

## Aspects of the Higher Evolution of the Individual

### Lecture 84: From Alienated Awareness To Integrated Awareness

I think everybody knows quite well that at present we are engaged in the study of what we have come to call the Higher Evolution, and I am sure that it is also appreciated that we are studying this vastly important subject not in the abstract - not just in very general terms - but very much in the concrete, very much in particular terms. We are studying not just the Higher Evolution of man but even the Higher Evolution of the Individual. This whole process of the Higher Evolution of the Individual is something very difficult, something very arduous, something involving a great deal of effort, a great deal of determination, even a great deal of strain; even, we may say, a measure, at least, of suffering. We may even go so far as to say that this particular type of effort, this particular kind of development, this Higher Evolution, is by far the most difficult thing that any human being, any man or woman, could possibly attempt. But even as it is the most difficult, the most arduous, it is also the most worthwhile. And being difficult, being arduous, being something that demands, we may say, everything that we have got, involving as it does every aspect of our nature, involving as it does a great deal of self-understanding, self-knowledge, a great deal of coming to terms with ourselves in various ways, we also find that in the course of this Higher Evolution of the Individual all sorts of difficulties, all sorts of problems, even, arise: problems that demand to be resolved if further progress is to be made. It is some of these problems - not just ordinary problems, ordinary difficulties, pressing as these sometimes are, but problems arising directly out of the Higher Evolution, directly out of our effort to evolve and to grow, that we shall be considering - or at least we shall be considering some of the more important of them.

Last we did not explore any specific problems. Last week we were more concerned with laying the general - we may say theoretical - foundations for the whole course; concerned with coming to understand certain principles which will be applied in different ways, in different fields, week by week throughout the course. We began by reminding ourselves very briefly of some of the things that we learned when we considered the Higher Evolution of Man. We reminded ourselves, you may remember, about the universality of the great principle of evolution. We reminded ourselves of the nature of the distinction - a distinction absolutely fundamental for this whole course - between the Lower Evolution on the one hand and the Higher Evolution on the other. We saw again that the Lower Evolution is collective, whereas the Higher Evolution is individual, concerning the individual and his individual effort.

Last week we were mainly concerned with the question of how consciousness evolves, and this was indeed the title of the lecture; and we were concerned with this question of the evolution or development of consciousness, because the Higher Evolution of man, the Higher Evolution of the Individual, consists essentially in an evolution of consciousness. We saw last week that, broadly speaking, there are four different levels, four different degrees or grades, of consciousness. Very briefly, these are: simple consciousness or sense consciousness, that is to say, awareness of sensations experienced through the sense organs as a result of contact with the external world, and this type of consciousness we of course share with the animals. Then, secondly, self-consciousness, which we also called subjective consciousness. Here one is not just aware, one is aware that one is aware. One not only experiences sensations, feelings, emotions, thoughts and volitions, but is conscious of oneself as experiencing them. This form of consciousness, self-consciousness, we do not share with the animals; this is distinctively human. We are, in fact, only human to the extent to which this form of consciousness, self-consciousness, has been developed in *us*. Thirdly, transcendental consciousness or what we also called objective consciousness. This consists in the awareness of a higher spiritual reality, a reality which embraces both oneself and the whole of conditioned existence, the whole world. This higher spiritual reality is not in itself an object, but at this stage of our evolution, by means of this type of consciousness - transcendental consciousness - we experience it as an object; but in itself it transcends the subject-object distinction. Sometimes, we also saw, this type of consciousness, this transcendental consciousness, is experienced as a sort of flash of Insight that momentarily lights up, illuminates, the whole of existence. And fourthly and lastly, absolute consciousness or universal consciousness, which is altogether beyond our present understanding so that there is no point in saying anything at all about it. It is sufficient to indicate its existence as what we cannot but think of as the culmination of the entire process of the Higher Evolution.

Having enumerated these four levels or degrees of awareness or consciousness - simple consciousness, self-consciousness, transcendental consciousness and absolute consciousness - we went on to see that simple consciousness belongs to the Lower Evolution, whereas transcendental consciousness and absolute consciousness belong to the Higher Evolution; and self-consciousness, we saw - the second degree or second level of consciousness - comes somewhere in between. Self-consciousness is the culmination of the Lower Evolution and the inauguration of the Higher Evolution, a sort of watershed between these two great divisions.

We also saw last week - just to finish the recapitulation - that the individual, in the course of his development, recapitulates the evolution, the development, of the race to which he belongs. But we also saw that this principle applies only so far as the Lower Evolution is concerned. So far as the Higher Evolution is concerned, we are on our own. The Lower Evolution takes us so far and then leaves us there, deposits us there to struggle on, on our own, by means of our own efforts. So further development, further evolution, depends not on nature, not on nurture, even; it depends on us, on our own individual efforts. So we concluded by understanding that the immediate task before us - before not just man but the individual man - is to develop present rudimentary self-consciousness to perfection as well as to develop at least the beginnings of transcendental consciousness; and only if we are doing this, or at least trying to do this - perfecting our self-consciousness, beginning to develop our transcendental consciousness - only if we are engaged in this sort of effort, in this sort of work, can we be said to be leading truly human lives.

