

March 1961

READING 2

SCHOOLS

In 1935 Mr Ouspensky stated his aim as follows:

If I can say: 'If I die tomorrow, work will continue,' it means a school is established. If it depends wholly on me, it means a school is not of sufficient strength.

And possibility of change of being is only with school work and school discipline. For a certain period one must have that, and then one can work by oneself. School means people. People must have preparation. Things went wrong with G. because at first he was very strict in choosing people, but later he took people without any preparation.

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Later the following conversation took place and it is from *The Fourth Way*, p.101

What does development mean? It means working in the four rooms, only the order of rooms in which a man works is different in different ways. In the Fourth Way work is done in all the four rooms at once.

Q. Is this organisation a school?

A. This is an interesting question: can we call ourselves a school? To a certain extent we may, because we acquire a certain knowledge and at the same time we learn how to change our being. But I must say in relation to this that in the beginning of our work, in St. Petersburg in 1916, we were made to understand that a school, in the full sense of the term, must consist of two degrees, that is, it must have two levels in it; one level, where men 1, 2 and 3 learn to become No. 4 and the other level where men No. 4 learn to become No. 5. If a school has two levels, it has more possibilities, because a double organisation of this kind can give a larger variety of experience and make the work more quick and more sure. So, although in a certain sense we can call ourselves a school, it is better to use this term for a bigger organisation.

Q. Did I understand from what you said that this is not exactly a school?

A. For some people it may be a school, for others not. It is always like that. It cannot be definite and cannot be the same for everybody.

Q. If it is not yet ready to be called a school, what can make it so?

A. Only work of its members on their own being, understanding of the principles of school work and discipline of a certain very definite kind. If we want to create a school, because we have come to the conclusion that we cannot change by ourselves without it, we must take part in the building of the school. This is the method of the Fourth Way. In the religious ways schools already exist, but here, if we want a school, we must take part in the building of it. But first you must learn. When you know enough, you will know what to do.

Q. You said that one can learn how to escape only from those who have escaped before?

A. Quite right – in the allegory of prison. And this means a school can only start from another school. This system can have value only if it comes from higher mind. If we

have reason to believe that it only comes from an ordinary mind, like ours, it can have no value and we cannot expect anything from it. Then better sit down and write your own system.

Q. Would it be possible for everyone in a school to progress from No. 4 to No. 5, or only for a few?

A. There is no limitation in principle. But you must understand that there is an enormous difference between man No. 4 and man No. 5. Man No. 4 is a man who has acquired a permanent centre of gravity, but in everything else he is an ordinary man. Man No. 5 is very different. He already has unity, a permanent 'I', the third state of consciousness. This means that he is awake, he can always remember himself when he needs it and the higher emotional centre works in him which gives him many new powers.

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Q. Does school stand for self-initiation?

A. What does self-initiation mean? It is all words. What would it mean to be initiated into the Chinese language? It would mean to learn it, to be taught. You cannot be initiated into Chinese by laying hands on you. Initiation is work. Two people can be in the same school, and for one it will be a school of one level and for another a school of another level. And for a third it may not be a school at all. It depends how deep one is in it. The highest school can be on very low level, and one and the same school can be on different levels, depending on the people in it. It requires work and remembering of aim.

Q. If schools are so important, why do they not have more influence in the world?

A. Schools can only act through people who are interested in them. They can do nothing if they are surrounded by people who are indifferent. The possibility of schools influencing life is conditioned by the general attitude to schools. In order to have influence, schools must have people who are interested and who would obey. But this must come from below, it cannot be produced by schools. Schools can throw B influences into the world, but if people are not interested in them, they can do nothing. They cannot use violence.

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