RECURRENCE - Memory

1/1-5 Recurrence / Memory - Triads*, activities leading to liberation from recurrence, worlds 3 and 6 of the Ray of Creation in spiral diagram contrasted.

2/1-4 Recurrence / Memory - "doing", and memory of our divine nature through our daily meditation balancing daily activity.

3/1-4 Recurrence / Memory - 4 Laws, Accident **, Cause & Effect, Fate, and Will. Possibility of real change in the sixth dimension through living under the law of Will.

4/1-8 Recurrence / Memory - Man's lifetimes illustrated in Conversations using spiral diagram, logarithmic lunar month basis discussed, possibility of constant connection with light of consciousness at diagram's centre through the meditation.

5/1-4 Recurrence / Memory - Physical, Subtle and Causal levels, experiencing the inner and outer as one - when everything is 'now' on the Causal level.

* Triads and Activities are also discussed in Vol IV (3 Forces / 6 Activities), Vol V (Triads) and Vol II (Chs VI & VII).

** 'The theory of accidents is very simple. They happen when the place is empty; if the place is occupied, they cannot happen. Occupied by what? By conscious actions.' P.D.Ouspensky, The Fourth Way.

The Papers in 4 & 5 above are also found in Vol VI.
If we understood recurrence — if we really understood what it means, we should realise that everything we do in our life is affected by it, and to a greater or lesser degree is under its influence. You remember Mr Ouspensky used to speak of different activities — he used to say: there are only six essentially different things that man can do. From the point of view of recurrence these activities are important, for certain of them are bound to the wheel of recurrence, others are able to escape it.

The activities which are able to escape the wheel of recurrence are those which create memory. To create memory means to create something new — to open up new possibilities — things that never happened before. The activities which are bound to the wheel of recurrence are those which destroy memory. To destroy memory means to go on doing the same things again and again, in the way we always have. Memory, in this sense, is equivalent to consciousness — the higher the level of consciousness the more we can remember, and the more possibilities are opened up. But when there is no consciousness our functions work automatically, and we can remember nothing. Consider, for instance, the instinctive behaviour of animals, particularly insects. Ants, for instance, have virtually lost their memory — they can do nothing new, nothing outside the instinctive behaviour laid down for them by nature. That is why we all dread becoming like the ants — everything worthwhile in life would disappear.

But there is no need to worry, for we have the meditation. And the meditation above all else is a way of creating memory. How does it create memory? By the triad 3 — 2 — I. This triad is actually the key to the meditation. But it may not appear to be so at first, because it depends on the accumulation of sufficient energy — the third force at the beginning. The manufacture of this energy comes from the triad 2 — I — 3, which is the triad of the meditation itself — the way the technique works. When sufficient energy has accumulated from this triad, the mantra transcends, which is the triad 3 — 2 — I. Unlike the triad 2 — I — 3, the triad 3 — 2 — I is a discrete event which only happens once, like the crystallisation of a saturated solution, or the fixing of a dye.

You will see that this triad ends with the active force. And the active force is on a very high level. It is in fact the first force in
1 is action
2 is passive
3 is 'neutral'

1.2.3  creative
2.1.3  regeneration
3.2.1  memory

1.3.2  mechanical action
2.3.1  imagination
3.1.2  instruction
the triad I - 2 - 3, the triad of creation - of our work during the day. These three triads are therefore concerned with the creation of memory, and both in the meditation and in other ways they work together for this end. You will see they are not bound to the wheel of recurrence, they are able to escape it. Consider the work of a great artist, for instance. As Mr Ouspensky used to say, no great artist will ever produce the same work again - next time he will produce something new. Nor will Shakespeare be writing the same plays again, though what he will be writing no-one knows....

It may not be entirely obvious, but on the scale of man's history there are certain people who are able to create memory. That is true above all else of the life of Christ. His work has created memory in the hearts of millions of people, over two thousand years. And the same is true to a lesser degree of all great artists, composers, poets, mystics and religious teachers. Such people must be free in certain respects from the laws of recurrence. The extent to which their work creates memory depends on the level of energy which inspired it. And the key to all this lies in the interplay between these three triads.