So much, then, for last week's lecture and some of the main points touched upon therein. Not that, in proceeding to this week's lecture, we leave last week's lecture and its subject matter behind; not that we can afford to forget what we learned last week. The theoretical principles that we studied last week are like, we may say, the foundation of a building; and however high we may build, however many stones we may pile one on another, the foundation remains there all along.

This week we come to the first of our problems. We come to a problem that, at least in the West, arises quite early in the spiritual life. At any rate, it arises quite early in the spiritual life of those who follow the path of Buddhism. It is a very important problem indeed. It is all the more important inasmuch as it arises in connection with awareness; that is to say, arises in connection with self-consciousness. Awareness, as we saw last week and as we have repeatedly insisted on other occasions, is the growing point of the whole process of the Higher Evolution; so that, if there is any misunderstanding in connection with awareness - if any misunderstanding arises in connection with the practice or development or cultivation of awareness - then the whole subsequent course of the Higher Evolution may be affected - even, perhaps, made impossible, just as if the bud is damaged the flower will not be able to unfold, at least not to the full measure of its perfection.

This is not to say that awareness itself is a problem. Awareness itself is no problem at all. Awareness is the resolution of many of our problems. The problem here lies in our confusing what I term alienated awareness with what I term integrated awareness; and tonight we are primarily concerned with this question. It is for this reason that tonight's lecture is entitled 'From Alienated Awareness to integrated Awareness'

We are going to proceed slowly. We are going to proceed step by step; and we are first of all going to consider awareness in general, especially the way in which awareness is to be cultivated according to the traditional Buddhist teaching. Here many of us will find ourselves for a while on quite familiar ground. After that, we shall be striking out in a new direction. We shall be exploring comparatively unfamiliar territory. We shall examine the nature of the difference between alienated awareness and integrated awareness. We shall try to see how alienated awareness arises and also how integrated awareness arises, and also how integrated awareness can be developed.

First of all, awareness in general. In books and writings about Buddhism, awareness is very often referred to as mindfulness; that is the more familiar term for many people. There is a detailed account of awareness, in the sense of mindfulness, along traditional lines, in the first chapter of my *Survey of Buddhism*. As perfect awareness, the seventh step in the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, I have dealt with this subject in the seventh lecture in the series on 'The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path'. I have also dealt with this subject of awareness or mindfulness in a more

contemporary manner, also in a more comprehensive manner, in the course of a talk on 'Dimensions of Awareness'. These talks, by the way, are all on tape. This evening we have only time for an outline of the subject of awareness in general.

Altogether there are four main kinds of awareness which we sometimes call dimensions of awareness. First of all, there is awareness of things; secondly, awareness of self; thirdly, awareness of people; and, fourthly, awareness of Reality. To begin with, awareness of things. This means awareness of the world around us, awareness of our material environment; if you like, awareness of nature. Now if we want to be aware of something material in this way, we have first of all to look at it or to listen to it, or perhaps both look at it and listen to it. But this is what very few people ever do. Most people, if they were challenged, would say that they have no time to look, really look, stop and look; no time to listen. But if we want really to be aware of things, material things, things which are part of the world around us, part of nature, we must learn to look at them. We have to learn to look, we may say, at the sky, learn to look at mountains - when we get the opportunity - learn to look at trees, learn to look at flowers, at rocks, at water, at fire; at all those in a sense very familiar material things that are all around us, that are there all the time, that in a sense we see all the time but which at the same time we never see; not only to learn to look at these as it were more poetic things but also learn to look at other material things that we encounter, that we cannot help encountering in the course of our existence, things even like brick walls and unemptied dustbins - even at these, if they are around us, we have to learn to look. It is not only a question even of looking; it is not only just a question of using our eyes. We also have really to learn to hear, to taste, to smell, to touch. No doubt the highest degree of perceptual awareness is possible through the sense of sight, through the eyes, but that does not mean that the other senses are not important or that they can be neglected. We should learn to look, moreover, not only at natural objects, not only at familiar household things of everyday use, but learn to look, really to look, for example, at works of art, paintings, sculpture and so on, things that very often, only too often, we just take for granted as parts of our cultural heritage, which we know are there in the museums and art galleries and maybe as reproductions on our walls, but at which we don't really need to look, that we don't really need to see.

We should also learn to listen - to music. Lots of people just have music on as a sort of background noise to which they never actually listen. It is just something there in the background - whether it is Bach or whether it is just the latest popular song they don't really know; they would have to stop and listen hard before they could tell you. It is just a sort of running rivulet of sound in the background without too much meaning or significance. But this is the way in which awareness of things, awareness of the material environment, awareness of nature and of man's handiwork to the extent that it is itself part of nature, is to be developed.

