

10 February 1969

READING 3

THREE KINDS OF INFLUENCE

PART 1

Please begin by re-reading the quotation from Reading 1, Part 3, (1969/3, p.7).

Perhaps some of you recognised that this quotation refers to the direct influence of the Inner Circle of Humanity on someone in the outer circle, which is called in our System 'Influence C'.

A short description of the three kinds of Influence which can determine the lives of people in the world, was included by Mr. Ouspensky in his *4th Psychological Lecture* of the series given during the 1930's. Here is the gist of it:

All people of the Outer Circle live under influences of two kinds; the first kind (called 'influences *a*') consists of interests and attractions created in life itself; interests of one's health, safety, wealth, pleasures, amusements, security, vanity, pride, fame, duties and so on.

[**Note:** We have learnt to regard these as belonging to the 'external' world and determined by temporary desires arising from the physical body.]

The second kind (called 'influences *b*') are of a different order, being aroused by ideas which are not created in ordinary life, but come originally from the Inner Circle, being thrown into the general circulation of human life; passing through many different minds, and reaching a man through philosophy, science, religion, art or in the form of myths and fairytales.

[**Note:** Every day in print and by radio appear a tangle of influences of these two kinds without any apparent recognition of their different origin or significance. A good example occurred on January 26th when, amidst all the '*a* influences', the Royal Ballet gave a strikingly faithful television performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, based on that 'Inner Circle' fairy story which has kept reappearing in different forms through the ages in different parts of the world.]

Although man may not know of the existence of these two kinds of influence, they both act on him, and according to his Being he responds to them in different ways. Thus he can take everything as influence *a* and not feel influences *b* at all; in which case his possibility of development diminishes with every year of his life, so that the man dies (often at quite an early age), while physically he remains alive, like a seed that cannot germinate and produce a plant.

But if, on the other hand, a man is attracted by influences *b* which make him feel and think, the result of the impressions they produce accumulate in him, fuse together, and form in his personality what is called a 'Magnetic Centre'. Magnetic Centre turns one's attention in a certain direction and helps to keep it there; it can help one to realise the need of a School, begin to look for a School, recognise it when one meets it, and try not to lose it; for nothing is easier to lose than a School. A well-formed Magnetic Centre enables him to absorb the School Teaching which (provided the School is directly connected with the Inner Circle) is different from 'influences *a* and *b*' and may be called 'Influence C'. This Influence C can be transmitted only by word of mouth through direct instruction, explanation and demonstration. When a man meets with Influence

C and is able to absorb it, then it may be said of him *that in one point of himself* (i.e. in Magnetic Centre) *he becomes free from the operation of chance*. From this moment Magnetic Centre has finished playing its part; it has brought a man to a School and helped him in his first steps there. From then on the C Influence transmitted by the School (and his own increasing Self-realization) will take its place and will slowly begin to penetrate into the different parts of his personality and with time, into his Essence.

[In your discussion try to listen with the new ears of 1969, and see how you understand this in the light of our own recent experience. In particular we have learnt that, if attempts are made to transmit C Influence only from hearsay and without understanding, it quickly becomes just another *b* influence; also that if published or given to intellectuals or other unprepared people it is taken just as *a* influence like everything else. I remember overhearing Aldous Huxley remarking to his friend Gerald Heard as they came away from a remarkable description of the Ray of Creation by Mr. Ouspensky: '*An interesting wemnant, Gewalt, of the Aztec weligion.*' The reactions of the friends we bring, for instance, to see a Mukabeleh are instructive also as giving a pointer to their Being – not their Knowledge.

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Next time we shall see how the Shankaracharya also speaks of three kinds of influence, but in terms of the Three Gunas. This is not at all easy and please avoid comparisons for the present or even mention of the Law of Three.]

PART 2

Another fundamental point on which our System and that of the Tradition of the Meditation agree, lies in the statement 'The Way does not begin on the level of ordinary life'.

In October 1935 at the crucial moment when we had to find and finance not only Colet but a large house and farm in the country, Mr. Ouspensky said at a meeting:

Your remember the staircase. The Way does not begin on the level of ordinary life. Between ordinary life and the Way there is a staircase, and the condition of going up this staircase is that if one wants to go to the next step one must put someone else on his step. People often ask what this means. This means work in connection with the School – bringing people, finding means for the School, etc. You were able to come and study because it was all organised and financed by others who came before you. In this way they 'put you on their step'. The outward aim of the Work is to establish and maintain a School within which we may have many kinds of investigation, scientific, psychological and so on. These lines will show results when people with particular preparation and capacity will come and begin to be interested.

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And now today when some individuals use the School for following their own personal interests, I often wonder if they remember that without this very School that he created, we should never have met with the Meditation, the Shankaracharya and his System; never have interested the Mevlevi nor learnt their turning and Mukabeleh; nor would we have retained our coherence as a solid body of people in the face of warring influences and changing times. How are *you* going to insure the future for those who come after you?

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A last word about the teaching on the 'Staircase'. It used to be said that, up to the final step that leads to the beginning of the Way, a man may be plagued with doubts – doubts about his Teacher and those around him, about the School, its Teaching and its methods, Only when the last doubts have gone will he start to sail along the Way under the fair wind of certainty.

Also that the kind of man most likely to succeed in going up the steps of the staircase is the ordinary householder (Russian *'obyvatel'*), the good, reliable and responsible person; but the lunatic and the tramp will probably fall down and crack their skulls. The lunatic is the one who falls for any strange cult or crazy set of ideas, who has in fact no true sense of values; the tramp is the one who has no values or standards at all!

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