But there are other triads which have the opposite effect - they bind one more and more to recurrence. These activities are not necessarily wrong - they are only wrong if used in the wrong place. If one wishes to create memory, but continues to use an activity which destroys it, that would be wrong. And although it may seem absurd, we are doing this all the time. Consider the triad 3 - I - 2, for instance. This triad is perhaps the most obvious way of destroying memory, for it uses up the energy needed for creating memory, in negative emotions. Yet it obviously has a right function in a different setting, for everything sooner or later has to be destroyed - everything, that is, except memory itself. For memory is not subject to birth and death.

And the same with the triad I - 3 - 2. This triad refers to all actions which go by themselves - which do not require attention. Again, this triad is only wrong if we use it in the wrong place - if we mistake it for the triad of creation. Every artist knows this - he knows that there are only certain precious moments when his work is truly creative. Directly it becomes repetitive, directly the inspiration is missing, it is time to stop. For the triad I - 3 - 2 has taken over from the triad I - 2 - 3, the triad of creative work.
1 is actin
2 is passive
3 is 'neutral'

1. 2. 3. creative
2. 1. 3. regeneration
3. 2. 1. memory

1. 3. 2. mechanical actin
2. 3. 1. imaginative
3. 1. 2. destruction
The triad 2 - 3 - 1 is not so obvious, in fact it is very elusive. It is an ascending triad, and it appears at first to be creative. One holds a certain thought in mind, of something on a high level, and so one is moved to act in a certain way.... But what thought? Is it real or false? It may be all imagination. In fact, it is what Mr Ouspensky used to call 'lying' - speaking of something one has never experienced, as if one knew all about it. And he used to say 'lying destroys memory'.

How can one recognize this triad? So many school methods and disciplines depend on it that many people never question it. But it is one of the main reasons why the meditation, for certain people, is never really successful, for it takes the place of the triad 2 - 1 - 3. How can one make sure that the difference is understood?

So it would seem that certain of our activities, certain things we do - more perhaps than we imagine - are actually not subject to recurrence, for they belong to the sixth dimension, not the fifth. Activities which are not subject to recurrence have a certain feeling about them - a feeling of escape - of liberation. And with it comes a strong sense of gratitude - gratitude that somehow, for some reason one does not understand, one has started along a different way....

NOTE: In the diagram the inner spiral has been taken to represent the three activities belonging to world 3 in the ray of creation - activities which are above the level of recurrence - and the outer spiral to represent the six activities belonging to world 6 - three from the world above, and three of its own. It would seem to be on this level that recurrence begins, whereas on the level of world 3 it does not exist, and there is no death. In the centre of the circle is the seventh activity, said to be incomprehensible for our minds, in which each of the three forces can act in the capacity of any other, and creation takes place in full consciousness.
ETERNITY

VI

Solid of time — eternal now

SOLID

III

Space solid — moment in time

POINT

II

Surface

I

Line

IV

Time

Line of time

Circle of time

Repetition in eternity

Repetition in time

Rep tition
According to the system given us by Mr Ouspensky, it was said that man cannot do - that he thinks he is doing, but in reality everything happens - it happens in just the same way as it rains, or it snows, or the sun shines....

Like many things in the system, this statement at first seems untrue, but later one finds it goes very deep. Even Christ would never claim that he was doing - again and again in the Gospels he points this out. "....the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." On our level the same thing is true - it is the Father, the divine principle in us which alone is capable of doing. Everything else happens. And it is our relation to the divine principle in us which determines the way things happen. If we can get close to it, things will go right. But if we continue to believe that we are doing, things will not go so well. For this feeling that we are doing, and particularly that we ought to be doing, will come between us and our divine nature - it will stand in the way.

How can we free ourselves from the illusion that we can do? That is what this method is designed to bring about. Without it we are in a dilemma, as indeed we used to be. For if we try to reach the divine principle in us by effort and will, the feeling that we must do grows stronger and stronger. In fact, the further we go in this direction the more difficult the way becomes. But with this method it is different - there is no effort and no struggle required. Instead, we leave everything to the mantra, and so the question of doing does not arise. And as we continue with the meditation the way actually becomes easier - it certainly does not become more difficult.

