

25 November 1974

READING 5

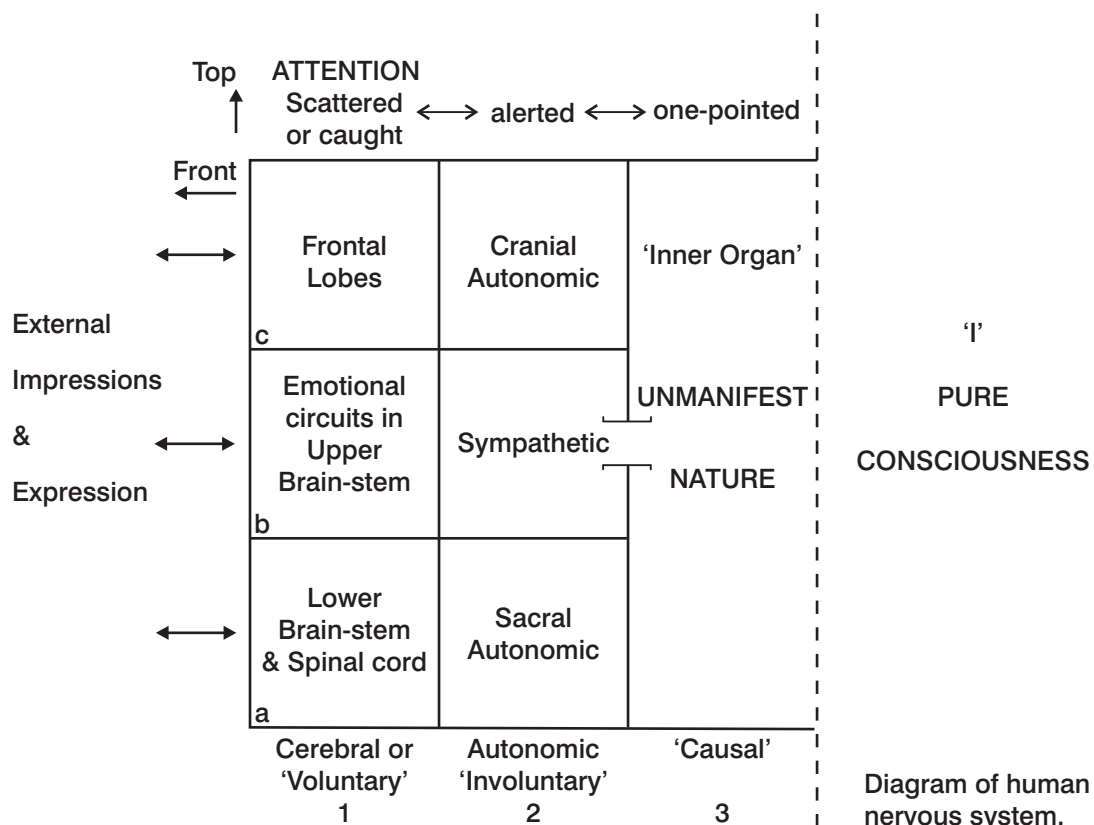
PART 1

Most people last week made heavy weather of trying to apply the Symbol of the Circle to our psychology; so perhaps we should return to the familiar picture of the house of three storeys, chiefly with the object of tracing the origin of those negative emotions that are so prominent everywhere now. This is what Mr Ouspensky had to say about them in his 'Psychological Lectures' just forty years ago:

These negative emotions are a terrible phenomenon. They occupy an enormous place in our life. Of many people it is possible to say that all their lives are regulated and controlled, and in the end ruined, by negative emotions. At the same time negative emotions do not play any useful part at all in our lives; they do not help our orientation, they do not give us any knowledge, do not guide us in any sensible manner. On the contrary, they spoil all our pleasures, they make life a burden to us, and they very effectively prevent our possible development because there is nothing more mechanical in our life than negative emotions.

In the figure the three vertical columns represent: *on the left* the cerebrospinal nervous system which occupies the centre of the stage in our thought today, for its functions can be largely known on the physical level; in the middle column we place the unseen and much neglected autonomic or emotional nervous system, over which we have no direct control; and the right hand column indicates the Causal level, which can be known only by the cultivation of one-pointed attention directed always towards the dotted line – the Pure Consciousness, or the Self.

The horizontal divisions – from above downwards – represent anatomical levels in the brain: the top being the frontal lobes, the middle the emotional circuits at the centre (Penfield



calls it ‘the great central headquarters in the upper brainstem’), and the lower the instinctive-moving mechanisms in the brain-stem and spinal cord, including the vital centres of respiration and circulation, etc.