Secondly, awareness of self. By this we do not mean anything very metaphysical. We mean simply awareness of the changing empirical self, which is in any case all that we usually experience. Traditionally in Buddhism, awareness of self is of three kinds, of increasing degrees of subtlety. First, there is awareness of the body and its movements, including the breathing process on which, of course, a whole concentration technique is based. Traditionally it is taught that, as one moves about, one should be aware of just how one is moving. If you are standing, be aware that you are standing. If you are sitting, be aware that you are sitting; experience yourself sitting. If you move your hand, be aware you are moving your hand. If you close the door, be aware that you are closing the door. If you are holding a book, be aware that you are holding the book. If you are running, be aware that you are running. If you are talking, be aware that you are talking. If we try to practise in this way, even for a little while, we shall very speedily become aware that we have sort of lapses of consciousness, lapses of awareness. There are whole periods, not to say tracts of time, when we don't really know what we are doing, in a quite literal sense. We don't know what we are doing with our bodies, if we are in fact doing something with our bodies. We don't know what has happened to our hand; we don't know where it is or what it is doing. We don't even know where our head is, sometimes.

This is the sort of teaching that traditionally we are given: that we should be aware of our physical body; be aware of its posture, be aware of its movements and, above all, in a sense, be aware of the breath, this most subtle part of the bodily function. Be aware of its coming in and going out, coming in and going out.

This is the simplest form of self-awareness: just being aware of the physical body - being aware of your feet, being aware of your hands, and so on. But, even though it is the simplest, it is still very difficult, and it is the foundation of all the rest - that is to say, all the other forms of awareness or mindfulness of self. It is traditionally held that if you cannot practise this, if you can't succeed in being aware of your physical body and its movements, it is not much use trying to practise any other more advanced form of awareness or mindfulness. And from Japan there comes a little story to illustrate this point. It is a story, as so many of these stories are, about a young monk. The young monk, we are told, went to an old monk because the old monk was a great meditation teacher, and the young monk wanted to learn meditation; he wanted to become Enlightened. So he made a long journey to the monastery where the old monk, the meditation master, lived; and after travelling for a long while, mostly on foot, very late at night, he reached his destination, knocked on the gate and was admitted. It so happened that, during the last stages of his journey, it had been raining heavily, so he folded up his umbrella and put it to one side, took off his shoes and put them also to one side, and then he was ushered into the presence of the master. So he made his three bows, his three prostrations, and the master asked him: 'What have you come for?' He said, 'Well, Enlightenment, of course.' So the master said, 'That is very good. Let me ask you a few questions.' So the young monk sat back, getting ready to answer questions on Buddhist philosophy, logic, his spiritual experiences and so on, but all that the master asked was: 'When you came here just now, what was the weather like?' This is the sort of question that masters sometimes ask. People get very disappointed; they expect to be asked about Nirvana and so on, but all that the master asked was, 'What was the weather like?' So the young monk, rather surprised, said, 'It was raining rather heavily.' So the old monk said, 'Oh yes; and did you get wet?' He said, 'No, I had an umbrella.' So the old master said, 'Where is the umbrella?' The young monk thought to himself, 'This conversation is getting more and more ridiculous,' but anyway he politely answered, 'It's outside. I left it outside with my shoes.' So the old master thought a minute, then he said, 'Tell me: on which side of the door did you leave your umbrella and shoes?' The young monk thought, and thought, and thought, and he could not remember. So the old master said, 'Tut, tut. That won't do. If you can't remember where you put them, where you left them - whether on the right-hand side of the door or the left-hand side, it means you just weren't mindful when you did it. If you can't even practise mindfulness, how do you expect to practise meditation? How do you expect to gain Enlightenment? You had better go away. This is not the place for you.' So the poor young monk had to depart. This is a little traditional story illustrating this point that awareness of the body, awareness of one's physical body and its movements, what it is doing, is the foundation of any subsequent higher practice of mindfulness and awareness.

All right, suppose you pass the test; suppose you know where your umbrella is at this particular moment; then you can go on to practising awareness of feeling, awareness of whether one's feeling tone, as it were, is pleasant - pleasurable - or painful, or whether you are experiencing a sort of grey, neutral state. And from there we can go on to being aware of our emotions; being aware of whether we are experiencing love or hate or fear or anxiety or desire or hope or jealousy or delight or expectation or disgust or any other emotional state when we experience it, knowing that we experience it. If we can do this - if we can be aware of our feelings, aware of our emotions, aware of our whole emotional life, then we shall find that this has a twofold effect: our negative emotions will tend to be dissolved and our positive emotions will tend to be refined still further; or at least, even if the negative emotions are not dissolved they will be brought very much under control.

