

7 October 1968

## READING 1

### INTRODUCTION

There are two sides of human nature: what we *know* ('Knowledge') and what we *are* ('Being'). The two together give *Understanding*; this is different from merely knowing; for (though it's easy to forget what you formerly knew), once you understand something it stays. At these meetings of ours we have to look after and feed both sides, both the Knowledge side and the Being side. Only by learning to *be* true and consistent can we *know* the full truth about anything; but this obvious fact is very unpopular today!

There are many kinds of knowledge, but the only kind which leads inevitably to improvement of Being and to flashes of new Understanding, is knowledge of Oneself. Today the advances of the different branches of science on all fronts have brought an enormous wealth of knowledge, except in that one essential respect; for men know themselves even less just now than they did at many other times in human history.

### PART 1. TO KNOW ONESELF

The only way to begin is to observe impartially; and for that it is useful to carry a simple picture in our minds. Figure 1 shows the state of 'the man in the street' who doesn't know that he is an automaton driven by external influences, just a creature of habits and borrowed ideas. Only a few honest observations are needed to prove the point!

Every man is said to possess a house of three storeys but he is usually content to operate from the basement.

We realise moreover that when we are careless and neglectful of our aim even for a single day we revert to this unhappy condition, so we feel in no way superior to the 'man in the street'; for we live on the same street but are lucky enough to have some advantages as well!

[Discussion]

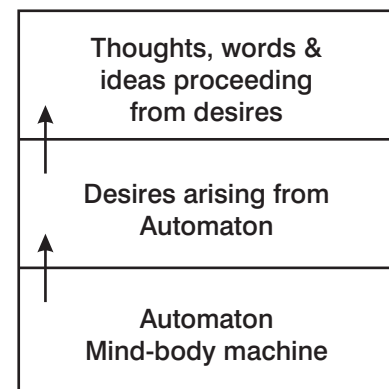


Figure 1. Man at street level  
State of ignorance of Oneself

### PART 2

On setting out to improve this state of affairs we are told that there are three essentials:

1. The 'good company' of people in the same hunt as we are – a new set of friends in fact.
2. A day-to-day method of getting through the fog of ignorance, of which the System of Meditation (which some of you are using) is the simplest and most universal.

And:

3. True Knowledge either coming by direct instruction or through the writings ('Scriptures') of those who have been the whole distance.

Since 1961 we have had the constant personal guidance of one of the present Leaders of the Tradition of the Meditation – the oldest Tradition in the world – a man who is recognised by the discerning throughout Northern India as having permanently achieved the full possibilities attainable by man. So we will be giving you quotations from the latest talks with him from which three of us have just returned.

Only a little of the above ‘treatment’ will bring us to a big discovery and a truer picture of man (Figure 2) – namely the existence of a Fourth Room in the house which contains the immortal principle of man. All religions and Systems of philosophy have sought entry into this Fourth Room, which is like a strongroom containing the treasure of a Knowledge which is eternally true. The diagram shows that it cannot be reached either from Room 1 or Room 3 direct; but that there is only a cloud of ignorance and impurity that comes between it and the heart’s desire. This cloud protects the treasure, but the other rooms are frequently penetrated by influences (‘Good Impulses’) from it which arise spontaneously in individuals among all peoples at all times. But our own experience has taught us that if we neglect these impulses they cease to come, though we may remain haunted by the restless feeling that we have lost something.

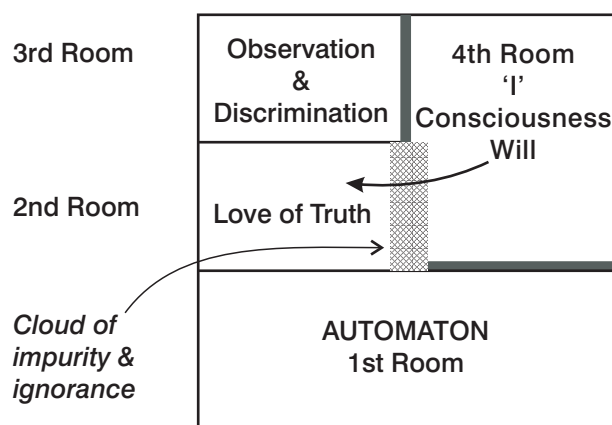


Figure 2  
Finding one's Way

In looking at Figure 2 we see that it is consistent with the view held by a few outstanding scientists of today (we will substantiate this statement next week). The whole of the left-hand side of the diagram comes under the laws studied by the physical sciences, but Consciousness is altogether outside the scope of the experimental laboratory. Current experiments study animals as ‘automata’ and can say nothing at all about what the animal feels and experiences; psychology purports to study the instincts, desires and thoughts of man. But unless the psychologist experiences consciousness himself he is like someone producing *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark!

The ‘fully Realized Man’ we mentioned puts it this way:

The whole Creation has two kinds of content which are called ‘Matter’ and ‘Consciousness’. The material (observable) world owes its existence to Consciousness and consciousness can only be manifested through matter. Each supports the other. On the basis of these two the whole of creation is passing through its measured manifestations and after fulfilling its destiny it returns to its cause. This is what one calls the Law of Causality (‘Cause and Effect’). Every cause produces the inherent effect and every effect conceals its cause within it.

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This is as true of the big Universe as it is of the small world of individual man; and that is why he describes the contents of the Fourth Room as ‘the Causal Level’, the world of psychology as the ‘Subtle Level’ and the gross physical body as the ‘Physical Level’. The three levels are under

wholly different laws of Time, Magnitude and Frequency, and we have to learn to look at the *same* world from the three different levels if we want the answers to our questions.

Pause for discussion

In conclusion we can revert to the subject of Knowledge with which we began and establish two altogether different kinds of Knowledge. 'Natural' knowledge comes from observation of the Laws of Nature and belongs to the left hand side of Figure 2. 'Extrasensory' or 'supernatural' knowledge comes only from those with firsthand experience of the Fourth Room. This, we are told, is the meaning of these six verses from the first *Upanishad* of all – the oldest verbal expression emerging from the Tradition of the Meditation:

Of a certainty the man who can see all creatures in himself, himself in all creatures, knows no sorrow.

How can a wise man, knowing the unity of life, seeing all creatures in himself, be deluded or sorrowful?

The Self is everywhere, without a body, without a shape, whole, pure, wise, all knowing, far shining, self-depending, all transcending; in the eternal procession assigning to every period its proper duty.

Pin your faith to natural knowledge, stumble through the darkness of the blind; pin your faith to supernatural knowledge, stumble through a darkness deeper still.

Natural knowledge brings one result, supernatural knowledge another. We have heard it from the wise who have clearly explained it.

*They that know and can distinguish between natural knowledge and supernatural knowledge shall, by the first, cross the perishable in safety; shall, passing beyond the second, attain immortal life.*

Our work here is to learn to discriminate between 'natural' and 'supernatural' knowledge and to use each of them in its right place, and to improve our Being in the direction of greater consistency of thoughts, words and actions.

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