30 October 1961

Part 1

We have not exhausted by any means the subject of the Staircase, so that the shortened report of a conversation about it might be useful to you.

'Are there any questions about the staircase diagram that have come up during the week?'

Q. You know it was said that one of the criteria by which one could tell if one had reached the top of the staircase was the ability to distinguish between Influences A, B and C. At our Friday meeting I think there was a good deal of muddle between Influences A and Influences B.

A. So they are not at the top of the staircase!

Q. An example of Influence B was given as being ordinary courtesy, truthfulness, and the results of good civilisation.

A. Certainly there is truth in what you say. We are taught that without the influence of Schools stemming from the Inner Circle, there would have been only barbarism among the masses of humanity. Civilising influence and all new cultures have come from the Inner Circle.

But we need to be more specific. Influences B are influences which are conscious in origin but not conscious in action, because they are thrown into the vortex of life and come under the Law of Accident. Take the Gospels; they are conscious in origin but by the time all the different scribes and pharisees have been over them since the manuscripts first appeared on papyrus they have been very greatly altered, have come under the Law of Accident. That is one way in which anything which is written down and published far and wide ceases to become *conscious in action*. Influences A are accidental in origin and accidental in action. Influence C, to remain Influence C, must be conscious in origin and conscious in action; it must be preserved from the Law of Accident. Is that clearer?

Q. The question came up from our discussion last Thursday: Can anything in particular be done to help man distinguish between A, B and C Influences – in particular rather than generally?

A. I would have said specific discussion of the particular Influence in question – a heart-to-heart talk about it. For instance our System – we are sure it was conscious in origin but is it being kept conscious in action? Then the Meditation – that seems to be conscious in origin, but will it be conscious in action if it is given out to masses of unprepared people?

This quotation from a meeting of Mr. Ouspensky's may help us now:

Q. Cannot an organisation help work on the third line?

A. Yes, it is necessary. But an organisation cannot help by itself, because each line must be based on some kind of attitude. An organisation cannot replace an attitude, but at the same time an organisation is necessary for understanding certain things. For instance, one of the most important things in the work is the understanding of discipline. If one understands the idea of discipline, one finds the possibility to work against self-will. If one does not understand it, one will think one works, but in reality one will not work, because it will only be self-will.

> Study of discipline is connected with the second line of work. Without understanding school-discipline one cannot have inner-discipline. There are people who could do good work and who fail because they lack discipline. Yet change of being is possible only with school-work and school-discipline. For a certain period of time one must have it, and then later, one can work by oneself. Discipline is connected with rules. Rules are the conditions on which people are accepted and given knowledge in a school. Keeping those rules or conditions is their first payment, and the first test.
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> One of the most important things in every kind of school is the idea of rules. If there are no rules, there is no school. Not even an imitation school can exist without rules. If it is an imitation school there will be imitation rules, but there must be some kind of rules. One definition of a School is that it is a certain number of people who accept and follow certain rules.
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> The important thing to realise about rules is that there is really only one rule, or it is better to say one principle – that one must not do anything unnecessary. Now try to understand that. Why cannot we 'do' in the right sense? Because we do so many unnecessary things. Every moment of our life we do hundreds of unnecessary things and because of that we cannot 'do' and must first learn not to do anything unnecessary. First we must learn not to do unnecessary things in relation to the work, and later in connection with our own lives. It may take a long time, but this is the way to learn. You must do this, you must not do that; this is all specifications, but there is only one rule. Until you understand this fundamental rule, you have to try to follow other rules which are given.

It is difficult to get over the schoolboy habit of looking at rules negatively. If one remembers that it was said 'That if one understood and kept all the rules of the System one would have the conduct of Man No. 5' – that keeping rules gives one a preview of the Unified Life, it would be like being at the top of the staircase. If one were at the top of the staircase, one would then instinctively do nothing unnecessary, and doing nothing unnecessary also means *saying* nothing unnecessary; so that a man at the top of the staircase is on a fair way to 'doing' in the real sense and to '*speaking*' in the real sense. We only talk; we very seldom *speak*. Now are there any questions about that? Can we take it positively as a real help? It is very important at the present time.

