

11 November 1968

READING 5

Reports from this week's meetings give the clearest confirmation of the Shankaracharya's oft-repeated assurance that the chief obstacle to progress is *ignorance*, which is measured by the degree to which one thinks one already knows! After hearing the second paragraph of Reading 4 about the three different kinds of machine to which people's lives are geared ('Man 1, 2 and 3'), somebody said, 'Oh, I already know all that.' 'Do you?,' said the meeting-taker, 'I'm sure *I* don't.'

People with a wider range of knowledge than anyone else take a different view; both the Shankaracharya and Mevlana have said things like, 'True Knowledge is like a great river flowing from source to ocean. All a man can do is to take a dip in it, or fill a flask for a single day's journey.'

From this it is obvious that one can't know everything (about oneself as a house of three storeys), all at once; it could take a lifetime. But pursue main questions and the details will eventually fall into place.

Are we clear about the difference between three categories of Man, and levels of development? Man 1, 2 and 3 are like three makes of car, say Ford, Morris or Renault – there can be no interchange of parts. But the performance within a particular make may be enormously different – from a mini to a luxury tourer or racing model.

Again, are we clear about the *Fourth Way* and how it differs from specialised or Traditional Ways? The Fourth Way is pursued in the midst of ordinary life and is not confined to a single study or place of study or any permanent shape. It should provide simultaneously for progress on the Way of Action, the Way of Love and the Way of Knowledge; and in addition have methods for work directly on the Fourth Room – such as the System of Meditation or the Mukabeleh. It is up to those in charge to keep the balance.

Many of your questions have quite rightly centred around how to become No.4, a man with 'permanent centre of gravity'. The word 'permanent' here has a relative meaning. The 'Real I', the Atman, from whom all good things come to the individual, manifests Himself in the Silence. Man No.4 knows that, and his strongest desire is to enjoy those manifestations, so he orders his life accordingly. It is achieved entirely through the practice of Attention, in the course of which he learns more and more what attention *is*, and how to have it under the most varied circumstances.

PART 1

In order to answer some of your questions it is necessary to go back to Part 1 of Reading 2, and approach the subject of Attention through observation of the three levels at which each of our chief functions can work. Each function has three 'parts' – mechanical, emotional and voluntary or intellectual.

Take the *Instinctive function* that governs the physical body. The *mechanical part* (which is well hidden from us to prevent our interfering with it) contains all those mechanisms (including true reflexes) which are inborn and do not have to be learnt – like digestion, breathing and circulation of the blood, reception of impressions and their distribution to different parts of the

nervous system. We can really only observe and experience the sensory and *emotional parts*. The latter contains all the truly 'instinctive emotions' like mother-love, sympathy with children and animals, and physical pleasures which it distinguishes from unpleasant sensations as part of the instinct of self-preservation.

The *Intellectual part* is very big and important. In the state of Self-Consciousness or approaching it, one can come into contact with the intellectual part of the instinctive centre and learn a great deal from it about the functioning and possibilities of the machine.

(P. D. Ouspensky: *6th Psychological Lecture*).

This part is the 'mind' behind all the work of the organism preserving its balance and the *milieu interne* in a changing environment.

Those who wish can pursue the same line of observation and study in relation to any of the chief functions. What needs to be stressed at this stage is that all the functions tend to work together at the same level (Figure 1). If our movements are involuntary and mechanical, our thoughts and feelings will also be going without attention. If one function rises to the emotional

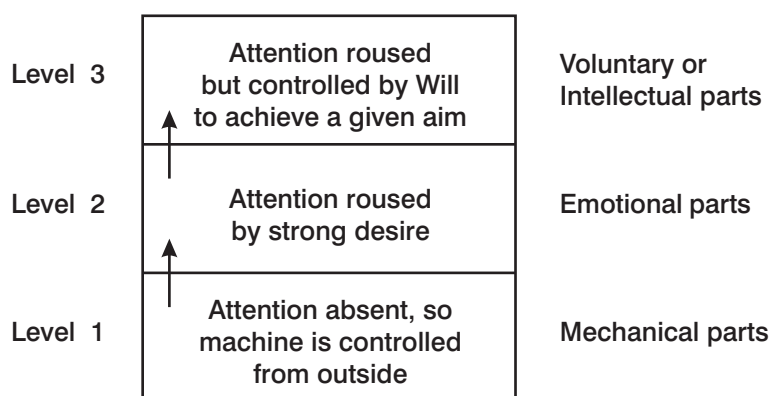


Figure 1

level, so do the others; one can see this in relation to the sex function, for if two people are in love everything tends to go better for them, if they don't get too identified! Or if an artist is in creative mood, his intellect, his emotion, his physical senses and his movements all work at high speed and very efficiently. At such a time attention doesn't have to be sought, it comes; but it is essential for the *discrimination* which is so important then.

In relation to man's Spiritual development, when experiencing at the frequency of Higher emotion or Samadhi, the same degree of attention is needed to select what is useful to the Atman or conducive to permanent happiness, from what is not.

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PART 2

The fact that all the functions tend to work at the same level may be connected with the distribution of energy in the machine. The principle is that each function and each part of a function is linked to a twin system of small accumulators which, in turn, are connected with the main (Figure 2). As one small accumulator is discharged, the others take over while the first fills up again. One can find many examples of paired organs belonging to this system in the body which, of course, is bilaterally symmetrical.

We have no time just now to go into details, but there are three levels for the large-scale control of energy to be found in the central nervous system, which correspond to the voluntary, emotional and mechanical levels of the different functions. (Compare Figure 3 with Figure 1). The lowest level can be compared with the heating system of a house, and the higher ones with the ventilation and lighting systems. Through these elaborate circuits the surplus energy derived from food, air and impressions is filtered and fed into the main accumulator, to be released into the small accumulator systems on demand; these are self-governing, and 'feedback' arrangements are everywhere to be found. It would be nice if our engineers could modernise this part of the System Teaching which has remained very much where it was forty years ago!

