

24 June 1968

READING 7

PART 1

Retype of 1965/24

Have you any observations to record from occasions during the week when you were free from 'repetition' and 'movement in Time' and could see the world (as in Figure 1, 1965/22) in terms of expansion and contraction of your own consciousness alone?

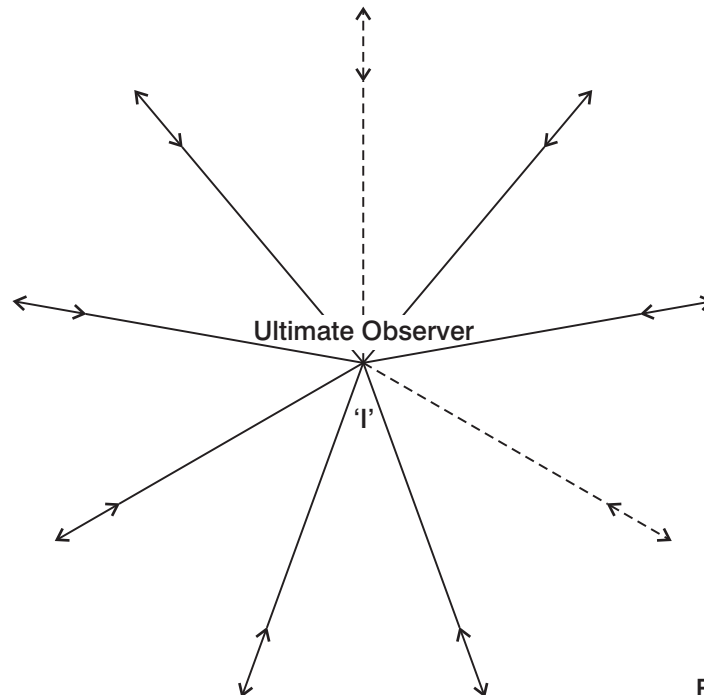


Figure 1, 1965/22

One way of prolonging this state of mind is to recall how our minds change in relation to certain Truths, which remain eternally the same; and it would perhaps be refreshing this week to look back at something we just touched on before Easter (1965/14).

We asked the question: 'What are some of the characteristics of more Objective states of Consciousness' and continued: 'One such is the feeling of *difference* between false and True, illusion and Reality. You begin to see yourself pretending, putting on an act... With this you begin to be aware of what are called "Self-evident Truths", Truths which seem to arise spontaneously in very different people at different times and in different places. Can you mention some of those? Probably only in a moment when you are rather less subjective.' We put these questions, if you remember, to you at a meeting here on Monday, 15th March; and it happened to be Irene Nicholson's last day here from Mexico.

A month later we had the following from her:

April 17, 1965

Would this be of any use to throw out as a suggestion for people to toss about? As I was flying across the Atlantic, and then across the US, some questions about self-evident truths formed in my mind and I began to see them in relation to the Diagram in the way I have set this out:

‘SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS’

What are these ‘self-evident truths’ that are talked about? In the world of the confusion of tongues there exists no such thing. One man may know he is asleep, but another will deny it hotly. One may have proved to himself that he has no Will, no Consciousness, and no Permanent I, and another will be certain that he has all three and that there is no need to work for them. A young politician assured a member of our groups recently that he was completely realized and fully in control of himself and of his immediate surroundings. The implication was that, given sufficient rope, he could bring all his fellow-men to the same happy state!

Of course in the world of material objects there are certain self-evident truths which even this young politician would be able to see. We do not need any further proof that fire burns, than to put our hand near a flame. The taste of sugar and salt, of pain and pleasure, of kicks and kisses, all speak for themselves. But when we leave the material world there seems to be nothing but disagreement everywhere.

Self-evident truths, then, must belong to the Ladder of Self-Development. As we rise from step to step there will be more of them, and they will change in quality, becoming all the time deeper and more objective; moreover, *two people on the same step will be unable to disagree*. (This is the mark of what Mr. Ouspensky called ‘Understanding’).

