

25 June 1979

READING 6

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the practice of 'attention' has already shown you that, such as we are, we can only directly attend (through the dominant hemisphere) to those parts of our machine which are manifested in the outer world. But even this can lead to a considerable 'no claim bonus' in the improved functions of the quiet inward-looking half of our nature, so that we get a number of pleasant surprises.

We have demonstrated this in relation to two of our principle functions, the 'moving' and the 'instinctive'; and during the next two weeks can go on to study the thinking and the feeling apparatus on the same basis.

There is little time this term to go into the subject in much detail but if during careful study during the holidays, interest in its importance is aroused, we'd like to return to it in the autumn.

PART 1. THE 'THINKING' OR 'INTELLECTUAL' FUNCTION

Of no part of human endowment is Mr. Ouspensky's basic statement about the relation between quality of performance and the three levels of attention more obviously true:

The division of a centre into three parts is very simple. A mechanical part works almost automatically; it can go on without attention. But because of this it cannot adapt itself to a change of circumstances, it cannot 'think', and continues to work by habit in the way it started (with the development of speech at the age of about 3 years) when circumstances have completely changed.

For the intellectual function, the mechanical part includes in itself all the work of registration of impressions, memories and relationships. This is all it should do normally, i.e. when other parts do their work. It should never *reply* to questions addressed to the whole centre, it should never try to *solve* problems and it should never *decide* anything... This part has its own name. It is called a 'formatory apparatus' or 'formatory centre'. The vast majority of mankind live all their lives with the *formatory apparatus* only, since for the immediate needs of living the formatory apparatus is quite sufficient.

The *emotional part* is concerned with a strong desire for knowledge, i.e. desire to know, desire to understand, satisfaction of knowing, dissatisfaction of not knowing, pleasure of discovering and so on, although again all these can manifest on very different levels. The work of the emotional part requires full attention, but in this part of the centre *attention does not require any effort*. It is attracted and held by the subject itself through (very often) 'identification' which is usually called 'interest' or 'concentration' or 'enthusiasm' or 'dedication'. The *higher or 'voluntary' part* of the intellect includes a capacity for creation, construction and discovery. It cannot work without attention but in this part *attention must be controlled* and kept to one point by will and effort. (It is rare and always impressive. Many great names spring to the mind – Darwin, Mendel, Pasteur etc., whose original hard work and brilliant exposition came from the higher part of the intellectual centre.)

Though this description given by our Western System is simple and clear, yet only the Shankaracharya's tradition of non-dualism shows us a way of escape from the spider's web of 'formatory thinking'. This is what invariably wrecks discussions at our own meetings where ideas from Higher Mind are introduced only to be killed and dissected by formatory thinkers! In common life, too, especially in politics the difficulties it causes are very obvious. In Mr. Ouspensky's words:

It is always possible to recognise 'formatory thinking', since formatory centre can only count up to two. It divides everything into two; 'communism and fascism', 'workers and bourgeois', 'labour and capital' and so on. We owe most current catchwords to formatory thinking, and not only catchwords but popular theories at all times in human history.

The newer work on the bilateral structure of the brain has revealed a fascinating explanation of formatory centre with the help of the Shankaracharya's stories and teachings. For evidently *both hemispheres are subject to it* but in their own separate ways. In the inward-looking hemisphere it gives rise to primitive superstitions and defective thinking; in the dominant outward one to a 'rigid logic' which does not see its own limitations. (See preface to second edition *A New Model of the Universe*.)

PART 2. THE EMOTIONAL OR 'FEELING' CENTRE

We are not yet ready to observe or prove the truth about the three parts of this most powerful apparatus upon which all Self-realization ultimately depends. That is because what we call 'attention' (i.e. the dominant hemisphere plus the formatory apparatus) at once stops the higher parts from functioning; and also because imaginary negative emotions are an endemic disease. Mr. Ouspensky's great discovery was that there is *no centre for negative emotions*, which are borrowed from other centres (just as in the sex function which in itself is only positive). If we really fall in love, all rivals cease to exist and we remain completely *indifferent* (though not negative) to others.

As Mr. Ouspensky said:

If negative emotions were useful or necessary for any, even the smallest purpose, and if they were a function of a really existing part of the emotional centre, man would have no chance, because no inner development is possible so long as man keeps his negative emotions. In School language it is expressed in the phrase *'Man must sacrifice his suffering'*.
(*Psychological Lectures*, P.D.O.)

While physical pain is necessary for any embodied being, *suffering* for both His Holiness and Mr. Ouspensky is psychological and can be destroyed without loss! For Christians too, it is clear that while Christ was enduring extreme physical agony on the cross, he could say to the repentant thief: 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' Thus He showed the whole world that suffering *can* be conquered.

Ridding ourselves (even for moments) of the duality of 'positive and negative' which doesn't exist for the emotional centre, we can briefly sketch out the three parts of the real centre:

The *mechanical part* consists of the cheapest kind of ready-made humour, sentimentality, love of excitement, of spectacular shows, of being in a crowd; attraction to crowd emotions and complete disappearance in lower half-animal emotions, cruelty, selfishness, cowardice, envy, jealousy etc.

The *emotional part* is very different in different people. It may include a (first-class) sense of humour, as well as religious, aesthetic and moral emotion in which case it may lead to the awakening of *conscience*.

(*ibid*)

Note. And this is the only point where, for us, Attention can be practised. Once we learn to recognise the voice of conscience we must instantaneously *attend* to it to the exclusion of all else. 'But with identification the emotional part can be something quite different. It may be very sarcastic, cruel, obstinate, wicked and jealous in a less primitive way'.

The *higher part* of the emotional centre (with the help of the higher parts of other centres), provides both for Self-realization by the way of Bhakti and also the power of artistic creation. As Mr. Ouspensky stressed, if the technical command which is necessary for the manifestation of the creative faculty provided by other centres is not correspondingly developed, it only manifests in dreams. 'This,' he said 'explains the beautiful and artistic dreams of otherwise inartistic people'.

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CONCLUSION

Although there has been only space for the bare bones of the subject, yet perhaps we have said enough to indicate that only through the Advaita (non-dualistic) system of the Shankaracharya based on Meditation, can we ordinary people develop the latent powers of the thinking and the feeling functions.

Without that, our Western System in spite of its basic knowledge, only led to even more suffering, negative emotions and formatory thinking, and seems to have done more harm than good.

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