

# THE FOURTH WAY

An Introduction by Lars Adelskog

Part Two of Two

In this second part of the present article on the fourth way there is a more detailed treatment of the four basic functions of man and their connection to four centres in man; there is also a discussion on why the knowledge of centres is important, on understanding, right attitude, work for your own goals, conscience, identification, the awakening of will, and the path to be walked.

## CENTRES

Our four basic functions – movements, instincts (sense impressions included), emotions, and thoughts – are located in four centres in man: the moving centre, the instinctive centre, the emotional centre, and the intellectual centre. These centres are said to be situated in certain places in the body, and even if they are localized there, they nevertheless penetrate with their activity the entire man, so that each centre can be said to be present everywhere in the body. Each centre has its own intelligence and its own memory, its own work and its own laziness, so that it is a being in its own right; in other words, you are not one person, but four: a moving person, an instinctive person, an emotional person, an intellectual person; and each one of these four “persons” can know things that the other three do not know, remember things that the other three do not remember, decide things that the other three do not want to carry out, etc.

Some centres are divided into two halves – positive and negative. This division is particularly distinct in the intellectual centre and the instinctive centre. The division of the intellectual centre is about “yes” and “no”, affirmation and denial. The division of the instinctive centre is obvious: pleasure and pain, pleasant and unpleasant sense perceptions. This division governs all instinctive life, all sensuality. The moving centre is divided into the two halves of motion and rest. It would seem as if the emotional centre were divided into positive and negative emotions, but this is not the case. All our negative, hateful, and depressive emotions, thus the bulk of what causes our psychic suffering, has the same character and origin – it is unnatural. Our being actually has no proper centre of negative emotions, but these originate in an artificial centre. This centre begins to be formed in early childhood through imitation, when the child grows up and imitates the negative emotions of adults.

Moreover, each centre is divided into three parts: intellectual part, emotional part, and moving part. The moving part of each centre is the most mechanical, the intellectual part is the least mechanical. The moving parts, also called the mechanical parts, are the parts of centres that we use the most often. Even the emotional parts we use only occasionally. The intellectual parts we ordinarily use very seldom. This shows how we limit ourselves, how we utilize only a small part, the weakest part ourselves, the part most deeply asleep.

How can we observe which parts of which centres are active in us when we live our everyday lives? This is very easy to discern after some exercise. If our temporary “I” is found in mechanical parts of centres, this manifests itself in the fact that thoughts, emotions, movements, or sense impressions occur without our attention or, at the utmost, that attention jumps about between various objects. Emotional parts need for their work that attention is kept on what you are doing, but this is done without effort or intention, for in this case the object of attention attracts it and keeps it by a force called “interest”, “fascination”, or something similar. Intellectual parts need for their work that you control and direct attention yourself, and this requires effort.

To sum up: The character of the action will show you which centre you are in – intellectual, emotional, and so on. The quality of attention will show you which part of the centre is active: the mechanical part without attention, the emotional part with attention but without effort, the intellectual part with both attention and effort. Or, put differently: no control in the mechanical part, control by the object in the emotional part, and control by yourself in the intellectual part.

A few examples will make this division of centres into three parts clearer. Through the mechanical part of the moving centre occur all automatic movements, which in ordinary language are called “instinctive”, such as catching a falling object without thinking. Thoughtless talking and talking for talking’s sake also belong here. All movements of the moving centre have to be learnt. Inborn movements – thus simple reflexes – come from the instinctive centre. In the emotional part of the moving centre is found the function connected with the pleasure of movement, the love of sports and games. From the intellectual part of the moving centre comes all well-done physical work, work that needs many inventions, constant attention and adaptation to reality. The emotional part of the instinctive centre: sensations of physical pain or enjoyment as well as unpleasant or pleasant sounds, smells, tastes, visual impressions, and other sense perceptions. The mechanical part of the emotional centre: the cheapest kind of ready-made humour and a rough sense of the comical; love of being in a crowd, being part of a crowd, attraction to crowd emotions of all kinds; complete disappearance in lower half – animal emotions; cruelty, jealousy, selfishness, envy, cowardice, and so on. The intellectual part of the emotional centre: effort to understand the feelings of other people, consideration of others, conscientiousness to others, power of artistic creation. The emotional part of the intellectual centre: desire to know and understand, fascination for knowledge, satisfaction of knowing, dissatisfaction of not knowing. The intellectual part of the intellectual centre: ability of all-round, comprehensive, systematic, and methodical thought, capacity for creation, invention, developing and formulating ideas.

