

3 October 1966

READING 1

PART 1. THREE-STOREYED HOUSE – A MORE INTIMATE PICTURE

Many people still tell me that when they hear the Shankaracharya's Indian words like 'Atman', 'Buddhi' and 'Manas', they start to curl up and bristle like hedgehogs; and it is indeed true that we need to establish among ourselves a congenial verbal currency in order to connect what he is saying with our own experience, and so proceed quickly towards our goal.

The word 'Buddhi' can, from one aspect, be equated with 'Soul', but part of the confusion is caused by using both these words in very different senses; at one extreme, for the ordinary inner nature of anyone, that which determines the trend of one's life and interests; and at the other for the perfect state of the 'Soul' when roused to its full potential and faithful to the dictates of Consciousness and Will. In this sense a 'Buddha' is a man with a perfect 'Buddhi', but the potential 'Buddha-nature' is inherent in all normal people. There need be no confusion.

Our System describes the 'House we live in' as a 'House of three storeys'. Not only is the whole organism built on this plan, but so is the brain of man through which it is all organised and controlled. But we don't even need to know about the whole brain; all we need to know intimately is that part of it in which we can be conscious – that part which gives us the feeling of 'I'.

This ordinary feeling of 'I', which we shall call the 'ego', wakes with us in the morning and accompanies us throughout the day, though, being composed of a multiplicity of small 'I's, it is always fluctuating and changing like a kaleidoscope. This is what gives us that feeling of 'I' and 'other', so that it is impossible at first to imagine life without it. This ordinary ego-feeling is called by His Holiness 'Ahankara', and part of it is true and part of it is false or imaginary.

To distinguish the True from the false, we have to proceed by a series of stages. When we were in a state of complete ignorance on this subject, the picture we carried with us was a very confused one – rather like this: (Figure 1)

We used to turn through this circuit, constantly saying or thinking 'I', without questioning anything or observing the facts. But as we learnt a little about ourselves and separated what was found to be useful and what was not, we began to form a clearer picture. (Figure 2, overleaf)

First of all there appears to be a rational faculty by which we keep a check not only on events but on our reactions to them. What is labelled 'Reason' here includes every *useful* intellectual process from ordinary common sense up to the best logical thinking of which man is capable. Greek Philosophy used the word *Nous* for pure Reason in contrast to the word *Phren* as in our 'Frenzy'.

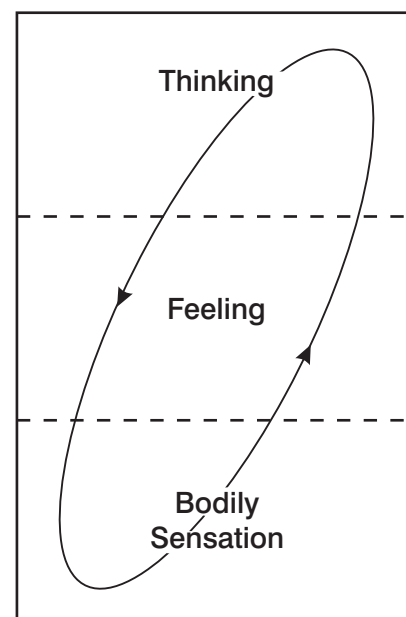


Figure 1

The Psyche –
all our psychological processes
bound to 'Ego feeling'

But we learnt that we have also an inner nature which works much more by feeling than by thought, and yet is to be distinguished from body and all its sensations and reflexes. So as equivalents of His Holiness's words 'Manas', 'Buddhi' and 'Body', we can use the words 'Mind', 'Soul' and 'Body', if we are careful to use them only in this way. There is a well-known description of what we mean here by Soul in *ordinary* people given by Plato in his *Theaetetus*:

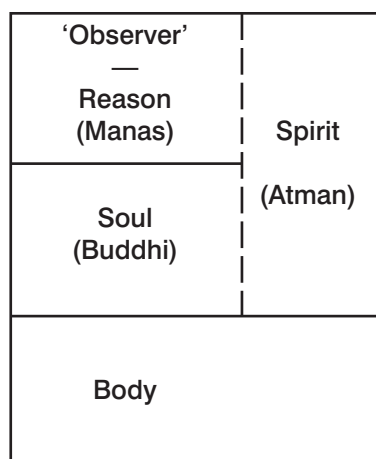


Figure 2

191 **Socrates.** Please assume, then, for the sake of argument, that there is in our souls (Psyche) a block of wax, in one case larger, in another smaller, in one case the wax is purer, in another more impure and harder, in some cases softer, and in some of proper quality.