A man who has not even begun to feel the ‘good impulse’ will, as we have noticed, be quite sure that he possesses Consciousness, Will and Permanent I, that he can do, and that the world revolves around him. But once we are firmly on the first rung of the Ladder we begin to get glimpses of certain truths about ourselves. On this rung the ‘self-evident truths’ will often be negative in character. We are *not* awake, and all men are asleep with us. We can *not* do, and this is the state of humanity as a whole. We do *not* have Will.

But if this negative aspect of the ‘self-evident truths’ were all, we would have no incentive to move to the second rung – to make a ‘Decision’. *Decision is based on the realisation that it is possible to escape from the prison*; that (in the words of St. Paul) ‘by myself I can do nothing but I am not justified thereby’; that it *is* possible to accumulate a number of small but reliable desires and bring them together into sufficient Will to last perhaps even as long as two minutes.

On the right side of the triangle the ‘self-evident truths’ are concerned with ourselves. They are on a personal scale. The shock that takes us further is the realisation that we need the help of other people, that *nothing can be achieved without Higher Knowledge and help from men who have trod the same path before*. We know that nothing can change for humanity unless such higher help is available. This in itself is an extraordinary and startling truth which will be incomprehensible to a man who has not yet begun to climb the Ladder. He will ask, ‘Where is this higher knowledge? Where are the proofs?’

But we ourselves are convinced. And in our efforts to go higher up the Ladder we discover some (at this stage) painful self-evident truths that are all embodied in the two great Laws which any true School will teach: the Law of Three which shows us that *no result can be achieved by an inappropriate action*; and the Law of Seven which explains *why all our efforts inevitably run down if they are not supported by parallel efforts deliberately applied at the points where the impulses fade off*.

These are the great self-evident truths which we learn on Step Three. They can be known only in School and through School discipline, and all our efforts are useless if they do not take these Laws into account.

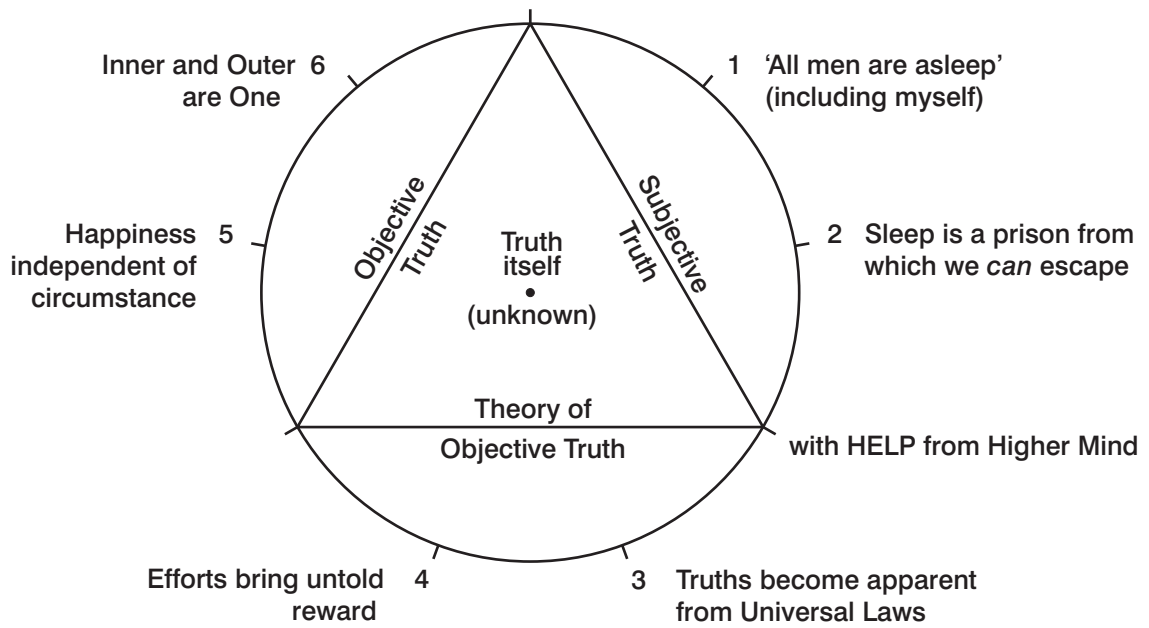


Diagram of Self-evident Truths

On Step Four we begin to find that there *is* help, coming from above. We find to our astonishment that ‘Our Father in Heaven’ is bountiful, that He rewards us out of all proportion to the efforts we make. But of course *we must make what efforts we can*, as sincerely and consistently as we know how.