The mechanical part of the intellectual centre has its own name. Sometimes it is referred to as a distinct centre and then it is called formatory centre or formatory apparatus. The majority of people use only this part when thinking, do not use the better parts of the intellectual centre. Their thinking is accordingly, because the formatory centre has a very limited capacity for thought, cannot think in the proper sense. Its function is actually to register impressions, memories, and associations, not to answer questions, explain and analyse things. One of its peculiarities is that it compares only two things, as though there were only two things in the domain under discussion. Moreover, it likes to think in extremes, in categories of nothing or everything, and it has a tendency always to seek the opposite of what is said. Formatory thinking tries to dispose of any problem quickly and after the briefest acquaintance with the subject matter, all that is needed to put a label on it, so that automatical talking in the mechanical part of the moving centre can follow on and say something on it. Formatory thinking generally lacks the ability to adapt to ever changing reality: it usually continues to work in the same way also when circumstances have completely changed. Formatory thinking cannot understand higher ideas such as those of the fourth way, since its crudely knocked-together manner of viewing sees nothing but contradictions. If, for instance, it is said that some certain activity requires the exertion of will, formatory thinking retorts, “How is that supposed to be done, we were told that we had no will, weren’t we?” If then it is said that we need to use our consciousness, formatory thinking exclaims, “But we have no consciousness!” Furthermore, formatory thinking is strongly attached to words and definitions, does not realize that reality is something else and that you must go past words to reality itself.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF CENTRES

Why is it important to have some knowledge of centres? Everything has to be viewed in relation to our aim. If our aim is waking up, then our constant efforts must eventually make us more awake, more conscious. Otherwise there would be no point in going any further. The important knowledge of centres concerns precisely the fact that our functions are divided among four centres and also the fact that centres are divided in three ever higher, ever less mechanical parts. This knowledge has a direct, practical significance. You observe yourself and state that you are looking at, say, a tree. (The “I” observing this is called “observing I”.) Before any thought or emotion arises, the “I” you are observing right now is an instinctive “I”, looking is an instinctive function. This “I”, therefore, is in the instinctive centre. The observing “I” then notes that the degree of attention is very low, mechanical: thus the mechanical part of the instinctive centre is involved.

This can at once have a practical significance if the observing “I” is not content merely to state: “mechanical part of instinctive centre” but goes on to remember “there are other parts of this centre, higher parts. Move to the intellectual part! Direct your attention. Look at the tree intentionally! Not dully, sleepily!” And so, at once, on this command, there arises another “I”, one in the intellectual part of the instinctive centre. Proceeding in this manner you have raised the level of consciousness in one centre. You can then go on to raise it in other centres as well. Raising it to the intellectual part of the intellectual centre means that also the attention of thought is directed to the tree. From now, self-remembering can be achieved without too much effort, for this requires activity in the intellectual parts of at least two centres, better in three, best in all four.

Achieving self-remembering is, to be sure, the purpose of all the exercises in self-observation; they are intended to lead you on to self-remembering, however short it be. The realization arrived at through self-observation – that we habitually almost always are in the mechanical parts of centres – should lead us on to the effort of raising the quality of attention to intellectual parts of centres, and then further on, to self-remembering.

Self-remembering is no function, not even in intellectual parts of centres. Self-remembering is another state of consciousness, is “above centres” with their mechanical functions. But it is true that self-remembering is closest to the intellectual parts, and that it is comparably easier to go from these parts to self-remembering than from lower, more mechanical parts of centres.

Self-remembering through observation of functions in centres and in parts of centres is just one of many exercises done in the fourth way. However different all these exercises be, they have but one purpose: they are intended to lead on to, facilitate, moments of self-remembering.

## UNDERSTANDING

In fourth way work, understanding must occupy the first place. The more you understand, the better the result of your work will be. Understanding means a certain possible maximum on a certain level of both knowledge and being. But this maximum constantly rises and sinks, because our being is not constantly the same: it changes with our states of consciousness. We may at one moment be more asleep, at the next moment more awake. We may understand something in the morning; and the same understanding may have completely vanished in the evening. Even the best memory we have is insufficient, for each essential thing we get to know we have to try to remember by understanding. We do this by putting it into its right place with other things into a system, because all knowledge worth its name must be part of some system. If you put the knowledge you have understood into its right place in the system, you will not forget it very easily. Understanding something means seeing its place in a greater whole, connecting it with this whole, apprehending its relation to other things and to oneself.

In the fourth way, it is not at all necessary to believe anything; belief as well as doubt is

often an easy evasion for intellectual laziness. Instead, you should try to verify everything you are taught. The whole of the psychological teaching on man's divisions, functions, the many "I"s, mechanicalness, sleep, and so on can be verified through your own experience, by self-observation. What you cannot verify you can assume for the time being as a working hypothesis or leave aside. But there is no single idea in the fourth way teaching that you can understand better by believing in it. You must not be in too big a hurry; it takes time to familiarize yourself with the teaching, and then it takes a long, intensive work on yourself during which you will eventually discover more and more about yourself, so that you will be able to verify in practice all you have been taught in theory.