Theaetetus. I assume all that.

Socrates. Let us, then, say that this is the gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses, and that whenever we wish to remember anything we see or hear or think of in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions and thoughts and imprint them upon it, just as we make impressions from signet rings; and whatever is imprinted we remember and know as long as its image lasts, but whatever is rubbed out or cannot be imprinted we forget and do not know...

194 **Socrates.** Now when perception is present to one of the imprints but not to the other, and the mind applies the imprint of the absent perception to the perception which is present, the mind is deceived in every such instance...

They say the cause of these variations is as follows: When the wax in the soul of a man is deep and abundant and smooth and properly kneaded, the images that come through the perceptions are imprinted upon this heart of the soul... and in such men, the imprints, being clear and of sufficient depth, are also lasting. And men of this kind are in the first place quick to learn, and secondly they have retentive memories, and moreover they do not interchange the imprints of their perceptions, but they have true opinions. For the imprints are clear and have plenty of room, so that such men quickly assign them to their several moulds, which are called realities; and these men, then, are called wise. Or do you not agree?

Theaetetus. Most emphatically.

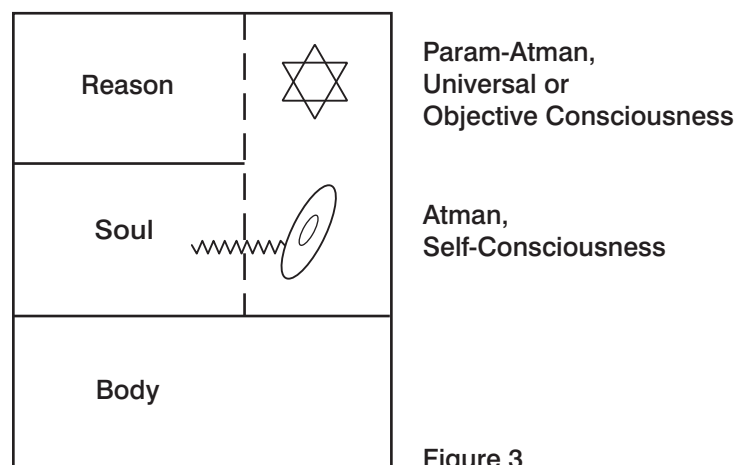
Socrates. But when the heart of anyone is woolly... or muddy and of impure wax, or very soft, or very hard, then there is a corresponding defect in the mind: the soft are good at learning but apt to forget, and the hard are the reverse; the woolly and rugged
195 and gritty, or those who have an admixture of earth or dung in their composition, get indistinct impressions, as also the hard, for there is no depth in *them*; and the soft too are indistinct, for their impressions melt together and quickly become blurred. But if besides all this they are crowded upon one another through lack of room, in some mean little soul, they are still more indistinct. So all these men are likely to have false opinions. For when they see or hear or think of anything, they cannot quickly assign things to the right imprints, but are slow about it, and because they assign them wrongly they usually see and hear and think amiss. These men, in turn, are accordingly said to be deceived about realities and ignorant.

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At a later stage still, we become aware of something very exceptional – a treasure of Truth and happiness and consciousness which sometimes illuminates the Soul like a glow of warmth or a beam of Light. And this beam of Light is one of the signals of that which we can call Spirit (equating it with His Holiness's word 'Atman'), and we recognise the Light as coming from our True Self, so that our ordinary ego feeling becomes quite surpassed by it. (Figure 2)

At a still later stage we realise that there are stages even in that, and this 'Spirit' or Consciousness is on two levels – (Figure 3) – so that one can be at one time conscious of everything that directly relates to oneself; and at another may expand to the realization that 'One's own Self lives in the hearts of all', or that 'everything in the Universe is oneSelf, or oneSelf is in everything'. Though many people have had temporary experiences of these things, the great goal must be to achieve a permanent connection which could survive physical death:

Before the Soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united, just as the form to which the clay is modelled is first united with the potter's mind. For then the Soul will hear and will remember. And then to the inner ear will speak the Voice of the Silence.



And that will be the 'Good Impulse' – the first step on the Ladder of Self-realization.

[Note: In your discussions please make sure before going on that everyone understands clearly what this picture of the three-storeyed house *feels* like, and can distinguish in themselves between 'Spirit, Soul, Mind and Body'.]