Already on the second side of the triangle we are beginning to learn the theory of certain Objective truths and we begin to receive a taste of the fruits of the practical application of these truths. Practical understanding will come on the third side of the triangle, on Steps Five and Six. The shock that will take us across the gap is the sudden realisation that the knowledge we have been accumulating is not theory but fact: fact as actual and simple as that sugar tastes sweet.

On Step Five we find the self-evident truths deepening to an extraordinary degree. We know, for instance, that *happiness can exist independently of all external circumstances*, however unpleasant; that *time and space are illusions of our senses*; that ‘*death is nothing*’, for we live again and again.

But we are still inclined to retain a certain dualism in our thinking. There is still ‘us’ and ‘the others’, our inner world, and the outer world. All this must evidently disappear on the Sixth Step where everything becomes One.

About Step Six we can speak only because already from Step Four we have had glimpses of it. But we cannot yet tell what it would mean to live on the third side of the triangle permanently. If we were there more constantly, our whole Being would be so permeated by these self-evident truths that every action, every word, every feeling would be a reflection of them and we could no longer trust the world of ‘many I’s’ – that world which on the lower rungs we began to fear and from which we longed to escape, but to which we have continued to cling through long habit.

On each Step we know *practically* the self-evident truths of that Step, and our lives change accordingly. On each Step we are slowly learning the truths of the Step above. We can even glimpse those truths that belong two Steps ahead. *But on a day when we stay on Step One we cannot know or understand truths that are self-evident and completely practical to the man on Step Four.* Truths spoken of by men on Steps Five and Six will

appear sheer lunacy, or at best theoretical speculation having no practical value – the hypotheses of unrealistic dreamers.

That is why truths are self-evident only according to where we stand on the Ladder at any given moment. By what we know, by what we are convinced of, by where our confidence lies, we can tell precisely where we stand on the Ladder of Self-Development.

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PART 2

In order to make sure that we are getting the right meaning for the different Steps which are so very 'systematic', here is the result of some researches into the root meanings of the Sanskrit words. Don't bother about learning the Sanskrit names. It is simply to get the true meaning of the different Steps which should be seen – not in passing time, but as eternally present; for it is only a cloud of ignorance that separates us from their full enjoyment, and the Meditation gradually dissolves this cloud:

(February 1963)

THE NYAYA LADDER

1. **SHUBHEKSHA** = pious desire, longing,¹ auspicious urge. The desire for liberation or unity by one who has some degree of attention as a result of his unselfish deeds and discipline in his life up to then. The manifestation is the start of an enquiry into one's own Self – a search for the Atman.

H.H. says: This is the good intention, the rising up of right desire. This is the start which leads to:

2. **SUVICHARNA** = good reflection, thought, investigation, circumspection. The act of investigation and thinking about what all that one has gathered concerning the desire (1) for liberation or unity.

H.H. says: The coming to a decision by which rationally (by reasoning) he comes to the point where he can go further without doubt. The Way appears to be in line with his intention and his conviction.²

3. **TANUMANASI** = lessening of outward mental movements. Entry into the knowledge of Self. Regular practice in experience of the Unity of Self and Atman and righteous living leads the mind to go naturally inward rather than outward (both during two half-hours and whenever there are no external demands on the attention).

H.H. says: When the particles in the body start the striving towards Sattva.³

¹ 'Home!' cried she. 'O daughter of a King, home to your stone house; for the longing is come upon you now, nor can you live any more after the manner of simple men.' – *Song of the Morrow*, R.L. Stevenson

² Mr. O. – When he decides to work, an 'observing I' or Watchman appears.