Understanding is a combined function of several centres. Each centre separately can only know; but when they combine their knowledge, this gives understanding. To understand something one needs at least three centres. One cannot understand anything just intellectually, using only the intellectual centre, but it must be emotional as well, using the emotional centre. Understanding cannot become deep without emotional energy. In our society, it has become fashionable to talk about "emotional intelligence" (EQ), but as usually happens, when knowledge originating from esoteric schools trickles out into the community at large and is popularized, it becomes distorted so that its essential content is lost. People lecturing on the popular subject of "emotional intelligence" have so far grasped it correctly that emotionality has its own intelligence, which we can take as a guide in our relations to other people. But then many errors crop up, since they do not have access to the teaching of the inner schools, and lacking this they have recourse to speculation, which always must lead them astray. For instance, they allege that it is always right to express all kinds of emotions, also negative ones, as long as you are "conscious" of them when expressing them. To this must be said that, first, the expression of negative emotion is utterly useless, and, secondly, it is impossible to be conscious when expressing such emotions. In the fourth way, the most important practical application of emotional intelligence is the awakening of conscience, which will be treated more fully below.

If you look at a thing from the point of view of one centre, another centre, and a third centre, then you really understand. Because you are not one, but many: an intellectual person, an emotional person, an instinctive person, and a moving person. Besides, understanding is of very different quality depending on the amount and depth of knowledge, and depending on how active the higher, more wakeful parts of centres are. In the lower, mechanical parts, understanding is weak or even non-existent. Deep understanding requires that the intellectual parts of centres are the most active ones.

#### RIGHT ATTITUDE

Right understanding presupposes right attitude. It avails us but little to accept as a fact that we are machines, that we are not conscious, that we do not have much control, that most things just happen to us. If we are to become less mechanical and more conscious, this will require that we change, and what we have to change first of all are our attitudes. Our attitudes are intellectual functions of which we have a certain control, and that is why we begin with them. Attitudes can be roughly divided into two groups according to the basic division of the intellectual centre into the positive and negative parts. The positive part affirms, accepts; the negative part denies, rejects. Right attitude means every attitude furthering our work on ourselves, our work for developing our possible consciousness, for waking up. Lack of understanding very often is due to a wrong attitude, that is to say, we have a positive attitude to things to which we should have a negative attitude, and vice versa, we have a negative attitude where we should have a positive attitude. There are many things in life which you cannot understand unless you do not have a right, negative attitude to them, for if you take a positive view on such things, you will understand neither these nor other things right. There are too many conditions in life on Earth

that are wrong, such things as do not favour man, hinder him from doing his most important mission: that of developing his consciousness. Trying to create nothing but positive attitudes is as wrong as cherishing nothing but negative ones. Attitudes should not be confused with emotions. Negative emotions are utterly useless; negative attitudes are in many cases necessary to our development. It is equally necessary to have positive attitudes to everything connected with our inner work on our consciousness. If we have negative attitudes to it, no development is possible. One example of a right negative attitude is the refusal to receive absurd, ugly, debasing impressions from modern “culture” and one example of a right positive attitude is to direct attention to the timeless creations of true culture in music, the arts, literature, and the more intensively receive elevating, ennobling, refining impressions, which nourish our essence and promote the development of our consciousness. Separating ourselves from what is bad is as important as absorbing what is good.

If you need to change your attitude and do so, your thinking will change, and your valuation too. Valuation is our emotional understanding, and changing it we can bring our emotional centre along in the change of direction undergone by the intellectual centre. The two centres can be changed so as to work in the same direction, and this will increase the energy supply for our effort.

#### WORKING FOR YOUR OWN AIMS

All work must have an aim, and this is of course true of fourth way work as well. It is necessary that all who are serious about their work for developing consciousness make it clear to themselves what aims they have. To formulate your aim, you must already know something of your position, for if you do not, all your goals will be imaginary. Aims must be concrete and realistic, be within the limits of the possible, be clearly formulated, and be constantly revised. In the beginning people usually set before them aims that are too abstract and too remote. It is like walking towards a distant light in the night. On the way to it one sees other lights that are nearer and walks towards them, then still nearer lights, and so on. This is the way aims with time become more realistic and finally come so close to oneself that one can attain them. For practical purposes you should not have too big a view of things, you should not look too far. You cannot work for a distant future, you work for tomorrow. You find that something is wrong today? Why is it so? Because something was wrong yesterday. So if you make it right today, there is a reasonable chance that it will be right tomorrow. This is the attitude you must have to your aims. If you have no aim, then it is impossible to know what is success and what is failure, what is better and what is worse, where you are standing and where you are going.

