

23 October 1961

You may like to hear again the talk that developed last Monday at Colet Gardens:

A. ACCIDENT AND CAUSE AND EFFECT

Q. It seems we lay down the causes in different parts of ourselves?

A. What goes on in one centre in us is often accident for another centre. We may be trying to pursue a line of thought and some emotion about something quite different may suddenly cause a change of direction. You are quite right about different parts of us.

Q. I don't see how you are to discover from external senses what is accident and your particular destiny?

A. We have not touched individual Fate or Will, for these are two other laws which we can only practically study later on. I thought it wiser if we could think what happens in ordinary life first and get a clear view of what the System means by 'Cause and Effect' and what it means by 'Accident'. In ordinary life things are confused and blurred and you will only get really clear and good examples when you are establishing a strong line of 'cause-and-effect' in this Work. May I suggest an example:

Here is a line of cause-and-effect (marked (a) Figure1) Suppose for instance you are

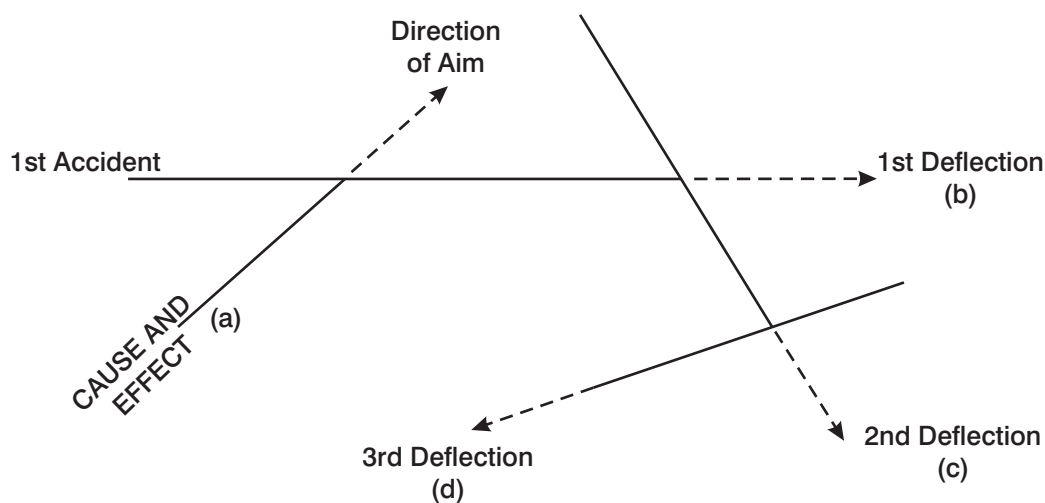


Figure 1

going well with the meditation, but you have a busy week and some of the half-hours are crowded out and progress slows down. At this point maybe you talk to somebody who says, 'I don't think this meditation is for everybody,' or 'It doesn't fit in with the System and all that we've learnt before.' This can be a first deflection (b) You begin to worry and not to like the meditation. Then you hear or meet with somebody who is supposed to be meditating wonderfully in a state of perpetual bliss, but whose private life is shocking! Here can come the second deflection (c)... 'I don't want to be like that.' And finally you catch influenza and stop, third deflection (d), bringing you back to worse than where you started. Or a line of cause-and-effect is study of the System and interest in the aim of the School. If you had a really strong line of cause-and-effect it would not matter what anybody else said;

you would have found that a certain practice of attention, a certain change of circulation had been developed over the years and was working well. But if you are surrounded by a wall of separateness and are not in step with other people, then such deflections can readily occur.

Remember the effect of an idle word on somebody; always remember what you say to somebody will be for them an accident though for you it may be deliberate or accidental; and when idle words come to your ears be strong in yourself, in what you believe, and have come to rely on and find works... We are, besides, far too prone to negative thinking; so many of our idle words are negative. If only we would be careful to speak about pleasant and interesting things. It is almost a British national failing just now.

Q. Would you say an awakened conscience is necessary to come under Cause and effect?

A. No, no! These laws, Accident and Cause-and-effect, happen all the time in ordinary life whether conscience is awake or not, but in a School conscience is of the utmost value in reminding you beforehand of the possibility of accident and its consequences.

