

CHAPTER XI

Necessity for study of school principles and methods – Three lines of work – Right and wrong in relation to the three lines – The need for understanding – Aims and needs of the school – Putting another in one's place – An organisation is necessary for practical work – What is 'work'? – Valuation – Working with people – Working for the school – Taking personal interest in the organisation – The right kind of people – Fourth Way school – Right attitude – Payment – How to pay? – Centre of gravity – Discipline – Rules – Not doing what is unnecessary – Surrendering one's decisions – Meeting demands – Shocks in school-work – Idea of choice – Physical work – School knowledge – Men of higher mind – Can schools influence life?

IN THESE LECTURES WE HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT MAN, not enough, but sufficiently for practical purposes, we have spoken a little about the universe; but I see that the idea of school and school-work is still very vague and sometimes mixed with formatory conceptions which do not lead anywhere. The idea of school must be taken simply that is to say, a school is a place where you learn something. But there must always be a certain order in things, and you cannot learn without following this order. Speaking of schools connected with some kind of higher schools (without this connection a school has no meaning) I said that in such schools you must work on your being at the same time as your knowledge, because otherwise all your knowledge will be quite useless and you will derive no profit from it. Esoteric ideas that are not taken practically become mere philosophy – simply intellectual gymnastics that can lead nowhere.

I have given you all the words necessary for the study of the system and explained the position of this system in relation to other systems. You will remember that I spoke about different ways and from what I said about them it more or less followed that this system belongs to the Fourth Way, that is, has all the peculiarities and features of schools of the Fourth Way. Then I said that a school depends on the level of the people who study in this school, and level depends on the level of being.

For development of being school is necessary – many people working in the same direction according to school principles and methods. What one man cannot do, many people working together can do. When I met this system I very soon became convinced that it was connected with schools and in this way had passed through recorded and unrecorded history. During this time methods were invented and perfected.

Schools can be of different degrees, but at present I take as a school every kind of preparatory school leading in a certain direction, and an organization that can be called a 'school' of the Fourth Way is an organization which introduces three forces into its work. What is important to understand is that there is a kind of secret in school-work, not in the sense of something actually hidden, but something that has to be explained. The idea is this. If we take school-work as an ascending octave, we know that in each octave there are two intervals or gaps, between *mi* and *fa* and between *si* and *do*. In order to pass through these gaps without changing the character or the line of the work it is necessary to know how to fill them. So if I want to guarantee the direction of the work in a straight line, I must work on three lines simultaneously. If I work only on one line, or on two lines, the direction will change. If I work on three lines, or three octaves, one line will help another to pass the interval by giving the necessary shock. It is very important to understand this. School-work uses many cosmic ideas, and three lines of work is a special arrangement to safeguard the right direction of the work and to make it successful.

The first line is work on oneself: self-study, study of the system and trying to change at least the most mechanical manifestations. This is the most important line. The second line is

work with other people. One cannot work by oneself; a certain friction, inconvenience and difficulty of working with other people creates the necessary shocks. The third line is work for the school, for the organization. This last line takes on different aspects for different people.

The principle of three lines is that the three octaves must go on simultaneously and parallel to one another, but they do not all begin at the same time and so, when one line reaches an interval, another line comes in to help it over, since the places of these intervals do not coincide. If a man is equally energetic on all three lines, it leads him out of many accidental happenings. Naturally, the first line begins first. In the first line of work you *take* – knowledge, ideas, help. This line concerns only yourself, it is entirely egocentric. On the second line one must not only take but also *give* – communicate knowledge and ideas, serve as an example and many other things. It concerns people in the work, so on this line one works half for oneself and half for other people. On the third line one must think of the work in general, about the school or the organization as a whole. One must think about what is useful, what is necessary for the school, what the school needs, so the third line concerns the whole idea of school and all the present and the future of the work. If a man does not think about this and does not understand it, then the first two lines will not produce their full effect. This is how school-work is arranged and this is why three lines are necessary – one can get additional shocks and the full benefit of the work only if one works on three lines.

If we connect the three lines of work with the idea of right and wrong, then all that helps the first line, that is, one's personal work, is right. But on the second line you cannot have it all to yourself, you have to think of other people in the work, you have to learn not only to understand but to explain, you must give to others. And you will soon see that you can understand certain things only by explaining to others. The circle becomes larger, right and wrong become bigger. The third line already relates to the outside world, and good and bad become what helps or hinders the existence and work of the whole school, so the circle grows still larger. This is the way to think about it.

I particularly draw your attention to the study and understanding of the idea of three lines. It is one of the chief principles of school-work. If you apply it, many things will open up for you. This system is full of such instruments. If we use them, they open many doors.

The first principle of the work is that efforts give results proportionate to understanding. If you do not understand, there will be no results, if you do understand, the results will be according to how much you understand. So the first condition is understanding, and even before that one must know what to understand and how to get the right understanding. Real work must be work on being, but work on being requires understanding of the aims, conditions and methods of the work. The aim of the work is to establish a school. For this purpose it is necessary to work according to school methods and school rules, and to work on three lines. Establishing a school means many things.

There are two conditions in the work with which one must begin, the first, that one must not believe anything, one must verify everything, the second, an even more important condition, refers to doing. One must not do anything until one understands why one does it and for what purpose. These two conditions must be understood and remembered. It is true that one may realize one does not know anything and does not know what to do. Then one can always ask for advice, but if one asks, one has to accept and follow it.

So far you have worked on the first line, you have studied what was given and explained to you, and you have tried to understand. Now, if you wish to continue, you must try to work on the second line and, if possible, on the third line. You must try to think how to find more work on the first line, how to pass to work on the second line and how to approach work on the third line. Without this your study will give no results.

Now ask questions until you are satisfied that you understand about the three lines of work

– what each line means, why they are necessary, what is necessary for each of them and so on. The profit you may get is always proportionate to your understanding. The more consciously you work, the more you can get. That is why it is so important that all this should be explained and understood.

Q. How does one need three lines of work?

A. In the beginning all depends on the mind – mind must be educated, it must awake. Later it will depend on emotion. For this one needs a school, one must meet other people who know more than one does oneself and one must discuss things with them. Certainly, if you remain by yourself you will forget the things you learn because there are so many momentums in us that things just disappear from our mind. That is why a man cannot work alone and only the combined work of many people together can produce the necessary results. There are many obstacles, many factors which keep us asleep and make it impossible for us to awake. Things we learn will just disappear if nothing helps them, and what can help them? Only other people around.

First one must work on acquiring knowledge, material, practice. Then, when one has got a certain amount, one begins to work with other people in such a way that one person is useful to another and helps another. On the second line, because of a certain special organization, one is in a position to work for other people, not only for oneself. And later one may understand in which way one may be useful to the school. It is all a question of understanding. On the third line you work for the school only, not for yourself. If you work on those three lines, after some time this organization will become a school for you, but for other people, who work only on one line, it will not be a school. You remember I said that a school is an organization where you can not only acquire knowledge but also change your being. A school of this nature is not always the same, it has magical qualities and may be one kind of school for one person and something quite different for another person. You must understand that all you can receive, all ideas, all possible knowledge, all help, comes from school. But the school does not guarantee anything. Take an ordinary university where only knowledge and instruction are given. It can guarantee you a certain amount of knowledge, but even that only if you work. But when the idea of change of being enters, no guarantee is possible, so people may be in the same school, in the same organization, and may be on different levels.