(Pause)

Suppose there is a method – a direct method for reaching Self-consciousness. The Maharishi has pointed out that Self-consciousness requires external actions and words for its manifestation; if one is completely secluded in a state of Self-consciousness it will not be manifested, and what is needed at the present time is manifestation. Now there is a long, long period between having Self-consciousness for half-an-hour, an hour – perhaps even two hours a day, though not every day – and the external behaviour characteristic of a man who has realized himself. Such behaviour needs learning through practical experience. To acquire the behaviour of a man who has realized himself – to think, speak, and act without loss of consciousness – a great deal of experience in all the impact of life is first necessary. And during all that time – until the behaviour characteristic of Man No.5 becomes second nature, rules are necessary. You often hear people say: 'I kept rules for a long time; now let's give it all up; they are no longer necessary for *me*.' I have yet to meet a man who was *No. 5 without the behaviour of No. 5!*

Let us think more about the *creative* side of things. On the one hand talking is one of the most mechanical functions of the mind (of the intellect). Or on the other hand it is a God-given thing; for has not a word or a sentence changed the course of many people's lives? Sacred words and formulations have immense power, and if we want to have the power *to speak* in a creative way we have to do away with a lot of unnecessary talking. So rules are only a curb on the mechanical parts in order to allow the creative functions to have scope. This I think is put rather picturesquely in another story from the Shankaracharya that we have just had:

> Our intellect can make us either Saint or thief, depending on how we use it.
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> There was a man in the Punjabi province who had a big, healthy cow that gave much milk. One day it was stolen by a man from another province. The cow was used to fresh green grass, but now there was only straw to eat. So she became thin and gave little milk, and no one could advise him what to do. One day a Saint came to the village and he said: 'It is very simple; just put a green eyeshade over her eyes and she will think the straw is green grass.' The advice was gratefully accepted, and the cow happily began to eat again and gave quantities of milk.
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> (It ended): So it is with men: this world easily deceives us because our intellect is covered over by habitual wrong thoughts.

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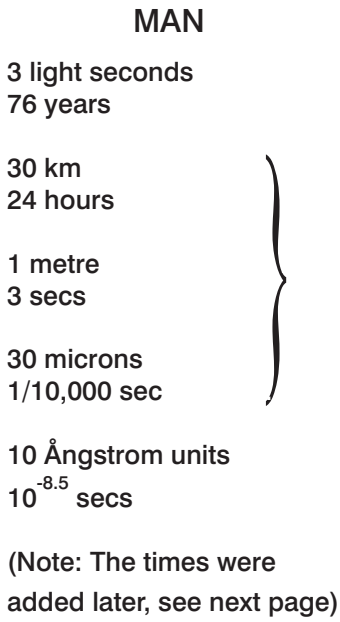
Part 2

As followers of Mr. Ouspensky, creative thinking must occupy a fairly high place in whatever we try to do. He was very fond of creative thinking himself, and just at the moment there is developing an opportunity for creative thinking in which every single one of us can gradually take a part. I mean this idea of Cosmoses – which remained in the dark for thirty years – is now blossoming out in many directions; and as all Knowledge is contained in the teaching on Cosmoses – all Knowledge of any kind – it must give the widest possible scope. Moreover it can only be contributed to by creative thinking involving *all* parts of the mind working harmoniously. It cannot be helped on by a little part of our minds – the formatory centre; one gets nowhere with that. Admittedly, a lot of these new discoveries remain in a rather technical stage – they are a job for specialists – but I have been wondering for some time if there was not a way of bringing *each one* of us in on it, and here is such an attempt.

I want to proceed in rather the same way as that by which Mr. Ouspensky made his discoveries on '*Time in different Cosmoses*'. We start with *man* himself, but this time with a '*Table of Size in different Cosmoses*' beginning with man:

First: What would you say was the *measure of a man*? Haven't you often seen people measuring materials in the old way? Don't you take the distance from the tip of the nose to the finger-tips of one outstretched arm – a yard – as the basis of man? A yard or a metre are very close together, and a circle with a yard diameter really includes all of man that matters; so if we take a yard or a metre as the measure of a man we will not be very far out. (1 metre was put at the centre of the diagram which was labelled '*Man*'.)