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Now have you ever thought this process of slowing down and changing direction is part of a universal law, and that in the outer circle of humanity it is only in exceptional cases, that is when some incoming accident happens to give an impetus *in the direction* of the main line, that its direction is kept. Such an exception was seen during the Battle of Britain when the urgent necessities of war gave an impetus leading to the discovery of radar and the whole new science of radio astronomy. But there are far more examples observable all around us of the *change of direction* in human endeavour which almost invariably takes place. Examples in history too abound. The process is seen in the history of Christianity which started as a religion of love, and at one phase changed into the 'persecution of heretics' and the Inquisition. Try to suggest some examples which occur to you. Now we can begin to see the difference between deliberate or planned action, and conscious action.

Q. When you say 'conscious action' you mean a plan of action?

A. Deliberate action is very good – planned action that can be done in a perfectly ordinary way and is done all the time; and many examples of techniques in ordinary life are precisely to prevent accident by means of planned action. (Example of preparation of theatre, etc. in modern operative surgery.)

Conscious action is different, and we think of it practically in relation to work in and for a School, because although we may not be conscious, we have degrees of consciousness; and if we try to be conscious – especially at important moments – then because we learnt a great deal in the past how things should be done by a School and in a School, our actions can be relatively conscious. Deliberate action means working fairly blindly along an obvious line; conscious action means seeing our actions in relation to a whole. Each individual in a School talking to someone outside the School, should try to see how his actions and behaviour might in given circumstances affect the School as a whole. Deliberate action on the one hand; conscious action on the other hand – the latter demanding knowledge of how to give the right kind of conscious impulse to prevent deflection.

Q. Could you call the example 'objective' that you have just given?

A. I would like to keep the word 'objective' for actions connected with Objective Consciousness, because 'subjective' and 'objective' are used in so many different senses. I know what you mean, and you can use that expression to yourself, but I think there will be confusion if we introduce it all round.

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The two universal cosmic laws are the *Law of Octaves* and the *Law of Three Forces*. The Law of Octaves describes the points at which slowing down, and therefore change of direction, in every line of cause-and-effect take place. The Law of Three Forces describes how this can be influenced by the right kind of conscious impulse given at the right moment. A properly constituted School must understand this process in practice as well as in action. 'Doing' would be the giving of a conscious impulse at the necessary moment. As we do not yet know all this even theoretically, we can well understand the fundamental approach of the System as stated in the words, 'Man cannot do'.

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Q. Conscious action avoids accident completely; remembering a rule at a critical moment would stop one being influenced by the Law of Accident at a weak moment.

A. It depends on scale, of course; in small things, yes, but big cataclysms, no.

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B. MAGNETIC CENTRE (leading on to **C. STAIRCASE**)

Q. Do you mean that when somebody with Magnetic Centre touches Influence C that person becomes free from the Law of Accident?

A. Now this is a very important and fundamental question, and if you understand what that means – if you find the answer to that question – you will understand many other things as well. Let's get it right first of all; *C Influence*, Knowledge given by direct word of mouth from a man who is in, or connected with, a School. If this man meets with somebody with Magnetic Centre, at that time, at that point in this man with Magnetic Centre he is free from the Law of Accident. Now why?

Q. Could he not have found that man if he had no Magnetic Centre?

A. It is more the other way round – how did the man belonging to a School find *him*! There are many people who are looking for anybody with Magnetic Centre, and if they are rightly trained in the School they will know exactly how to reach such a man and attract him and interest him; nothing will be left to accident. But there is much more to it than that. May I ask you one question. What really is Influence C? *Whose* influence is it?

Q. Influence from Higher Mind?

A. Whose Higher Mind?

Q. The Leaders of the School?

Q. Does it come from the Absolute?

A. It is much nearer to us than the Absolute.

Q. Is it from the Inner Circle of Humanity?

Q. Is it from one's own Higher Mind?

A. We have not got there yet!

Q. *Our* Teacher, Mr. Ouspensky?

A. Yes, the man who gave us this Influence C, first of all. Influence C is entirely specific. There are many Influences A and many Influences B, but usually only one Influence C which *imprints itself on a man*, a man with the right Magnetic Centre for that Influence. There were many people not interested in Mr. Ouspensky, but if a man was, and was bound by that imprint, that imprint remains. He may meet with other Influences C later if he is lucky, but the imprint of the original one remains with him, and he must measure everything – every new influence by that imprint; otherwise he is likely to change horses, and has to begin all over again.

