mind. She wanted her son to become a doctor because her parents were in the medical profession. Arguments started and they got heated up. While they were fighting for their arguments a holy Man happened to appear and asked them why they were fighting. The husband put his ambitions and the wife explained her ambitions. The holy Man asked them to call the boy and enquire as to what *he* would like to be. The couple said, 'The child is not yet born.' The holy Man laughed at the stupid planning even before the child is born. Such future plans have no substance. Such desires are not useful. Pure Buddhi suppresses such foolish desires and imaginings around them like a snake-charmer who presses down any snake who raised his head unnecessarily. Desires are not bad; too many of them are bad and all superfluous constructions (imaginings) round desires are bad. They are utterly useless. ...

The remedy begins with the following resolution:

14.8.64

S. No single man can do the work for the whole world, so a timetable has to be made. A factory opens at a fixed time and shuts at a fixed time whether the work is completed or not. We must do the same materially and spiritually; ... we should never carry the burden with us once work is over.

Q. Does this mean a literal timetable of stopping ordinary work for meditation?

S. Yes, we need regular times so as to save and restore energy. If we go on thinking our thinkings our energy goes and our minds become dull. We should not burn up energy unnecessarily. You get into your car, start up, get into gear and reach destination. On arrival you put gear into neutral, but if you leave the engine running, you are wasting energy unnecessarily.

Q. You have got to be careful who is driving the car too?

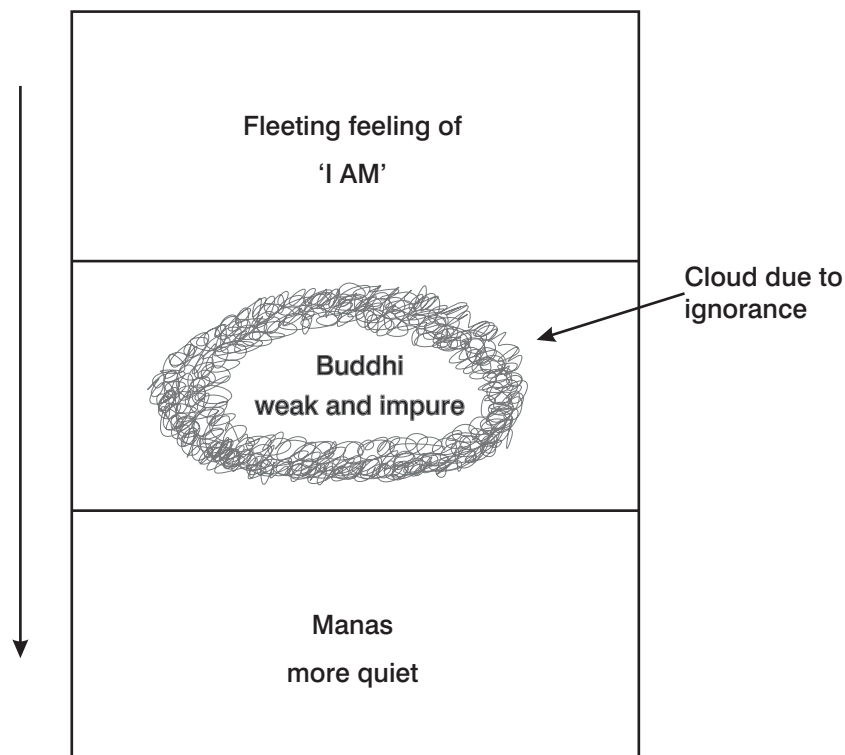
S. (laughing) Yes, certainly, those who are full of tension are bad drivers. Such people forget things; they may leave the ignition key in. Such people when they go to sleep dream about ordinary things and wake up tired. We must not be members of this group. There is a kingdom of the mind where nothing but useless activities go on. Those who get nothing from the practical world inhabit this kingdom.

When the 'man in the street' first begins, in accordance with this timetable, to look within himself, his uncertainty is described in much the same terms by the Shankaracharya as in this passage from the *Cloud of Unknowing*, that 14th century English work by an unknown author (Trans. Ira Progoff, Rider & Co., pp. 58, 62 and 63):

Do not slacken, therefore, but persevere in the work until you feel the desire. For, when you begin it, you will find that there is at the start but a darkness; there is, as it were, a cloud of unknowing. You know not what it is except that you feel in your will a naked intent toward God.