Q. You spoke of the aims and needs of the school. Could you tell us what they are?

A. First we must prepare ourselves for understanding them. We have school ideas, so we must make use of them: that will help us to understand schools. If we do nothing ourselves and talk about schools, it will only create imagination and nothing more. We must draw profit from the ideas we have: if we draw no profit from them, schools will not exist for us. You must have your own aim and it must coincide with the aim of the school, it must enter into it.

Q. Does the difference between the first and the third lines mean that a school has aims apart from the advancement of its members, such, for instance, as perpetuating its own knowledge?

A. Not only. There may be many things, because it is taken in a different line of time. In relation to yourself you can take only the present. In relation to school – a longer time.

It may help if I remind you how this work began. A very long time ago I came to the conclusion that many things existed in man that could be awakened, but I saw that this did not lead anywhere, because one moment they were awakened and another moment they disappeared, since there was no control. So I realized that school was necessary and I began to look for a school, again in connection with these powers which I called ‘miraculous’. Eventually I found a school and found many ideas. These are the ideas we are studying now. For this study, an organization is necessary, first, in order that people could learn these ideas and, secondly, in order that they should be prepared for a further stage. This is one of the reasons for an organization, and only those people can have a place in it who have done something for themselves already. As long as they are in the power of false personality they

cannot be useful, either to themselves or to the work. So the first aim of everyone who is interested in the work is to study himself and find what must be changed. Only when certain things are changed does one become ready for active work. One thing must be connected with another. One must understand that personal study is connected with the organization and with the study of general ideas. With the help of these ideas we can find much more: the more you have, the more you can find. Work is never at an end – the end is far. It cannot be theoretical, each of these ideas must become practical. There are many things in this system that an ordinary man cannot invent. Some things one can discover by oneself; some other things one can understand only if one is given them, but not otherwise; and there is a third kind of things which one cannot understand at all. It is necessary to understand these gradations.

Q. It seems to me that what we have been learning so far was theory, and now we need to make it a matter of personal practice?

A. Quite right. Only it is wrong to think that until now everything was theoretical. From the first lecture you were given material for self-observation and for practical work. You must not think that this is the beginning of something new that has not existed before.

Q. What form of work could we have other than lectures and discussions?

A. You must think what you need besides discussion. You need instruction, you need to be shown the way. One cannot find the way by oneself; it is the state of human beings that they can be shown the way but they cannot find it by themselves.

You see, to put it more clearly, you enter the second line of work in this way: these groups have been going on for some time, and there were people and groups before you. One of the principles of school-work is that one can get instruction and advice not only from me but also from people who have been studying before you came, perhaps for many years. Their experience is very important for you, because, even if I wished it, I could not give you more time than is possible for me. Other people have to supplement what I can give you, and you, on your side, must learn how to use them, how to profit by their experience, how to get from them what they can give you.

Experience shows that in order to get what it is possible to get from these ideas a certain organization is necessary, organization of groups of people not only for discussing things but also for working together, as, for instance, in the garden, in the house or on the farm, or doing some other work that can be organized and started. When people work together at anything for the sake of experience, they begin to see in themselves and in other people different things which they do not notice when they just discuss. Discussion is one thing and work is another. So in all schools there exist different kinds of organized work, and people can always find what will suit them without unnecessary sacrifices, because sacrifices are not expected.

But you must think about it, you must realize that so far people have looked after you, talked to you, helped you. Now you have to learn to look after yourselves, and later you will have not only to look after yourselves but also after new people. This also will be part of your work.

The chief point I speak about is understanding. I mean understanding of the work, of the necessity of work, of the requirements of the work, the general plan of the work, and interest in it all. This is what is obligatory. One cannot understand the methods of the work until one understands its general direction. And when one understands the direction, it will help one to understand many other things that one wants to understand. You see, one cannot avoid one's share in this part of the work. If for one or another reason one avoids it, one cannot acquire any more.

Some people do not understand the very beginning of work; they do not think about work as *work*; they take it in the ordinary way. There is one thing that is necessary, obligatory, after a certain time, and this is *valuation*, because one cannot work without it. On the one hand people want to work, but on the other they want to take things in the same way as usual. But if

they want to work, *everything* in reference to the work must be regarded differently, *everything* – and they think they can take things in the same way. What I find lacking is *work* and understanding of work and valuation of work. Valuation is lacking chiefly. Everything is taken for granted, and at the same time it is taken from an ordinary point of view. As a result nothing changes. Much depends on personal attitude and personal work. A school for one person is not a school for another.

Q. How can one have the right attitude and valuation?

A. First of all, before beginning to study, one must decide what one really wants to know. It is quite possible that what we study here will not interest one, one may find that one does not need it at all. So one must try to find more or less what one wants, otherwise one may only waste one's time. This is first. Secondly, one must understand certain fundamental principles, otherwise one will fail to understand many other things; something will always stand in the way of one's understanding.

A very important principle is that a person cannot study the system alone, and it is necessary to understand why. There are many reasons. The first reason is very simple and obvious – one cannot have a teacher all to oneself. If one finds someone who can teach this system, he will not spend his time on one person. And without someone who can explain things and work with one, one can do nothing. Secondly, if one works alone, or tries to, one cannot put someone else in one's place, and at a certain moment this becomes very necessary in order to pass to the next degree of knowledge and being. You will remember what I said about the staircase in the first lecture, in connection with the explanation of the growth of magnetic centre and the work following? I said that a man can rise to the next step of the staircase only by putting another man in his place. This means that one climbs up this staircase which represents the difference in levels between ordinary life and what is called the Way. The Way does not begin on the same level as ordinary life, one has to go up higher to reach it. This means that the level of our understanding, our ordinary mind, even our ordinary feelings have to be changed. Only, in thinking about putting other people in one's place, it is very important to avoid one dangerous mistake. Some people are inclined to think that this must be their individual work. They fail to understand that this expression is a formulation of a general principle. It is childish to think that it can be done by one person transmitting these ideas to another. First of all it is necessary to understand that people cannot do it and, secondly, that it cannot be demanded of them, because individual work can only refer to oneself. Putting people in one's place is *school-work*, that is, the joint efforts of all the people belonging to the school. All school-work is organized with this purpose in view, the different branches of the work all pursue the same end: to put new people in the place occupied by the people who are there at present and in this way to help them rise to other steps. But nobody has thought about it in the right way. For instance, very few people think about these lectures and about the house in the country: who arranged them and how they are arranged and run. This is the answer to the question about putting someone in one's place, because other people look after you and arrange things for you. They studied the ideas of the system before you and came to a certain point in their study; and now they want to go further. For that they have to help other people to know what they know. They cannot do it by themselves, so they help to arrange lectures and other things for newer people. This is part of the general plan of school-work. The principle of the work is that everyone must do what he can. Then, when other people come, it is for them to do what others have done before them. A certain period of effort is necessary and everyone must share in it.

Q. Why can a man do more in a group than by himself?

A. For many reasons. The first, as I explained, because he cannot have a teacher all to himself. The second, because in schools certain sharp corners are smoothed out. People have to adapt to one another, and this is generally very useful. The third is that one is surrounded

by mirrors; one can see oneself in every person.

Q. But is there a tie between me and other people here?

A. There must be a tie, but the tie is produced by work. Everybody who works creates this tie. We must not expect other people to think about us. They will do so as much as possible, but we cannot take it for granted.

