

6 February 1978

READING 4

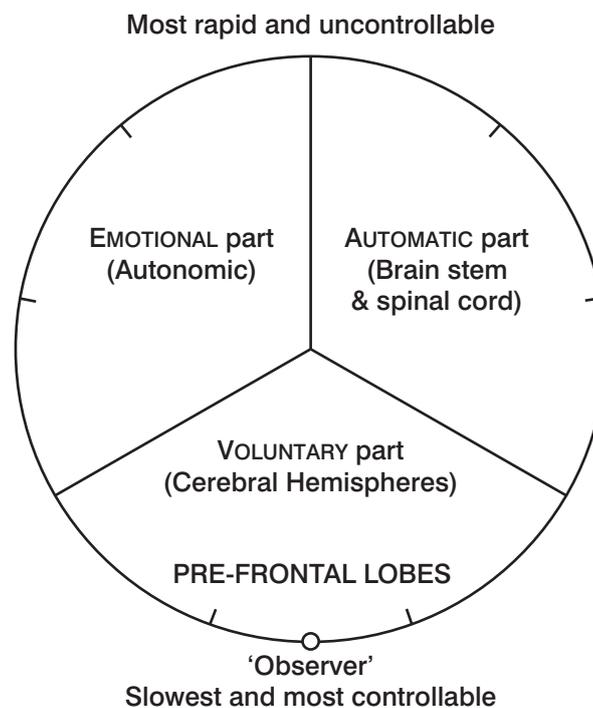
OBSERVER (CONT.)

PART 1

This, together with Reading 3, has to last for two weeks since each group is meant to encourage its members to make their own daily-life observations according to a definite plan.

We have said that all our major functions are made on the same basic plan as part of the whole complicated human machinery. Two of these functions – movement and speech – are most easily observed to begin with.

Taking *Movement* first, we can confirm quite quickly that the daily cycle is composed of three kinds of movement: 1) *automatic movements* which proceed without any attention at all, 2) *voluntary movements* which demand some degree of attention, and 3) *movements activated by emotion* of some kind according to whether we enjoy or dislike doing them. Here attention is more or less difficult to control according to our degree of emotional involvement one way or the other.



THE DAILY CIRCUIT (any major function)

Most routine work is done with scarcely any feeling at all; but now and then like and dislike comes into it and emotional expression by man and animals (especially birds) is chiefly done through movement.

The next thing to see is that voluntary movement has to very *slow*. Try running downstairs attending to each step – if you don't do it very slowly, you'll fall. This difference in speed is very obvious when you are learning any skilled or new set of movements – you have to 'use your head' all the time, as when you are learning to drive a car. But everyone knows the relief experienced when driving becomes automatic – you pass your test and take the 'L' off. The mechanism then carries it all out at top speed and the attention is free to look out for anything unusual, to prepare for any

emergency. The ratio of the speeds of the 'voluntary' and the 'mechanical' parts of movement is far greater than we imagine – the latter can be done 30,000 times quicker. And when you have acquired full control of attention or in tense situations when the emotion is fully alerted, the possibilities of doing the most complicated set of movements at high speed is quite unbelievable. Take as examples what the Captain of a jumbo jet plane or Concorde can achieve when taking off or landing or in emergency; also in sports like tennis or skiing at international level.

So would you bring examples which confirm this difference in speed? Some people are able to see this every week when Turning in a Mukabeleh or doing the 'Movements'.

Next let us take *speech*. Most of the time talking is automatic; if there is somebody to talk to, the words pour out and if there's nobody else we patter away to ourselves! But at an important interview or at a press conference one's words must be measured very carefully and, for a Prime Minister at question time in Parliament, long practice can achieve wonders.

It's often easier, of course, to observe this in other people such as intimate friends or members of one's family – the familiar 'gramophone records' can only be dodged with some difficulty. Then, one fine day, one sees by someone's expression that one is oneself playing one's own gramophone! What is important is that these records or sound-tracks tend so often to be engaged in what Mr. Ouspensky used to call 'lying' – talking about something you know nothing about *as if you knew*. This habit must be stopped or one will never absorb anything new or become an impartial receiver and transmitter of True Knowledge.

(Pause for discussion)

Even such rudimentary attempts as we are able to make, will quickly convince one of the value of maintaining these pre-frontal lobes as 'a pure white screen on which one sees all the pictures and scenes being enacted, but only as a silent Observer'.

Observations of very young children are of special interest here. It has been established that for a few weeks before and after birth, the brain of a baby is quite smooth (with only the main fissures clearly discernable). During its first months, the baby can be seen to be constructing its own body image so that impressions which fit into that are 'me' and all other impressions are 'not me'. Its motor responses are of course very limited and any mother knows that the same yell may indicate cold, hunger, thirst, or fright; and the same smile express either joy or merely wind! But gradually by imitation its repertoire of movement increases until at a year old it is walking and by three it can say sentences and has established whether it is going to be right or left-handed, and the brain surface has become corrugated into many lumps and folds. So you could bring your babies to your groups – though group-takers would probably prefer that you just bring only *observations* about your babies!

Finally, movement is the best field for observing the three aspects of energy (the 'Gunas') so as to understand the Shankaracharya's teaching on movement when either Rajas, Tamas or Sattva predominates. We then take the valuable step of distinguishing excitement from emotion, which are being so confused everywhere today.

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PART 2 (Again, for the more experienced people)

I wonder if you realise the importance of the idea (expressed in Part 2 of Reading 3, 1978/3) of the need for all of us now to convert the personal individual self (Vyashti) into the universal Self (Samashti)? This *change of attitude* is really all that has to be accomplished on the way to self-fulfilment both in this life and in lives to come.

We will continue Mr. Howitt's recent line with the Shankaracharya with this quotation from the New Zealanders' fourth audience:

N.G.H. A man on the way of the householder must by nature tend to be predominantly either intellectual, emotional or active (sensory-motor). Are there different kinds of discipline for each?

S. There are two kinds of programme (Sadhana) – one is general and applicable to all; others are individual and will differ from person to person according to their place of living, to the society to which they belong, and all that.

N.G.H. I ask that question because with the people back in New Zealand one wonders if there are any signs or indications to tell to which of those three a given person belongs.

S. Those who are critical in their approach are called 'intellectual'; they need knowledge or intellectual teaching (Jnana). Those who are emotional demand Bhakti. Those who are, as it were, indifferent, neither particularly intellectual nor devotional, need to do something in order to get along the spiritual path. (Some of these are instinctive or passive while the majority are active.) In our country they usually have to worship, go to the temple and that sort of thing. But those who feel intensely come under the emotional way of Bhakti while for those whose approach is critical come by Jnana or reason.

N.G.H. What are the particular obstacles for the intellectual and for the emotional person that one should watch out for?

S. In Bhakti one should be very careful that there should be nothing to disturb one's faith (Shradda); in Jnana one has to be careful that one is honest about what he is thinking and saying.

B.R.H. When H.H. was speaking earlier about offering one's actions, everything one has, to the Param-Atman, is this general to each of these types of people or is it particular to one?

Translator, Sri Narayan. I am grateful to you for this is one of my own questions.

S. Surrender (of the individual consciousness to the universal) is necessary in all three, because unless you surrender that, you will not be able to get light even for the intellectual understanding of things; and then of course surrender is essential for devotion and faith (and then he re-tells the story of the two kinds of artist which clarifies the difference between Jnana and Bhakti). 'Now,' he added, 'the one who frescoed the wall is a Bhakta and the one who polished it is the Jnana.'

(Record, 10 January 1978)

Had we seen this story in that context before?

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