No matter what you do, this darkness and this cloud is between you and your God and because of it you can neither see Him clearly with your reason in the light of understanding, nor can you feel Him with your affection in the sweetness of love.

Be prepared, therefore, to remain in this darkness as long as must be, crying evermore for Him whom you love. For if you are ever to feel Him or to see Him, it will necessarily be within this cloud and within this darkness. And if you will work with great effort as I bid you, I trust in His mercy that you will achieve it. (p.58)



Note: that the arrow is reversed –
'180° turn' of direction of mind

Figure 3

PART 2

And soon he will get glimpses of what lies beyond the darkness and the cloud:

Pay attention to this work, therefore, and to its marvellous ways within your soul. When it has been truly conceived, it comes merely as a sudden stirring with no forewarning, instantly springing toward God as a spark from a coal. And it is wonderful to count the number of stirrings that may appear within one hour in a soul that is disposed to the work.

And yet, in any one of these stirrings every created thing may suddenly and completely be forgotten. But immediately after each stirring, because of the corruption of the flesh, it drops down again to some thought or to some deed that has been or has not been committed. And what follows? Immediately it rises just as suddenly as it had done before.

From this, it may be seen in brief what the manner of this working actually is, so that man can clearly know that it is far indeed from being a fantasy or a false imagination or a quaint opinion; for these latter do not arise from such a devout humility and a blind stirring of love, but are the result of a proud, curious, and imaginative mind. Such a proud and curious mind must always be borne down and sternly trodden under foot, if this work is conceived in full purity of spirit.' (pp. 62 & 63)

1.9.64

S. Impurities in Buddhi have two causes; one is the dirt or cloud or mist, and the other is its own mobility. Due to dirt or cloud one sees truth in the wrong direction. He takes this material world to be true, and for him nothing exists beyond this. One of the simple laws is that there cannot be two Truths. So either matter has to be true or the Spirit.

The other reason of impurity is the speed at which Buddhi is moving. If you take a stick, light it at one end and rotate vigorously, then you will see multifarious shapes of light but not the stick or the fire at its end. Such is the mobile Buddhi. This must be stilled. True Knowledge removes the dirt or cloud and meditation stills it. By such discipline one purifies his Buddhi so it will show the right path.

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Before the Absolute started the Creation or had the desire to create, he had a feeling that 'I AM' and then that 'I want to do That'. This feeling of 'I' is called 'Ahankar'; 'I' for us is the Atman. It has two aspects. The first is the 'I' AM' which you all feel when you wake out of sleep (that now 'I am awake') before you begin to see this, that and everything in the world. The other is illusory, associating this, that and every other substance with the ego. That happens to most common men in the world. They take the material world for their 'I' and live in illusion. By Knowledge and meditation such illusions are removed.

PART 3

While many of his talks describe intermediate steps, an approach to the Final state (Figure 2) was described one day in the following words:

12.8.64

S. We see the world with our eyes but they cannot see into ourselves. For that we need the eye of Mind. Eye of Manas has limits. Beyond that is Buddhi which penetrates into subtler forms. It is limited too. The most subtle field is fathomed only by the Atman which is beyond Buddhi. This example shows how Atman feels something deeper – divers dive for pearls but unless they surface they don't know what they've picked up. Sleep may be very profound, but we don't know that it was profound till we wake up. Same with meditation – you have gone deep within Yourself, but it is only when you come back into the world that you realise that you had full peace.

27.8.64

S. Some people in all countries and at times have realised that there is something missing in ordinary life; something without which life makes no sense to intelligent people. That something is the Atman – the Divine Self. Just as the children's game of hide-and-seek is played in all countries, so *the great game of Hide-and-Seek* goes on, and

in that game it is the Atman which remains hidden. Realized Men are there to help the people who want to find the 'he', the hidden Atman. Techniques may differ according to the country and the type of person, but the great game goes on and it is necessary that some people should always win.

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[NOTE: This is just a very beginning of the Shankaracharya's teachings under each of these three headings. It would be most useful if you could try to arrange your own observations and questions also in this way.]

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