³ All these four Graces combine to crystallise in a person by the time he reaches the Third stage, and the crystals at that time are formed which give him enough power or enough Sattva for the Fourth stage: The Grace of Atman, the Grace of God, the Grace of a Teacher, and the Grace of a System of True Knowledge.

4. **Fourth Stage or SATTVAPATTI** – the dawn of true Self; having gone inward he comprehends his Self as it really is. The doubts and reflections cease and the real Self with right knowledge begins to appear.

H.H. says: This is when the pull of the Way pulls him from the outside world of sensory impressions which begin to lose their power over him. Long before he experiences the full strength of Will (Atman), the third and fourth stage determine that he is getting quite strong will in himself; and by the time he crosses the fourth stage he has attained so much will that there is no question of that aspirant coming down the Ladder at all.

The Fourth Stage increases the Sattva Guna (Divine Love in this context). The increase of Sattva Guna determines this stage for the aspirant so that the pull of the spiritual world becomes greater than that of the sensory world. Even very important activities in the material world no longer have so much pull for the aspirant as do his endeavours in the spiritual field. He saves time from them to complete the work on the spiritual line. It is this stage which determines that the disciple would rather complete that work than leave the Way.

5. **The Fifth Stage, ASAMSHAKTI** = loss of attachment. After regular glimpses of the Real Self, the attachment of self to body or possessions fades away. At this point there remains no identification, association or attachment of self to anything else. (Among 'possessions' are to be included all the old personal attitudes and prejudices.)

About this H.H. said: This stage denotes that the man starts looking at things *as they are*. He gets right values for everything; he realises about things what they are, how they are constituted, what their properties are.

The fifth stage is that in which the person ceases to consider all that is in the world as outside himself. He starts getting glimpses of the fact that he and the 'outside world' are one thing.

It is quite possible, even before the fourth stage, to have glimpses of the next stage ahead, but, as in ordinary education, you have to pass from Primary to Graduation stage by stage, just so you have to take these steps. Unless you pass one, you cannot go on to the next. Thus the completion of the fourth stage determines that the disciple does not turn back or leave the Work. The realization of the Fifth stage gives a feeling of unity with the material world – unity of Spirit with materiality. He realizes, for instance, that the clay is not different from the (design of the) pot. He sees the Unity, the causal aspect within all the material things we register in our daily impressions. He sees the root cause and the effects of that cause together – sees them as one thing. [see also Chapter 4 of *Tertium Organum*]

6. **The Sixth Stage, PADARTHA BHAWANI** means the absence of duality. At this stage one realizes the presence or existence of Atman in everything, everything in Atman.

H.H. said this is the stage when the outward pull is nearly gone, and he comes close to pure Sattva and abundance of Sattva.

Asked further about loss of the sense of duality, he replied with the example of a real elephant and an artificial one made of felt. They may look alike, but with the real elephant we watch out for our safety as we might do with the artificial one if we didn't realise it was unreal. The coarse material world of the senses is like the artificial elephant; once we know all *that* is artificial then we know the Real; we establish relation with the Real, and we don't bother about the artificial.

7. **The last or Seventh Stage is TURIYA** = the fourth, the mighty. The Fourth⁴ state of Consciousness when the Self becomes one with the Atman.

H.H. says that Turiya is the stage of the Realized Man when he knows himself, he knows everything, he knows how to DO, and whatever he does is just the right thing – right action, right thoughts and right feeling – everything all combined.

He said there are other, exceptional, states of consciousness beside the four described, e.g. fainting or unconsciousness of body from whatever cause, hypnosis, trance-state, and finally there is Samadhi where all outward and inward impressions stop for the disciple, who simply exists in bliss but keeps his consciousness by Will. But Turiya is none of these and yet all of them. All the degrees and kinds of consciousness are like colours which merge in the white light.

(12 October 1962)

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⁴This refers to four states of consciousness met with on the Ladder:
1) Dreamless Sleep, 2) Dream, 3) Waking, 4) United.