If you have formulated your aim – and formulated it not just once and for all but are working on it daily, reminding yourself of it now and then, because otherwise you will forget for a long time – then it is easier to catch yourself in moments when you are nearer to your aim, to observe and remember yourself in better states. You must see that you are always on the move, from sleep to somewhat more awake or, on the contrary, from a more wakeful state to a deeper sleep; you never remain in one place. Sometimes you are closer to your aim and sometimes further from it. If your aim is always more or less present, much is possible that would be impossible otherwise. No results can be achieved, if there is no aim, no effort, and no decision.

It is interesting to see that no less than three of the eight elements of the noble eightfold path of the Buddha concern work for one’s own aims, that is to say: right attitude, right decision, and right effort. Right attitude is necessary to right decision, and right decision is necessary to right effort. And only by making constant efforts will you achieve your aim.

By establishing an aim you can establish the principles of good and evil. There can be no clear idea of good and evil or right and wrong without first establishing an aim or direction.

When you have an aim, then what is opposed to your aim or takes you away from it is wrong, and what helps your aim is right. If this personal aim corresponds to the possibilities of consciousness development, then it contains a common basis of values for many people, namely all those who want to develop. What keeps us from reaching our aim is mechanicalness, sleep; and what helps us achieve our aim is consciousness, being awake. From this it follows that consciousness is good and mechanicalness is evil. Instead of “good” and “evil” people who want to develop can speak of “conscious” and “mechanical”. This is quite sufficient for all practical purposes. It does not mean that all that is mechanical must be evil, but it means that evil cannot be conscious, but must be mechanical. Moreover: that good cannot be mechanical but must be conscious. Everyone must ask himself: Can I be evil consciously? Can I consciously do what I have realized to be evil? Must not evil, if I have realized what it is, be something that I do mechanically, in my state of sleep? And the corresponding as to good: Can I be good in my habitual, mechanical, sleeping state? Must I not be conscious to be good?

Our capacity for visualization, which we often do not use very wisely, can help us in our work for our aims. We can visualize how we would act, if we were conscious beings, if we were constantly conscious. Would we act in such ways as we usually do, would we talk as we usually talk, and so on? We can visualize ourselves to be different. That is a very creative use of visualization. This also demonstrates the difference between creative visualization and ordinary imagination. Imagination is entirely mechanical, controls us, and is negative. Creative visualization is intentional, thus less mechanical, more conscious, is controlled by us, and is positive.

## CONSCIENCE

Moral values change constantly, and vary from people to people; there is nothing constant in them. In many parts of the world, for instance, it is considered very immoral to refrain from killing someone who killed your father’s cousin and instead turn him over to the police; in Western Europe, those in power now try to drum into citizens a new morality saying that you are an evil person (a “racist” or a “nazi”) if you express national feelings and are opposed to national characters being annihilated and supplanted by multiculturalism. If we examine the moral rules in existence, we find that they all contradict one another. There is no such thing as general morality; there is no such thing even as could be called Christian morality. It is all more or less subjective and arbitrary, mostly created by power elites for purposes of mass manipulation.

In the fourth way, the understanding of right and wrong is vitally important. Walking this way, a man must have a certain sense of right and wrong. Then he must be sufficiently skeptical about ordinary morality and must have understood that there is nothing general or stable in it. And he must understand the necessity of objective right and wrong, namely that there are definite, unchanging standards by which he can discern what is right and what is wrong in each individual case, so that all arbitrary conceptions of right, limited to times and places, make way for absolutely valid norms of right. All of this is about starting from a right attitude, a right conception; what the Buddha called right view and enumerates first among the eight elements making up the noble eightfold path. Morality passes, but the sense of right endures.

We have been taught that man has the possibility of existing in four states of consciousness but that such as he is presently he practically has no experience of the two higher states: self-consciousness and objective consciousness. Objective consciousness is described as a state where we can know truth. If we reach that state, we shall also know what is right and wrong. Consequently, the same way which leads to objective consciousness leads also to the understanding of right and wrong. As we have not got objective consciousness, we consider

everything that helps us to develop it as right, and everything that hinders us in this as wrong and bad.