The illusion that we can do arises from a simple mistake. We think we know what is right and what is wrong in ourselves. Only our divine nature knows this. Our divine nature is really ourselves - our real 'I'. What the mantra does is to take us there, and then all the lesser and smaller parts of us fall into place. All these lesser parts of us may seem to be good or bad, but to behave as if we knew is a form of lying. Far better to realise that they all have some good in them, for everything has good in it somewhere.

In another place in the Gospels, Christ says, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice'". The feeling that we have to sacrifice, that this way requires sacrifice and suffering,
that it can only succeed if we get rid of certain wrong features in ourselves — all these things arise from the idea that we can do. The meditation is a way of escape from all this — it is a way of mercy, not a way of sacrifice. And the first thing it asks of us is to be merciful with ourselves — merciful and full of understanding. For then the meditation can have the right effect — it will work in us in the right way.

It may throw new light on the idea of doing if we look at it from the point of view of recurrence. In recurrence — in the fifth dimension — everything happens. It happened that way before, and it will do so again. This applies to a great many things in life — our habits, our tendencies, our ways of behaviour, our desires and inclinations. If we knew how much of us belongs to this category — if we realised it had all happened before, we should soon be giving up the idea that we can do.

But there is something else in life — some other kind of experience we sometimes have — a kind of experience which is quite new, which never happened before. This kind of experience belongs to the sixth dimension, and it always seems to come from beyond us, from a different level. For this reason it is connected more with doing. But it is difficult to generalise about it, because the same thing can be different for different people. The system, for instance — Mr Ouspensky used to say that he had never met the system before. But for some people the system is something they read about in a book, and they think they know it already. And the same with the meditation. But if one has experienced something from the meditation it is quite obviously new. And when the meditation changes something it does so in a new way — a way one would never have expected. One suddenly finds certain things have changed. There is no question of our doing it, for it is already done. What could be the reason for this?

If you think about it you will see that in the place where the mantra comes from — where our divine nature is — there is really no question of doing or of happening, for everything is always there. Like the places on a map — it may require a great deal of effort to travel from one place to another, and we may feel we are achieving something by doing so, but when one sees it laid out on the map it is all there all the time.

We are told the same thing is true about one's life — it is all there. But where is it? The only answer we can find is that it exists in memory — the memory of our divine nature — and that this memory knows every detail of our lives, knows it all from beginning to end, laid out
like a map. Usually, we take the same route over and over again, but
now and then we find a new direction.....

Mr Ouspensky attached great importance to memory - and he would
qualify it by saying "if you know what kind of memory I mean....."
One realises now that this is the memory he meant - the memory of our
divine nature. We know each part of us has its own memory - the logical,
thinking part has one kind, the moving part has another, the emotional
part a third - and all these memories must be stored away in different
parts of the brain, like the rolls of magnetic tape we use in our
recording machines. But this memory must be a kind of master roll - a
record of everything we are. And what is even stranger, it must also
be a record of everything we could be. In the fifth dimension the same
tape is played again and again, but in the sixth dimension a new tape is
chosen - one which was never played before.

So when Mr Ouspensky spoke as he did of self remembering, he obviously
meant getting in touch with the memory of the master roll. And this, in
so many words, is what the meditation is designed to do. Which explains
why the meditation has seemed from the very beginning to bring us to the
same place - the place we had been trying to reach before.

But although the place is the same, the way of getting there is
different. Instead of trying to reach it all the time, during the day's
activities, we keep two periods every day in which to go there. Like the
story about the inhabitants of a remote province in China, who were found
by those who visited them to be happier and more peaceful than anyone
they had ever met. When one of them, a wise old man, was asked how this
could be, he replied, "There is nothing special about the way we live -
it is the same as everyone else. But we have a very wonderful king
who looks after us. He never appears in public, nor does he make any
laws or regulations, but each of us is allowed to visit his palace every
day. After seeing him, we are each so filled with his good influence
that every moment of the day passes in happiness. And so our whole
life is spent in peace."
There is, if you remember, an idea of the system, that man is under four different laws, the law of accident, the law of cause and effect, the law of fate, and the law of will. Some things that happen in our lives are accidental, other things are due to the effect of certain causes, a third category of things is due to fate, and a fourth category to will.