Thirdly, there is what is known as awareness of thoughts; and here we become aware that very few people really think. Very few people are really masters of their thoughts. In most cases, thoughts just drift through our minds. Thoughts, as it were, take possession of us. We don't know why they have come, we don't know where they have come from very often; they just come, and here they are, and very often there is little we can do about it. We just have to tolerate them; even if we want to meditate and keep our minds free from thoughts, we just have to watch the thoughts - playing, rioting as it were, in the playground of our mind - and it seems we are powerless to chase them away. So we don't think; we have no control over our thoughts. They are not our own thoughts, really, we are not masters of them. All that is happening is that we are subject to this very loose association of ideas which is very easily interrupted, very easily redirected. But if we become aware of what is happening, if we cultivate this awareness of our thoughts, then thinking becomes more purposeful; in a sense, our thinking becomes our own, it becomes an active rather than a

passive process, and what we call wandering thoughts gradually come to be eliminated and we experience an altogether more peaceful and more harmonious state of mind.

Now this is the traditional classification of awareness of self - that it consists in awareness of the body and its movements, awareness of feelings and emotional states, and awareness of thoughts. But other classifications are also possible. We can speak, for instance, as I have done on a number of previous occasions, in terms of various kinds of psychological conditioning. By such psychological conditioning we mean the tendency of our actions to be determined, without our realising it, by previous patterns of experience - in many cases, patterns laid down very early in life indeed. And this conditioning is of various kinds. We are conditioned by the fact that we are human beings and not animals: that is to say, we are conditioned by the fact that we are humanoid mammals as distinct from non-humanoid mammals. We are conditioned, again, by the fact of being either male or female. We are conditioned by the place where we were born, conditioned by our race, conditioned by our nationality. We are conditioned by the social group to which we belong, conditioned by caste, conditioned by class; conditioned by profession, conditioned by party, conditioned by church, even conditioned by religion. Such conditioning also is resolved by means of awareness - in other words, awareness of self. To the extent that we become aware, really aware, that we are psychologically conditioned in all these various ways, to that extent we become free, become emancipated, from that conditioning.

Now, thirdly, awareness of people. By this we mean awareness of people as people; and, strange to say, that is a comparatively rare thing. Usually we are aware of people not as people but as things, as objects, as bodies 'out there'. The extreme case, of course, is that of the infant. The infant is not aware, in the early months of life, even of mother as a person - in fact, least of all of mother as a person. To the infant, mother is just an object that gives warmth, nourishment and so on. Mother to him is just, we may say, a breast. Now we like to think that we grow out of this sort of attitude towards people - regarding them as things - and to some extent we do grow out of it, but not altogether. Only too often, unfortunately, in our personal lives, our personal relationships, we treat other people not as persons but as things, as objects; and no doubt all of us can think of many examples of this sort of thing.

We cannot be aware of people unless we first of all look at them; and, as many of you know, this is one of the things that we learn to do in our communication exercises - to learn to look at people. However, I am not going to say anything more about that at the moment, because the weekend after the one that is coming we shall be doing the communication exercises in a special weekend course. As I have said, only if we look at people can we be aware of them. We can go even further than that and say that only if we are aware of people that we can love them.

Fourthly and lastly, awareness of Reality. This is, of course, the highest kind of awareness. Not that this kind of awareness and the other dimensions of awareness are mutually exclusive. You can have glimpses of Reality through all the others through awareness of nature, awareness of the self, awareness of people - through all of these, indirectly at least, we can have some glimpse of Reality. But here, in this kind of awareness, our awareness of Reality is as it were direct. In what it actually consists it is very difficult to say, because it is beyond words, but we can perhaps say that this kind of awareness is synonymous with meditation in the highest sense: that is to say, meditation as contemplation.

The four kinds of awareness - that is to say, awareness of things, of self, of people and of Reality, these four kinds or four dimensions of awareness, are connected with the four kinds of consciousness. Awareness of things is connected with simple consciousness. Awareness of Reality is connected with transcendental consciousness and absolute consciousness. And awareness of self and awareness of people are both connected with self-consciousness. We shall be dealing with the whole question of personal relationships and the Higher Evolution later on in this series. For the present, we are confining ourselves more or less to the more subjective side of self-consciousness. Here we come to the heart of our subject: the nature of the difference, the nature of the distinction, between alienated awareness and integrated awareness.

First of all, I would like to point out that this is not a traditional distinction. It is not a distinction that one finds in Buddhist texts, in the Buddhist scriptures. It is not a distinction that is known in

the East as such, in Buddhist spiritual circles. This is not to say that the phenomenon of alienated awareness is unknown there. It certainly is known there, it certainly does occur, and I have had personal experience of it - I have personally encountered it, in the course of my sojourn in the East. But we may say that the phenomenon of alienated consciousness, alienated awareness, is on the whole much more characteristic of the modern West. Why this should be so we shall try to understand a little later on. For the moment we are concerned simply to differentiate alienated awareness and integrated awareness.