On our way to full objective consciousness we can in the third state of consciousness, self-consciousness, have a certain objective consciousness, namely of ourselves. One important aspect of this objective consciousness is conscience. Here, the word conscience does not mean the individual reactions against violations of prohibitions that express themselves mechanically in people and even in pets such as dogs and cats. Such a conscience may be however arbitrary and is totally dependent on the conventional morality from which the prohibitions in question have been formulated. In the fourth way teaching, conscience is a certain faculty that exists in every normal person, and by normal person is meant one whose consciousness can develop. Conscience is a sudden, instantaneous state in which one cannot hide anything from oneself, cannot lie to oneself, where one is at once aware of all the feelings one has felt in relation to something or somebody, all these feelings with all their mutual contradictions and inconsistencies. It is a shocking realization of how asleep and mechanical one is in one's feelings, how much lie and falsehood, how many absurd contradictions there are in the feelings one imagines are noble, unselfish, and loving. Conscience exists within us, but it is sleeping very hard. It can wake up for a short moment in everyday life, and when it does, this usually brings about suffering, at least in the beginning, for it is very unpleasant to see the truth about oneself.

Conscience is another manifestation of consciousness, of being awake. You might say that consciousness works more on the intellectual side and conscience more on the emotional side. Conscience is the same in relation to feelings, as consciousness in relation to ideas. More intellectual consciousness and more emotional conscience only appear separate. Actually they are two aspects of the same state, and the one cannot develop without the other awakening. Conscience is a tool of discrimination that helps us see what is good and bad or right and wrong in our own conduct. Moments of conscience are absolutely necessary steps on the path to waking up, and a man without conscience cannot develop.

Yet, conscience is not very far for a normal human being, and, generally, it is easier to have moments of conscience than moments of consciousness. At first, when conscience manifests itself in us, it turns against us, and we begin to see all our inner contradictions. Usually we cannot see them, because we are always in one or another small "I" that does not know of the other "I"s, but conscience can see from above and shows us that here we felt one thing, there another thing, and here again quite another thing, all on the same subject, or person. For instance, we love somebody one moment, and wish him or her dead the next. We become aware of such contradictions in moments of conscience, and this is what makes them so unpleasant. All our life, all our habitual ways of thinking, have only one aim – to avoid shocks, unpleasant feelings, unpleasant realizations about ourselves. And this is the chief thing that keeps us asleep. But if we want to wake up, we must welcome moments of conscience, without fear, with gratitude. Waking up conscience is waking up the courage to see the truth about ourselves.

## IDENTIFICATION

When we begin to observe ourselves, we find that most of our functions, and emotional functions in particular, are accompanied by a strange phenomenon: we are too easily captivated by whatever we are observing, we become too absorbed in things, so that we are lost in them. Here "being lost" means that the self-observation, which was possibly there before this phenomenon appeared, ceases completely. This state of being lost in whatever one is watching, feeling, or thinking of is called identification. A very clear example is when we switch on our TV set, actually without any intention of watching a certain programme, browse through the channels, come right into a drama film that has just begun, and then just sit there for one and a

half hours, being quite in the grip of the film. During this time, we do not really exist; we are the film, are identified with it. Another example is when we are discussing something with someone and then become emotionally very committed. If we observe ourselves immediately after this, we shall notice that we were not present, we were not there. We were not anywhere else either. We did not exist – except as unconscious, mechanical functions.

As in everything else, so in identification there are degrees. Identifications can be strong or weak, deep or shallow. In observing yourself you find when you are more identified, less identified, or not identified at all. Sometimes you identify so that you can see nothing else, at other times you can see something. If things were always the same, there would be no chance for us, but they always vary in degree of intensity, and that gives us a possibility of change.

Being in the grip of something is an extreme case, a deep identification. But there are many small identifications which are difficult to observe, and these are more common. They are the most important, because they keep us mechanical. Between deep sleep and wakefulness there are many different stages, and we pass from one stage to another. We are always passing from one identification to another.

If one is strongly identified with something, one is practically asleep. In states of weak identification, one is not as deeply asleep, one is closer to being awake. If you want to wake up, you must become free from identification. You can become free. Such as we are now, we are never free, because we are identified.

If you observe yourself immediately after a short time of strong identification, you will notice an inner emptiness. This emptiness depends on the absence of yourself, of your own essence. During the time you are identified it is quite impossible for you to observe yourself and of course to remember yourself. However, at the moment you observe yourself, it is impossible for you to be identified. Thus identification and self-observation or self-remembering are mutually exclusive states: if the one is present the other is absent.

If you catch yourself after a state of deep identification, you can compare that moment with other states. In this way you can make it clear to yourself what it means to be identified. When you begin to observe yourself, certain forms of identification become impossible. The best way to understand identification is to find examples. For instance, you observe how a person is quite in the grip of his views, his arguments, his irritation, his enthusiasm; all of this is identification. Then you find the corresponding states in yourself. You realize that identifications are there all the time – not just at moments when something unusual happens.