Now there is reason to believe that these four laws that man is under have a direct connection with dimensions of time. The most obvious, perhaps, is the law of cause and effect, which belongs to the fourth dimension, for it depends on the sequence of events in time for its manifestation. By comparison the law of accident has no dependence on time, for accidents can happen to any of us at any time, and their causes are not dependent on any sequence of events within our control. We might perhaps say they belong to the zero dimension.

Our fate is not so easy to understand - it controls the big events of our life - the place of our birth and the hour of our death, our marriage, our work in life, and things of that order. It is precisely these things in our life which are subject to recurrence, for they are fixed points, and in the ordinary way are not able to be changed. But there is a way of changing them, for nothing is impossible. They can be changed in the sixth dimension, by the law of will.

What is meant by 'will'? Obviously not our will - the will of the ordinary mind, which feels itself to be the doer of all our everyday actions. More probably the will of some deeper part, which seems to come from beyond us. One only gets this feeling at certain specific times, and in certain specific ways, and usually after it has happened. This is particularly true of creative work. It was Rembrandt who said he never knew how his paintings had come into existence - it was certainly not his doing. And many artists have experienced the same thing, at least about certain parts of their work. But there is another category of things which come under the same heading. When one has been doing the meditation for some time one finds that certain things have changed. They may be certain aspects of one's behaviour, or one's relation to other people, or one's inner state, or even of one's external circumstances. And when one notices them, it is always accompanied by the same feeling of surprise - 'how could this have come about? It is certainly not my doing'.

The usual interpretation of will is that it comes from outside us - from God, or from some higher intelligence, or however we like to put it. But this is not really an answer, for this intelligence is also within us, and if it is within us and without, what can it really be?
'Everything happens'

Man cannot do. Everything happens. Some things happen in time - from day to day, from week to week and from year to year - other things happen in recurrence, again and again, from lifetime to lifetime.

The things that happen in time may be accidental, or else their causes are seen and can be traced. But the things that happen in recurrence are different. Their causes are deeply hidden from us, and often seem unexpected, particularly to others near us. Often they belong to dreams, and until they actually happen these dreams can go on again and again, lifetime after lifetime. But when they do happen they seem quite inescapable, as if some hidden force were guiding us, rather like falling in love. Nobody else understands, when one falls in love ... 

Is there anything else - anything which doesn't just happen? When Mr Ouspensky was asked this, he said that the one thing which had never happened before was the System. So where do we find the System - in which direction do we look? We look everywhere for the specs, but the specs are on the nose all the time!
Consider, for instance, how man lives under different laws. He lives under the law of accident. And as accidents are unpredictable they have no dimension - they belong to the zero dimension. So in this sense man is a point - he is an infinitely small particle in a restless universe. On the other hand he lives under various physical laws - laws connected with his physical body, such as the law of gravity. In this sense he is one dimensional - he is pulled by a line of force stretching to the centre of the earth. And then he is alive - he belongs to the earth's surface and is part of organic life. In this sense he is a two dimensional being, and is subject to many different laws which determine the environment under which life can be maintained. And then he is a three dimensional object, and subject to the various laws which determine his physical form. All these three orders of laws are connected with the outward aspect of his existence - with the three space dimensions ... of the diagram.