First of all I must observe that integrated awareness is in principle identical with awareness in general as we have just described it, especially with awareness of self. So the question to be answered is: what then is alienated awareness? What is it alienated from? What is integrated awareness? What is it integrated with? if we can only understand this, the nature of the distinction between the two will be clear.

Briefly, we may say that alienated awareness is awareness of ourselves, especially of our feelings and emotions, without actually experiencing ourselves, without actually experiencing our feelings and our emotions. So in its extreme form alienated awareness is awareness of one's own non-experience of oneself; even awareness that one is 'not there', paradoxical as that may seem. Obviously, this is quite a dangerous state to get in or to be in. Alienated awareness may also be accompanied by various physical symptoms; especially it may be accompanied by severe, even excruciating, pains of various kinds in the head. This is more likely to occur when one is deliberately increasing alienated awareness under the erroneous impression that one is thereby practising mindfulness. I am not, of course, saying that all pains in the head encountered in the course of meditation are due to alienated awareness, but pains - even, as I said, very excruciating pains - are one of the physical symptoms of alienated awareness.

Integrated awareness, on the other hand, is awareness of ourselves while at the same time actually experiencing ourselves. This self-experience may be either positive or negative. But even if it is negative, the negativity will eventually be resolved by the fact that we are aware of the negative state besides actually experiencing it, or allowing ourselves to experience it. So the nature of the distinction between the two - between alienated awareness on the one hand and integrated awareness on the other - should be quite clear. Alienated awareness is that awareness which is alienated from the experience of self, especially emotion; and integrated awareness is that awareness which is integrated with the experience of self, especially with the experience of the emotions.

I have said that this is clear, and no doubt it is conceptually clear - no doubt it is verbally clear - but perhaps it is still difficult for some of us really to recognise the distinction in a way that is meaningful, in a way that accords with our actual experience. So let us approach it in a somewhat different way. Let us now imagine three levels or three grades, as it were. First of all, there is experience without awareness. This is what we have most of the time. We feel happy or we feel sad; we experience pain or we experience joy; we experience love, we experience hate, fear; but we don't really know that we are experiencing them, we are not aware that we are experiencing. There is just the bare sensation, the bare feeling, the bare emotion, but there is no awareness. We are lost in the experience, immersed in the experience. We as it were forget ourselves - as when, say, we become very angry. When we recover and we survey the damage we say, 'I didn't know what I was doing, I wasn't myself, I forgot myself.' in other words, while we were under the influence of that emotion, possessed by that emotion, identified with that emotion or that emotional state, there was no awareness. This is the first degree, the first level, as it were. There is experience. Certainly there is experience, no lack of that. That is there in full. But we are not aware of the experience. There is no awareness alongside it; no awareness of it.

Secondly, there is awareness without experience. This is the alienated awareness. We as it were stand back from our experience. It is not our experience, it is going on 'out there', so we are not really experiencing it, even; not really feeling our feelings, not really emoting our emotions. We love but we don't really love, we hate but we don't really hate. We are sort of standing back and looking at the experience, looking at the feeling, looking at the emotion, with this alienated awareness. This is the second degree, the second level.

The third is experience plus awareness. This is what we call integrated awareness. Here we have the experience and, by very virtue of the fact that we are now experiencing integrated awareness, the emotional experience even tends to be a positive rather than a negative one. We have the experience but alongside - or perhaps I should not even say alongside, but as it were saturating - the experience, in a sense even identical with the experience, we have got the awareness. The two have come together. So the awareness gives, as it were, clarity to the experience, and the experience gives substance and body as it were to the awareness, so you have got both coalescing, without it being really possible to draw a line and say, 'This side is the experience and that side is the awareness.' You are fully immersed in the activity; even if the feeling or the emotion is accompanied by activity you are fully immersed in the feeling or in the emotion in the sense of actually experiencing it, but at the same time, together with it, without being different from it, you have got the awareness. This is a much higher state, a state that it is very difficult for us to have any idea about if we haven't actually experienced it ourselves. This is not so much an awareness of experience but an awareness with experience, an awareness in experience, even an awareness in the midst of experience, and therefore, as I said, it is very difficult to describe indeed.

Perhaps we can approach the subject more conveniently in this way, thinking, as I said, in terms of (1) experience without awareness, which is our usual state, (2) awareness without experience or relatively without experience, which is our state when we get on to the spiritual path and sometimes go a little astray, and then (3) awareness with experience, experience with awareness, the two beautifully blended, as it were, together.

