

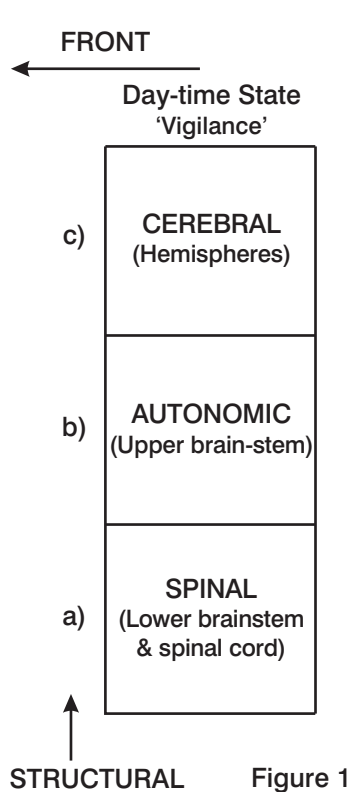
21 May 1973

PART OF SMALL MONDAY MEETING

COLET HOUSE

Dr. R. Well, at this the last meeting of this group as so constituted, I would very much like to find out if it is as much help to you as it is to me in meditating and in getting answers to questions, to try and see these two directions – one in which we can study the world, do the jobs in front of us, and fit things into their external pattern. There is no quarrel with any of that; Professor Bronowski does it regularly in his programme (*The Ascent of Man*) on television, and good luck to it all!

But if your minds get tired with this incessant interest in one thing after another, then there is always the other direction in which to turn in order to get refreshment from the treasury. So we will put the diagram up again; there should be no conflict at all. (Figure 1 – first column of last week's Figure 4 – on screen)



(to Dr. Peter Fenwick). I have not tried this on you; I am glad you are here.

All *that* can be studied factually and scientifically, and by controlled experiment; and I think that all the outer world, and its repercussions which can be studied physically, could be said to be contained in that structural diagram. So, on the big scale, one can see it as the three divisions of the nervous system – Cerebral, Autonomic and Spinal; or, on the smaller scale of the brain itself, as the hemispheres, upper brainstem, and the lower brainstem and spinal cord; or, taking the forebrain only, one can see the same three storeys there. So I find it very interesting to try and connect what I see and hear around me, and from knowledge being discovered, with this form of a 'threeness in a Oneness'.

Then I feel the need of something else, and I find that what works so marvellously in our sort of life is this whole System that the Shankaracharya has been developing over the last three years, so that I would like to make it connect up with people in a more direct way and not across the Indian ocean!

(With Figure 2, i.e., with the next two columns of last week's Figure 4 added on screen, overleaf).

So, going inwards in terms of the physical life (the 24-hour cycle), we go from the daytime state, through the dream-state to the dreamless state, about which we know nothing; but in spiritual terms it is just the reverse, because the daytime state is deep spiritual sleep; the dream-state is where all kinds of spiritual creations can take place – where general ideas and forms and shapes get aroused, and all types of creativity can evolve; and in this dreamless state, if we stay awake, there is nothing between us and the Pure Consciousness.

A very interesting thing that has been proved since Hughlings Jackson first mooted the idea of 'internal evolution' (with a certain amount of confirmation in current work) is that big changes in a person's character (though linked around constitution) take place during