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I would like to go on, for you to understand this question – Whose influence? – in relation to Influence C. I put up there (Figure 2) various points on the Way right up from the top of the stairway. Though at the top of the stairway a man has Self-consciousness, yet it is not permanent in him. He has to go through the process of crystallisation, and that has to be given him by a man of very high Being and Knowledge because otherwise there will be a flaw in the crystal. We have met quite a number of Men No. 5, but sometimes there has been a flaw in the crystal. Therefore before this development of Self-consciousness is made permanent one has to have special treatment, then one becomes *Man No. 5* – I have put permanent Self-consciousness with glimpses of Cosmic Consciousness – and then when a man has command of Cosmic Consciousness he becomes *No. 6*. I think one could say that influences of people – ordinary people – can arise from that level, but only *No. 7* has Will.

Now Cosmic Consciousness is independent of life and death; it is permanent, and the death of the physical body does not mean anything in relation to it. This influence continues to exist – though not in any form that you could recognise as a person; personality has died with the body, but the influence continues to exist, and these influences are partly general, but mainly specific. The idea of the Guru in Eastern literature means a man of Cosmic Consciousness who continues to exert his influence on those who have this stamp of this particular C Influence upon them. Now this is all rather far away and speculative, but I think we have to believe that after fourteen years we would not have kept going in the right general direction had we been left to ourselves without any such influence. Let us leave it at that. I think we can say – for a great many of us – we have been able to recognise the difference between different influences to which we have been subject lately. Any questions about that?

Q. Can you go further, improve? What do you mean by impression? (Earlier it had been suggested that one criterion of progress up the staircase was the ability to distinguish with greater and greater certainty between the three kinds of influences – A, B and C, and which was the *kind* of impression one wanted.) Can you say what you mean alchemically or in terms of vibrations?