For now this brief description will suffice to explain the reason why there has to be a safety device for controlling the outflow of energy from the Big Accumulator in the Fourth Room;

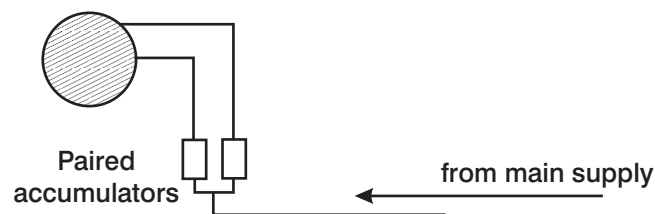


Figure 2

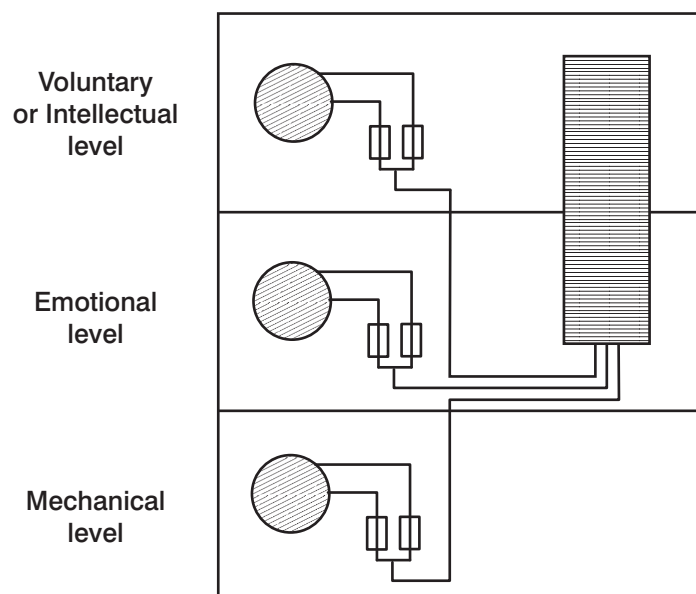


Figure 3

since, if it were all to run away, we should die. It frequently happens (especially from the mental stress occasioned by the increased tempo of modern life), that energy is withdrawn at too fast a rate and a nervous or physical breakdown ensues. In recurrent cyclical disturbances, melancholia and even suicidal impulses will follow with the depletion of nervous energy from prolonged excitement with its attendant insomnia.

The System of Meditation we use will prevent the slightest risk of approaching that state of affairs and, moreover, without any of the unpleasant side-effects of tranquillising drugs. That risk is only mentioned here because of the need for caution and moderation on the path of Self-realization. Attempts of ignorant people to 'take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm' are sternly forbidden. Self-knowledge, and increasing ability to control the attention, will ensure that energy is safely delivered as and when it is needed. Samadhi and Turiya, with Consciousness in the Higher Centres, will come only when we have quietly learnt to stop the leaks of energy through identification with negative imagination and negative emotion, which would otherwise be quite uncontrollable at those higher frequencies.

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CONCLUSION

The development to No.4 and even No.5 (with all the help we are receiving), is a very gentle and happy process. There is now no need for violent measures or for impatient flurry and worry, since the accumulation of Sattva, 'the Energy of Being', will give one that love and longing for the Atman or Divine Self which ensures a smooth progression.

Here are more extracts from the latest talks in India:

Written question from Miss I.

Several times quite recently I have awakened in the night and felt a great sense of peace and joy. All problems completely disappeared and there was a feeling of being in a different world. Some words of His Holiness came to me about the three levels of communication... Would His Holiness tell us more about this please.

S. When the Being is pure and clean then such moments arise and one finds oneself awakened at unexpected times in complete peace and joy. There are then two possibilities. In one case only the presence of the Self is experienced, and that is always full of happiness and peace; whereas in another case one finds oneself in communication. In such situations mental images are formed in the subtle body; whatever one may think or remember immediately comes into being very much like physical things...

Q. Last night I happened to have enough Sattva and to wake with it several times. One time there was a very vivid scene as in a theatre with yourself explaining certain things...

S. Each individual has a luminous or subtle body through which experiences of very varied nature are possible. This body works with the physical body, or it can function by itself. For instance, this subtle body is free of the limits of time and space to which the physical body is subject. Due to this, the subtle body can create forms and images which are not possible for the physical body, although these images are always related to the physical world. Once an inner relation has been established between two persons through the heart, then at certain moments they could communicate...

...

When the Sattva within the individual rises due to meditation one may come under certain influences. These influences are usually impregnated with happiness, love, compassion or Sense of Truth and justice... The real and proper meditation is that when meditation, subject of meditation and the meditator become One, and there will at the time be no experience. In fact, there is nothing to do in meditation except meditate...

...

One can refine this subtle body according to one's being. When, by disciplined work, the coverings of ignorance are removed, one may extend this exercise of power beyond the usual limits. Most of such experiences are possible only for a limited time under certain circumstances; they might reappear but it would be difficult to keep control over them. It is very much like dreams; no one knows when they start or end or how long they will stay.

(15 September 1968)

Q. Has this anything to do with the crystallisation of certain particles on the Ladder of Self-Realization?

S. Firstly, the subtle body should become pure, and secondly, it should remain stable so that the mind does not move from one to other subjects; it should be able to attend continuously to one point. Thirdly, the outer influences are responsible for creating a situation to allow crystallisation to take place. This outer influence is a complex subject in itself.

(16 September 1968)

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