Q. Would you say more on that? Is there any obligation between oneself and the people in this room?

A. That depends on you, on how you understand it, what you feel about it, what you think you can do about it. There are no imposed obligations. Obligations come from work. The more one does, the more obligations one has. If one does nothing, nothing is asked of one. Mr Gurdjieff explained this in the beginning; he said it was dangerous to do something in the work if you do not want difficult things to be asked of you.

Q. You said that the second line is work with people. I find it easier to work alone.

A. Everybody finds that. Certainly it would be much better if you could sit here alone and talk to me, without any other people, and particularly 'these' people, because these people are especially unpleasant. We all think that. I thought that when I began to study. It is one of the most mechanical things in the world. The whole work, the whole system is arranged in such a way that you cannot get anything from the first line if you do not work on the second and third lines. In the first line you can get certain ideas, certain information, but after a while you come to a stop if you do not work on the other two lines.

Q. While trying to work on the first line, how can one get an idea of the third line?

A. By working on the first line to begin with, and then getting a picture of the whole – all the ideas of the system and the principles of school-work. If you work on what we call the first line – self-study and study of the system – every possibility in the work enters into it. So the more time and energy you give to the study of the system the more you will understand what is included in it. In this way, little by little, understanding will come. In the first line you must be very practical and think about what you can gain. If you feel that you are not free, that you are asleep, maybe you will want to be free, to awake, and so you will work to gain that. In the third line you think about the work, about the whole organization. First of all, organization must be the subject of your study, like the Ray of Creation – the idea of organization, the needs of organization, the forms of organization. Then you will see that the organization is your business, not someone else's business. Everybody must take part in it, when they can. Nobody is asked to do what they cannot, but everybody must think about it and understand it. What is important in the third line is not so much actual doing as thinking about it. You cannot leave other people to think about it for you. There can be no school-work on one line. School-work *means* work on three lines. It must be taken from a personal point of view and understood that only with these three kinds of help can one move from the passive dead spot. Too many things keep you there, you always have the same feelings, the same dreams, the same thoughts.

Q. Is the third line responsible for the progress of the system?

A. Everything is. One line cannot exist without another. One line or two lines is not work. But first of all understanding is necessary. You can study – time is given for that – but you cannot decide to do one thing and put off another thing.

Q. You say that first we must understand about the third line. But that surely is not yet work?

A. It depends. In a sense, to understand is already work. If not enough people think about the work as a whole and understand it, it is impossible to continue. A certain number of people must understand and be able to do what is necessary. You have never realized how difficult it is for the work to exist even in the form it has now. Yet it is possible for it to exist and develop if more understanding and energy is put into it. Then, with right understanding, it will be right development. But you cannot expect someone else to go on putting understanding and

energy into it for you.

Q. But the initiative does not lie with me?

A. Certainly it lies with you. Only on the second line it does not lie with you – it has to be organized. You must come to the understanding of the third line yourself, only then will it be third line. It depends on your attitude and your possibilities, and these possibilities cannot be created artificially. If you feel that it is necessary to do something for the work of the school, and if you are able to do it, that will be third line of work. First you must understand what is needed, and only later can you think about what you yourself can do for the organization.

Q. It seems to me that what you want from us is that we should feel that we *are* the organization, or part of it, that it is not something separate from us?

A. Quite right, and more than that. You must understand what a school of the Fourth Way means. It is in ordinary life and therefore it particularly needs organization. Schools of monks and yogis are organized, but ordinary life does not give opportunities for studying the different sides that need to be studied. For this there must be a special organization.

Q. You speak much of understanding recently.

A. Yes, understanding is necessary, and a personal attitude. People do not make the existence of the school a personal concern, and it cannot be impersonal. In many cases words stand in the way of understanding. People speak of first line, second line, third line, just repeating words – and cease to understand anything. They use these words too easily. It is necessary to have your own personal picture of these lines: first of yourself acquiring knowledge, new ideas, breaking down old prejudices, discarding old ideas which you have formulated in the past and which contradict one another, studying yourself, studying the system, attempting to remember yourself and many other things. You must think about what you want to get, what you want to know, what you want to be, how to change old habits of thinking, old habits of feeling. All that is first line.

Then, when you are prepared enough and have made sufficient efforts for some time, you can put yourself in the conditions of organized work where you can study practically. On the second line the chief difficulty in the beginning is working not on your own initiative; because it depends not on yourself, but on arrangements made in the work. Many things enter into that you are told to do this or that, and you want to be free, you do not want to do it, you do not like it, or you do not like the people with whom you have to work. Even now, without knowing what you will have to do, you can visualize yourself in conditions of organized work which you enter without knowing anything about it, or very little. These are the difficulties of the second line, and your effort in relation to it begins with accepting things – because you may not like it; you may think you can do whatever you have to do better in your own way; you may not like the conditions, and so on. If you think first about your personal difficulties in relation to the second line, you may understand it better. In any case it is arranged according to a plan you do not know and aims you do not know. There are many more difficulties that come later, but this is how it begins.

In the third line your own initiative comes in once more, if you have the possibility to do something not for yourself but for the work. And even if you can do nothing, it is useful to realize that you can do nothing. But then you must understand that if everybody came to the conclusion that they can do nothing, there would be no work. This is what I mean by making a personal picture, not just using the words: first line, second line, third line. Words mean nothing, particularly in this case. When you have a personal picture, you will not need those words. You will speak in a different language, in a different way.

Every line in the work, like everything else in the world, goes by octaves, increasing, decreasing, passing intervals and so on. If you work on all three lines, when you come to an interval in your personal work, another line of work may be going well and will help you to pass the interval in your individual work. Or your individual work may be going well and so

may help you to pass the interval in some other line. This is what I meant when I spoke about intervals in connection with different lines.

The one thing to understand in the work is that one cannot be free. Certainly freedom is an illusion, for we are not free anyway, we depend on people, on things, on everything. But we are accustomed to think that we are free and like to think of ourselves as free. Yet at a certain moment we must give up this imaginary freedom. If we keep this 'freedom', we can have no chance of learning anything.

Q. About thinking personally, I find when I try to do so I bring it down to a small scale.

A. You mix things, the word 'personal' has misled you. 'Personal' does not only mean your own life and conditions. You must feel it is your own work. A school can exist only when people feel not outside it but inside, when they think of it as their own house. Then only will they benefit from it and will know what can help the work, what may be useful.

I will give you an example of a personal attitude, you remember the small parable in the New Testament about a man finding a pearl and selling everything to go and buy it. There are also other small parables there which are all pictures of a personal attitude. Imagine a man taking it impersonally – it would be quite different. The New Testament always shows the necessity of a personal attitude, of personal profit.

Many things become possible if we think about them in the right way. Every problem connected with the work, if understood rightly, gives you something, there is nothing from which you cannot get more profit than you do now. The first thing to learn in this system is how to get things, everything you do must be done for a purpose, your own purpose. You benefit from all the three lines, but from each in a different way.

In relation to the third line it is very important to understand the general idea of why this work exists and how to help it. As I said, the idea is to establish a school, that is, to work according to school rules and principles, first studying these rules and principles and then applying them in practice. Many conditions are necessary for that. One of these conditions is that people are necessary. There are people who are prepared, who are capable of developing these ideas, but they do not know them. So it is necessary to find them, find the right kind of people and give them these ideas. But for that one must first understand these ideas oneself.