CONCLUSION

While these experiences are developing in frequency and intensity, one hungers and thirsts more and more for the marvellous manifestations of the 'Spirit', and comes to realise that the key to all is the state of the 'Soul' which must be raised to its full potential and kept clean and perfect. One begins to feel a need to impose on oneself each day a certain discipline and to find how to make this discipline compatible with a full and many-sided life. One realises that in no two people can this discipline be precisely the same; and moreover it differs for the same person at different times. All this organisation can do is to make sure that we all understand the goal we are aiming for; help us to see during any given week just at what stage each of us stands in relation to it, and provide various forms of discipline which can be used by people when needed.

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PART 2. PSYCHOLOGY IN TERMS OF 'FREQUENCY' OF RECORDING SYSTEMS

Among the experiences referred to at the end of Part 1, is that of a different relation to what we call 'Space-Time'; and one becomes aware that the problem of how the Soul can become a 'vehicle for Spirit', or a 'room in which Spirit can come to rest', is somehow bound up with this.

But here we come bang up against a confusion which is almost universal in Western thought today. What we loosely call 'Space' and what we call 'Time' are only convenient measures of *movement* or *change*; and they only exist when one is *looking at the movement* and using a particular clock and a particular measuring-rod. This is the real meaning of 'Relativity', but few 'relativists' take into account that if you change the measuring-rod you have to change the clock too, and this makes all the difference.

In addition we are always confusing two entirely different concepts, the concept of 'Speed' and the concept of 'Frequency'. 'Frequency' is not felt by us as *movement* at all; it is felt, for instance, in relation to *Sound* as tone or pitch, and in relation to *Light* as degree of brightness or difference of colour. Our sensitivity to differences in frequency is so fine and so accurate that it is perhaps our most valuable possession, and can be extended to discriminate between different qualities of thought, different shades of emotion, and different degrees of consciousness, in ourselves and other people.

It is also relative to a number of clock-systems in our organism which record at very different frequencies. Thus the practical part of the mind that keeps pace with events in our immediate vicinity, uses a foot-rule and a 'seconds' hand, and records frequencies within a very small range. It is as if it were a movie camera taking a film at, say 16 frames a second, and projecting it on the screen of consciousness at the same speed, so that to all of us alike this speed of events appears just natural. On another part of the screen is projected the order and pattern of *sound*, again at 16 cycles a second, and for about twelve octaves above that. Below this frequency, sounds are incoherent noise, and above the top note of the piano even noise soon becomes inaudible to us humans. It passes into the ultrasonic region; but at least some mammals like dolphins and bats, some cave-dwelling birds, and many insects with the vertebrates that eat them, use built-in 'Sonar' systems in this range of frequency.

Frequencies of stimulus ranging from 100 to 16,000 vibrations a second evoke the same kind of electrical response from the... cortex; namely a single deflection lasting from 1/20 to 1/55 second... As Adrian says: 'The quality of the sensation seems to

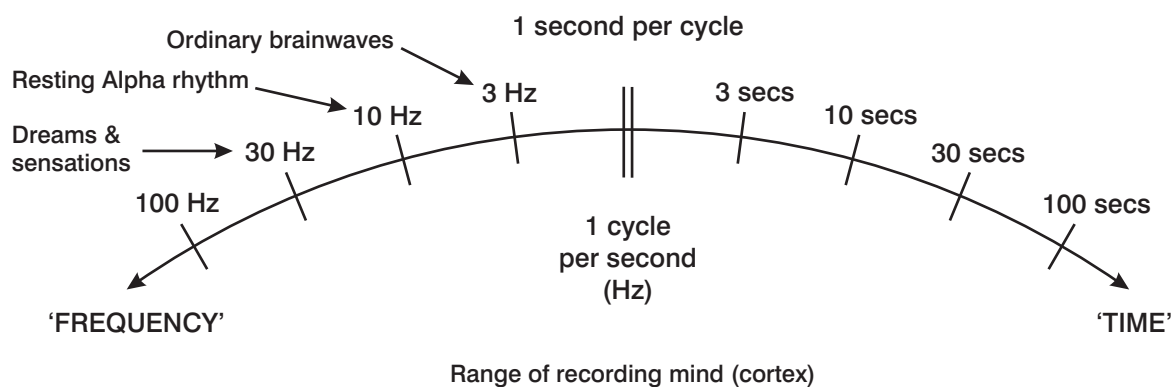


Figure 4a

depend on the path which the impulses must travel, for apart from this there is little to distinguish the messages from different receptors...'