Now the question which we have to consider at this point, bringing us to part three of our lecture, is: how does alienated awareness arise? How do we come, that is to say, not to experience ourselves? We may say that this is due to some extent to the nature of the very times in which we live, especially here in the West. We are often told that we are living in an age of transition, and this is very true. Sometimes we do not realise how abrupt, even violent, how important also, how potentially valuable, the transition is. Many of the old values are breaking up. People are no longer quite so sure what is right and what is wrong, not quite so sure what we ought to do or not do, not quite so sure how they ought to live, in what way they ought to live; not sure what role to adopt, what part to play. All this means that we are no longer sure who or what we are. Our sense of identity is weakened, and on this account there is a widespread feeling of anxiety.

I don't want to attach too much importance to this factor of the times in which we live. I want to look more closely at some of the more immediate factors. I have spoken of three levels of awareness of self, that is to say awareness of body, of feelings and emotions, and of thoughts. So, in the same way, we can speak of three levels of experience of self, and even three levels of alienated awareness or three levels of non-experience of self. First of all, non-experience of the body. There are several reasons for this. One of the most important is the refusal actually to experience, or to allow ourselves to experience, bodily sensation, especially, we may say, sensations connected with sex; and such refusal is very often connected with wrong early training. In this way one finds, for instance, that people are brought up with the idea, with the vague feeling, that the body is somehow shameful; at least, that it is not so noble as the mind or so respectable as the mind. And in the same way, one is often imbued with the feeling or the idea that sexual feelings are sinful. All these sort of ideas and feelings, we may say, are legacies, attitudes, left over from Christianity. And though in many ways we might have outgrown Christianity, outgrown at least Christian dogma and ecclesiastical supervision, these sort of attitudes are very widespread and still do quite a lot of harm. We may say that it is one of the great merits of the work of Wilhelm Reich that he has gone into this whole question, this whole subject, so very thoroughly, and has shown quite clearly how inhibition, very early in life, even in infancy, of pleasurable bodily sensations, could lead ultimately to a crippling negation on the part of the adult person of his or her whole life force. So this is non-experience of the body and, to some extent, how it has come about.

Then, non-experience of feelings and emotions. This also comes about in various ways. We are told, for instance, or we have been brought up to believe, that certain emotions are wrong, especially negative emotions, and should not be indulged in. For instance, we are taught that anger is wrong; it is wrong to get angry. So, having been taught in this way, we feel guilty if we happen to become angry for any reason. On this account, it sometimes happens that, even when we are

angry, we try to pretend that we are not angry. We refuse to recognise that we are angry. In other words, we repress the feeling; we refuse to experience it, and it goes underground.

Then, again, what happens is that we experience an emotion but we are told by someone in an authoritative position that we do not in fact experience that emotion. For instance, mother tells the small boy that he is not afraid of the dark, because - she says - brave little boys are never afraid of the dark. So we want to be considered a brave little boy, of course, so we repress or we try to push out of sight our fear of the dark; in other words, we cease to experience the fear at least, cease to experience it consciously. It just gets repressed, and it may, of course, come out in dreams. We may have terrible nightmares.

Or perhaps it happens that we just don't like our little sister. That is a very common family situation. But we are told by mother or by father that of course we like her because she is our little sister. So we don't know where we stand, as it were. We experience a feeling but we are told we don't experience it; not even that we ought not to, but that we don't, that we can't, that it is impossible. Like when the little boy sometimes blurts out, 'I'd like to kill daddy'; but mother says, 'Of course you don't. No one would ever want to kill daddy. That's psychologically impossible. You don't.' So it is repressed. We cease to experience it.

Or another common example: the little boy or little girl doesn't like brown bread. But mother says, 'Of course you like it because it's good for you.' So once again, confusion and repression. In this way the child becomes very confused indeed. In this and other ways, the child becomes alienated from his or her own feelings; and the effects of this may continue throughout life - not only continue but be powerfully reinforced from other sources, because the same type of conditioning still goes on. When we are a bit older, maybe when we are adolescent, we discover we dislike going to parties; but we convince ourselves, perhaps, that we do like going because everybody likes going. So, of course, we do too. Or, we may say - on another level - we discover that we are not in the least moved by the work of a certain famous artist. We may privately think it is just deplorable; it just leaves us cold, but we find that all our most intelligent friends are very much moved by the work of that great artist; in fact they are highly excited about it. So we have to be highly excited too.

We need not multiply examples. The end result is that we become alienated, to a greater or lesser degree, from our own feelings and emotions.

Now, non-experience of thoughts. Here it is not so much that we fail to experience our thoughts. It is more like that we fail to have any thoughts at all. This is because, we may say, nowadays so many agencies are telling us what to think; telling us, in fact, what we think. Parents are telling us what to think. Teachers are telling us what to think. This isn't just a question of feeding us with information, with facts. That is all right; that is quite a different thing. But it is value judgements that are also imparted - that 'This is right' and 'That is wrong', 'This is good' and 'This is bad', and so on. And then there are the various media: the newspapers, radio, television. They are also giving us information - very slanted, very selective information - and also making up our minds for us about this, that and the other, in a way of which, practically all the time, we are not really conscious at all.