Sometimes I am asked why expansion should be necessary for a system that is meant only for a few. It is not difficult to answer this question. It is quite true that this system cannot belong to all; it cannot even belong to many. But *we* must make every effort to give it to as many people as possible. Expansion of ideas of the system will be limited by the nature of the ideas themselves and by people's inertia and their incapacity to understand these ideas. But it must not be limited by *our own* inertia.

The system can reach the right people, that is, people who can not only *take*, but also *give*, only if it is given to a large number of people. If it is limited to a small group it will never reach the right people. Small groups, if they think that they can keep the ideas to themselves, will distort and spoil them. Distortion can be avoided only if work grows and if many people know about it. Small groups, limited and unchanging, will always add something personal to it. So the more the work grows, the more each individual can get from it. Another reason why schools cannot exist on too small a scale is that only a certain number of people gives a sufficient variety of types. For successful group-work, variety of types is necessary, otherwise there is no friction, no opposition. People would think they understood one another.

Q. What is the best way to start forming a Fourth Way school?

A. We cannot start. A school starts from another school. If people meet together and say 'Let us start a school', it will not be a Fourth Way school. But if a school is started, how to continue, how to develop – that is what you must think about. And for this you must first understand what work on three lines means and then *work* on three lines.

Q. To some people the system appears as selfish.

A. The system must be selfish in a sense. The first line of work is selfish, for there you hope to gain something for yourself. The second line is mixed – you have to take other people into consideration, so it is less selfish; and the third line is not selfish at all, for it is something you do *for* the school, not with the idea of gaining something *from* the school. The idea of gain belongs to the first line. So the system includes in itself both what is selfish and not selfish.

Q. How can one understand the third line practically?

A. When you begin to understand, this marks a definite moment in the work. Suppose you are in contact with a certain school – which level, or whether good or bad we do not enter into. In this school you get certain knowledge. But what do you give in exchange? In what way do you help the school? That is third line. I am often asked what the third line means, how to understand it and how to start working on the third line. This question never presented any difficulty for me personally. From the moment I met the system I felt that it was bigger and more important than anything I ever knew and, at the same time that it was known only to a small group of people. There were no organizations behind it, no help, nothing. Science, art, the theatre, literature had their universities, museums, books, a large following of people, the help of governments, the help of society, and at the same time all their combined content was very small compared with the system. At best they were only preparation for the system – and in spite of this they had all and the system had nothing.

These were my ideas when I met this system. I decided to work on this line, and *this* was the third line of work.

It is quite clear that the work needs an organization and a place for all the people who want to come, and therefore it is necessary to find people who understand this need and are willing and able to support the work in every way they can. Take as an example an ordinary school. It requires a certain plan and organization, and a certain number of people to run it, and one must know who will do one thing and who will do another.

So everyone who wants to go on must realize that this work, its existence and its welfare is *his own business*, that he must think about it, must try to understand its requirements, must regard it as his personal concern that the work should go on, and not leave all this to other people. The most important thing is to make it one's own concern, to think of it as one's own work.

There is a Russian proverb: if you like coasting downhill you must like pulling the toboggan uphill. If someone says, 'I am interested in the first line but not in the third', it is the same as saying, 'I like coasting down but do not like pulling the toboggan up'.

Try to think that I may go away and the work, as it is now, may disappear. Look at it from this point of view, do not take it as a permanent institution.

Q. I try to take what I can from the work. But how to learn to give back?

A. Sometimes one may be in the position to put the question in this form, but sometimes it is sufficient to understand what *may* be given, not what *you* can give; to know what is useful and necessary for the work without relation to yourself. Only then can you understand what may be useful at a given moment and see whether you can do something at that moment or not. So before you can put 'I' into it you must understand what can be done in general, what the work needs. Only later can you put 'I' into it. I do not consider so much what one or another person actually does, but I consider very much what he thinks. This is what is important. If he thinks and feels rightly, opportunity may come. He may not have the opportunity to do anything today, but circumstances may change and opportunity may present itself. But if he does not care about this side of things, if he does not understand it and does not think rightly about it, he deprives himself of the possibility to gain what he wants to gain.

Q. If circumstances stop this work as it is now, is there a possibility of developing oneself by using what one has heard here?

A. I cannot answer this. I can only say that if people do not work in these conditions how can

they work without these conditions? Experience shows that with all possible help a long time is necessary to get some results, so if one is by oneself there is still less chance. It is impossible to say what will happen in one or another case. One has a tendency to forget the most elementary things one has learnt. Even what one thinks one has understood one forgets in a couple of weeks. Then, with the best intentions people distort ideas. Supposing they do not come to any groups, they must continue to think, they have problems, ask themselves questions and have to find answers to them. For instance, one of the usual forms of distortion by people who work by themselves or in separate groups is that they invariably take some kind of explanation as a principle.

But if a man has learnt to remember himself, that is another thing; it is a different state, different conditions.

In the work the first condition is understanding what one wants to gain and how much one is prepared to pay for it, because one has to pay for everything. Sometimes one wants things without realizing what it involves and how much there is to pay. Try to think about it, perhaps you will see what I mean. This means that everything one may acquire needs a certain effort, and in order to make this effort, particularly to make it consciously, one must know why one is doing it and what one can get by this effort. And it is very important to understand too in which conditions one can work and without which conditions it is useless to try to work.

Q. You say one must know how much one is prepared to pay. How can one pay?

A. *Payment is a principle.* Payment is necessary not to the school but to the people themselves, for without paying they will not get anything. The idea of payment is very important and it must be understood that payment is absolutely necessary. One can pay in one way or another way and everyone has to find that out for himself. But nobody can *get* anything that he does not pay for. Things cannot be given, they can only be bought. It is magical, not simple. If one has knowledge, one cannot give it to another person, for only if he pays for it can the other person have it. This is a cosmic law. The idea of payment is very strongly emphasized in the New Testament in Matt. xiii in several beautiful parables that I have mentioned. Man has to be a good merchant, he must know what to buy and how much to pay. Things cannot fall from heaven, they cannot be found, they must be bought. What one can get is proportionate to what one is prepared to pay. And one has to pay in advance – there is no credit.

Q. There is no check on the price? You cannot find out whether it is too high?

A. Some people think it is too high, refuse to pay and get nothing.

Q. I do not understand about paying in advance. How is it done?

A. The only way is to pay in advance, but how to do it is another thing – all that we study here is how to pay in advance.

As a general principle, paying in advance means that if you are doing certain work and want to have something connected with it, then if you make it useful for the school, you earn the right to have it.

Payment is a most important principle in the work, and it must be understood. Without payment you cannot get anything. But as a rule we want to get something for nothing, and that is why we have nothing. If we really decided to go for this kind of knowledge – or even for quite a small thing – and we went for it regardless of everything else, we would get it. This is a very important point. We say that we want knowledge, but we don't really. We will pay for anything else, but for *this* we are not prepared to pay anything, and so, as a result, we get nothing.

Q. Has payment to do with some loss to oneself?

A. Loss or effort. You may gain in that way, but you may regard it as a loss. Payment has many sides. The first payment is, of course, taking the trouble to study and understand the things you hear. It is not yet payment in itself, but it creates the possibility of payment.

Payment, in the true sense of the word, must be useful not only to you but to someone else – to the school. But if you are not useful to yourself you cannot be useful to the school either.