It is important to realize that identifications can never help you. They do not help you understand more or better; they only make things more confused and more difficult. If you realize that, it may help in some cases. Identification gives us no energy that we can use, only destructive energy. In states of identification you cannot sense right, think right, see right, judge right. Identification and imagination are the chief causes of our weakness.

Identification happens when you are repelled or attracted by something. Study or observation does not necessarily produce identification, but attraction and repulsion always do. Also, we use too strong a language, and this automatically produces identification. We have many automatic appliances of this sort.

Identification always has an emotional element. It is a kind of emotional disturbance. But sometimes identification becomes a habit, so that one does not even notice the emotion. That is not to say that emotion is bad. In itself, emotion must afford us new energy, new understanding. Emotion is not destructive, but identification is. It is very easy to confuse identification with emotion. We do not have a very wide experience of emotion without identification, so in the beginning we have difficulty in understanding what an emotion free from identification is. People often speak about their emotions when in reality they mean their identifications.

Negative emotions cannot exist without identification. Really positive emotions are free



from identification. Real love exists in states of non-identification; it is impossible with identification. There is sympathy without identification and sympathy with identification. When sympathy is mixed with identification, it often ends in anger, hatred or some other negative emotion. Identification eventually kills all emotions, except the negative ones. With identification only the unpleasant side remains.

It is not so much a question of what one is identified with. Identification is an inner state. Many things that we think are outside us are really in us. Fear, for instance, is independent of things. If you are in state of fear, you can be afraid of anything, innocent everyday objects, ash-trays and clothes hangers. This often happens in pathological states, and a pathological state is only an intensified ordinary state. This fact, that identifications are inside in us, not outside of us, makes it possible for us to set ourselves free from them.

Certain desires must be bound up with identification: for instance the desire to harm someone. You cannot do it without identification, and if identification disappears, you do not want it any longer. It is possible not to lose oneself; losing oneself is not a necessary element of desire at all.

You overcome identification by realizing that you are identified and then turning your attention to something more important. To do so you must learn to distinguish between important things and unimportant things. If you turn your attention away from less important to more important things, this will with time help you to become less identified with unimportant things. If you want to become free from identifying, you must be able to see this state as apart from yourself, separate it from yourself, and you can do that only by trying to become more conscious, trying to remember yourself, to be aware of yourself.

In a way, struggling with identification is not so difficult, because, if we can see it, it becomes so ridiculous that we cannot remain identified. Other people's identifications always seem ridiculous and ours may become so too. Laughter may be useful in this respect, if we can turn it on ourselves.

If one is completely absorbed in one's work, it will be bad work. If one is identified, one can never get good results. It is one of our illusions to think that we must lose ourselves to get good results, for in this way we only get poor results. It is a wrong idea that one cannot study a person or anything else without losing oneself. If you lose yourself in something, you cannot study it. Identification is always a weakening element: the more you identify, the worse your study and the smaller the results. We can do well whatever we are doing only as much as we are awake. The more we are asleep, the worse we do the thing we are doing – there are no exceptions.

The aim of struggle with identification is to awake. Identifying is a feature of sleep; identified mind is asleep. Freedom from identifying is one of the sides of awakening. A state where identifying does not exist is quite possible, but we do not observe it in life and we do not notice that we are constantly identified. Identifying cannot disappear of itself; effort is necessary. But first one must understand what to identify means.

It takes time to understand what identifying is. It will help you to understand, if you want to remember yourself, find that you cannot, and try to see why you cannot. Then you realize that identification prevents you. Then you will see what it is. All these things – identification, sleep, mechanicalness – are connected.

The only way of getting to know identification is by observing it, because it is not always the same. We do not notice the temperature of our body except when it becomes a little higher or lower than normal. In the same way we can notice identification when it is stronger or weaker than usual. By comparing these degrees we can see what it is.

There are many forms of identification, but the first step is to see it; the second step is to struggle with it in order to become free from it. We spend our energy in the wrong way on identification and negative emotions; they are open taps from which our energy flows out.

## CONSIDERING

Identifying with people takes a particular form that is called internal considering. Two entirely different conditions can be meant by “considering”: you can consider externally, try to understand how other people perceive situations; you can consider internally, retire into your shell, indulge in your self-absorption and distorted view of the enviroing world and other people. Internal considering usually is feeling that people do not treat you well, do not pay you your due, do not estimate you at your proper value, that you are ill-favoured by fortune or by life generally. Internal considering always takes the form of an inner harping on the same string, a kind of emotional thinking that boils down to the conviction that other people do not consider you enough. There are some very manifest forms of it that the people closest to the individual, and often he himself, notice. There are so many subtle forms of it we do not notice, and yet our life is filled with it. Internal considering has one and the same tendency: I am victimized, my suffering is worse than that of other people, nobody understands me and my problems, nobody cares, I deserve much more appreciation, and so on. Of course, individuals can become the victims of all manner of objective iniquities and real sufferings; what is meant by internal considering, however, is not a rational scrutiny of existing bad conditions, but a subjective, inner state which actually is not due to external circumstances. The cause of it is not external but internal, an internal emotional disturbance.