(Lord Brain. *Mind, Perception and Science*, Blackwell, 1951, p.6)

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Perhaps we can now appreciate that the ordinary recording Mind (Manas) is quite incapable of *playing back to us* frequencies of more than 100 or so cycles per second [Hz]; even our sensory impressions have to be coded. Further, these impressions can only be picked up by sense organs below a frequency of 10 kHz (10,000 Hz) for transmission along sensory nerves to the brain. This is the ultimate frequency at which the Mind (Manas) decodes the messages it receives from sense organs along sensory nerves. Ordinarily these are projected on the screen of consciousness at the usual frequency – (16 Hz to 10 kHz) – but we have all experienced moments when 'time appears to stand still'. Perhaps it's like this: if a cine-camera records 'impressions' at, say, 64 frames a second and then projects them at 16 frames a second, one gets the appearance of 'slow-motion photography' when all movement is four times as slow. This 'slow-motion photography' is really '*high-frequency recording*'. But our experience embraces far higher frequencies than that; in a different state of consciousness the human mind records at such high frequencies that we do in fact observe a 'still world' in which movement is only a local disturbance.

Now from the accumulated evidence we are forced to the conclusion that impressions from the 'Spirit' must be recorded at the speed of light – and light or electromagnetic waves take a thousand millionth of a second (1 nanosecond) to travel 1 foot (the size of a man's brain). Our diagram then assumes the following 'Time relations', which are really recording frequencies. (Figure 4b)

It is necessary for part of that great central headquarters which we call 'Soul' to free itself from the damping influences of sensory circuits reaching it from the top and lower storeys, and record at wavelengths comparable with those of high frequency radio. In Mr. Ouspensky's words, 'Emotional Centre must work at its full speed', but a watchman ('Mind') must still be present.

This is not such an absurd thing to say nowadays as it seemed only a decade ago, for 'large areas of chemistry are concerned with materials which exist for only a few millionths of a second and where everything is finished before conventional instruments have had time to respond. New techniques are now giving glimpses into these exciting regions.'[†] Many of these are photochemical reactions[†] such as occur in our own bodies as well as in the 'photosynthesis' of the green plant. One such example is in the human pituitary where nerve impulses set off hormonal activity when stimulated by light falling on the retina (which sets up impulses conveyed along the optic nerves to the immediate neighbourhood of the pituitary). In fact our '*vision*' itself is the result of a photochemical reaction whereby much

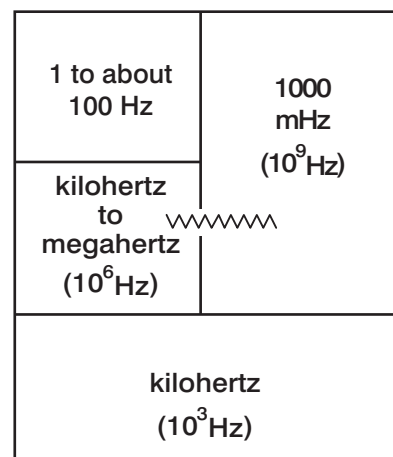


Figure 4b

[†]See statements such as: 'The excited electronic state which is first reached by light absorption usually has a lifetime of 10⁻⁸ seconds or even less.' (Prof. George Porter in *Discovery*, August, 1966)

higher frequencies of 10^{14} – 10^{15} Hz cause changes in the pigment of the retinal cells, and it is these molecular reactions which are transmitted in code along the nerves to the brain.

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PART 3

Proceeding methodically from day to day in accordance with the mild discipline of the Meditation as described by the Shankaracharya, we are rewarded unexpectedly in different ways. Sometimes we get glimpses of the Laws of Symmetry in Nature, sometimes we get near-ecstatic experiences from rhythms, colour harmonies and music; sometimes we see a new meaning in many of the things we have read in books which can help us to understand in ourselves the distinction between Manas and Buddhi (Mind and Soul).

Encouraged by such good things we continue our treasure hunt with increasing zest and we come to another exciting question. If the ultimate goal is that the Soul (Buddhi) of each individual should be united with the Spirit (Atman) what, we ask, are the obstacles to this union which have to be overcome? Here again our diagram will help us to distinguish between three categories of people in respect of what they chiefly 'identify with' or are 'attached to', *for the way to this union is escape from identification*. Figure 5 shows three extreme types in order to make the matter clear; but we are not extreme types and probably suffer each kind of attachment at different times, though usually with a special emphasis on one.