Q. So in order to progress one must make small payments?

A. Or big.

Q. What are they?

A. This is what we are speaking about – you must find it for yourself. It always means a certain effort, certain ‘doing’, different from what you would do naturally, and it must be necessary or useful to the work.

Q. I do not understand the difference between efforts and payment.

A. Efforts may be payment, but they must be useful, and not only to you. It is necessary to understand the work in general and the needs of the work. When one understands all that, one will find ways of doing something useful. Attitude depends on yourself and on your understanding; opportunity depends on circumstances.

Q. Is there a connection between work on oneself and payment?

A. If you do not work on yourself, you will not be able to pay. This is the connection. Who will pay? False personality cannot pay. So in the beginning payment means effort, study, time, many things. But that is only the beginning. As I said, the idea is that in the way of attaining something in the work one gets only as much as one pays for. It is a physical law, the law of equilibrium.

Q. Is payment sacrifice?

A. Yes, but you have to sacrifice only non-existent things, imaginary things. All our values are imaginary. In the work one acquires new values and loses imaginary values.

Q. Has one to break down every thought one has?

A. You cannot generalize. Some of them may be useful. If all these things could be explained briefly, it would be easy. It is necessary to study many things in order to know what to pay and how to pay. And in life you get credit, but here you get no credit. By paying you must get *something*, but you do not know *what* you will get.

Q. One must be willing to pay?

A. Yes, but it may be difficult, not easy. Generally, paying must be difficult for you and useful for the work. But this is too general an explanation. Often we cannot define things until we come to facts.

We cannot have old things and new things, there is no room for them, so first we must make room for them. This is so even in regard to ordinary things. If one wants much, one must give much. If one wants little, one will give little. Measure it, then you will understand.

Q. I think perhaps one deludes oneself about wanting to change?

A. Very often. This is a very good observation, because often one persuades oneself that one wants to change but at the same time one wants to keep every small thing, so where is the change? Change is impossible if one wants to keep everything. To think about changing one must also think about what one would give up.

Q. Is there something in ourselves that prevents us from wanting enough to change? If we desired enough, should we get the help?

A. Yes, certainly, but I would not put it like that. You have all the help possible, it is now your turn to work, your turn to do something. Certainly, with different conditions, different preparation, and also different circumstances, things could be better arranged. But the question is not how much is given, but how much is taken, because, generally, only a little part is taken of what is given.

Q. Does it mean that it is important for us to plan our own affairs so that we have more time to devote to the work?

A. I think almost everybody, with the exception of very extreme cases, can give sufficient time to take a certain part in the work without actually changing his life and affairs.

Q. It is not possible for most of us to give up our lives.

A. No. I said that people must *think* about this side of the work, and they must look at the practical side – what is possible and what is impossible. I am perfectly sure that in most cases people can continue to do what they have to do and live as they are accustomed to live. There is nothing in life that cannot become work if one tries to remember oneself, tries not to identify, to understand that everything happens and so on. It is not necessary to change circumstances; on the contrary, changing circumstances is even worse, especially in the beginning. Later it may be useful, but not at first.

Q. What did you mean by saying that everything in life can be a possibility to work?

A. I meant that every ordinary occupation in life can become work. If one tries to apply the ideas of the work, then, little by little, whatever one does becomes work.

Q. What is a practical application of this system?

A. For instance, the possibility, by self-remembering, of increasing our consciousness. This immediately becomes practical. And there are many other things.

Q. I am beginning to understand that most of the work one tries to do for other people in life is useless. Would it be true to say that the school teaches one to discriminate as to what work one is really capable of?

A. Yes, certainly, this is one of the most important things. But the school does not teach you just to work for people, it teaches you to work for the school, and in this way you learn what you can do and how to do it. You must learn first to work for yourself, without that you cannot do anything, you must learn to be useful to yourself, to change yourself. Secondly you must learn to be useful to people in the school, you must help them, and then you must learn to help the school as a whole. As I said, only when one works on all the three lines can one get full benefit from the school, and in that way one learns what one can do outside the school. Besides, in school one learns cosmic laws and one begins to understand why certain things are impossible.

Q. If we are all mechanical, I cannot make out why we try to do anything. If we have a school, what is the object of having it?

A. If there were no possibility to change, there would be no object of having it, but there is a possibility, and this makes all the difference. In this system we know that it is impossible to 'do', that everything happens, but we also know that there are possibilities to develop this power to 'do'.

Q. Does work on oneself gather momentum after a time or remain equally difficult, like pushing a cart uphill?

A. I think it becomes more difficult, because it comes to more and more ramifications. You start on one line, then after some time you work on three lines, and each of them divides and divides, and all the time requires attention and effort. There is no momentum there.

On the other hand, one acquires more energy, becomes more conscious, and that makes it easier in a sense. But, by itself, work cannot become easier.

Q. Is it necessary to work for the school before you can make any progress?

A. It cannot be put like that. If you work for yourself and make progress, then the opportunity of working for the school may come, but you cannot make theoretical suppositions. It is your initiative that is the most important thing, both in the first and the third line. You are given material, but the initiative remains with you. But in the second line you have no initiative, or very little.

Let me repeat what I said earlier: you have received these ideas and came here because certain people have worked before you and have put their energy and time into it. Now you must learn to share the responsibility. You cannot continue getting the ideas without sharing the responsibility; this is quite natural. So, if not to-day, then to-morrow one must 'do'. Do what? One must understand what to demand from oneself. We study school methods, and this

is the only way to study them.

Q. Can you give an example of how to share responsibility?

A. No. As I said it is a question of understanding what is useful, what is necessary. Then it is a question of seeing what one can do, if not now, perhaps later. It cannot be given in the form of a prescription.

Q. Is it not true that for one's own benefit one should make payment which is difficult?

A. Yes, but you must find it. Payment is not just making things difficult for yourself without any benefit for anyone else.

Q. Should we avoid looking at the work only from the point of view of our special capacities?

A. Naturally everybody must look first from the point of view of what he can do. But supposing his capacities are not useful – he must then find new capacities which may be useful. People often ask: How to learn to 'do'? By working, by doing all that is possible in connection with the three lines of work. Often we cannot 'do' because we do not know our own powers. Then we have not the habit of a certain discipline that is necessary in the work. Everything can be learned, but it requires initiative and understanding, and understanding means effort, work.

Q. It seems to me that I have more from the work than I have given. But I have nothing to give.

A. I would not make such a complication out of it. We always have something to give, and we always have something to learn. So long as you are interested and continue to take things, you have a chance to pay. You lose the chance to pay when you take nothing.

Q. I feel that it is part of our concern with the third line of work that we have to try to become man No. 4.

A. That is not third line of work. You do it for yourself, otherwise you cannot do it. All three lines are connected, but the third line is what you do directly for the school, such as you are, without waiting to become No. 4.

Q. But it seems to me that until we reach a higher level of being the understanding of which you spoke would not be for us?

A. No, you are wrong. If you mean by a different level of being having a centre of gravity, then you are right, but if you mean a different state of consciousness, you are wrong, because if you wait till you have a different state of consciousness, you will get nothing. So the answer to your question depends on what you mean by change of being. Struggle with false personality is also necessary; because of false personality we can find nothing. This means that a certain change is necessary but not a big change.