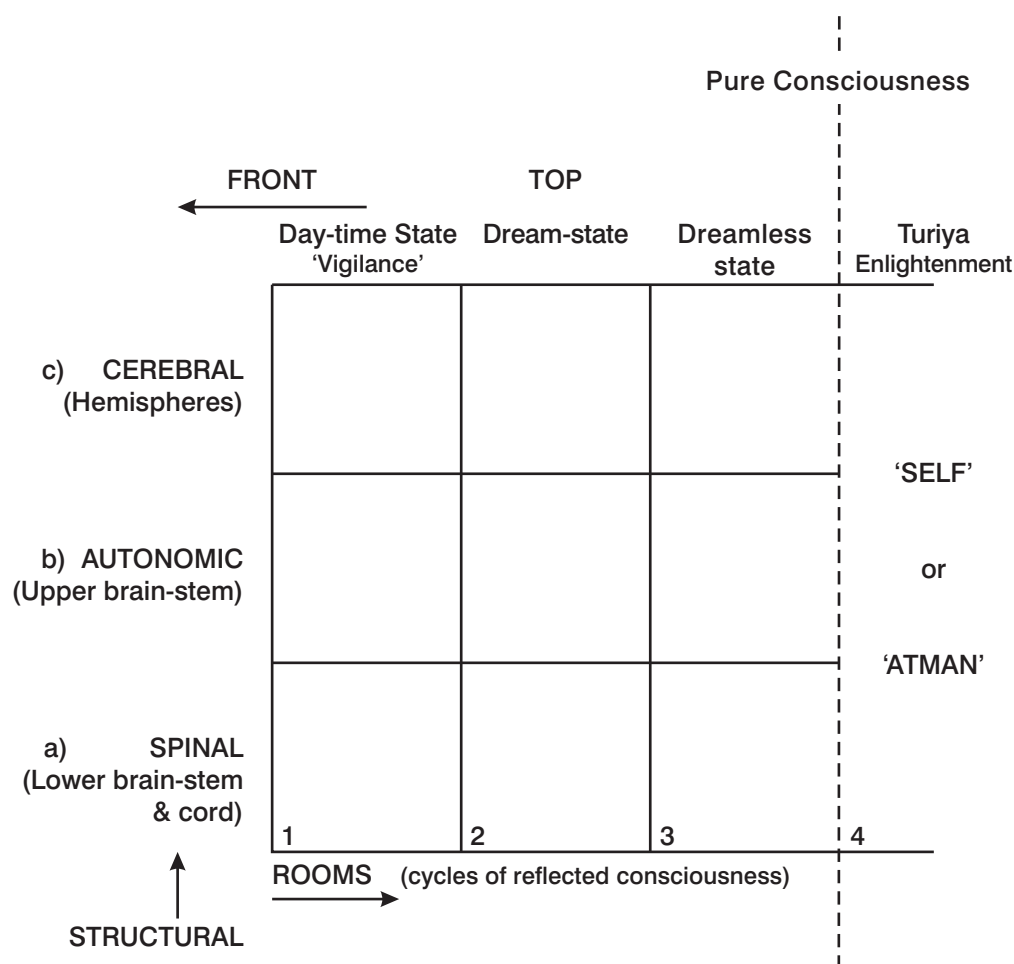


Figure 2

dreamless sleep; but we want a big change to occur, to some extent, *under our control and orientated by us*. It would have to be in a dreamless state when the attention is not engaged and switching from one object, or from one idea or memory to another. That is a reason for finding the way inwards to that same area of mind or brain, while still remaining awake.

How do we establish the meaning of the two directions in figures 1 and 2, in terms of our own experience?

The mental equipment over which we have control is this top storey. The first room on the left is structural – the prefrontal lobes. This is felt as our familiar mind, and we can make our minds think of this or that or not think as we like; and it is the only past over which we have direct control, so the beginning of the meditation and other systematic work on attending must begin there.

But, in going inwards, we also go downwards into the depth of our nature, only we have no control over the downward direction of that process – that is part of 'the works' – but we achieve it by going *inwards* – discounting first of all the daytime impressions; then the dreams; and when we leave everything so that there is complete silence we are, at the same time, entering more and more primitive areas of our nervous equipment and fresh and untapped sources of energy – bringing a new feeling of 'I' or sense of individuality.

I wonder if this corresponds with what you have experienced from time to time when you try to meditate? How impossible the meditation is if this top storey is full of surface thoughts; and when we have relinquished those, do we not find our mind still in motion pursuing the deeper dreams and memories? Is there anything you want to say? Would you

agree that this is a reasonable working model – at least it doesn't produce conflicts between the scientific objective and our objective?

Mrs. Fleming. I seem to notice in myself that there is no unity ordinarily between the cerebral and autonomic, and it appears to become united in the dreamless state or on the causal level?

Dr. R. Very true. It varies of course in different people; in some there is not very much disunity; in others there is continual conflict going on; and some people make themselves ill by the wrong kind of suggestion to their autonomic. Because it is highly suggestible.

Mrs. Fleming. But when one gets the unity on the dream level and gets to the dreamless, one feels as if one goes through the dotted line?

Dr. R. We don't need to try and connect everything with the diagram, but just to get the *two directions* as a start, and then following that direction in actual practice will lead you to your own answer.

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About understanding the Shankaracharya. I asked, 'What of all the things he had told me, is the most important to me at the present time?' He said that he would try to sum it up.

Physically, I was to be completely in the service of Param-Atman, considering myself everyone's servant.

Devotionally, I should pay attention to the Supreme Being, never forgetting its eternal benevolence.

Intellectually, I was to identify myself as One with the Param-Atman, who witnesses everything and is being revealed in all the forms I see around me.

All that is such a big task that there seems no time for arbitrary excursions into philosophy, but I think you will find in that and other things this threefold division is rather a help.

Mr. Peter Eadie. I just wondered where does a person conquer fear?

Dr. R. There are different kinds of fear, Peter, but we are unaware of the early stages until the point when it comes into our consciousness – usually through its physical manifestations; one's knees tremble, and various things of that sort! One has to have something already prepared before one can deal with those very quick manifestations of fear which seem to overwhelm one, instantaneously and unexpectedly.