But the next three dimensions ... are connected with man's inner life - with that part of his being which is not so readily seen. The fourth dimension is concerned with the law of cause and effect, with the line of passing time. If we do something now, the effect of what we have done may show itself tomorrow, or next year, or many years hence. And that is why it is impossible to alter certain things, because their causes lie in the past. But the fifth dimension is concerned with something quite different, which we call fate. Fate is quite a different thing from cause and effect - it belongs to recurrence rather than time. Certain things in life which have always been - the time and place of our birth, our parents, our childhood, our marriage, the hour of our death - all these things are under the law of fate, and in the ordinary way they cannot be changed. When the law of fate becomes uppermost in our lives we are sometimes aware of it. Instead of the usual feeling of doing, it is as if something else had taken over - as if everything was falling into place and happening in a prearranged way. Such times may be very emotional, and often seem for the best. And yet what choice is there? How do we really know? If we want choice - if we want to be sure of our direction - there is only one alternative, to live under the law of will. If we can learn how to live under the law of will, many new things will become possible. For the law of will belongs to the sixth dimension, and it can influence and control all other laws to which man is subject. Even our fate can be changed, if this is a necessary thing, and we can learn how to create new causes in our life, and in this way alter the past. Many aspects of our physical life, too, can be profoundly changed - many inherent weaknesses of the body, and many functional disorders. Some people maintain that we can escape the law of gravity, but this would appear to need considerable application! Certainly the law of accident can be avoided, at least in certain respects. But what does it really mean, to live under the law of will? Whose will is it, and where can it be found?
Tell me, can one take the diagram as life itself?
Yes, why not?
Then where does life begin?
It comes from the centre. The centre is the light of consciousness.
This light which flows from the centre is always there. Everything else in the diagram is changing, but the light never changes, it is always the same.
You mean it is the same, even after death?
Yes, death is only a stage in the development of our life. It is not an end but a beginning.
You mean it coincides with the moment of conception?
Yes, it is on the same radial line.
Then what is the meaning of the radial lines in the diagram?
They represent the eternal existence of each moment in our life. They are at right angles to the line of the spiral—the line of time.
So if every moment were connected with the centre, would that be eternal life?
Yes, it would mean there was no death.
So how do we make this connection?
Through the meditation. Every time we do the meditation we bring a little of this radiance from the centre into our everyday life. In time the two merge together and the light becomes fixed.
- Could you say what happens in each spiral?
- About the inner spiral we know very little, except that it contains the molecular pattern or code on which our life is based.
- Then does the inner spiral determine what happens in the outer spiral?
- Yes, it is like a microfilm of our life. Each point on each spiral corresponds.
- And when the germ cell is formed it contains this pattern or code?
- Yes, and when the germ cell begins to multiply and differentiate the same code is contained in each cell. By point 1 in the outer spiral the form of the body is already settled, and by point 2 the quickening occurs - the embryo becomes alive.
- And at point 3 the child is born and begins to breathe?
- Yes, birth is a quite extraordinary event in one's life - one is suddenly thrust into the world of time.
- And yet one remembers nothing about it?
- I wouldn't say one remembers nothing - some deeper part must surely know. One can see that in a newly born child.
- I wonder what it actually knows?
- It knows itself as a grown up person, not a child.
- You mean it remembers the past?
- Yes, but it can't tell one about it, because it hasn't yet learned how to talk.
- And by the time it learns to talk it has already forgotten?
- Yes, by that time it is busy with other things - it is busy learning how to behave as a child.
The numbers on the spiral indicate a logarithmic progression. This simply means that the value of time decreases as time goes on – that as we grow older, less and less happens in each successive moment of time. At the beginning of life, in the first few moments of our existence, an enormous amount of change takes place in a very short period of time; at the other extreme, towards the end of life, very little happens at all. And in between, the value of time is steadily decreasing.

But what is the basic unit of man’s time? The basic unit is a lunar month of 28 days. One lunar month is the period, the rhythm of conception; ten lunar months is the prenatal period in the womb; one hundred lunar months is approximately the period of our childhood, and one thousand lunar months is the period of life itself.

Seen in this way the different periods of our life take on a new, and a very interesting meaning. In ‘real’ time the prenatal period is as long as the period of childhood, and childhood itself is as long as the whole of our adult life. How can this be possible – is it really true? Only our own experience can tell us.