Q. Would you mind repeating again the characteristics of a centre of gravity?

A. Permanent centre of gravity comes at a certain moment in relation to the work, when one is already sure what one is doing, and sure of the system, and when this becomes more important than anything else, when it occupies the chief place in one's life. This is the moment when permanent centre of gravity is established. But when one is interested in the ideas of the system, and yet at any moment something else may become more important, this means that one has no centre of gravity.

Q. Is it possible to look on three lines of work as being three different forces forming a triad?

A. Yes, in a sense, but they always change. One is active to-day but was passive yesterday and may be neutralizing to-morrow. And they are different even in obligations.

You see, like many other things, these three lines of work cannot be defined in words. At the same time the idea is very clear. The moment you understand it you will ask yourself 'Why did I want definitions? It is quite clear without words!' You must try to remember all that was said about it, for many things were already said on this subject. For instance, remember what was said about prison.

I remember a conversation with Mr Gurdjieff many years ago. He put it in a very simple

form. He said: 'One can be useful to oneself; one can be useful to other people; one can be useful to me'. He represented the school. That describes the three lines of work. And he added; 'If one is only useful to oneself and cannot be useful to me or to other people, it will not last long'.

Q. But by being useful to oneself one automatically becomes useful to other people?

A. No, it is separate. Only forgetting goes automatically; nothing good happens automatically. It is quite right to get things for yourself, but if you think only about that, you limit yourself. One has to study oneself; one has to work on oneself; so one has time to study other lines. But after some time, if one does not accept this idea and keeps only to one line, one begins to lose ground.

Q. Isn't the third line rather out of our reach at the moment?

A. No, it is only necessary to understand. Again, one person may be in one position, another in another position – so there are no general laws about it. For instance, I began with the third line; I could do more on the third line, before I could do anything on the first and the second.

Q. Isn't there a sort of organization to help people to work on the third line?

A. Yes there is. But an organization cannot help by itself, because each line must be based on some kind of attitude. An organization cannot replace an attitude, but at the same time an organization 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 this 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 these rules or conditions is their first payment, and the first test.

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. Rules are not for convenience, they are not for comfort – they are for inconvenience and discomfort, and in that way they help self-remembering.

You must understand that all rules are for self-remembering, although they also have a purpose in themselves. If there are no rules and the importance of rules is not understood, there is no work.

The important thing to realize 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.

Rules are particularly important in connection with organization of groups, because, since people come without knowing one another and without knowing what it is all about, certain rules have to be imposed. For instance, one of the rules that applies to new people is that they should not talk to people outside about what they hear at lectures. People begin to realize the

importance of this rule only when this form of talk turns against them, when their friends insist on their talking and they no longer want to talk. This rule is to help people not to lie, because when they speak about things they do not know, they naturally begin to lie. So if, after listening to one or two lectures, people begin to talk about what they have heard and express their opinions, they begin to lie. Most people are too impatient, they do not give themselves enough time, they come to conclusions too soon and so cannot help lying.

But the chief reason for this rule is that it is a principle of school-work not to give ideas but to keep them from people, and to give them only on certain conditions which safeguard them from being distorted. Otherwise they will be distorted the next day; we have had enough experience of that. It is very important to prevent these ideas from deteriorating, because it may be said that a school is something where people and ideas do not die. In life both people and ideas die, not at once, but die slowly.

Another reason for this rule is that it is a test, an exercise of will, an exercise of memory and understanding. You come here on certain conditions; the first condition is that you must not talk, and you must remember it. This helps enormously to self-remember, because it goes against all ordinary habits. Your ordinary habit is to talk without discrimination. But in relation to these ideas you must discriminate.

Q. It seems that in a school nothing is done without reason. Is one reason why this rule is necessary that talking would introduce a new factor, the result of which could not be predicted?

A. Certainly. If people knew what to do without rules, rules would not be necessary. At the same time it is also a kind of education, because by obeying rules people create something in themselves. There would not be enough friction if there were no rules.

Q. I take it that the main object of rules is to break mechanicalness?

A. Each rule has many objects, but you cannot expect anything from rules alone. They are only a part of the general work, a help.

Q. I find it almost impossible not to utilize the knowledge so far gained to assist one's friends.

A. It cannot be utilized yet, because if you try to do something with the amount of knowledge you have, you will distort it. It is necessary to have more, because only then will you be able to judge whether you can do something with it in a given case or not, whether you can give something to this or that person or not. Now you cannot say.

Besides, everything in this system must be explained fully or not touched at all, and in order to explain one thing you have to explain another. This is the difficulty. Do you see what I mean? For us many things are facts, or at least should be facts. If you tell them to people who have not gone slowly through this study, for them it will be something like faith. They will either believe or not believe, and since these things mostly go against ordinary ideas, it would be much easier for them to disbelieve. So why should we produce more disbelievers? It is impossible to convey these ideas sufficiently clearly to people who do not study them.

Q. It is difficult to discuss something with anyone without it being coloured by what we have heard here.

A. Until it becomes easy you cannot begin to do anything; everything will be transformed into talk and will remain talk. Only when you are able to keep silent, keep something to yourself, only then can you accumulate more knowledge or material. If you make a hole in a balloon, the contents of the balloon will escape. If you make a hole in yourself, something will also escape. Rules are difficult to keep, because by remembering rules and obeying rules you accumulate conscious energy. This is chiefly why rules are made.

One cannot describe rules or give a catalogue of them, but rules can be understood. Besides, emotional development needs discipline. Nothing develops the emotional centre so much as giving up self-will. Rules are connected with the idea of conduct. When we become men No. 5 our conduct will be perfect compared to what it is now. But we are not men No. 5,

so we must have rules. If we remember rules, understand and follow them, our conduct will be consistent and will lead in a definite direction; it will no longer be the erratic conduct of men 1, 2 and 3.

All the ways need discipline. This explains why one cannot work by oneself. One cannot create discipline by oneself. If one understands this work, then discipline takes the form that one does not decide for oneself but works according to instructions. It takes a long time to acquire will, for self-will has to be conquered first. In the meantime another will is necessary, the will of the school, of the organization.

Q. I do not understand why rules belong to the second line and not the third?

A. Try to think. There can be no rules on the first and the third lines; there you must do what you can, there must be initiative, work must be free. On the second line there must be discipline.

Q. What is more important on the second line, advantage to oneself or advantage to other people?

A. It is impossible to put it this way. In the second line you must be able to forget your own interests, your own likes and dislikes.

Q. Are the questions which people ask at lectures and which are helpful to other people the second line of work?

A. No, work is another thing, you know. It is necessary to understand what the word 'work' means in the system's sense. It does not mean happenings like that – that somebody's question happens to give a useful result. Work always means a line of efforts leading towards a certain definite aim. Not one effort. One effort does not mean work; but a connected line of efforts, an uninterrupted line of efforts, only that becomes work.

Q. If two people help each other, will that be second line?

A. No, as I have explained, in the second line there is no initiative. But there must be a certain preparation for it: one must understand the necessity of working with people. When you begin to understand that it is physically impossible to work alone, that it is only because of these other people that you yourself can work, that will be understanding, but it will not be second line yet. You must understand that the people you meet here are as necessary for you as the system itself. This will be a beginning.

Q. Is there any particular line that will help one to escape from doing unnecessary things?

A. No particular line – all lines that are explained. You must be able to see what is possible. You are given many suggestions and one day you can do better work on one line and another day on another line; there is no special line for all days, for all time. And there is self-remembering, everything that was said about identification, considering, negative emotions, study of the system, many things. You never know which will be more useful at a given time; one moment one helps and another moment another helps.