So, having seen this - having made this little survey - we can begin to see what sort of state most of us are in, at least to some extent. We are in a state of alienation from ourselves: alienation from our own physical bodies, from our feelings, from our emotions, and from our thoughts. We don't experience ourselves. And this is something that we really have to recognise, accept and come to terms with: that we don't experience ourselves. Once again, we can think in terms of the iceberg: just the tip protrudes above the surface of the waves from the whole mass of the iceberg below. So the tip is visible, the greater part of the iceberg is not visible. It is just like that with our experience of ourselves. Our self is relatively extensive, just like the iceberg continuing underneath the water, but that part of our self which we experience, which we allow ourselves to experience, that we are allowed to experience, is relatively small. In some cases it is even infinitesimal.

So this is our condition - this condition of alienation from ourselves: from our bodies, our feelings, emotions, thoughts. This is the state into which we have got ourselves, into which the world has



got us, the age has got us, society has got us, our parents have got us, teachers have got us - and, finally, we ourselves have continued the good work. So what happens next? What happens after this?

Well, in the case of some people - in the case of some of us, at least - we come into contact with Buddhism. And then what happens? When we come into contact with Buddhism, amongst all the wonderful things we start learning and hearing about, we start learning all about mindfulness and awareness. And what we hear, or what we are taught about mindfulness or awareness, seems to say that what we have to do is to stand, as it were, aloof from ourselves, especially aloof from our negative emotions, and not experience anything; just watch ourselves, just as though we were watching another person. This is what the teaching of mindfulness seems to say. So, of course, we are very much impressed by this, because in our alienated state we can't help feeling, we can't help thinking, that this seems just the thing for us. So we start practising. We start practising awareness or mindfulness - or what we think is awareness, what we think is mindfulness. We stand back from our thoughts, back from our emotions, back from our feelings; just look at them, sort of push them 'out there'; and what is the result? In nine cases out of ten, in this way, we simply succeed in intensifying our experience of alienated awareness.

Not only that. We learn other good things from Buddhism. We learn that craving, desire, anger and so on are all unskilful states. We are told we mustn't call them sins because in Buddhism there aren't any sins; they are unskilful states, but they are just as bad as sins - if anything, they are much worse; and we have got to get rid of them. So we are very glad to hear this. We are very glad to hear - well, we think we are glad to hear, because we can't even really feel glad at this stage - we think we are very glad to hear that craving and desire, anger and fear, are unskilful states, because this means we are able to go on sweeping them all under the carpet and pretending that they aren't really there. And this, too, increases our alienated awareness.

And later on still, when we start reading books about Buddhism and studying Buddhist philosophy, we come across the *anatta* doctrine - that is to say, the doctrine of no-self or the non-self. At this stage, if we are lucky, some smiling oriental monk tells us that, according to Buddhism, there is no self; the self is pure illusion. If we could only see clearly and see properly, we should see that the self is just not there; we haven't got a self; that's our big mistake. And this, too, appeals to us very much. We rather like the sound of this teaching. Why is this? Because, as the result of practising so-called mindfulness and increasing our alienated awareness, we have begun to feel rather unreal. To us it seems, in our experience of unreality of ourselves, as though we have begun to realise the truth of *anatta*. We have begun to have some experience of that great spiritual truth that there is no self. In other words, we start thinking that we have developed Insight in the transcendental sense; and maybe the same smiling oriental monk, not knowing anything about Western psychology or the mistakes that Western people can make, encourages us to go on thinking this. And the result is we just get more and more alienated, and we start feeling pains in the head. It seems sometimes as though our skull is being constricted - as though, as some people have described it to me, there is a great iron band around the head that is getting tighter and tighter and tighter. And this is because one is getting more and more alienated, and in some very severe, very extreme cases, people even have a complete mental breakdown; and in this way a very serious situation develops indeed.

I may say that this is the sort of situation that I encountered when I came back to this country originally in 1964 from India. During the twenty years that I was in India, I had of course kept up some kind of communication with some Buddhists in this country and I knew roughly what was going on. I knew that there were one or two meditation centres and people practising meditation, and I was very pleased to learn this. But when I came back to England and started seeing things for myself, I found in fact that the situation was very different and I got quite a shock. I remember on one occasion I was taken to a certain meditation centre - I am not going to mention any names - and I was shown some people who were meditating and had been meditating for several weeks. As I said, I had quite a shock, because they seemed to me just like zombies. They just weren't there at all, they were so completely alienated from themselves. And I found quite a number of people in this state in London after having practised mindfulness, awareness and so on in this alienated way. They had just made themselves mentally ill, and some of them had landed up mental hospitals. They had just been not meditating but developing alienated awareness.