This distinction has been found to correlate with the three genotypes of the classical Blood Groups; Group A with No.3, Group B with No.2, and Group O with No.1; though often the difference is obscured by external influences such as parental example, upbringing, interests and occupation, etc.

Each of these categories of people have equal but different advantages and disadvantages, and for each the kind of discipline required is different. With the coming of the Meditation each person can easily tell what it is that commonly prevents him or her from proceeding easily and quickly to the 'Peace of God'; for the obstacles are not external (as we like to suppose) but internal.

We are getting corroboration of this from a little research on 'brainwaves' which is currently in progress; EEG records are being made of people of known blood group, before, during and after meditating. We begin to perceive differences in the tracings obtained from the three kinds of people; but it's far too early yet to lay down the law about it.

While there are these differences among us, yet all are alike in the field of Self-realization, in being muddle-headed, cold-hearted and subject to egotism, imagination, identification and negative emotion. So we have plenty in common to make it easy to 'love one's neighbour as oneself'!

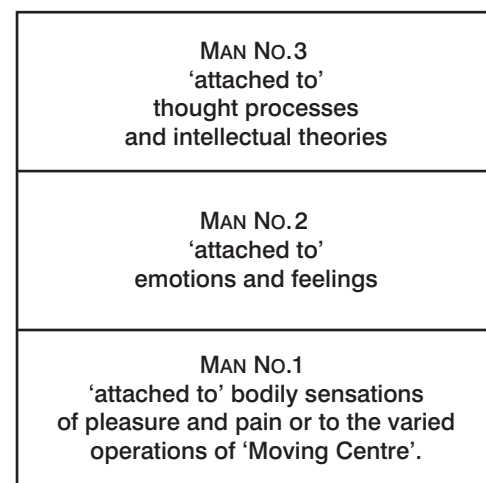


Figure 5
Three extreme categories of people

PART 4. Expression

We have spoken about the reception of Higher Impressions as a guide to living, but this is only one side of the penny; the other is the expression of all this in our lives. The Truth cannot manifest itself except through the lives of people – and this expression by example was never more needed than it is today.

The Lord's Prayer puts this very briefly and clearly. Not only do we say 'Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name', but also 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

The art of living (its whole interest and difficulty) lies in achieving this – the Yoga or union between inspiration and action. We do not receive this bounty in order to *escape from life* but in order to *conquer life*, each in his own way and in his own sphere.

The Soul maintains this slender thread of connection with the Spirit during short periods in order to enjoy and carry out efficiently all details of living. We must also recognise in an organisation of the Fourth Way like this one, that each decade of a person's life carries different needs and different obligations with it, and this must also be taken into account in assigning how much time people of different age groups should be allowed to give to this work.

As I write this, I remember vividly an episode on my first visit to India while camping by the Ganges. I happened to emerge after the morning dip in the river alongside an Indian teenage boy. Glancing up at my gray hairs he remarked, 'It's good to be young. Have you heard our teaching about the seven ages of life? In the first ten years it's almost all play; in the next ten we work hard to pass our exams but we enjoy our holidays like this one. From 20 to 30 we build up our career and get married; from 30 to 40 we have to settle down and pay for our children to go to school. From 40 to 50 we work harder than ever to support our growing family and marry off the daughters. From 50 to 60 we train our eldest son to take over as head of the family, so we can retire. And in the last ten years or so we pull out of all worldly obligations in order to prepare for our next journey. I suppose that's why *you* are here now!' Then having been serious for long enough, he turned with a whoop and raced back into the river to join his companions who were disporting themselves like dolphins.

Later, His Holiness was to say much the same; and he also summed up the difference of outward expression which accompanies the stages of Self-realization in these words:

The difference between a disciple who is up on the Ladder, and a common man was to some extent explained yesterday. A common man is uncouth in his actions whereas a trained man would do it in a better and beautiful way. For example, an uneducated man takes a long and weary effort to express himself, where an educated man would express freely, squarely and nicely. The refinement in any branch of knowledge or work is the product of Buddhi. Those who are higher up on the Ladder would exhibit just by their actions. Put them under most trying and difficult situations and they will do the job undisturbed and with great ease and simplicity. This would explain what is his level.

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