Q. Does this system involve self-surrender?

A. Not in the usual sense. In the Fourth Way only a special kind of surrender is necessary, in certain kinds of work, in some special situations. For instance, as I have said, one must surrender one's decisions in questions connected with work in the school. This is an example of possible discipline. And one must remember why one is doing it and what one is doing. For instance, in remembering rules, one must surrender a considerable part of one's own judgment and simply remember them. Why? Because one must realize that one does not understand enough. When one does understand, there will be no need to remember rules. So you see, surrender does not mean blind sacrifice, and it is necessary only in connection with school-work, not outside schoolwork.

I repeat: the way to acquire will is to put oneself under a certain discipline and not try to escape. People use in the work the same methods they use in life – they adapt. They try to make work as comfortable, or at least as little uncomfortable as possible, and in that way they

lose what the work can give.

Q. I do not see why adapting should not be admitted in the work.

A. You cannot adapt to the work; you have to work in actual fact. Adapting may be right in certain cases in life, but in the work it is always wrong. Adaptation is not a sure method. You adapt yourself to one state or one set of circumstances, and then it changes and your adaptation fails. You must find a better method, because you never know what will happen next moment. For instance, you sit in your room and decide not to be irritated, then something happens unexpectedly and you are irritated before you know it.

Q. How can we make this work more real? I realize that it is not what it might be.

A. It is what it is because you are not what you might be. There is a certain principle in the work – time is counted. For every person certain demands are made. If you have only been one month in the work the demands are small; next month they grow, after six months they are bigger, after a year still bigger. If a person does not meet these demands, the bill becomes very heavy in the end. If someone considers that he has the right to be on the level of the first month after being in the work for some years, he cannot pay the bill. Payment means first of all being able to meet demands. Demands always grow, and if you are behind your time things will look below their right level *to you*, whatever they are in reality, because *you* are below level. But if you work, if you grow, you will be on the level of the demands. I am showing you the side from which it is possible to approach this question. Many things are necessary in an organization, understanding first of all, and effort.

Q. I suppose meeting the demands entails giving up some things, but I am puzzled about what they are.

A. Do not worry. When it is necessary to give up something it becomes quite clear. If you do not see what you have to give up it means that it is not the time to think about it yet. Intellectual thinking about it is quite useless, for when you have to give up something it never comes in the form of a puzzle. Maybe some day you will see some particular kind of negative emotion and will realize that if you want to keep it you cannot work. Or it may be some kind of imagination, or something else of this kind. It always begins in this way.

Q. It seems paradoxical that we are trying to get free from laws and are putting ourselves under more.

A. In order to get free it is necessary to submit to many more laws for a certain time, for one can learn to be free only by obeying more laws. There are many reasons for this. One reason is that we are too lenient with ourselves; if we set ourselves a task, after some time we begin to make excuses. And then we deceive ourselves too much.

So, as I said, if people want to continue to study, they must accept certain conditions. This means they must make the study practical. If people do not take work seriously enough, it is a waste of time. You have a right to go away and I have a right to stop lectures, so there are no obligations on either side. I have other work to do, but my giving up my time to this is necessary, because it is the only way to establish a school. If I can say, 'If I die to-morrow, work will continue', it will mean that a school is established. If it depends wholly on me, it will mean that the school is not of sufficient strength.

Q. In a school is it better to study only yourself and not other people?

A. No, it is necessary to study other people also, but not only other people.

Q. Surely it is easier to be objective about other people than about oneself?

A. No, it is more difficult. If you become objective to yourself you can see other people objectively, but not before, because before that it will all be coloured by your own views, attitudes, tastes, by what you like and what you dislike. To be objective you must be free from it all. You can become objective to yourself in the state of self-consciousness: this is the first experience of coming into contact with the real object.

Q. Does one ever learn to administer shocks to oneself in order to work as one should?

A. If you work on three lines, one line will give shocks to another. When you understand, not theoretically but from observation, how one line helps another, you will find out.

Q. What I meant was, when one needs energy quickly for a special purpose, how can one get it? Is it by a shock?

A. A good shock makes energy quickly. But shocks can be of three kinds: somebody else can give it to you, or you can give it to yourself, or it may come accidentally. Nothing else can create energy quickly. A good shock can make you remember yourself and remember the shock. It may be so good that you will be unable to forget it for some time; that will make you more emotional and the emotional centre will produce energy.

Q. You said shocks can be accidental?

A. Accidental shocks do not count. Things happen; people find money in the street, but you cannot rely on it. When we speak about 'giving shocks' we speak about conscious shocks.

We must understand how things happen. We start to do something and then come to an interval without so much as realizing the existence of intervals or knowing about their possibilities. This is our situation. Before we come to the possibility of aiming and attaining, we must understand that this is very far from us and we must study intervals in the given examples, such as the food diagram. By studying these intervals and the two conscious shocks which were explained, by learning to produce them, we may come to the possibility of quite a different kind of shock, but not before that. As a matter of fact, if we could produce enough necessary shocks that are strong enough, there would be practically nothing we could not attain. The only thing we need is shocks, but we cannot make them. Even if we think of them, we are not confident enough, we do not trust ourselves, do not know for certain that this shock will produce the desired effect. That is why organized work includes in itself many shocks, so it is not left to ourselves. We are so fast asleep that no shocks wake us – we do not notice them.

Q. Does the realization of mechanicalness give one choice in one's actions or must one wait for will?

A. I would say it gives choice. At the same time it is wrong to think that when realization comes it already brings the possibility and the power. One can know and not be able to do anything. It is a most difficult and unpleasant situation if one begins to see things and is unable to do anything. That is why in some cases it is better not to begin working unless one is ready to go on to the end. Otherwise one may remain between two stools.

The idea of choice is a contradictory idea. From one point of view there is no choice, from a second point of view there is choice, from a third again no choice, and all are true. It is a very complicated idea. For instance, in the work there is choice, but work is connected with life outside. Things may become so bad that there is no choice, and then perhaps there is a moment of choice, but if we miss it, we miss it.

Q. Is there any way to recognize these moments of choice?

A. Only by trying to find these moments in the work, because this system is a method of acquiring new knowledge and power and, at the same time, a means of exercising this knowledge and power. Here we have more possibility to choose. If we exercise it, then perhaps later we will be able to apply it to other things. This idea is connected with crossroads. Crossroads are moments when one can 'do'.

A moment comes when one can help in this work or not. If an opportunity comes and one misses it, another may not come for a year perhaps, or even longer, if one does not arrange to use organized work which may make permanent opportunities.

Q. Concerning work on the second line, is it necessary to ask for an opportunity?

A. Everybody is given the opportunity, only, an individual person cannot organize work on the second line for himself; it must be arranged.

In this connection it was found by experience that physical work is very useful in school. In

some schools there are special physical exercises, but, in the absence of these, physical work takes their place. All this refers to the second line – it must be organized work. The idea is this; when a certain number of people work together, in the house, in the garden, with animals, and so on, it is not easy. Individually they can work, but working together is difficult. They are critical of one another; they get in one another's way; they take things from one another. It is very good help for self-remembering. If a person is interested in the idea, he can try it, but only if he feels the need of it. You must not think it is some kind of magical help. Work means action. Theoretically, work with other people is second line, but you must not think that being in the same room with other people or doing the same work is already second line. You do not know yet what the second line of work is.