External considering is understanding people’s difficulties, understanding what they want, watching the impression you produce on people and trying not to produce a wrong impression. With the help of external considering you control the impression you wish to produce, another kind of impression than the one that otherwise you would have made mechanically. External considering means taking into account other people’s weaknesses, putting yourself in their place by thinking and feeling intentionally, while holding back on your mechanical reactions to these people. Often in life it is described by the word “tact”, only tact may be educated or accidental. External considering means control. If we learn to use external considering consciously, it will give us a possibility of control of ourselves and the situation.

If one considers internally one misses moments of external considering. External considering must be cultivated, internal considering must be eliminated. But first observe and see how often you miss moments of external considering and what an enormous role internal considering plays in life.

When considering people externally you do, not what is pleasant to you, but what is pleasant to them. It means you must sacrifice yourself, but it does not mean self-sacrifice. It means that in relation to people you discipline yourself so that you think first, and then act. Your thinking will show you that, more often than not, if this person would prefer you to act in one manner and not in another, it is all the same to you, so why not do what he likes? What is better for you, what is better for the other people, who those people are, what you want from them, what you want to do for them – all this must enter into it. The idea is that in relation to people things must not happen mechanically, without thinking. You must decide your course of action. It means you do not walk over people without seeing them. Internal considering, however, means that you walk over them without noticing. We have too much internal and not enough external considering. External considering is very important for self-remembering. If we have not got enough of it, we cannot remember ourselves.

Internal considering means identification. External considering means struggling with identification. External considering means using directed attention, that is to say, being in the intellectual parts of centres: in this case both the intellectual centre and the emotional centre. External considering is close to self-remembering and can pass into self-remembering; it then becomes a kind of self-remembering in relation to another person. Internal considering is mechanical; external considering is close to consciousness. So by practising non-identifying,

by trying to control attention, you find many opportunities of studying external considering and, if you find examples, perhaps you will find methods of struggling with internal considering and transforming it into the practice of external considering.

If you want to start working to eliminate internal considering, you must find moments free from considering and see how to begin struggling with it and studying it. You must try in free moments to have a right mind about it. When you are considering, it is too late. You must think of typical cases of considering, of what produces it, and then have a right point of view about it, realize how useless and ridiculous it is. Then compare it with external considering, and try not to forget it. If you do this you may remember it when a moment of considering comes, and perhaps it will not come. What is really important is to think about considering when you are free from it, and not justify or hide it from yourself.

### AWAKENING THE WILL

An important realization is that man in his ordinary state, before he has developed consciousness, *cannot do*. In fact, it is one of our most cherished illusions that we constantly do things, that we can do them, that this doing comes from “ourselves”, that is to say: “I am doing this”. It is a simple observation that man is a being in whom practically all thoughts arise mechanically, without his willing or controlling them; a being in whom practically all emotions arise of themselves, without his wielding the slightest control over them. Even when he decides something, he most often is not able to carry it out, because the small “I” that made the decision has soon vanished and been replaced by other “I”s that know nothing of the decision and are not prepared to carry it out.

We believe we can do, because we have not observed ourselves sufficiently. If we observe ourselves, when trying to do what we have never done before or trying to do it in another way, then we shall see whether we can do or not. We think we do, but actually it just happens in us, and this chain of mechanical happenings we call “doing”. Almost all our doing is repeated happenings following patterns that established themselves in us long ago. These patterns are as mechanical as our mechanical thoughts and mechanical emotions. “Mechanical” means that they arise of themselves, through impulses and happenings outside of our will and control. It is not “me” doing, but “it” doing in me.

Man is demonstrably an almost completely mechanical being, split into hundreds of small “I”s constantly replacing each other. He is self-conscious only for brief, rare moments, and is asleep for all the rest of the time. How is it possible that man on the one hand is such a being and on the other hand is able to do? How is it possible that man on the one hand does not have consciousness and on the other hand possesses will? No, it is not possible. Doing presupposes a conscious “I”, an “I” that is in control, an “I” that thinks, feels, and wills by itself; and man is such an “I” only for brief moments. Beings that are asleep cannot do. In order to be able to do, man must awaken.