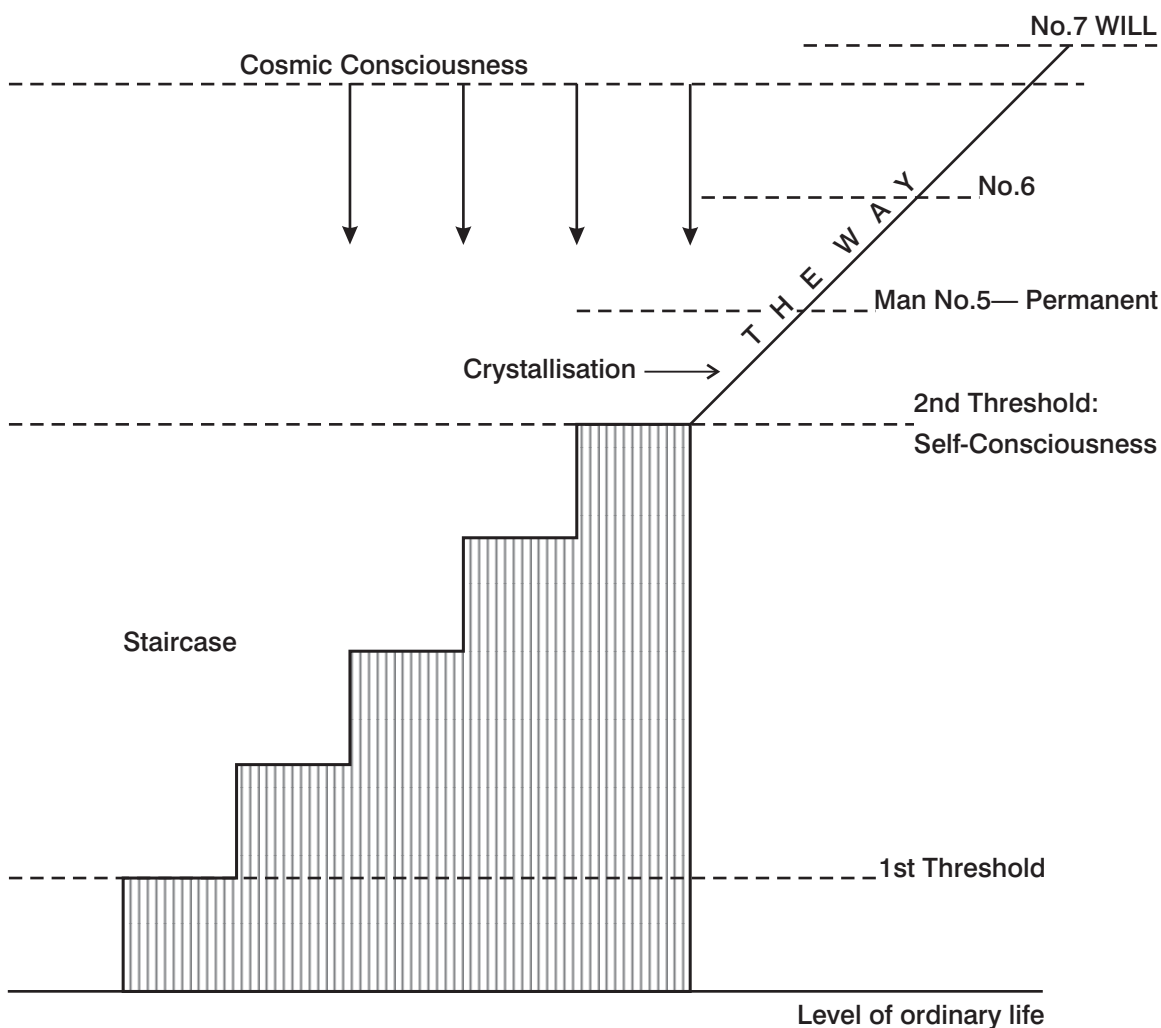


Figure 2

A. I mean alchemically you become sensitised to a certain code of behaviour, to a certain way of teaching, to a certain style, and you measure things by that. There will be quite a lot to think about. I would like you to keep this diagram in mind, and over the next week or two there will be some more material and see if you don't get interesting results.

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Extracts from some sayings by His Holiness the Shankaracharya:

1. Parting from his visit to us all at the Ashram his last words were:

Although going from here, I am one with you all. My blessings will be with you all the time, and in meditation we will be meeting. That is real communion.

We are ever at God's feet. The son of a lion is always a lion, and the son of a bird is always a bird. Never forget that we are the sons of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Absolute bliss consciousness).

2. A story related to us directly after:

10th August

God's love for His worshippers is very great indeed.

For instance:

Once Surdas (one of the Hindu devotees of Lord Krishna) while travelling from one place to another fell into a dry well. The well was in a lonely place and nobody could approach it to rescue him. At that moment Surdas remembered God. Lord Krishna, pleased very much, pulled him out of the well. When Surdas took hold of his hand, he at once recognised that God Himself was before him. Conclusion is that God helps his worshippers at any time in any place if we but remember him with a pure heart.

Once some Americans enquired from Ramtirtha (when he was touring there) why the female friends (Gopis) of Lord Krishna loved him to such a great extent that they forgot themselves. Ramtirtha replied, 'Yes! I will give you the answer.' After some time Ramtirtha came on the speaker's platform and then presently left, saying to the people that he would give the reply in a lonely place; and he began to run. The people followed him. He stopped after a short distance and the people repeated the question. Ramtirtha replied that this was not a suitable place, so he again began to run. In this way he went until he stopped, about midnight. At that place he said, 'I think that now you have your reply. When you have so much affection to follow after an ordinary person like myself (the worshipper of Lord Krishna), then what would have been the position of those female friends of Lord Krishna when He Himself was there?' Conclusion is that we should remember the name of God constantly, everywhere.

Human life is the starting point for reaching and realizing Almighty God. This world is a waiting room where a man lives for a few days and then departs for the home of God. So worship God wholeheartedly with love and affection. Seek happiness in the worship of God.

What do you think this influence is – A, B or C?

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