Q. You said once that physical work is the way to make centres work properly. What did you mean by that?

A. Physical work – not sport, but hard work, one kind for one person, another kind for another person – puts centres right. Centres are connected in a certain way and energies are distributed in a certain way. When people are idle, centres try to do one another's work, and because of that physical work is a very reliable method for making them work better. This method is largely used in schools. In modern life, particularly with some people, wrong work of centres saps all the energy. But of course, even in organized work, if one works with identification it does not mean anything.

Q. What is the difference between physical work in ordinary life and organized physical work in a school?

A. Working anywhere else is much easier: you give yourself more freedom to choose the way to do it. Suppose you work in your own garden. You will do the things you like doing and do them in your own way. You will choose your own tools, your own time, your own weather, everything. So you introduce very much self-will into it. In organized work you have not only physical results, you also struggle with your self-will. Work does not cease to be dangerous by being specially organized, however, because in ordinary work will always remains self-will, while in school-work self-will spoils the whole thing, and not only for oneself but also for other people. Self-will always knows better, and always wants to do things in its own way. All organized work is a chance to work against self-will.

Besides, organized physical work needs emotional effort. That is why physical work cannot really be called physical, because it is emotional as well. If it were only physical it would not be so profitable. If there is no emotional effort in the physical work you are doing, you must either increase your speed, or increase the time or the effort in order to make it emotional. Try to do some physical work harder and longer than you can do it with ease and you will see that it requires an emotional effort. This is why physical work is important.

Q. What sort of emotional effort?

A. You will see. We are now speaking of physical work connected with the system – it is under quite different laws; you do it for a different purpose, and you have to remember why you do it.

Q. Do some people need school and others not?

A. School is for those who are prepared for school. The beginning of school-work already means some preparation. In school a new octave must begin. What is the duty of this personality which was magnetic centre? What can be required from it now? Valuation of the work, valuation of the system and of everything connected with the system. If valuation is there, this personality will grow; if it is not there, it will not grow.

Q. Can one be identified with a school?

A. That means losing the school. One can be identified with the school in many ways – by liking it too much, or criticizing it too much, or believing in it too much.

Q. Does a school interfere with how you behave outside school?

A. In relation to the school your actions are controlled by rules. Outside school you will find that it is also necessary to apply certain principles which you use in school. If you do not try to apply them whenever you can, it is useless to know them. Then – this is not a rule or a principle – you will find even outside school that if you want to do something you must not do some other thing; in other words, you have to pay for everything, not in the sense of taking out money and paying it out, but by some kind of ‘sacrifice’ (I do not like to use this word, but there is no other). In that way it will involve all your life.

Q. Does the number of people in a school depend on the amount of knowledge produced?

A. No, it depends on the number of people who have a certain being and who can look after other people, teach and instruct them and so on. You think schools are like mushrooms in a wood, but they are very different from mushrooms. A school is the result of long work. Even if you take this room and us sitting here talking, it is the result of thirty years’ work of many people, and maybe many before them. This must be taken into account.

Besides, knowledge in our sense means knowledge connected with the possibility of development of being. This knowledge must come from another school and must be valuable. Suppose I make you learn by heart the dates of birth of all French presidents, what use will that be? Yet very often this is called knowledge.

Q. Is the reason why this knowledge may not be given without payment because people who take it without payment will twist it?

A. Simply because they will lose it, will throw it away, because valuation depends on payment. You cannot have a right valuation of a thing you do not pay for. If it comes too easily, you do not value it. This is one side, and another side of the question is that if you value a thing you will not give it away to other people. What does valuation mean? If you realize what effort was put into it, how many people have worked, and for how long, to give you this knowledge, you will not give it away for nothing, because, first of all, it will not be useful to them if they have it, and secondly, why should they have it for nothing? It would be the greatest injustice. But this cannot happen, because they cannot take it anyway.

Q. As far as I understand, the main object of school is to produce superman?

A. I don’t know about this ‘producing superman’. This is not a superman farm!

Q. What relationship has the idea of school with cosmic order?

A. This school – a school in which you can be – is a very small thing. It may help you, but it is a great presumption on our part to think that it has any cosmic meaning. It is very easy to understand the idea of school if you think simply about it. You want to have certain knowledge, and you cannot get it until you meet a school, I mean a school that has got this knowledge from another school, not knowledge invented by ordinary men. This is the only idea from which you can start.

Q. Some time ago you have mentioned men of higher mind from whom this knowledge comes. Do they actually live, and can we recognize them?

A. We cannot recognize them if they do not wish to be recognized. But if they wish to, they can show that they are on a different level. If we meet people of a higher level, we shall not recognize their being, but we can recognize their knowledge; we know the limits of our knowledge, so we can see when somebody knows more than we do. This is all that is possible for us in our present state. But we cannot see whether another person is conscious or not, or more conscious than we are. He will look the same, or even, and this is particularly interesting, it often happens that people who are more developed may look less conscious and we may take them to be more mechanical than we are.

Q. Do schools exist to have a general effect on other people not in schools, or is it entirely for their own reasons?

A. I would say both, only there is no contradiction between the two things, because how can schools have an influence on people not in schools? Only by preparing them for school, in no

other way. You see, the chief difficulty in understanding school systems is that they cannot be diluted too much. If they become diluted they become their own opposite, they cease to mean anything, cease to have any purpose.

Q. Have not schools in the past influenced humanity?

A. When schools influenced humanity, humanity was very small and schools very big. Now humanity is very big and schools very small. For instance, schools under the name of different Mysteries influenced certain periods of Greek life, but Greece was a very small country. Egypt too was comparatively small, so it could be influenced. But how could this small school influence humanity at the present time? You ask without thinking. I remember Mr Gurdjieff said that 200 conscious people could influence humanity. We calculated once what this would mean. Suppose one man No. 7 exists in the world, he must have at least a hundred pupils, because he cannot be in contact with lower degrees by himself. So if there is one man No. 7, he must have at least a hundred men No. 6. Each of these men No. 6 must have at least a hundred men No. 5, so that makes 10,000 men No. 5. Each of these 10,000 men No. 5 must have at least a hundred men No. 4, through whom he can have contact with other people, so there must be 1,000,000 men No. 4. Each of these men No. 4 must have at least a hundred men 1, 2 and 3 whom he knows and with whom he can work; so that will make 100,000,000 men No. 1, 2 and 3. This means that, even if we suppose that a thousand makes one school, there would be 100,000 schools. Well, we know definitely that there is no such number of schools, so it is impossible to expect a man No. 7, because the existence of a man No. 7 would mean that schools would control life. Even man No. 6 would mean that schools control the world. This implies that men No. 7 and No. 6 would only be in the world in special conditions, and it would be seen and known, because it would mean that life would be controlled by schools. And since we know that if there are schools now, they are very hidden, it cannot be so in our times.

Q. Do you mean that man No. 7 cannot exist on this planet or that he does not exist under present conditions?

A. I did not say he cannot exist. I said we may have reason to think that he does not exist, because his existence would show itself. But it does not exclude the possibility that for some reason men No. 7 may exist and not show themselves; only it is less probable.

The above text constitutes Chapter XI of *The Fourth Way* by P. D. Ouspensky.