All such things as consciousness, will, a unitary self, wakefulness, self-control, positive emotions, and so on, are qualities and faculties of developed people, not of ordinary undeveloped people. And we are all born with our consciousness undeveloped; if consciousness later develops in us, then it exclusively depends on our own work, our knowledge and effort. People number 1, 2, and 3 are in that respect equal, are at the same stage. Lasting, permanent self-consciousness presupposes long, hard work with yourself and exists only in a human being of a higher kind called man number 5 in the fourth way. And real will exists only in a man who has progressed even further, man number 7. We are here talking about people in whom this exists as permanent capacities. And all of this is the exclusive result of self-development; nothing of this can just come about by accident; all of this must be acquired by man through his own work, through his walking the path. Consciousness can be born only from consciousness; will, only from will.

The greatest qualities and faculties have all grown out of the first, weak, fumbling attempts. The fact that we are not conscious beings does not mean that we cannot have moments of consciousness. The fact that we are beings who, generally speaking, cannot do, does not mean that we shall not try to do. The fact that we largely do not have will does not mean that we should not try to awaken our will. Walking the path is doing what we cannot do. We cannot, we cannot, we cannot, and then, suddenly, we can. It is at moments of self-remembering that we can begin to do, that we can begin to use the will. Because moments of self-remembering are not just moments of consciousness, but moments of will as well. At these moments we are not mechanical; at these moments we can do. Therefore, we should constantly make efforts at creating these moments of consciousness and will, producing them more often, striving to make them last longer, bringing them about not just at quiet moments, but above all in difficult situations, where we certainly are most in need of them not to act mechanically, to make the right decisions, not to get our things into a mess through such chains of mechanical events that we call our “doings”.

Awakening the will means constant struggle with our mechanical tendencies, our overwhelming urge to sleep, striving to rise from living almost exclusively in the lowest, the mechanical parts of centres, to living in the intellectual parts. This manifests itself in our life in such a manner that we increasingly replace mechanical happenings in our functions by intentional actions. Motto: will what you do!

#### THE PATH TO BE WALKED

The teaching of the hidden (esoteric) schools emphasizes that man is a special creation, as separate from animals as animals are separate from plants, and plants from minerals. Mankind actually constitutes a kingdom in nature of its own, the fourth kingdom. The most important quality of this kingdom is the possibility of self-consciousness. Man can become self-conscious, conscious in a real sense. He is not yet, except occasionally, but those occasions represent peak experiences in his life, those rare moments when he felt really alive.

Why should that consciousness which is the genuinely human be reduced to manifest itself seldom and spontaneously only? Why should we not be able to produce self-consciousness intentionally? Why should we not, by applying right striving, right effort, be able to reach a higher state where the truly human consciousness, self-consciousness, becomes permanent, never to be lost again? Where normal individuals are concerned, there are no other hindrances to the development of our consciousness than our own ignorance and reluctance to make the effort. All the higher, superhuman beings who have come to the uplift of mankind, individuals like Pythagoras and Gautama Buddha, have left the same message: man is able, through right knowledge and right effort, to reach higher states of consciousness; at first only momentarily, but in time, he can be stabilized in such states, be transformed with enduring effects. These messengers have been unanimous also about the methods of this development: it is about the training of consciousness through observation, self-observation, the sharpening of attention, efforts towards self-remembering:

*The Blessed Buddha once said to his pupils, “Let us sit in silence and let our eyes behold.” After a while the Teacher asked, “How many times did I change my position?” One noticed ten changes, another only three, and another insisted that the Teacher had remained still. The Lord of Wisdom smiled, “I changed my position and the folds of my garment seventy-seven times. As long as we shall not see clearly we shall not become Arhats.”*

Arhat in Buddhist terminology is the designation of an individual who has become stabilized in the first kind of superhuman, higher consciousness. Pythagoras was an arhat. Gautama had reached much further.

It is about a path to be walked, a path existing because many people have already walked it and covered its stages. Some of those who have gone before have then turned back, being prepared to guide us through all the stages of the path. On their journey to the goal all pass through these stages, because the latter correspond to definite qualities and faculties to be acquired, definite higher states to be attained. The path is objective, not subjective. It exists and is what it is, independent of our conceptions of it. The fact that the path is objective means that you cannot make your own path corresponding to your imagination of what development of consciousness means. You cannot accept some elements of the teaching while rejecting others, you cannot apply certain rules or laws while defying others, if you want to progress on the path and reach the goal some day.

The path is the promise of final success. Since other individuals have succeeded and reached the goal, you will be able to do it as well. You should not expect, however, to reach the goal in this life; the path is too long and difficult, your powers are too small, and your time is too short. But if you mean serious business, you will always manage to walk a stage or a part of a stage, so that you reach a little closer to the goal. And all the work you put in for your perfection is done for the future. No work done for the good is ever lost.