(some detail of lunar month times is included in the Appendix & Index Vol)
- Then what happens at point 4 in the diagram?
- At point 4 the child is about one year old. It is still learning how
to live. Having got over the shock of being born it is busy rediscovering:
the joy of physical existence.
- And the discomfort too, I would imagine?
- Yes, there is plenty of that. But in-between one sees the delight
coming through - the delight of being alive.
- And then I suppose the child learns how to talk?
- Yes, around point 5, which is about 3 years old....
- But what actually happens during this period?
- Well, the speech centre develops of course. But many other things develop
too, in fact, the child sometimes becomes quite intolerable.
- I wonder why that is?
- The personality begins to grow. At this period we begin exploring the
psychological situation in which we find ourselves - trying things out on
our parents, for instance.
- But what is the real function of personality?
- It is the outward expression of what we are.
- But what really are we?
- Yes, I know. One begins to ask oneself this question more and more, as
adolescence approaches, and that is perhaps where the fifth dimension enters
our life.
- You mean we begin to realise it all happened before?
- Yes, at moments perhaps. At this age all sorts of things are happening
to us - we are deciding on a career, our sex life is developing, we are
learning how to apply ourselves to serious work. But there is something
else - something which keeps on making itself known to us - the ever recurring
question "what is life for - what is it all about?".
- How much do you think it is possible to find an answer to that question, during the last segment of the spiral?
- Point 7 is about 16 years old, and point 8 is about 35. The period from point 6 to point 7 is a period of searching, the period from point 7 to point 8 is a period of finding, and the last period from point 8 to point 9 is a period of rejoicing over what we have found. "Let him who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All".
- But isn't it largely a question of remembering?
- What I am speaking about is not remembering - it is something which never happened before.
- You mean the system?
- Yes, and the meditation. The meditation belongs to the sixth dimension - it is in a new direction - a direction at right angles to the circle of recurrence.
- I don't quite understand what you mean?
- Recurrence is the same life, again and again. The sixth dimension is something quite new in our life - something we never previously experienced.
- So this period of our life really is a voyage of discovery?
- Yes, many things are possible - things one never dreamed about. One has to remember that the spiral contains a great many unused patterns - parts of the code which will come into operation if the light is allowed to circulate. That is the real purpose of the meditation.
You said last time that when the inner and the outer worlds become one, our highest aim is achieved?

- Yes, that is the practical importance of this teaching about the universe. It is something we never understood before.

- How do you see it practically?

- Well, think about the meditation. By going inwards during meditation it is possible to reach the causal level - the place where everything is one. During the day this will influence all our actions.

- But how does it influence our actions - what is the connection between the two?

- In the place where everything is one all the laws of the universe exist together. In a way we cannot understand the purpose of our existence is already known.

- And so during the day we have only to carry out this purpose?

- Yes, the universal nature of things is felt in everything personal.

- But I thought we had to give up the personal for the universal?

- Oh no, there is nothing we have to give up.

- Then what is it we have to do during the day?

- Enjoy life - enjoy it to the full.

- But isn't there some special work - some discipline which would help?

- No, that will prevent the natural flow of energy. Try to understand how this method works. Energy belonging to the causal level is very potent. A little of it can have a very big effect.

- You mean it is the kind of thing we cannot forget?

- Yes, like being in love. When you are in love you carry it around with you - you don't have to keep on trying to remember you are in love.

- I think I see what you mean - it just comes naturally.
Tell me, is there an actual connection between the inner and the outer worlds?

Yes, the connection is memory. There are different kinds of memory. On the physical level there is short term memory only—we very soon forget what we experience because it goes into the past. On the subtle level there is long term memory also... and so we can remember things very clearly which happened a long time ago. But on the causal level there is no need for memory at all because everything is now. There is no such thing as the past and the future.

You mean the whole of our life is now?

Yes, it is all there at once.

People often talk about living in the now—do you think that is what they mean?

I don't know—I often wonder what they mean. What I mean is not something within our direct control.

You mean it comes naturally?

Yes, as a result of the meditation. But of course all three kinds of memory can be going on simultaneously.