2. Well now, we know that the ratio between cosmoses and between the different divisions within man himself is 30,000, and this applies to size as well as to time. Start then by multiplying one metre by 30,000. 30,000 metres is of course 30 kilometres, and one interpretation of 30 kilometres is that it is the radius of man's horizon. If a man is in a boat on the sea with nothing to obstruct his vision, he can see 30 km and no more because of the curvature of the earth; so 30 km from one point of view is the limit of the outward vision of man. (30 km was placed in the division above 1 metre.)

3. Then if you multiply by 30,000 again you get the distance that light travels in 3 secs (the present moment for a man, the time of his breath); and so we put here (above 30 km) 3 light seconds.

4. Then suppose we start dividing by 30,000. 30 microns (30,000ths of a millimetre) – what does that mean? It is the smallest object a man can see with the naked eye under the right conditions – the diameter of a mote in a sunbeam, or of the largest cell in the human body – the human egg, 30 microns across, just visible to the naked eye under the right conditions. One meaning then is that 30 microns corresponds to the other limit of man's vision. You can say that all that is included between those two limits is sensory man – man whose brain depends on sensory imprints (30 km, 1 metre and 30 microns were bracketed together).

5. If you divide again by 30,000 you come to a quantity – 10 Ångstrom units (Å)– and it is about that quantity that new discoveries are being made at the present time in relation to Protein Synthesis, the basis of man's life. These two extreme measurements (3 light seconds and 10 Å) belong outside the sensory world of man – they belong to the world of 'extra-sensory perception' – and we can only infer them by other means. But what does this '10 Å' – this minute dimension – mean?

You heard last week that 10 Å is the diameter of one of the ribosomes (the factories for protein synthesis) just visible through the electron microscope in the cytoplasm of cells. These factories make the smaller protein components of the giant self-producing molecule DNA containing all the reproductive nuclear material of a cell, which when unravelled comes to a molecular length of 1 metre. So measurements which can be directly related to man extend from the largest molecule, through the cell, man himself, the biosphere and the earth. For each of those other four cosmoses the interpretation and significance of these figures would be different.

All this concerns the size of molecules, but there is also the time factor to be considered. It has been described, in a recent scientific article (*Scientific American*, 'How Cells Make Molecules', Sept. 1961) how these cells synthesise proteins at the seemingly incredible speed of two amino-acids per second, finishing the chain of 150 in 1½ minutes. I think it a little grudging of the writer of the article to call it just 'the efficiency of the cell'. It looks to us quite miraculous. You know that in this Teaching a miracle is defined as 'the laws of another cosmos manifesting in a cosmos above or below itself'. There is no such thing as an absolute miracle, but what pertains to another cosmos looks miraculous to us. The creation of a vast protein molecule – with a molecular weight of anything from 60,000 to 100,000 times the molecule of water, and containing a number of intricate compounds and an infinite number of atoms, would seem to us to be a miracle if done in 1½ minutes! Yet, in human official time, the equivalent would be about 600 years.

Q. Is it known how long our own digestion takes to 'unbutton' a protein back to amino-acids?

A. When it is working well, much of that work is done in an hour or two, but it is not complete for several hours. By the time food reaches the lower end of the small intestine it is reduced to minute building stones – as small as the building stones out of which these molecules are synthesised.

We can now put the other side of the picture. The measure of man's *size* is taken as a metre, but the measure of his *time* is his present moment, 3 seconds. At the point above that (with 30 km) will come 30,000 times that, i.e. 24 hours, a day and a night; above that (with 3 light seconds) 76 years, a life-time; and below (30 microns), 1/10,000 of a second, and below that again (10 Å), $10^{-8.5}$secs, which is the frequency of very high frequency wireless waves. It is the time taken for light to travel 1 metre, the size of a man, at the other extreme from the distance light travels in 3 seconds. There is a correspondence between all these things which completes the picture, and all these correspondences are being worked on. Sufficient has been done already for me to be able to say this with some confidence.

Q. Is the root man's memory? Is the shortest memory one of these very small things?

A. I would like to know what kind of memory you mean? If you mean the memory by which the fertilised ovum grows along a definite pattern not only into a human being but into a human being different from other human beings, that is the kind of memory required.

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