Observation shows that the seedbed for negative emotions – that second column, arises either a) in the top storey from negative thinking, or b) in the lower storey from unpleasant physical sensations. In intellectuals (blood group A) the former is more prevalent, and in instinctive people (blood group O) the latter. The top compartment of column 2 (cranial autonomic) is governed by the chemical mediators which produce all the physical and mental characteristics of sleep, depression and apathy (Tamas). The bottom compartment (which is dominated by the explosive energy of sex) is governed by opposing chemicals which throughout organic life give rise to aggression (Rajas, from which comes our word ‘rage’). Emotionals – middle storey people (blood group B) – enjoy both, and also particularly object to having ‘their feelings hurt’!

The way to reach the delights which are to be found on the Causal level is by the understanding and practice of attention, together with the Shankaracharya’s instruction about fixing mind and heart on the single idea of the Universal Consciousness.

Any questions please?

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PART 2

Some people like their information put in scientific language, while others prefer it in more picturesque form. The middle column 2 can be felt most readily in connection with the Three Gunas. When full of Sattva one feels a warm and sympathetic heart. With the burning heat of Rajas the emotional life is reduced to ashes; while narrow and selfish thought processes at the top turn the heart to ice. Hans Anderson’s fairy story *The Snow Queen* (which we last quoted in 1952) describes the process:

You may remember that the chief goblin made a ‘mirror’ which had this peculiarity, that everything good and beautiful that was reflected in it shrank almost to nothing, but all that was worthless and ugly was magnified and looked even worse than before. All who went to his goblin school ran about with the ‘mirror’ till at last there was not a land or a person that was not distorted in it.

Next, they wanted to fly up to heaven with it, but the higher they flew (‘nearer to God and the angels’), the more the mirror trembled till it slid out of their hands and, falling to earth, was shattered into millions of splinters. ‘After that it caused greater misfortune than before, for some of the splinters were hardly as big as a grain of sand, and these flew about all over the world, and whenever they flew into anyone’s eye they stuck there, and those people saw everything distorted, *or had eyes only for the wrong side of a thing*, for every little fragment had retained the same power as the whole looking-glass. *A few people even got a tiny splinter of the mirror into their hearts*, and that was terrible indeed, for such a heart became a block of ice...’

‘What,’ people ask, ‘do these splinters mean?’ In the story of *The Snow Queen*, the boy Kay was smitten with splinters in the eye and heart, captured by the ‘Snow Queen’, and only rescued through the devotion of his small companion Gerda. This was his sad condition when she found him at last and before she melted his heart with her kisses:

Kay was blue with cold – indeed nearly black, *but he did not feel it...* for his heart was like a lump of ice. He was dragging some sharp flat pieces of ice to and fro, joining them together in all kinds of ways, for he wanted to make something out of them. It was just as when we have little shapes cut in wood and piece them together to form patterns which we call a Chinese puzzle. Kay was making patterns too – *it was the ice-game of thinking*. In his eyes the patterns were very remarkable and of the highest importance; that was because of the speck of glass in his eye. He laid out whole patterns so that they formed words – but he could never manage to make the word he wanted – the word ‘Eternity’.

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PART 3

Since 1952 we have tried many ways of transforming our emotional life. In 1960 we were given the modern form of the System of Meditation, which I believe to have been designed to cure the Spiritual ‘ice-age’ that had already led to two world wars and was likely to develop into the situation we see today. I also believe that the only infallible way to transform negative into positive emotion is that to which the Shankaracharya has brought us. This summary was given in answer to an old friend of ours (in charge of a very large group in Holland) which we took with us one time when we went to India:

Q. What is to be the next step, when one has really seen that only the Atman is Truth, the rest but Maya? Does it take a long time to let this penetrate in the whole being?

S. When this idea (that Atman alone is Truth and the rest is Maya, brought about by thought processes based on bodily sensations) has been fully appreciated, then one will experience expansion of light, power, knowledge and service; and accordingly the limited ideas of individuality and relationships will break their barriers and go on extending in proportion to the depth at which this idea is rooted in the being. The being will be full of enthusiasm and one will be naturally able to know more, teach more, and serve more than one used to do. The human world would become a family; the limited would become unlimited, small will be enlarged, and darkness be transformed into Light. Love would prevail everywhere; a person will love all, and all others will love this person.

In the 12th chapter of *Bhagavad-Gita* (the one called Bhakti-Yoga or the Way of Love), Krishna says that, ‘Whoever loves Me, would love everyone in the world and also be loved by them; for when love prevails the response is from both sides.’

To manifest this Knowledge is to expand the family, to offer the service to many more, and to pour out love on all. If love, knowledge and service is on the increase, I should assume that the idea that ‘Atman alone is Truth’ is manifesting. At this stage the personal self is fully purified; and the light, power and knowledge of the Atman is made to reflect in one’s inner being and also in the outer world, just as a clear glass allows the reflection of light inside and outside equally. But if instead an opaque wall is built up, even though the light may shine inside and produce warmth, yet the light and the warmth would not be made available outside. This idea, fully appreciated, will clean the being and allow full reflection of power, knowledge, happiness and service.’

(Record, 9 February 1971)

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