Now we mustn't think that this sort of thing happens only to those who take up Buddhism. It can happen to those who take up, in the wrong way, other forms of Eastern tradition too. Suppose your alienated person comes in contact not with Buddhism; suppose he or she comes in contact with Vedanta. Vedanta tells you you are not the body; it tells you you are not the emotions; you are not the mind; you are not any of these things. What are you? You are God. You are God with a capital G, you are Brahman, you are Reality itself. You have just got to wake up to this fact. Don't think that you are the body, don't think that you are the emotions, don't think that you are the mind. Think that you are God - and God, of course, doesn't have a body, and so on. So you practise in this way, too; you say 'I am not the body' - you are already alienated from it anyway, but you say, 'I am not the body, I am not the emotions. I don't have any emotions. I am not the mind. I am God.' So what is the result? You just end up in the same way as with this wrong practice of mindfulness or awareness: you end up alienated from yourself. This is not to say that the Vedantic teaching is wrong. It is not to say that the Buddhist teaching is wrong. The trouble is that we apply it wrongly; or sometimes we may say that the Eastern teachers even - in the West, unacquainted with psychology, unacquainted with the Western mind - even they apply it wrongly. The teaching is metaphysically true. In a metaphysical sense, yes, there is no individual self. In a metaphysical sense, yes, you are God. But we don't take all this metaphysically, we take it psychologically, and in this way all the harm is done; in this way the misunderstandings begin.

So a strange situation develops, a strange sort of pseudo-spirituality and a strange atmosphere in certain places. Go to some Buddhist circles and you find the people on the whole quite mindful, quite aware; they shut the door quietly and they wipe their feet before they come into the house if it's a rainy day, and so on, and they don't get angry - or at least, they don't show it - they are very controlled and very quiet; but everything seems a bit dead. They don't seem really alive. And what has happened? Why is this? The reason is, they have not developed integrated awareness; they have not as it were merged their awareness and their life principle, their aliveness. They suppress, they repress, their life principle and they develop this cold, alienated awareness instead of the real, the true, integrated awareness.

So another question arises - and this brings us to the fourth and last part of our lecture: how can integrated awareness be developed?

First of all, in order to develop integrated awareness we have to understand, at least theoretically, what has happened. We have to understand at least theoretically the distinction between alienated awareness on the one hand and integrated awareness on the other. We have to retrace our steps - have to undo the harm that we have done, or that has been done to us. We have to allow ourselves to experience ourselves. If we have once taken that wrong turning, if alienated awareness has really developed to any serious degree, then we have to go back to square one, as it were, and we have to learn, we have to allow ourselves, to experience ourselves. We have to experience our own body, have to experience our own repressed feelings and emotions, have to learn to think - to insist on thinking our own thoughts; and this will not be easy, especially for those who are comparatively advanced in life, because some feelings are very, very deeply buried and therefore very difficult to recover, and we may even need expert - that is to say professional - help in the matter. We may even have sometimes to act out our feelings; not only to feel them, not only to experience them, but express them externally, even sometimes the negative ones. This does not mean that we should indulge them, but it means that, slowly and mindfully and with awareness, we start letting them out and allowing ourselves to experience them while remaining conscious of them, aware of them, while we are actually experiencing them. Then, if we do this and other things as well, of the same nature, we shall begin all over again to experience ourselves: begin to experience our own physical body, experience our own feelings, our own emotions, experience our own thoughts; in a word, as I said, experience ourselves, experience the whole of ourselves, ourselves in our totality - the so-called good and the so-called bad, the so-called high and the so-called low, the so-called noble and the so-called ignoble; experience it all as one living whole which is ourself. And when we have done this, when we really experience ourselves in this way, fully and vividly, then we can begin to practise mindfulness; because then, when we practise mindfulness in this way, at this stage, it will be the real thing. It will be integrated, it will be integral awareness, and not alienated awareness.

Incidentally, I may add here that the communication exercises that I have already mentioned and that we will be having the weekend after this one, are very useful in this connection, because one thing that they do is to enable us to experience repressed feelings of all kinds, positive and negative, especially feelings directed towards other people.

I hope that I have done, at least to some extent, what I set out to do in this lecture. I hope that the nature of the distinction between alienated awareness and integrated awareness has become in some measure clear. I hope it is clear how alienated awareness arises, also how integrated awareness can be developed. The whole subject is of very great practical importance indeed. As I have said - as in fact I have insisted - awareness is the growing point of the Higher Evolution of Man, the Higher Evolution of the Individual; but it is only the right kind of awareness, only integrated awareness, that constitutes this growing point, not the alienated awareness. So, if we develop this, if we develop the integrated awareness - awareness, mindfulness in the true sense - and if we continue to develop it on ever higher and higher levels along with our experience on ever higher and higher levels, then we may say that the Higher Evolution, so far as we individually are concerned, is assured.

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