Mr. Eadie. One notices sometimes a feeling of paralysis, and one wonders what one should be able to do, because it is too late to deal with the matter when it is upon one?

Dr. R. Yes, it is always too late to conquer the *effects* of fear. To reach the causes of fear it is absolutely essential to have something like keeping the Param-Atman in memory all the time and to practise this – just as one can learn to swim in a pool before trying to swim in the sea. The mind is so slow compared with these quick inner reactions, that one has to build up an attitude, say, by some regular practice.

That is one of the things I want to introduce in another way this afternoon.

But first, are there other questions which cause you to feel that there is something very unclear about this in practice? – only it is meant to be for practice!

Mrs. Gould. To actualise something in the dream-state, does one have to pass through the dream-state and beyond, and then come back?

Dr. R. I don't know what your question means, or why you should want to actualise 'something in the dream-state'? Dreams are so flimsy and temporary.

(to Dr. F.). I hope you are storing up these questions; they are more in your field than mine!

But would you not agree that it would be necessary to create some persistent form of belief, or some sure method which one has found to work in one's own case from day to day in order to prepare for whatever booby-traps life may set for one?

Dr. Fenwick. It is the only way one can get control.

Mr. Michael Fleming. In practice, if it works, you don't feel afraid in a situation where you have been before. I suppose there must be other things happening in the other storeys as well? It seems to be almost a biochemical change?

Dr. R. Yes, each system is connected with everything else, and there certainly are highly complicated and rapid biochemical and electromagnetic changes accompanying any of these structural physical states.

Mrs. Fleming. Would you say that if you have some reserve at the moment when your heart begins to beat because of physical fear, if you are prepared it is all right – it fades away because something else is looking after it?

Dr. R. Yes, and even something more definite than merely a 'reserve'; a *spell* is needed for that moment, already prepared. This I know can work.

Now what really counts – makes all other things much less important – is the method which the Shankaracharya has suggested, of having *constantly in remembrance the Supreme Being*, which is *oneSelf*. So that not only do you apply to it for the answer to every question, but you dedicate your thinking, feeling and actions to that same Being, learning to realise that you are not the doer and not the thinker. It's not enough if we begin just before we die; we have to start early and do the spadework! We create this magic spell against the moment of fear.

The Shankaracharya says that people often come to a Realized man or Master and ask to be shown the Param-Atman or the Supreme Being, and this puts the teacher in a dilemma because he cannot do that without a lot of spadework, and this the ordinary person won't have time for!

So, with the idea of trying to cultivate the remembrance of the Supreme Being all the time, I have here a whole volume of the Shankaracharya's talks and answers to our questions during 1972 and 1973, and I would like to use it, bit by bit, to bring this idea of the Param-Atman a little closer to us. Surely there are forms of expression of this same reality nearer to our language, our times and ideas in the West? It is, as I have said before, largely a question of language – the way we talk to ourselves and communicate with other people.

...

Meditation

(Afterwards Dr. R. said).

‘I ARISE TODAY’
if the mind will
only shed this burden
of past and future and plurality.

And this is how, through the setting up of a right attitude, we are being advised to accomplish the same thing: (from the Shankaracharya’s Ashram Talk, August, 1970)

Dr. R. reading:

We want to meditate on the Param-Atman. As it is the Source of all greatness, its own greatness must be infinite; as it is the Source of all happiness, its own happiness must be boundless; as it is the Source of all beauty, its own beauty must be – we do not know... But how could we ever meditate on such a Param-Atman whose qualities and nature are far beyond the utmost stretch of human imagination?

It was the question that Arjuna put to Lord Krishna, to which he answered.

I am the Self in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, and the Life, and I am the end of them all.

Whatever is glorious, excellent, beautiful or mighty, be assured that it comes from only a part of My splendour...

All this implies that by thinking of the most powerful manifest thing as only a tiny particle of Param-Atman’s power; by thinking of the most beautiful object we can, and then treating it as a mere atom of Param-Atman’s beauty, and so on, we can gradually find our way to Param-Atman. Thus, starting from sensory objects and rising higher and higher, we reach a state where all difference between sensory and ultra-sensory, between definable and undefinable has faded away from us.

Thus, what to ordinary people are *different* shapes and forms, are to a fully Realized person all manifestations of one and the same Param-Atman. What he sees then, around and within himself, is Param-Atman (the Unity, the Oneness) and *not* the mirage which we call ‘the world’. Such a man would welcome heat and cold, pleasure and pain, fortune and misfortune – all alike, because all are manifestations of the Param-Atman.

(Record, 1 August 1970)

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Well, I hope you have a good holiday. We meet again in a fortnight’s time as a large meeting, with all but the two newest groups; and by that time we must have decided how we are going on, so now we turn to the Param-Atman for the solution.

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