

16 October 1961

PART 1 [Quotation from *In Search of the Miraculous*, Chapter 10]

Influences of the second kind can proceed through books, through philosophical systems, through rituals. Influences of the third kind can proceed only from one person to another, directly, by means of oral transmission.

The moment when the man who is looking for the way meets a man who knows the way is called the *first threshold* or the *first step*. From this first threshold the stairway begins. Between 'life' and the 'way' lies the 'stairway'. Only by passing along this 'stairway' can a man enter the 'way'. In addition, the man ascends this stairway with the help of the man who is his guide; he cannot go up the stairway himself. The *way* begins only where the *stairway* ends, that is, after the *last threshold* on the stairway, on a level much higher than the ordinary level of life.

Therefore it is impossible to answer the question, *from what does the way start?* The way starts with something that is not in life at all, and therefore it is impossible to say from what. Sometimes it is said: in ascending the stairway a man is not sure of anything, he may doubt everything, his own powers, whether what he is doing is right, *the guide*, his knowledge and his powers. At the same time, what he attains is very unstable; even if he has ascended fairly high on the stairway, he may fall down at any moment and have to begin again from the beginning. But when he has passed the last threshold and enters the way, all this changes. First of all, all doubts he may have about his guide disappear and at the same time the guide becomes far less necessary to him than before. In many respects he may even be independent and know where he is going. Secondly, he can no longer lose so easily the results of his work and he cannot find himself again in ordinary life. Even if he leaves the way, he will be unable to return where he started from.

This is almost all that can be said in general about the 'stairway' and about the 'way', because there are different ways. We have spoken of this before. And, for instance, on the fourth way there are special conditions which cannot be on the other ways. Thus the conditions for ascending the stairway on the fourth way are that a man cannot ascend to a higher step until he places another man upon his own step. The other, in his turn, must put in his place a third man in order to ascend higher. Thus, the higher a man ascends the more he depends upon those who are following him. If they stop, he also stops. Such situations as this may also occur on the way. A man may attain something, for instance, some special powers, and may later on sacrifice these powers in order to raise other people to his level. If the people with whom he is working ascend to his level, he will receive back all that he has sacrificed. But if they do not ascend, he may lose it altogether.

There are also various possibilities as regards the teacher's situation in relation to the esoteric centre, namely, he may know more or he may know less about the esoteric centre, he may know exactly where this centre is and how knowledge and help was or is received from it; or he may know nothing of this and may only know the man from whom he himself received his knowledge. In most cases people start precisely from the point that they know only one step higher than themselves. And only in proportion to their own development do they begin to see further and to recognise where what they know came from.

The results of the work of a man who takes on himself the role of teacher do not depend on whether or not he knows exactly the origin of what he teaches, but very much depends on whether or not his ideas come in *actual fact* from the esoteric centre, and whether he himself understands and can distinguish *esoteric ideas*, that is, ideas of objective knowledge, from subjective, scientific, and philosophical ideas.

COMMENT

In the last forty-six years since this was said, there have been many talks about how to put someone on the same step as oneself in order to move on a step up the staircase. Apart from the rare cases when the fully enlightened man, such as the Great Teacher of the Maharishi, could take a pupil and train him to take his place as Head of the Tradition after his death, it must be realised that in actual practice the expression 'to place someone on one's own step' can have no real meaning except in a School. In fact, this is the basis of School work. Those who came first are taken up a step by the head of the School. They then take new people as tutors in classes moving up a step themselves in the process, ready to take more senior pupils and so on. It must be remembered that all this is related not only to Knowledge but also to Being. Your experience in the School over the years should make the idea of the staircase very vivid for you.

Of course a man may receive a new C influence when, with the help of a School, he has already climbed a number of steps up the stairway, and then his progress up the remaining steps may be greatly accelerated. We have seen many examples lately where experience in a School enhances the effect of the meditation.

Once when we asked 'What is the criterion by which the individual can know his position on the staircase at any time?', we received this answer:

'Ability to distinguish between A, B and C influences. At the top of the staircase a given influence can be known with certainty for what it is.'

The meditation as given by the Maharishi himself or by a man duly empowered and appointed by him is undoubtedly C influence, and therefore can be the first threshold or the first step for the person receiving it. But what is so often forgotten is that 'from the first threshold the staircase begins'. Between 'life' and the 'way' lies the stairway, and only by passing up this stairway can a man enter the way. In addition (as has been abundantly proved), 'the man ascends this stairway with the help of the man who is his guide; he cannot go up the stairway by himself'.

PART 2

You were asking, last week, how to reconcile the rules and principles of School Work (the importance of which you have begun to feel) with the present need to introduce as many people as possible to the meditation and through the meditation to the System. Certain rules and all the principles remain just as important as ever. If principles are well understood and remembered, the application or relaxation of certain rules in particular cases become clear. For instance, that C influence is for *prepared people*; that no-one should do anything affecting the School or other people in the Work, or 'in the name of the School', without advice from those who direct it; that certain ideas *cannot* be understood except in School; and so on. These are principles and eternal.

But in this case we must remember that this method of meditation was designed by Higher Mind exactly for all the people in the world; and it is the desire of those who gave it that as many people should be reached as quickly as possible. We are still in some doubt whether unprepared people will really do it properly and for long enough; but that can only be told by trying. For this purpose a 'School of Meditation' will be registered in legal form by the end of next week; and this is to be kept quite separate from the School and System (though in fact it will be run by

some of our people with special experience). This School of Meditation will arrange lectures designed to lead straight to the method, and printed invitation cards will be available for your friends. What is important is that these lectures and the method itself will be in no way connected with our Work in their minds. This is an experiment to find out if something effective and safe can be done in this way.

As most of you will have realised it is extremely difficult to know exactly what to say to people to make them want the meditation enough to go through all the difficulties of being given it; perhaps that is why we should attack the problem as members of a School and not as individuals!

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