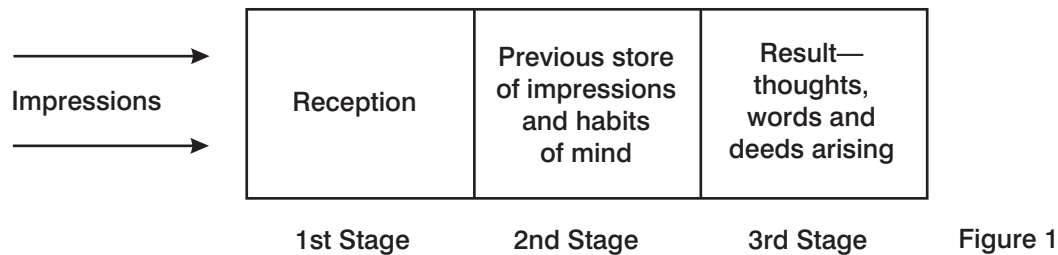


1 June 1970

## READING 5

To return to the three elements of a triad, let us apply the previous picture to the mechanism of the human mind.

The undisciplined man – the ‘man in the street’ – is a machine for turning impressions into action without conscious selection, as shown here:



This in fact is the picture present in scientific thought since the start of modern neurology, if it is understood to apply on the purely physical level – that is, to sense organs, nerves and brain. Some of the most up-to-date research workers admit that science has no idea as to how nerve impulses at the electronic level are translated into experiences in consciousness. The only new aspect (derived from the construction and programming of computers) is that Figure 1 is really a large *circuit* composed of a great number of small circuits, in all of which *output controls input* by means of feedback mechanisms. Our thoughts, words, and deeds are then automatically selecting what impressions we take in, whether they are derived from the outer or the inner world, which we often find difficult to distinguish.

The operation of Mind, then, though based on physical mechanisms must be experienced in terms of a different space-time; shall we call this the subtle level?

Though all of us experience from time to time far more than the mechanism shown in Figure 1, yet we must admit that too much of our days are spent in this mechanical state. If we would like longer periods of freedom from the mind-body machine (‘Manas’) we might find that the following conversation with the Shankaracharya can start us on the way:

### ‘LEARNING HOW TO LIVE’

Many people who aspire to rise high or go on the way towards liberation, want the Self-realization first, and only after Self-realization they might wish to work. This way of thinking is wrong, for there is no such thing as ‘Self-realization first, and work after’. Nor is it possible to exist in the world only with meditation and without supporting oneself and helping others. It must be a two-way process.

Once when a man came to get the meditation, the instructor said: ‘First I want to ask you a question: Can you remember anything you saw on the way here?’ The man thought hard and then said, ‘I’m sorry, but the only thing I can remember was seeing a monkey sitting in a tree making offensive gestures.’ ‘Right,’ said the instructor, ‘now go into the next room and try to get that

monkey out of your mind. Come back when you've succeeded.' But after half-an-hour, the man returned covered with perspiration, and said: 'The more I try to get that monkey out of my mind, the bigger it gets; and now I can't think of anything else!'

'From that experiment,' said the instructor, 'you could learn a number of things: First, that you cannot get something out of your mind by trying to push it out; this only concentrates your attention on the thing you want to get rid of. One should leave it altogether, and attend to something you want to keep. Secondly, if you failed to get rid of one recent impression, it is obviously going to take some time to get rid of all that you have accumulated in your mind during your journey through life.'

Now please listen carefully to what I say. It is the nature of man's existence that whatever is taken in by his mind, stays with him. In a sense, the mind *becomes* whatever it admits; as in your case, it becomes the monkey and keeps on repeating old mannerisms. Once you let a false and selfish idea take root in the mind, it is very difficult to get out; just as there is endless trouble once you let a lunatic into your house.'

(13 September 1968)

There are many such 'monkeys' within each individual which have taken up their abode during his journey through innumerable lives; and they rise on occasion to disturb the peaceful existence. They will play around as long as one allows them to play. To get rid of all this one needs to discipline the mind by giving it something useful to do. The way lies partly through acquiring true Knowledge by which one comes to know things as they really are; and then by meditation, one reduces the effect of old habits so as to allow the mind to work under the control of the Self (Atman) and apply it in one's life through love for others, so as to manifest the Atman to them.

\* \* \*